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Senate Bill 423 (Substitute S-3 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Patrick J. Colbeck
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 4-14-14

CONTENT

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

- **Encourage the board of a school district or public school academy (PSA) to provide instruction that focused on the core principles of the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, and State Constitution.**
- **Allow a school district or PSA to develop curricula and materials for this instruction that were aligned with the State Board of Education recommended model core academic curriculum content standards.**
- **Require the State Board of Education to update the recommended model core academic curriculum content standards to ensure that they covered this instruction.**
- **Require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure that State assessments for social studies included questions related to this instruction.**

Encouraged Instruction

The bill would encourage the board of a school district or the board of directors of a PSA to provide instruction focusing on the following topics 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.

Curriculum & Assessments

The bill would allow a school district or PSA, and its professional school personnel, to develop curricula and materials for the instruction described above that would be aligned with the State Board of Education recommended model core academic curriculum content standards developed under Section 1278 of the Code, and that were grade- and age-level appropriate.

Section 1278 requires the State Board to develop and periodically update content standards that encompass academic and cognitive instruction. The standards must be in the form of knowledge and skill content standards that are recommended as State standards for adoption by public schools in local curriculum formulation and adoption. The recommended standards must set forth desired learning objectives in math, science, reading, history,

geography, economics, American government, and writing for all children at each stage of schooling.

The bill would require the State Board, by May 1, 2014, for each grade level for which there is a State assessment for social studies, to update the recommended model core academic curriculum content standards to ensure that they covered the instruction described in the bill.

Beginning with State assessments conducted during the 2014-2015 school year, for each grade level for which there is a State assessment for social studies, the bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure that State assessments contained questions related to the instruction described in the bill, including at least the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

MCL 380.1278 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Suzanne Lowe

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would increase State costs for the Department of Education by requiring the State Board to update the recommended model core academic curriculum content standards to ensure they covered the instruction described in the bill, and by requiring the State Superintendent to ensure that State assessments for each grade level that tests social studies included questions related to the instruction described in, and documents enumerated in, the bill. While it is possible that the Department has enough questions to meet the requirement for grade 11, it is likely that questions would need to be written for the other two grade levels that currently are tested in social studies. If the testing had to be broadened so that all of the content prescribed in the legislation were tested, costs could run into six figures, according to the Department. If the assessments instead could satisfy the legislation by covering 10% to 20% of the content prescribed in the bill, and if the assessment reports did not need to be altered to indicate specific scores on the constitutional content, then the costs would be lower.

While the bill would not require local districts to adopt the instruction described in it, districts could feel obligated to include instruction on the specified topics since the bill would require State assessments to include questions on them. If that instruction were greater than what is being taught now, indirectly districts could see some increased compliance costs in aligning their instruction with the topics listed in the bill.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers

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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.