87R1750 GCB-F

By:  Miles S.B. No. 174

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the inclusion of American principles, including social injustice and civil rights concepts, in the public school curriculum and instructional materials and in training materials and resources for use by school districts.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Subchapter J, Chapter 21, Education Code, is amended by adding Sections 21.460 and 21.461 to read as follows:

Sec. 21.460.  TRAINING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES REGARDING SITUATIONS INVOLVING SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUES. The agency shall advise school districts regarding training materials and resources for a school district to use in assisting educators to:

(1)  recognize and respond to situations that involve an alleged social injustice or violation of civil rights; and

(2)  as appropriate, consult persons with substantial, demonstrated experience in addressing those situations.

Sec. 21.461.  BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING STUDENT FREE SPEECH. The agency shall provide to school districts information relating to best practices for promoting the ability of all students to engage in free speech guaranteed by the constitution of the United States or this state regarding a policy issue, including engaging in speech through a public forum, a nonvoting position on a school district board of trustees, or a civic engagement program.

SECTION 2.  Section 28.002, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsection (h-1) to read as follows:

(h-1)  To accomplish the primary purpose stated in Subsection (h):

(1)  the State Board of Education and each school district shall ensure that:

(A)  the public school curriculum emphasizes:

(i)  understanding the principles underlying the United States Constitution, including the freedom of speech, the rights to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances, and other principles contained in the Bill of Rights;

(ii)  empowering students to protect themselves and others from injustices and to rectify those injustices; and

(iii)  understanding the benefits of diversity and the history of the civil rights movement; and

(B)  each historical event addressed in the public school curriculum meets a reasonable standard of historical significance, in relation to the limited amount of available instructional time; and

(2)  a course of instruction may include the use of a public forum, youth dialogue, workshop, or other appropriate method of instruction.

SECTION 3.  Section 31.023(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  For each subject and grade level, the State Board of Education shall adopt a list of instructional materials. The list includes each instructional material submitted for the subject and grade level that meets applicable physical specifications adopted by the State Board of Education, that [~~and~~] contains material that is consistent with the purpose and guidelines of Sections 28.002(h) and (h-1), and that covers [~~covering~~] at least half of the elements of the essential knowledge and skills of the subject and grade level in the student version of the instructional material, as well as in the teacher version of the instructional material, as determined by the State Board of Education under Section 28.002 and adopted under Section 31.024.

SECTION 4.  (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, this Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

(b)  The changes in law made by this Act to Section 31.023(a), Education Code, apply to instructional materials adopted by the State Board of Education on or after September 1, 2022.

SECTION 5.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2021.