

By Senator Ring

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

12
13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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15 Section 1. Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is amended
16 to read:

17 1003.4205 Disability history and awareness instruction.—

18 (1) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, each district
19 school board shall ~~may~~ provide disability history and awareness
20 instruction in all K-12 public schools in the district during
21 the first 2 weeks in October each year. The district school
22 board shall designate these 2 weeks as "Disability History and
23 Awareness Weeks."

24 (2) (a) During this 2-week period, students shall ~~may~~ be
25 provided intensive instruction to expand their knowledge,
26 understanding, and awareness of individuals who had or have ~~with~~
27 disabilities; ~~the history of disability;~~ and the disability
28 rights movement. Disability history must ~~may~~ include the events
29 and timelines of the development and evolution of services to,

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30 and the civil rights of, individuals who had or have ~~with~~
31 disabilities. Disability history must ~~may~~ also include the
32 contributions of specific individuals who had or have ~~with~~
33 disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged
34 national leaders.

35 (b) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the
36 instruction shall ~~may~~ be integrated into the existing school
37 curriculum in ways including, but not limited to, supplementing
38 lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or providing other
39 school-related activities. The instruction shall ~~may~~ be
40 augmented by presentations from individuals who have
41 disabilities, who have been approved by the school or school
42 district as presenters, and who the school or school district
43 has ensured meet the appropriate background screening
44 requirements of s. 1012.465 to enter schools and interact with
45 students delivered by qualified school personnel or by
46 ~~knowledgeable guest speakers, with a particular focus on~~
47 ~~including individuals with disabilities.~~

48 (c) Each public school in the state shall submit an annual
49 report to the superintendent of the school district in which the
50 school is located by August 1, 2016, and each year thereafter.
51 The report must include, but need not be limited to,
52 recommendations and policy alternatives regarding the state of
53 disability awareness at the school.

54 (3) The goals of disability history and awareness
55 instruction include:

56 (a) Better treatment for individuals who have ~~with~~
57 disabilities, especially for youth in school, and increased
58 attention to preventing the bullying or harassment of students

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59 who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

60 (b) Encouragement to individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities
61 to develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals
62 who have ~~with~~ disabilities gaining pride in being an individual
63 with a disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering
64 the workforce, and contributing to their communities.

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

68 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.