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CS/HB 551

2023 Legislature

1  
 2 An act relating to required African-American  
 3 instruction; amending s. 1003.42, F.S.; requiring each  
 4 school district to certify and provide certain  
 5 evidence to the Department of Education regarding  
 6 certain instruction; authorizing the department to  
 7 seek input from and contract with certain educational  
 8 organizations for specified purposes; requiring each  
 9 school district to submit an implementation plan to  
 10 the Commissioner of Education and post the plan on its  
 11 website; providing requirements for the plan;  
 12 requiring the commissioner or the department to  
 13 provide certain notification; providing a timeframe  
 14 within which a school district must submit revisions  
 15 to its plan to the department; authorizing the State  
 16 Board of Education to take certain actions under  
 17 certain circumstances; providing an effective date.

18  
 19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

20  
 21 Section 1. Paragraph (h) of subsection (2) of section  
 22 1003.42, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsections (6), (7),  
 23 and (8) are added to that section, to read:

24 1003.42 Required instruction.—

25 (2) Members of the instructional staff of the public

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26 | schools, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education  
27 | and the district school board, shall teach efficiently and  
28 | faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the  
29 | highest standards for professionalism and historical accuracy,  
30 | following the prescribed courses of study, and employing  
31 | approved methods of instruction, the following:

32 |       (h) The history of African Americans, including the  
33 | history of African peoples before the political conflicts that  
34 | led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the  
35 | enslavement experience, abolition, and the history and  
36 | contributions of Americans of the African diaspora to society.  
37 | Students shall develop an understanding of the ramifications of  
38 | prejudice, racism, and stereotyping on individual freedoms, and  
39 | examine what it means to be a responsible and respectful person,  
40 | for the purpose of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a  
41 | pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic  
42 | values and institutions. Instruction shall include the roles and  
43 | contributions of individuals from all walks of life and their  
44 | endeavors to learn and thrive throughout history as artists,  
45 | scientists, educators, businesspeople, influential thinkers,  
46 | members of the faith community, and political and governmental  
47 | leaders and the courageous steps they took to fulfill the  
48 | promise of democracy and unite the nation. Instructional  
49 | materials shall include the vital contributions of African  
50 | Americans to build and strengthen American society and celebrate

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51 | the inspirational stories of African Americans who prospered,  
52 | even in the most difficult circumstances. Instructional  
53 | personnel may facilitate discussions and use curricula to  
54 | address, in an age-appropriate manner, how the individual  
55 | freedoms of persons have been infringed by slavery, racial  
56 | oppression, racial segregation, and racial discrimination, as  
57 | well as topics relating to the enactment and enforcement of laws  
58 | resulting in racial oppression, racial segregation, and racial  
59 | discrimination and how recognition of these freedoms has  
60 | overturned these unjust laws. However, classroom instruction and  
61 | curriculum may not be used to indoctrinate or persuade students  
62 | to a particular point of view inconsistent with the principles  
63 | enumerated in subsection (3) or the state academic standards.  
64 | Each school district must annually certify and provide evidence  
65 | to the department, in a manner prescribed by the department,  
66 | that the requirements of this paragraph are met. The department  
67 | shall prepare and offer standards and curriculum for the  
68 | instruction required by this paragraph and may seek input from  
69 | the Commissioner of Education's African American History Task  
70 | Force or from any state or nationally recognized African-  
71 | American educational organizations. The department may contract  
72 | with any state or nationally recognized African-American  
73 | educational organizations to develop training for instructional  
74 | personnel and grade-appropriate classroom resources to support  
75 | the developed curriculum.

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77 The State Board of Education is encouraged to adopt standards  
78 and pursue assessment of the requirements of this subsection.  
79 Instructional programming that incorporates the values of the  
80 recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor and that is  
81 offered as part of a social studies, English Language Arts, or  
82 other schoolwide character building and veteran awareness  
83 initiative meets the requirements of paragraph (t).

84 (6) Each school district must submit an implementation  
85 plan to the commissioner and post the plan on the school  
86 district's website. The implementation plan must include all of  
87 the following:

88 (a) The methods in which instruction will be delivered for  
89 each grade level.

90 (b) The professional qualifications of the instructional  
91 personnel.

92 (c) A description of the instructional materials.

93 (7) The commissioner or the department must notify a  
94 school district if its implementation plan required under  
95 subsection (6), or a school district's reported instruction, do  
96 not meet the requirements of subsection (2) or established  
97 rules. The school district has a minimum of 45 days after  
98 receipt of such notice to submit revisions to its implementation  
99 plan to the department.

100 (8) The State Board of Education may initiate any of the

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101 | actions under s. 1008.32(4) if a school district fails to comply  
102 | with the requirements of subsection (2) or established rules.

103 |       Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.