

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: PCB PKQ 17-01 Civic Literacy
SPONSOR(S): PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
Orig. Comm.: PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee		Brink	Duncan

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Civic literacy is recognized as integral to the maintenance and improvement of constitutional democracy in the United States. Florida law incorporates several aspects of civic instruction into the public education system, including:

- academic standards for civics at all grade levels K-12;
- required instruction on the history, significance, and principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, flag education, and the arguments in support of adopting our republican form of government;
- civics and U.S. government course requirements in middle school and high school, respectively;
- a civics end-of-course assessment that constitutes 30 percent of a student's final grade for the middle grades civics course; and
- Celebrate Freedom Week, during which public school students must receive specified instruction on the Declaration of Independence and recite the Declaration at the beginning of each school day.

Currently, there are no civics education requirements for students enrolled in public postsecondary institutions in Florida.

To bolster civics instruction in Florida and prepare students to be civically engaged, knowledgeable adults, the bill:

- designates the month of September as "American Founders' Month" and authorizes the Governor to issue a proclamation urging public and private organizations within the state to celebrate the month;
- encourages all public schools to coordinate instruction on the founding fathers with "American Founders' Month;"
- requires the Just Read, Florida! Office to develop sequenced, content-rich programming to help elementary schools incorporate social studies, science, and fine arts content into literacy skills instruction;
- provides that it is a priority of the K-20 public education system to prepare students to become civically engaged and knowledgeable adults who make positive contributions to their community;
- requires students entering a Florida College System or State University System institution in 2018-2019 or thereafter to demonstrate competence in civic literacy either through a general education civics course or by passing an assessment adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) or the Board of Governors (BOG); and
- requiring the chairs of the SBE and BOG to jointly appoint a faculty committee to:
 - develop a new course in civic literacy or revise an existing general education core course; and
 - establish competencies and identify outcomes for the course.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Required Instruction

Florida law requires each district school board to provide instruction regarding the history, significance, and principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, flag education, and the arguments in support of adopting our republican form of government.¹ The law also requires districts to provide a character-development program in kindergarten through grade 12. Each school district must develop or adopt a curriculum for its K-12 character-development program and submit it to the department for approval.² The curriculum must “stress the qualities of patriotism; responsibility; citizenship; kindness; respect for authority, life, liberty and personal property; honesty; charity; self-control; racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance; and cooperation.”³ For grades 9-12, the character-development program must include instruction on:

- Developing leadership skills, interpersonal skills, organization skills, and research skills;
- Creating a resume;
- Developing and practicing the skills necessary for employment interviews;
- Managing stress and expectations; and
- Developing skills that enable students to become more resilient and self-motivated.⁴

Civics Instruction

Currently, Florida’s Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies include civics content in kindergarten through grade 8 and in grades 9-12.⁵ The standards were initially adopted after a review process in 2008 and then revised in 2014 by the State Board of Education (SBE).⁶

Each middle grades student must successfully complete three middle school or higher courses in social studies in order to be promoted to high school.⁷ One semester of the three courses must be in civics. Students enrolled in the civics course must take the statewide Civics end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Civics EOC assessment, which was administered initially in the 2012-2013 school year, counts toward 30 percent of the student’s course grade; however, students are not required to pass the assessment in order to be promoted. Results from the assessment are included in the school grades calculation for middle schools.⁸

The percentage of 7th grade students achieving a Level 3 (passing score) or a Level 4 on the Civics EOC assessment has steadily increased since the 2013-14 school year.⁹

¹ Section 1003.42(2)(a)-(d), F.S.

² Section 1003.42(2)(s), F.S.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

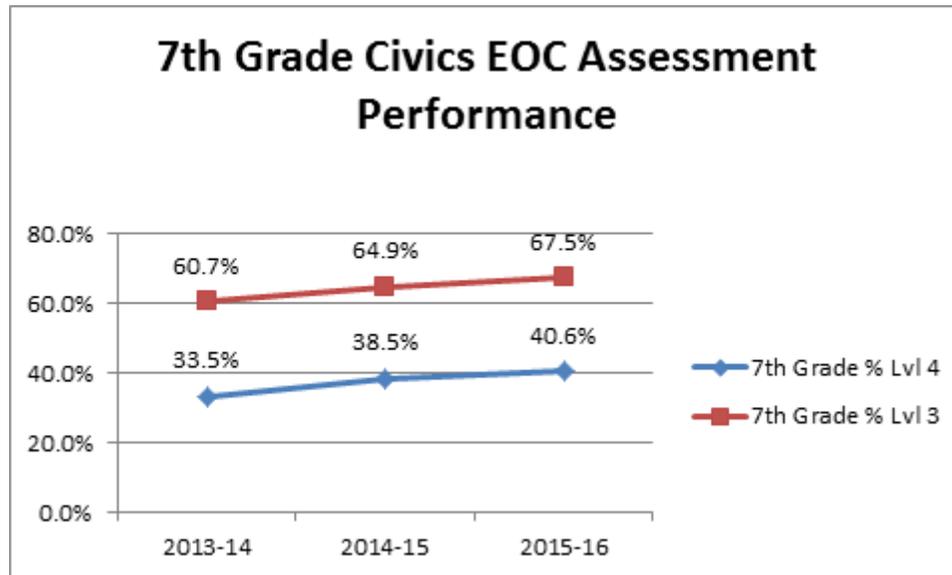
⁵ See CPALMS, *Browse and Search Standards*, <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard> (last visited Feb. 27, 2017) (providing the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for each subject area, by grade level).

⁶ See rule 6A-1.09401, F.A.C. See also Lou Frey Institute, *Civic Education in Florida: hearing before the House PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee* (Feb. 15, 2017), available at <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=2909&Session=2017&DocumentType=Meeting%20Packets&FileName=pkq%202-15-17.pdf>.

⁷ Section 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S.

⁸ See ss. 1003.4156(1)(c), 1008.34(3)(b)1.i., F.S.

⁹ Florida Department of Education, PK-12 Education Information Portal: *Civics EOC*, <https://edstats.fldoe.org/SASPortal/public> (last visited Feb. 27, 2017).



In addition to the middle grades civics requirement, each public high school student must earn a one-half course credit each in U.S. Government and economics, including financial literacy, and one credit each in World History and U.S. History.¹⁰ Like middle grades Civics, the U.S. History course includes an EOC assessment that counts as 30 percent of a student's final course grade.¹¹

Although the law provides for civics-related academic standards and promotion and graduation requirements, there is no postsecondary civics course requirement in Florida.¹² Currently, students entering postsecondary education at a Florida College System (FCS) or State University System (SUS) institution must complete at least one social sciences course as part of the general education core course requirement.¹³ The six courses that students can select to satisfy the social sciences requirement include:

- American History;
- Government;
- Economics;
- Anthropology;
- Sociology; and
- Psychology.¹⁴

Of the FCS and SUS students who took a general core course in social sciences in the 2014-2015 school year, only 16 percent took Government. The most popular social sciences course was Psychology, in which 35 percent of the students enrolled.¹⁵ Currently, only nine states have postsecondary civics education requirements, including Texas, Oklahoma, Utah, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Nevada.¹⁶

¹⁰ Section 1003.4282(3)(d), F.S.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, *OPPAGA Research on Postsecondary Civics Education: hearing before the House PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee* (Feb. 15, 2017), available at <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loadaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=2909&Session=2017&DocumentType=Meeting%20Packets&FileName=pkq%202-15-17.pdf>.

¹³ See s. 1007.25(3), F.S.

¹⁴ See rule 6A-14.0303(1)(e), F.A.C. (establishing FCS general core course options for social sciences); Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.005(1)(e) (establishing SUS general core course options for social sciences).

¹⁵ Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, *OPPAGA Research on Postsecondary Civics Education: hearing before the House PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee* (Feb. 15, 2017), available at <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loadaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=2909&Session=2017&DocumentType=Meeting%20Packets&FileName=pkq%202-15-17.pdf>.

¹⁶ See *id.*

Without a postsecondary requirement for demonstrating competence in civics, little data exists on the effectiveness of K-12 civics instruction and accountability initiatives.

Background Knowledge

Research has shown that a student’s background knowledge—the prior knowledge students need to master new ideas—is positively correlated with his or her ability to comprehend text, remember new concepts, and solve problems.¹⁷ This is because a person with a broad depth of background knowledge and a knowledge-related vocabulary can successfully make the necessary inferences to understand texts, express viewpoints, and apply knowledge.¹⁸ Generally, the earlier children develop a large vocabulary, the greater their reading comprehension will be in later grades. Because developing a vocabulary is a gradual process, it must begin in early grades to put students in a position for reading success.¹⁹

Studies have shown that K-3 teachers spend only 16 minutes on social studies each day, with daily science instruction receiving 19 minutes. The difference in time spent on instruction in literacy skills as compared to science and social studies instruction has been associated with students’ decreased reading comprehension.²⁰

Average Number of Minutes per Day Spent Teaching Each Subject in Self-Contained Classes, by Grades		
	Grades K-3	Grades 4-6
Reading/Language Arts	89 mins.	83 mins.
Mathematics	54 mins.	61 mins.
Science	19 mins.	24 mins.
Social Studies	16 mins.	21 mins.

Only teachers who indicated they teach reading/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies to one class of students were included in these analyses.

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Some districts, such as the Washington D.C. public school system, have adopted English language arts scope and sequence guides to help integrate information-rich texts covering social studies, science, and literary content in order to gradually develop a broad base of student knowledge.²² The State of New York has adopted a model Core Knowledge Language Arts curriculum to help local districts increase background knowledge and literacy skills for students in kindergarten through grade 2.²³ Students in New York classrooms that participated in a 3-year pilot program using the curriculum

¹⁷ Daniel Wilingham, *How Knowledge Helps*, <http://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/spring-2006/how-knowledge-helps> (last visited Feb. 28, 2017).

¹⁸ See Doug Lemov, *How Knowledge Powers Reading*, <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb17/vol74/num05/How-Knowledge-Powers-Reading.aspx> (last visited Feb. 28, 2017). See also E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Building Knowledge: The Case for Bringing Content into the Language Arts Block and for a Knowledge-Rich Curriculum Core for all Children*, <http://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/spring-2006/building-knowledge> (last visited Feb. 28, 2017).

¹⁹ See *id.*

²⁰ Knowledge Matters Campaign, *Restoring Wonder and Excitement to the Classroom* (2012) at 5, available at <http://knowledgematterscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WhyKnowledgeMatters-1.pdf>.

²¹ *Id.* at 5.

²² See, e.g., District of Columbia Public Schools, *Scope and Sequence: Fifth Grade* (2014), available at <http://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/SY14-15%20ELA%20Grade%205%20SAS.pdf>.

²³ New York State Education Department, *New York State ELA Curriculum*, <https://www.engageny.org/english-language-arts> (last visited Feb. 28, 2017).

were shown to have greater gains in reading, science, and social studies than students in comparison schools.²⁴

Just Read, Florida! Office

In 2001, Florida Governor Jeb Bush established the Just Read, Florida! initiative, which aimed at helping students become successful, independent readers.²⁵ The Legislature formally created the Just Read, Florida! Office within the Department of Education in 2006.²⁶

Among other things, the Office must:

- create multiple designations of effective reading instruction, with accompanying credentials, which encourage all teachers to integrate reading instruction into their content areas;
- train K-12 teachers and school principals on effective content-area-specific reading strategies (these strategies must be developed for all content areas in the K-12 curriculum-- for secondary teachers, emphasis must be on technical text);
- provide parents with information and strategies for assisting their children in reading in the content area;
- work with the Florida Center for Reading Research to provide information on research-based reading programs and effective reading in the content area strategies;
- periodically review teacher certification examinations, including alternative certification exams, to ascertain whether the examinations measure the skills needed for research-based reading instruction and instructional strategies for teaching reading in the content areas; and
- work with initial teacher preparation programs to integrate research-based reading instructional strategies and reading in the content area instructional strategies into teacher preparation programs.²⁷

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill designates the month of September as “American Founders’ Month” and authorizes the Governor to issue a proclamation urging public and private organizations within the state to celebrate the month. The bill encourages all public schools in the state to coordinate instruction related to the nation’s founding fathers with “American Founders’ Month.”

The bill revises the statutory priorities for Florida’s K-20 education system under s. 1000.03, F.S., to expressly state that it is a priority of the system to prepare students to become “civically engaged and knowledgeable adults who make positive contributions to their community.”

To help increase background knowledge and literacy skills, the bill requires the Just Read, Florida! Office to develop and provide access to sequenced, content-rich curriculum programming, instructional practices, and resources that help elementary schools use state-adopted instructional materials to increase students’ background knowledge and literacy skills, including attainment of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in social studies, science, and the arts.

The bill also requires that, beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, students who enter a FCS or SUS institution for the first time demonstrate competency in civic literacy. Competency may be demonstrated either by completion of a civic literacy course or by passing an assessment adopted in state board rule or in Board of Governors (BOG) regulation depending on the type of institution in which the student is enrolled. The chair of the SBE and the chair of the BOG, or their respective designees, must jointly appoint a faculty committee to:

²⁴ The Core Knowledge Foundation, *The NYC Core Knowledge Early Literacy Pilot* (2012) at 13, available at http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/documents/712/CK%20Early%20Literacy%20Pilot%203%2012%2012.pdf.

²⁵ Exec. Order No. 01-260 (2001).

²⁶ Section 8, ch. 2006-74, L.O.F.

²⁷ Section 1001.215, F.S.

- develop a new course in civic literacy or revise an existing general education core course; and
- establish course competencies and identify outcomes that include, at a minimum:
 - an understanding of the basic principles of American democracy and how they are applied in our nation’s republican form of government;
 - an understanding of the U.S. Constitution;
 - knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance; and
 - an understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases and their impact on law and society.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Creates s. 683.1455, F.S., designating the month of September as American Founders’ Month.”

Section 2. Amends s. 1000.03, F.S., revising the priorities of Florida’s K-20 education system.

Section 3. Amends s. 1001.215, F.S., revising the duties of the Just Read, Florida! Office to including developing and providing access to certain resources for elementary schools.

Section 4. Amends s. 1003.44, F.S., encouraging districts to provide instruction on founding fathers during “American Founders’ Month.”

Section 5. Amends s. 1007.25, F.S., providing that postsecondary students must demonstrate competency in civic literacy; providing requirements for demonstrating competency in civic literacy; providing for the development of a new course or revision of an existing course in civic literacy; providing for the establishment of course competencies.

Section 6. Amends s. 943.22, F.S., conforming a cross reference.

Section 7. Amends s. 1001.64, F.S., conforming cross references.

Section 8. Provides an effective date.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill requires the SBE and the BOG to identify in rule and regulation, as applicable, one or more assessments that students can pass in order to demonstrate competency in civic literacy.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Not Applicable.