

ASSEMBLY, No. 4159

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 28, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Requires new civics instruction in middle and high schools; requires school districts to use DOE's curriculum guidelines for civics; and requires DOE to provide funding to enhance civics instruction.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/29/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning civics education in public schools, amending
2 P.L.1987, c.425, and supplementing chapters 7C and 35 of Title
3 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.425 (C.18A:35-2.1) is amended to
9 read as follows:

10 1. The State Department of Education shall prepare curriculum
11 guidelines for the teaching of civics which **[may]** shall be used by
12 local school boards in fulfilling the requirements established
13 pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2.
14 (cf: P.L.1987, c.425, s.1)

15
16 2. (New section) Beginning with the 2018-2019 grade nine
17 class, the State Board of Education shall require that the local
18 graduation requirements adopted by a board of education include, as
19 part of the total credit requirement in social studies, at least one
20 course in civics or United States government.

21
22 3. (New section) Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year,
23 each board of education shall provide a course of study about the
24 values and principles underlying the American system of
25 constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of
26 government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society, which
27 shall be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade.
28 The board shall ensure that the course of study includes a minimum
29 of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

30
31 4. (New section) The Department of Education shall annually
32 provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic and Law-Related
33 Education at Rutgers, the State University. The purpose of the
34 funding shall be to enable the center to provide a clearinghouse of
35 materials, an online resource center, technical assistance,
36 professional development and any other activities deemed
37 appropriate by the department to enhance the teaching of the middle
38 school civics course of study required pursuant to section 3 of this
39 act.

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41 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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44 STATEMENT

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46 Under current State Board of Education regulations, high school
47 students are required to complete at least 15 credits in social

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 studies, including satisfaction of a two-year course in United States
2 history in accordance with N.J.S.18A:35-1 and 2; five credits in
3 world history; and the integration of civics, economics, geography
4 and global content in all course offerings. This bill directs the State
5 board to require at least one course specifically in civics or United
6 States government as part of the social studies credit requirement
7 for high school graduation. The requirement would begin with the
8 2018-2019 grade nine class.

9 The bill also amends current law to require, rather than permit,
10 school districts to use the Department of Education's curriculum
11 guidelines for civics in fulfilling the requirements established by
12 N.J.S.18A:35-1 and 2 for a two-year course of study in United
13 States history.

14 This bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle
15 school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of
16 study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be
17 provided to public school elementary students, but no similar
18 requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under this bill,
19 beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, each board of education is
20 required to provide a course of study about the values and
21 principles underlying the American system of constitutional
22 democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role
23 of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all
24 pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study
25 must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the
26 equivalent.

27 The bill also directs the Department of Education to annually
28 provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic and Law-Related
29 Education at Rutgers, the State University. The purpose of the
30 funding is to enable the center to provide a clearinghouse of
31 materials, an online resource center, technical assistance,
32 professional development and any other activities deemed
33 appropriate by the department to enhance the teaching of the middle
34 school civics course of study required by the bill.