

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 551 Required African-American Instruction

SPONSOR(S): Benjamin

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 804

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Education Quality Subcommittee		Suppiah	Sanchez
2) PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) Education & Employment Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Chapter 1003.42 F.S. outlines the required instructional topics for public education, including the history of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, kindness to animals, the study of women’s and Hispanic contributions to the United States, the history of the Holocaust, and the history of African Americans.

Instruction on the history of African Americans must include the history of African peoples prior to development of slavery, the passage to America, the experience of slaves, the abolition of slavery, the contributions of African Americans to American society, and the history of local African American cemeteries when possible.

The bill requires school districts to provide evidence that requirements on the instruction of African American history are being met. The bill also allows the Department of Education to seek input from and contract with state or nationally recognized African American educational organizations to support curriculum on the history of African Americans.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact. See fiscal comments.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2023.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Required African-American Instruction

Florida law requires that public school students in grades K-12 receive instruction on specific subjects including historical time periods, comprehensive health education, and government, among others.¹ Instructional personnel are required to teach these subjects efficiently and faithfully, using historically accurate books and materials, following prescribed courses and approved methods of instruction.² Florida law does not dictate grade level, instructional material, or instructional hour requirements.³

Florida public schools are required to teach about African-American history.⁴ The instruction must include, “the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans to American society.”⁵

In November 2022, the Department of Education (DOE) adopted a rule requiring school districts to report, annually by July 1, on how instruction was provided during the previous school year for certain subjects defined in s. 1003.42(2), F.S., including the history of African Americans.⁶ The report must include specific courses offered for each grade level and what materials and resources were used.⁷

Commissioner of Education’s African American History Task Force

The Commissioner of Education’s African American History Task Force (African American History Task Force) ensures awareness of African-American history educational requirements, identifies and recommends needed state education leadership action, assists in adoption of instructional materials by the state, and builds supporting partnerships.⁸ The task force creates models for relevant curricula, including specific topics pertinent to each grade level. Models incorporate recommended student activities, focus questions, and assessment tools for each topic. Current topics include the Harlem Renaissance, the slave trade, the expansion of the Sahara Desert, and the Rosewood Massacre.⁹

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires school districts to annually certify and provide evidence to the Department of Education (DOE) that requirements on the instruction of African American history are being met. The DOE may prescribe the manner in which this evidence is provided. In addition to seeking input from the Commissioner of Education’s African American History Task Force, the bill allows the DOE to seek input from state or nationally recognized African American educational organizations. This input may be used when preparing and offering standards and curriculum for instruction in African American history. The DOE may also contract with these organizations to develop training for instructional personnel and classroom resources to support the developed curriculum.

¹ Section 1003.42, F.S.

² Section 1003.42(2), F.S.

³ *See id.* The State Board of Education is encouraged to adopt standards and pursue assessment for K-12 public schools for subjects, such as the history of the Holocaust and African-American history, among others.

⁴ Section 1003.42(h), F.S.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Rule 6A-1.094124, F.A.C.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Afroamfl.org, *Commissioner of Education’s African American History Task Force*, available at <https://afroamfl.org/> (last visited March 13, 2023).

⁹ Afroamfl.org, *African American History Instructional Standards Guide*, available at <https://afroamfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AAHTF-Instructional-Standards-July-2021.pdf> (last visited March 13, 2023).

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s. 1003.42, F.S.; requiring each school district to certify and provide evidence to the DOE that the requirements on instruction of African American history are being met; authorizing the DOE to seek input from and contract with state and nationally recognized African American educational organizations to support curriculum.

Section 2. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

To the extent the DOE elects to contract with any state or nationally recognized African American education organization, the department may incur any costs associated with the contract.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

Not applicable.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Not applicable.