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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 423 (as introduced 6-11-13)
Sponsor: Senator Patrick J. Colbeck
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 6-12-13

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to do the all of following:

- **Require the board of a school district, or board of directors of a public school academy (PSA), to ensure the provision of instruction that focused on the core principles of the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, and State Constitution.**
- **Require the board of a school district or PSA to allow and encourage any public school teacher, educator, or administrator to read or post portions of records that reflect the history of the U.S.**
- **Allow the board of a school district or PSA to develop curricula and materials for the instruction required under the bill that were aligned with the State Board of Education recommended model core academic curriculum content standards.**
- **Allow the board of a school district or PSA to display documents and objects of certain historical significance, as provided by the bill.**
- **Require the State Board of Education, by May 1, 2014 to update the recommended model core academic curriculum content standards to ensure that they covered the instruction required under the bill.**
- **Require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure that the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) and the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) include questions related to the instruction required, and historical documents referred to, in the bill.**

Instruction Requirements

The bill would require that the board of a school district or PSA ensure that instruction focusing on the following topics was provided during the school year in a grade- and age-level appropriate manner for all pupils in grades K to 12.

- The core principles of the Declaration of Independence (specifically including language contained in the preamble).
- The core principles of the United States Constitution (specifically including the preamble, Articles I through V, and the Bill of Rights).
- The core principles of the State Constitution.

The bill states, "In order to encourage a school culture that respects and values our civic heritage, the board of a school district or intermediate school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall allow and encourage any public school teacher, educator, or administrator to read or post in a public school building, in a classroom, or at any public

school event excerpts or portions of writings, documents, and records that reflect the history of the United States, including..." the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, the Anti-Federalist Papers, the Bill of Rights, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Northwest Ordinances.

Historically Significant Displays

The bill would allow a school district, intermediate school district, or PSA to display "documents of historical significance that have formed and influenced the legal system or republican form of free representative government of the United States based on the rule of law found in the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights." The bill specifies several historical documents, and includes "another document or object of historical significance in forming or influencing the United States or its legal or governmental system or that exemplifies the development of the rule of law".

Displays could include, but would not be limited to, documents containing words associated with a religion, but the displays could not seek to establish religion or promote religion or other philosophy. A document that contained words associated with religion would have to be displayed in the same manner and appearance as other documents, and could not be presented or displayed in a fashion that called attention to it apart from other displays.

The display also would have to be accompanied by a prominent sign that quoted the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Curriculum & Assessments

The Code requires the State Board of Education to develop content standards that encompass academic and cognitive instruction, but do not include attitudes, beliefs, or value systems that are not essential in the structure of society and the responsibilities of citizens in society. The bill would require the Board, by May 1, 2014, to update recommended model core academic curriculum content standards to ensure that they covered the instruction required by the bill.

Beginning with assessments in the 2014-2015 school year, the Superintendent would have to ensure that the MME and the MEAP assessments include questions related to the instruction required under the bill, including at least the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

MCL 380.1278 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Glenn Steffens

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could have a minimal fiscal impact on the State due to increased administrative costs associated with the Department's compliance with the MEAP and MME content required in the bill.

The bill also could have a minimal fiscal impact due to increased administrative costs of local districts that do not currently provide instruction on certain content to the level prescribed by the bill.

Fiscal Analyst: Cameron Mock

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.