

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3009
By: Talarico
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There have been calls to re-prioritize civics in Texas classrooms in order to help students understand the role of citizens in a democracy and to support students' identity formation as active citizens. H.B. 3009 seeks to address this issue by requiring public schools to offer project-based civics instruction to all students at least once in the fourth through eighth grades and once in high school and by providing for a statewide curriculum with locally-developed project elements.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Education Agency in SECTION 3 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3009 amends the Education Code to include civics among the social studies topics in the required foundation curriculum for each public school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12. The bill requires the state curriculum standards for social studies to include civics instruction at least once in grade four, five, six, seven, or eight and as part of one or more courses offered at the high school level that satisfy graduation requirements. The bill includes one credit in civics as an alternative to world geography or world history that satisfies one of the three required social studies credits under the foundation high school curriculum and requires each district and open-enrollment charter school that offers a high school program to provide an elective course in civics that meets the requirements for such a one-credit course.

H.B. 3009 requires the State Board of Education to develop a civics curriculum to do the following:

- measure the civics learning objectives contained in the essential knowledge and skills for social studies;
- demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the relevance of public policy and the structure of federal, state, and local governments; and
- include opportunities for students to engage in specified learning activities.

The bill requires each district or charter school, in implementing the civics curriculum, to develop a project-based course of study which may take the form of a capstone project, portfolio, or presentation and which must use inquiry-based learning, focus on problem solving, and

address an issue that is relevant to the students. The bill requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to advise districts regarding training materials and resources for a district to use in assisting educators to implement the civics instruction prescribed by the bill, including assistance in developing projects and methods of teaching.

H.B. 3009 requires each district and charter school, not later than September 1 of every even-numbered year, to submit to TEA a report that describes the projects developed through civics courses offered by the district or school and to submit the initial report not later than September 1, 2020. The bill requires TEA to adopt rules necessary to gather data and conduct research to substantiate any correlation between taking a civics course offered under the bill's provisions and student achievement as measured by public school system accountability performance indicators.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.