

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 178
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Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The State Board of Education (SBOE) unanimously approved the courses "Ethnic Studies: Mexican American Studies" and "Ethnic Studies: African American Studies" in 2018 and 2020, respectively. As a result, Texas became the first state to offer standalone Mexican American studies and African American studies courses for high school students. Pilot programs for Native American Studies and Asian American Studies are in place in Round Rock ISD and Grand Prairie ISD, respectively, in advance of the consideration of those courses by the SBOE. High school students must successfully complete three credits in social studies, including one credit of world geography or world history, under current law and each SBOE-approved ethnic studies course is currently offered only for elective credit. H.B. 178 seeks to include ethnic studies as an option of satisfying certain social studies curriculum requirements for public school students.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 178 amends the Education Code to specify that the social studies component of the foundation curriculum consists of ethnic studies for purposes of the requirement for each public school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 to offer the foundation curriculum.

H.B. 178, with respect to the requirement that the foundation high school program include a requirement that students successfully complete three credits in social studies, provides for the completion of one credit in ethnic studies as an alternative to earning a credit in world geography or world history. This provision applies only to students entering the ninth grade during the 2026-2027 school year or a later school year. For students entering a grade above ninth grade during the 2026-2027 school year, the law as it existed before amendment by the bill applies and is continued in effect for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.