

By: Johnson

S.B. No. 229

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to civics instruction in public schools.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter J, Chapter 21, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 21.466 to read as follows:

Sec. 21.466. CIVICS COURSE TRAINING. The agency shall advise school districts regarding training materials and resources for a school district to use in assisting educators to:

(1) develop civics projects and methods of teaching as described in Section 28.0022;

(2) understand and teach the relevance of:

(A) public policy; and

(B) the structure of federal, state, and local governments; and

(3) engage students in:

(A) thinking critically;

(B) working cooperatively;

(C) identifying issues in the community;

(D) researching a problem, evaluating alternative outcomes, and developing a solution; and

(E) creating public policy or action plans.

SECTION 2. Section 28.002(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Each school district that offers kindergarten through

1 grade 12 shall offer, as a required curriculum:

2 (1) a foundation curriculum that includes:

3 (A) English language arts;

4 (B) mathematics;

5 (C) science; and

6 (D) social studies, consisting of Texas, United
7 States, and world history, government, economics, with emphasis on
8 the free enterprise system and its benefits, civics, and geography;
9 and

10 (2) an enrichment curriculum that includes:

11 (A) to the extent possible, languages other than
12 English;

13 (B) health, with emphasis on:

14 (i) physical health, including the
15 importance of proper nutrition and exercise;

16 (ii) mental health, including instruction
17 about mental health conditions, substance abuse, skills to manage
18 emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and
19 responsible decision-making; and

20 (iii) suicide prevention, including
21 recognizing suicide-related risk factors and warning signs;

22 (C) physical education;

23 (D) fine arts;

24 (E) career and technology education;

25 (F) technology applications;

26 (G) religious literature, including the Hebrew
27 Scriptures (Old Testament) and New Testament, and its impact on

1 history and literature; and

2 (H) personal financial literacy.

3 SECTION 3. Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, is
4 amended by adding Section 28.0022 to read as follows:

5 Sec. 28.0022. CIVICS INSTRUCTION. (a) The essential
6 knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum under
7 Section 28.002 must include instruction in civics:

8 (1) at least once in grade four, five, six, seven, or
9 eight; and

10 (2) as part of one or more courses offered at the high
11 school level that satisfy graduation requirements under Section
12 28.025.

13 (b) Each school district and open-enrollment charter school
14 that offers a high school program shall provide an elective course
15 in civics that meets the requirements for one credit in civics under
16 Section 28.025(b-1)(4).

17 (c) The State Board of Education shall develop a civics
18 curriculum as described by this section. The curriculum must be
19 developed to:

20 (1) measure the civics learning objectives contained
21 in the essential knowledge and skills for social studies;

22 (2) demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of
23 the relevance of:

24 (A) public policy; and

25 (B) the structure of federal, state, and local
26 governments; and

27 (3) include opportunities for students to engage in:

- 1 (A) thinking critically;
- 2 (B) working cooperatively;
- 3 (C) identifying issues in the community;
- 4 (D) researching a problem, evaluating
5 alternative outcomes, and developing a solution; and
- 6 (E) creating public policy or action plans.

7 (d) In implementing the curriculum described under this
8 section, each school district or open-enrollment charter school
9 shall develop a course of study that is project based. The course
10 of study may take the form of a capstone project, portfolio, or
11 presentation. The course of study must:

- 12 (1) use inquiry-based learning;
- 13 (2) focus on problem solving; and
- 14 (3) address an issue that is relevant to the students.

15 (e) Not later than September 1 of every even-numbered year,
16 each school district and open-enrollment charter school shall
17 submit to the agency a report that describes the projects developed
18 through civics courses offered by the district or school.

19 (f) The agency shall adopt rules necessary to gather data
20 and conduct research to substantiate any correlation between taking
21 a civics course offered under this section and student achievement
22 under Section 39.053.

23 SECTION 4. Section 28.025(b-1), Education Code, is amended
24 to read as follows:

25 (b-1) The State Board of Education by rule shall require
26 that the curriculum requirements for the foundation high school
27 program under Subsection (a) include a requirement that students

1 successfully complete:

2 (1) four credits in English language arts under
3 Section 28.002(a)(1)(A), including one credit in English I, one
4 credit in English II, one credit in English III, and one credit in
5 an advanced English course authorized under Subsection (b-2);

6 (2) three credits in mathematics under Section
7 28.002(a)(1)(B), including one credit in Algebra I, one credit in
8 geometry, and one credit in any advanced mathematics course
9 authorized under Subsection (b-2);

10 (3) three credits in science under Section
11 28.002(a)(1)(C), including one credit in biology, one credit in any
12 advanced science course authorized under Subsection (b-2), and one
13 credit in integrated physics and chemistry or in an additional
14 advanced science course authorized under Subsection (b-2);

15 (4) three credits in social studies under Section
16 28.002(a)(1)(D), including one credit in United States history, at
17 least one-half credit in government and at least one-half credit in
18 economics, and one credit in world geography, ~~or~~ world history,
19 or civics;

20 (5) except as provided under Subsections (b-12),
21 (b-13), and (b-14), two credits in the same language in a language
22 other than English under Section 28.002(a)(2)(A);

23 (6) five elective credits;

24 (7) one credit in fine arts under Section
25 28.002(a)(2)(D); and

26 (8) except as provided by Subsection (b-11), one
27 credit in physical education under Section 28.002(a)(2)(C).

1 SECTION 5. Not later than September 1, 2022, each school
2 district and open-enrollment charter school shall submit the
3 initial report required under Section 28.0022, Education Code, as
4 added by this Act.

5 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
6 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
7 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
8 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
9 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.