

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education

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BILL: SB 146

INTRODUCER: Senator Brandes

SUBJECT: Civic Education

DATE: February 2, 2021

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

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Westmark</u>	<u>Bouck</u>	<u>ED</u>	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

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**I. Summary:**

SB 146 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 as a Freedom School, based on specified criteria.

The bill has no impact on state revenues or expenditures.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.

**II. Present Situation:**

**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>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1000.03(5)(c), F.S.

## Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

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>2</sup> 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. 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>

### *Civic Standards Review*

In 2019,<sup>6</sup> the Legislature required the Commissioner of Education to conduct a comprehensive review of Florida's civics education course standards. The SBE is expected to complete adoption of necessary revisions to these standards by summer 2021, and approval of new civics education course descriptions is anticipated by fall 2021.<sup>7</sup>

## High School Diploma Requirements

Students have several options to earn a standard high school diploma.<sup>8</sup> In order to graduate from a Florida high school with a standard high school diploma under a 24-credit or 18-credit option or the Career and Technical Education pathway, a student must complete three credits in social studies comprised of one credit in United States History, one credit in World History, one-half credit in economics, and one-half credit in United States Government.<sup>9</sup>

### *Demonstration of Civic Literacy*

Students in Florida public schools and those entering Florida College System (FCS) institutions or state universities must demonstrate competency in civic literacy.<sup>10</sup> Students must successfully complete a one-semester civics education course in grades 6, 7, and 8, which includes the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments; the structures and functions of the

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<sup>2</sup> Sections 1003.41 and 1003.4282(3), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1003.41(1), F.S.

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

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

<sup>6</sup> Section 1, ch. 2019-150, L.O.F.

<sup>7</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Civics Review*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicsreview/> (last visited Jan. 25, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> A student may complete a 24-credit program under s. 1003.4282(3), F.S., an 18-credit Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) option under s. 1002.3105, F.S., the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway under 1002.4282(11), F.S., an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum or Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum, pursuant to s. 1003.4282(1)(a), F.S., or an option for students with a disability under s. 1003.4282(10), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> See ss. 1003.4282(3)(d), 1002.3105(5), and 1003.4282(11)(a)1., F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Civic Literacy*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicliteracy/> (last visited Jan. 28, 2021).

legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; and the meaning and significance of historic documents, such as the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States. Moreover, each student's performance on the statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment in civics education constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade.<sup>11</sup>

Students initially entering a FCS institution or state university must demonstrate civic literacy competencies and outcomes, including:<sup>12</sup>

- Understanding of the basic principles of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government.
- Understanding of the United States Constitution.
- Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance.
- Understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases and their impact on law and society.

### **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. Service learning activities are directly tied to academic curricula, standards, and course, district, or state assessments. The Department of Education is required by law to encourage school districts to initiate, adopt, expand, and institutionalize service-learning programs, activities, and policies in kindergarten through grade 12.<sup>13</sup>

### **Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program**

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (program)<sup>14</sup> is comprised of four awards, the Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS), the Florida Medallion Scholarship (FMS), the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholarship (CAPE), and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship (Gold Seal).<sup>15</sup>

In order to be eligible for an initial program award, a student must meet residency, academic, and service work requirements specified by each award. Criteria specific to each scholarship program include completing, as approved by the district school board, administrators of a nonpublic school, or Department of Education for home education students:

- For the FAS, a minimum of 100 hours of volunteer service work.<sup>16</sup>
- For the FMS, a minimum of 75 hours of volunteer service work.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Civic Literacy*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicliteracy/> (last visited Jan. 28, 2021). *See also* s. 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* *See also* s. 1007.25(4), F.S. Students must demonstrate competency by successful completion of a specified civic literacy course or by achieving a passing score on an assessment. *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* Section 1003.497(1), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Section 442, ch. 2002-387, L.O.F. *See also* ss. 1009.53-1009.538, F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 1009.53(2), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 1009.534(1)(e), F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Section 1009.535(1)(e), F.S.

- For the CAPE and Gold Seal, at least 30 hours of volunteer service work.<sup>18</sup>

The program of volunteer service work includes identifying a social or civic issue or a professional area that interests the student, developing a plan for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, evaluating and reflecting on his or her experience.<sup>19</sup> Service work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office. The hours of volunteer service must be documented in writing, and the document must be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work.<sup>20</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 146 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 2022-2023 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. The criteria developed by the commissioner 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; and
- 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.

<sup>18</sup> Section 1009.536(1)(e) and (2)(b), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, F.S., the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the volunteer service work performed. Sections 1009.534(1)(e), 1009.535(1)(e), and 1009.536(1)(e) and (2)(b), F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Sections 1009.534(1)(e), 1009.535(1)(e), and 1009.536(1)(e) and (2)(b), F.S.

The bill specifies that the 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.

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 factor. 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<sup>21</sup> 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 minimum percentage of students graduating with a standard high school diploma who must successfully complete a civic literacy practicum and earn community service hours.

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

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.

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

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

None.

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

None.

##### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

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<sup>21</sup> According to the Florida Department of Education, the State Board of Education should be granted explicit rulemaking authority to develop criteria and processes required in the bill. Florida Department of Education, *2021 Legislative Bill Analysis for SB 146* (Jan. 28, 2021).

**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 Department of Education estimates that compliance with the requirements of the bill relating to the civic literacy practicum and criteria for a school designation would require two additional staff at a cost of \$152,939.<sup>22</sup>

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill creates section 1003.44 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

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<sup>22</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2021 Legislative Bill Analysis for SB 146* (Jan. 28, 2021).

B. Amendments:

None.

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

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