

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3394

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MAY 17, 2021

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** “Laura Wooten’s Law”; requires civics instruction in middle school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to provide curricula, professional development and technical assistance for middle and high school civics.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State Cost Increase; Potential Annual Local Cost Increase
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Education; Rutgers University; School districts

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate
Potential Local Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines (currently prepared by the Department of Education) and newly provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course required under current law.
- While the bill requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, and professional development, the center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill.
- School districts will incur increased annual costs to the extent that additional faculty are needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill, or if existing faculty members require new materials or engage in training offered by the center or another provider. The OLS cannot

project what future resources school districts will require to meet the in-class instructional provisions of this bill and therefore cannot estimate the annual local cost impact.

BILL DESCRIPTION

The bill amends current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the required two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States. The bill now directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to prepare curriculum guidelines and also provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

The Legislature is to annually appropriate funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education to effectuate the bill's purposes.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines and provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States high school history course required under current law. The center provides in-service workshops to school districts for \$900 for a half-day workshop or \$1,750 for whole-day workshops. The OLS cannot estimate the number of teachers throughout the State who may take the professional development workshops or require other forms of training or additional instructional materials. The OLS also cannot determine whether additional faculty will be needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill.

The bill also requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development, and other activities that encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the teaching of United State history and enhance the middle school civics course of study required in the bill.

The center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill

Section: Education

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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).