

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 19-12—sHB 7082

Education Committee

Appropriations Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF BLACK AND LATINO STUDIES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM

SUMMARY: This act requires all local and regional boards of education (“boards”) to include African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies in their curriculum beginning with the 2021-22 school year and adds these topics to the state’s existing required program of study for public schools. As with other required subject matter under existing law, the State Board of Education (SBE) must make curriculum materials available to help boards develop their instructional programs.

The act also requires SBE to review and approve, by January 1, 2021, a black and Latino studies high school course that the State Education Resource Center (SERC) must develop. Under the act, boards must offer the course in the 2022-23 school year, but they may do so in the 2021-22 school year.

For the school years 2022-23 to 2024-25, the State Department of Education must (1) conduct an annual audit to ensure that the black and Latino studies course approved under the act is being offered by each board of education and (2) annually report on the audit to the Education Committee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019, except (1) the requirement that SERC develop and SBE approve the course are effective upon passage and (2) the addition of African-American and black and Puerto Rican and Latino studies to the required courses of study is effective July 1, 2021.

§§ 1 & 2 — AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND PUERTO RICAN AND LATINO STUDIES AS PART OF THE REQUIRED COURSES OF STUDY

Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, the act adds African-American and black and Puerto Rican and Latino studies to the required program of study for public schools and requires boards to include these studies in their curricula. By law, the required program of study includes, among other subjects, the arts; language arts, including reading and writing; mathematics; physical education; science; and social studies, including citizenship, geography, government, and history.

In developing and implementing the new curriculum, the act allows the boards to (1) use existing and appropriate public or private materials, personnel, and other resources, including curriculum material that SBE must make available under the act and (2) accept gifts, grants, and donations, including in-kind donations. The curriculum must meet SBE-adopted statewide subject matter content standards.

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As for the curriculum material that SBE must make available, prior law required SBE, within available appropriations and using available resource material, to assist and encourage boards to include African-American history and Puerto Rican history, among other subjects, in their instructional program. The act broadens this requirement to include African-American and black studies and Puerto Rican and Latino studies.

§§ 3 & 4 — HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

The act requires SERC to develop the one-credit high school course in black and Latino studies. To do so, SERC may use (1) existing and appropriate public or private materials, personnel, and other resources, including people and organizations with subject matter expertise in African-American, black, Puerto Rican, or Latino studies and (2) the SBE curriculum materials the act requires.

SBE must review and approve, by January 1, 2021, SERC's developed course if it determines that the content is (1) rigorous, (2) aligned with state-approved curriculum guidelines, and (3) in accordance with the SBE-adopted subject matter content standards.

By January 15, 2021, SBE, in consultation with SERC, must submit to the Education Committee a description of the black and Latino studies course that includes the scope, sequence, and course objective, and a report on the course's development.

For the 2021-22 school year, the act allows any board of education to offer the state-approved course in grades 9 to 12. For the 2022-23 school year, the act requires each board to offer the course in grades 9 to 12.

BACKGROUND

SERC

SERC is a quasi-public agency that provides professional development, special education services, and other educational services to local school districts (CGS §§ 10-357a to -357g).