

By Senator Ring

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1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to disability awareness; amending s.
 3 1003.4205, F.S.; requiring, rather than authorizing,
 4 each district school board to provide disability
 5 history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public
 6 schools beginning in a specified school year;
 7 requiring presentations by certain individuals to be
 8 included in the disability history and awareness
 9 instruction; requiring each public school to establish
 10 a disability history and awareness advisory council;
 11 providing membership on the council; providing
 12 responsibilities of the council; providing meeting
 13 times for the council; providing an effective date.

14
 15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 17 Section 1. Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is amended
 18 to read:

19 1003.4205 Disability history and awareness instruction.—

20 (1) Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, each district
 21 school board shall ~~may~~ provide disability history and awareness
 22 instruction in all K-12 public schools in the district during
 23 the first 2 weeks in October each year. The district school
 24 board shall designate these 2 weeks as "Disability History and
 25 Awareness Weeks."

26 (2) (a) During this 2-week period, students shall ~~may~~ be
 27 provided intensive instruction to expand their knowledge,
 28 understanding, and awareness of individuals who had or have ~~with~~
 29 disabilities; ~~the~~ the history of disability; ~~and~~ and the disability

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30 rights movement. Disability history must ~~may~~ include the events
31 and timelines of the development and evolution of services to,
32 and the civil rights of, individuals who had or have ~~with~~
33 disabilities. Disability history must ~~may~~ also include the
34 contributions of specific individuals who had or have ~~with~~
35 disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged
36 national leaders.

37 (b) Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the
38 instruction shall ~~may~~ be integrated into the existing school
39 curriculum in ways including, but not limited to, supplementing
40 lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or providing other
41 school-related activities. The instruction shall ~~may~~ be
42 augmented by presentations from individuals who have
43 disabilities, who have been approved by the school or school
44 district as presenters, and who the school or school district
45 has ensured meet the appropriate background screening
46 requirements of s. 1012.465 to enter schools and interact with
47 students delivered by qualified school personnel or by
48 knowledgeable guest speakers, with a particular focus on
49 including individuals with disabilities.

50 (c)1. Each public school in the state shall establish a
51 disability history and awareness advisory council. The council
52 at each public school shall consist of the following seven
53 members:

54 a. Six teachers who are employed at the school.

55 b. One individual from the local community who has a
56 disability.

57 2. The responsibilities of the council at each public
58 school shall be, but are not limited to:

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- 59 a. Providing to the school input regarding the curriculum
60 for disability history and awareness;
61 b. Assisting in locating individuals who have disabilities
62 to make presentations at the school; and
63 c. Submitting an annual report to the superintendent of the
64 school district in which the school is located by August 1,
65 2016, and each year thereafter. The annual report must include,
66 but need not be limited to, recommendations and policy
67 alternatives regarding the state of disability awareness at the
68 school.

69 3. The council at each public school shall meet at least
70 four times a year and more often as needed.

71 (3) The goals of disability history and awareness
72 instruction include:

73 (a) Better treatment for individuals who have ~~with~~
74 disabilities, especially for youth in school, and increased
75 attention to preventing the bullying or harassment of students
76 who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

77 (b) Encouragement to individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities
78 to develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals
79 who have ~~with~~ disabilities gaining pride in being an individual
80 with a disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering
81 the workforce, and contributing to their communities.

82 (c) Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal
83 commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and the equal
84 opportunity for, all individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

85 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.