A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT
relating to the inclusion of civics education in public schools,
including continuing education requirements on civics education
for certain classroom teachers.

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

SECTION 1. Section 21.054, Education Code, is amended by
amending Subsection (d) and adding Subsection (d-3) to read as
follows:

(d) Continuing education requirements for a classroom
teacher must provide that at least 25 percent of the training
required every five years include instruction regarding:

1. collecting and analyzing information that will
improve effectiveness in the classroom;
2. recognizing early warning indicators that a
student may be at risk of dropping out of school;
3. digital learning, digital teaching, and
integrating technology into classroom instruction;
4. educating diverse student populations, including:
   (A) students who are eligible to participate in
special education programs under Subchapter A, Chapter 29;
   (B) students who are eligible to receive
educational services required under Section 504, Rehabilitation
Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Section 794);
   (C) students with mental health conditions or who
engage in substance abuse;

(D) students with intellectual or developmental disabilities;

(E) students who are educationally disadvantaged;

(F) students of limited English proficiency; and

(G) students at risk of dropping out of school;

(5) understanding appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students;

(6) how mental health conditions, including grief and trauma, affect student learning and behavior and how evidence-based, grief-informed, and trauma-informed strategies support the academic success of students affected by grief and trauma; and

(7) for a classroom teacher who teaches social studies:

(A) teaching a civics practicum required under Section 28.002(h-4), if the teacher teaches social studies at the applicable grade levels;

(B) leading guided classroom discussions of current events;

(C) simulations and models of governmental and democratic processes; and

(D) media literacy, including instruction on verifying information and sources and identifying propaganda.

(d-3) The agency shall maintain a list of available courses
that include instruction regarding teaching a civics practicum as described by Subsection (d)(7) and make the list readily accessible to classroom teachers who teach social studies.

SECTION 2. Section 28.002, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (h-2), (h-3), and (h-4) to read as follows:

(h-2) In adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum under Subsection (a), the State Board of Education shall adopt essential knowledge and skills that develop each student's:

(1) civic knowledge, including an understanding of:
   (A) the history, qualities, traditions, and features of civic engagement in the United States;
   (B) the structure, function, and processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and local levels;
   (C) the founding documents of the United States;
   (D) how geography and economics affect federal, state, and local policy; and
   (E) the role of a United States citizen;

(2) civic skills, including the skills necessary to:
   (A) actively and responsibly participate as a citizen in a democracy;
   (B) engage effectively in civic life and with government institutions at the federal, state, and local levels;
   (C) analyze and determine the reliability of information sources;
   (D) formulate and articulate reasoned positions;
   (E) actively listen and engage in civil
discourse; and

(F) collaborate and engage in community organizing;

(3) civic attitudes, including:

(A) an appreciation for the importance and responsibility of participating in civic life;

(B) commitment to the United States and the United States' system of government;

(C) an appreciation for free speech and civil discourse;

(D) civic self-efficacy; and

(E) an understanding of different perspectives;

and

(4) civic behaviors through experiential learning, including:

(A) voting;

(B) engaging in deliberative discussions;

(C) volunteering;

(D) attending public meetings; and

(E) engaging in other civic activities.

(h-3) The agency shall ensure that each school district teaches civics education as part of the district's social studies curriculum in a manner consistent with the essential knowledge and skills adopted under Subsection (h-2).

(h-4) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules requiring each student to complete a student-led, content-focused civics practicum once during grade eight and once while in high
school as part of the social studies curriculum. Each civics
practicum may be designed to be completed individually, in a small
group, or as a class and must:

(1) be nonpartisan;
(2) be consistent with and clearly linked to the
essential knowledge and skills adopted for social studies;
(3) focus on building civic knowledge, skills,
attitudes, and behaviors as described by Subsection (h-2);
(4) promote a student's ability to:
   (A) rigorously research and analyze information;
   (B) make logical arguments with supporting
evidence;
   (C) present complex issues from multiple
perspectives; and
   (D) engage in civil discourse with people who
hold positions different than the student's; and
(5) require a student to demonstrate an understanding
of the relationship between federal, state, and local government
and between the policies at each level of government.

SECTION 3. Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, is
amended by adding Section 28.0028 to read as follows:

Sec. 28.0028. SUPPLEMENTAL READING LIST. (a) The agency
shall develop a reading list of supplemental civics-focused texts
for each grade level that a school district may use as part of the
district's reading curriculum. The reading list developed under
this section must be distributed to every school district and
open-enrollment charter school not later than September 1 of each
The reading list developed under Subsection (a):

(1) must:

(A) include only nonfiction texts; and

(B) be designed to:

(i) build civics background knowledge and vocabulary for the elementary grades; and

(ii) provide a rich study in rhetoric, reasoning, and argumentation for the secondary grades; and

(2) may include:

(A) the founding documents of the United States; or

(B) biographies of prominent United States or Texas citizens; and

(C) the writings or speeches of national and state leaders.

(c) Not later than August 1 of each school year the agency shall review the list adopted under Subsection (a) and determine if any reading material should be:

(1) removed from the list; or

(2) added to the list.

SECTION 4. Subchapter 2, Chapter 29, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 29.919 to read as follows:

Sec. 29.919. CIVICS EDUCATION FUND AND GRANT PROGRAM. (a) The civics education fund is a special fund in the treasury outside the general revenue fund. The fund is composed of:

(1) money appropriated or transferred to the credit of the fund by the legislature;
(2) gifts, grants, or donations contributed to the fund; and

(3) the returns received from investment of money in the fund.

(b) Before a gift, grant, or donation received from a private source may be deposited to the credit of the civics education fund, the agency shall ensure that the gift, grant, or donation is not accompanied by conditions that are detrimental to the neutral and rigorous teaching of civics or that will unduly influence the direction of civics education policy. The agency shall make available to the public any determination the agency makes under this subsection.

(c) Money in the civics education fund may be appropriated only for purposes of the grant program established under this section.

(d) The agency shall establish a competitive grant program to provide funding to school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, public institutions of higher education, and other relevant stakeholder organizations to assist with the implementation of civics education in public schools. In awarding grants, the agency may prioritize underserved communities, such as school districts or open-enrollment charter schools with high concentrations of educationally disadvantaged students.

(e) Money awarded under the grant program may be used only to:

(1) implement civics education, including to pay costs associated with professional development training in civics
education for classroom teachers who teach social studies; and

(2) collaborate with stakeholder organizations for the implementation of civics education.

(f) The agency may contract with a qualified third party to manage the grant program.

(g) Not later than September 1 of each even-numbered year, the agency shall submit to the legislature a report on the civics education fund and the grant program. The report must include:

(1) the sources and amounts of money deposited to the credit of the fund;

(2) the amount and purposes of each expenditure from the fund;

(3) information regarding any grants provided to a public institution of higher education or another stakeholder organization; and

(4) anticipated revenue and expenditure projections for the fund for the next two years.

(h) The commissioner may adopt rules to implement this section.

SECTION 5. Section 39.023, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (a-17) and (c-9) to read as follows:

(a-17) A reading assessment instrument adopted or developed under Subsection (a) must include excerpts from texts included on the reading list developed under Section 28.0028 for the applicable grade level.

(c-9) The English I and English II end-of-course assessment instruments adopted under Subsection (c) must include excerpts from
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1 texts included on the reading list developed under Section 28.0028
2 for a high school grade level.
3
4 SECTION 6. (a) As soon as practicable after the effective
5 date of this Act, the State Board for Educator Certification shall
6 propose rules implementing Section 21.054(d), Education Code, as
7 amended by this Act.
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9 (b) A classroom teacher subject to continuing education
10 requirements immediately before the effective date of this Act is
11 not required to comply with the continuing education requirements
12 described by Section 21.054(d), Education Code, as amended by this
13 Act, for any continuing education requirements period that ends
14 before January 1, 2022.
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16 SECTION 7. Sections 28.002 and 39.023, Education Code, as
17 amended by this Act, and Section 29.919, Education Code, as added by
18 this Act, apply beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.
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20 SECTION 8. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
21 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
22 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
23 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
24 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.