

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1504
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Education
5/20/2021
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

It has been noted that there should be more opportunities for learning about different cultures and ethnicities in public schools. Specifically, many have pointed to the underrepresentation of Hispanic culture, African American culture, Asian-American culture, and indigenous culture in the Texas public school curriculum and have highlighted the importance of accurately representing this history in Texas. The Texas Education Agency has approved Mexican American and African American studies as elective courses for high schools, but because these courses do not fulfil certain high school graduation requirements, they have failed to gain widespread popularity and adoption.

H.B. 1504 seeks to address this issue by providing for these existing ethnic studies courses to be counted toward the social studies credits required for graduation and by making ethnic studies courses an established component of the social studies foundation curriculum.

H.B. 1504 amends current law relating to ethnic studies instruction in public schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board of Education in SECTION 2 (Section 28.025, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 28.002(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Requires each school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 to offer, as a required curriculum a foundation curriculum that includes social studies, consisting of Texas, United States, and world history, government, economics, with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits, geography, and ethnic studies, including Mexican American and African American studies. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 28.025(b-1), Education Code, as follows:

(b-1) Requires the State Board of Education (SBOE) by rule to require that the curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program under Subsection (a) (relating to requiring SBOE by rule to determine curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program that are consistent with the required curriculum) include a requirement that students successfully complete three credits in social studies under Section 28.002(a)(1)(D) (relating to requiring each school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 to offer, as a required curriculum a foundation curriculum that includes social studies, government, economics, and geography), including one credit in United States history, at least one-half credit in government and at least one-half credit in economics, and one credit in ethnic studies, including Mexican American studies or African American studies, world geography, or world history.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 28.025(b-1), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies only to students entering the ninth grade during the 2022-2023 school year or a later school year. For students entering a grade above ninth grade during the 2022-2023 school year,

Section 28.025(b-1), Education Code, as that section existed before amendment by this Act, applies, and that section is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.