

SUBJECT: Creating a civics curriculum and course training

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 12 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Dutton, M. González,
K. King, Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver

0 nays

1 absent — Ashby

WITNESSES: For — Joseph Ferris, Yeji Kang, and Natalie Mulin, Civics 4 Y'all; Jamie Carroll, Generation Citizen; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Patrick Bresette, Children's Defense Fund-Texas; Jon Brooks, Xavier Fitten, Camila Rojas, and David Thomason, Civics 4 Y'all; Amanda Gnaedinger and Anthony Gutierrez, Common Cause Texas; Meredith Norris, Generation Citizen; Cinde Weatherby, League of Women Voters of Texas; Fatima Menendez, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Seth Rau, San Antonio ISD; Dwight Harris, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Molly Weiner, Texas Aspires Foundation; Chris Frandsen, Texas League Of Women Voters; Valerie Street, Texas Progressive Action Network; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas; and 25 individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Deborah Nelms)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Marin, Monica Martinez, and Melody Parrish, Texas Education Agency)

DIGEST: HB 3009 would require the State Board of Education (SBOE) to develop a civics curriculum to be included in the required foundation curriculum. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) would be required to advise school districts regarding the implementation of the civics curriculum.

Civics instruction. Under the bill, each public school that offered

kindergarten through grade 12 would have to include an emphasis in civics in the social studies curriculum.

The essential knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum would have to include instruction in civics at least once in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8, and as part of one or more courses offered at the high school level that satisfied graduation requirements.

Each school district and open-enrollment charter school that offered a high school program would be required to provide an elective course in civics that met requirements for a one-credit social studies course.

SBOE would have to develop a civics curriculum to:

- 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 government; and
- include opportunities for students to engage in thinking critically; working cooperatively; identifying issues in the community; researching a problem, evaluating alternative outcomes, and developing a solution; and creating public policy or action plans.

In implementing this curriculum, each school district and open-enrollment charter school would have to develop a project-based course of study that could take the form of a capstone project, portfolio, or presentation.

Training. TEA would be required to advise school districts regarding training materials and resources for a district to use in assisting educators to:

- develop civics projects and methods of teaching as specified in the bill;
- understand and teach the relevance of public policy and government structure; and

- engage students in specified learning activities.

Rules. TEA would be required to adopt rules necessary to gather data and conduct research to substantiate any correlation between taking a civics course described by the bill and measured student achievement.

Reporting. By September 1 of every even-numbered year, each school district and open-enrollment charter school would be required to submit to TEA a report that described the projects developed through civics courses offered by the district or school.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have an estimated negative impact of \$333,000 to general revenue related funds through fiscal 2020-21.