

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

---

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

---

BILL: SB 918

INTRODUCER: Senator Brandes

SUBJECT: Civic Education

DATE: February 12, 2020

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Dew</u>	<u>Sikes</u>	<u>ED</u>	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	<u>Underhill</u>	<u>Elwell</u>	<u>AED</u>	<b>Recommend: Favorable</b>
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

---

**I. Summary:**

SB 918 authorizes the development and integration of a nonpartisan civic literacy practicum and the designation of a public school providing high-quality civic learning as a Freedom School. Specifically, the bill requires:

- The Commissioner of Education to develop minimum criteria for a nonpartisan civic literacy practicum that may be incorporated into a school’s curriculum for the high school United States Government course, along with a process for district school boards to verify student completion of the practicum.
- School districts to include and accept nonpartisan civic literacy practicum activities and hours in requirements for academic awards.
- The State Board of Education to annually designate each public school in the state which provides students with high-quality civic learning, based on specified criteria, as a Freedom School.

The bill has a fiscal impact, however the Department of Education can implement the provisions of the bill with existing resources. See Section V.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.

**II. Present Situation:**

Florida law requires the adoption of standards for core curricula content taught in public schools and specifies the requirements students must meet to earn a standard high school diploma.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Sections 1003.41 and 1003.4282(3), F.S.

## Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

The Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) establish the core content to be taught in Florida and specify the core knowledge and skills K-12 public school students are expected to acquire.<sup>2</sup> The curricular content must integrate critical-thinking, problem-solving, and workforce-literacy skills; communication, reading, and writing skills; collaboration skills; information and media-literacy skills; and civic-engagement skills, among others.<sup>3</sup>

The State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for adopting the NGSSS and subsequent revisions to standards in rule.<sup>4</sup> NGSSS for social studies include at a minimum curricular content for geography, United States and world history, government, civics, humanities, economics, and financial literacy.<sup>5</sup>

## High School Diploma Requirements

A student can graduate from a Florida high school with a standard high school diploma through successfully completing one of the following options:<sup>6</sup>

- The 24-credit option;
- The 18-credit Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) option;
- The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway;
- An International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum; or
- An Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum.

To earn a standard high school diploma through the 24-credit option, 18-credit ACCEL option, or CTE Pathway, a student must complete 14 credits in the following subject areas:<sup>7</sup>

- Four credits in English Language Arts (ELA) I, II, III, and IV.
- Four credits in mathematics, including one each in Algebra I and Geometry.
- Three credits in science, including one credit in Biology I and two credits in equally rigorous courses.<sup>8</sup>
- Three credits in social studies, including one credit each in United States History and World History; one-half credit in economics, which must include financial literacy; and one-half credit in United States Government.

## Service Learning

Service learning refers to a student-centered, research-based teaching and learning strategy that engages students in meaningful service activities in their schools or communities.<sup>9</sup> Service learning activities are directly tied to academic curricula, standards, and course, district, or state

---

<sup>2</sup> Section 1003.41(1), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Section 1003.41(3)-(4), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1003.41(2)(d), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1003.4282(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1003.4282(3), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Two of the three science credits must have a laboratory component. Section 1003.4282(3)(c), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 1003.497(1), F.S.

assessments.<sup>10</sup> The Department of Education must encourage school districts to initiate, adopt, expand and institutionalize service-learning programs, activities, and policies in kindergarten through grade 12.

### **Civic Literacy in Florida**

Florida law establishes civic literacy as a priority of the Florida K-20 education system and defines civic literacy to mean that students are prepared to become civically engaged and knowledgeable adults who make positive contributions to their communities.<sup>11</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill authorizes the development and integration of a nonpartisan civic literacy practicum and the designation of a public school providing high-quality civic learning as a Freedom School. Specifically, the bill requires:

- The Commissioner of Education (commissioner) to develop minimum criteria for a nonpartisan civic literacy practicum that may be incorporated into a school's curriculum for the high school United States Government course, along with a process for district school boards to verify student completion of the practicum.
- School districts to include and accept nonpartisan civic literacy practicum activities and hours in requirements for academic awards.
- The State Board of Education (SBE) to annually designate each public school in the state which provides students with high-quality civic learning, based on specified criteria, as a Freedom School.

The bill requires the commissioner to develop minimum criteria for a nonpartisan civic literacy practicum that may be incorporated into a school's curriculum for the high school United States Government course required for high school graduation, beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. The bill also requires the commissioner to develop a process by which a district school board can verify that a student successfully completed a practicum meeting the required criteria, specifically:

- The criteria must require a student to:
  - Identify a civic issue that impacts his or her community.
  - Rigorously research the issue from multiple perspectives and develop a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue.
  - Create a portfolio to evaluate and reflect upon his or her experience and the outcomes or likely outcomes of his or her involvement. A portfolio must, at a minimum, include research, evidence, and a written plan of involvement.
- A civic literacy practicum must be:
  - Nonpartisan;
  - Focus on addressing at least one community issue; and
  - Promote a student's ability to consider differing points of view and engage in civil discourse with individuals who hold an opposing opinion.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Section 1000.03(5)(c), F.S.

School districts are required to include and accept nonpartisan civic literacy practicum activities and hours in requirements for academic awards, especially those awards that currently include community service as a criterion or selection actor. The bill authorizes school districts to count the hours outside of classroom instruction a student devotes to the nonpartisan civic literacy practicum to implement his or her plan of involvement toward meeting the community service requirements of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

The bill requires the SBE to designate, on an annual basis, each public school in the state which provides students with high-quality civic learning, including civic-engagement skills, as a Freedom School. The SBE must establish the criteria for a school's designation as a Freedom School, which must include:

- The extent to which strategies to develop high-quality civic learning, including civic-engagement skills, are integrated into the classroom using best instructional practices.
- The scope of integration of high-quality civic learning, including civic-engagement skills, across the school's curricula.
- The extent to which the school supports interdisciplinary, teacher-led professional learning communities to support continuous improvement in instruction and student achievement.
- The percentage of students graduating with a standard high school diploma who successfully completed a civic literacy practicum and earned associated community service.

This bill aligns with the Governor's Executive Order 19-32, which requires the commissioner to review Florida's education standards and materials and to identify opportunities to equip high school graduates with sufficient knowledge of America's civics.

The creation of a civic literacy practicum may promote civic literacy in Florida and create an additional pathway for students to fulfil the community service requirements of other academic awards.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill has no impact on state revenues or expenditures. There may be costs for a school district to incorporate a nonpartisan civic literacy practicum into a school's curriculum for the high school United States Government course. However, the nonpartisan civic literacy practicum is not required and a school district will only experience these costs if the district chooses to incorporate the practicum into its curriculum for the course.

The bill requires the Department of Education to develop criteria for the practicum, to determine the status of whether or not each school has a practicum as part of the U.S. Government course, to review the process by which a district can verify that a student successfully completes a practicum, and to establish the criteria for designation of a participating school as a Freedom School. The number of schools that may participate is unknown. The department estimated that it would require two additional staff (Program Specialist IV and an Administrative Assistant) at \$146,789 to implement the provisions of the bill.<sup>12</sup> However, the department has vacant positions that could be used to absorb any additional workload.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill creates section 1003.44 of the Florida Statutes.

---

<sup>12</sup> Department of Education, *Senate Bill 918 Fiscal Analysis* (Dec. 16, 2019) (on file with the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education).

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

---

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

---