Originating

House Bill 3305

BY DELEGATES MARTIN, HIGGINBOTHAM, ELLINGTON,

HORST, MAZZOCCHI AND WAMSLEY

[Originating in the Committee on Education; reported
on March 23, 2021]
A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-7c and §18-2-9 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to further amend said Code by adding thereto a new section designated §18-2-8c, all relating to required courses of instruction; requiring one credit course in personal finance; requiring all public schools to teach cursive writing in grades three through five; imposing additional requirements for the courses required for all public, private, parochial, and denominational schools in the history of the United States, civics, the Constitution of the United States, and the government of West Virginia; requiring state board to consult with certain other entities in prescribing such courses of study; requiring the state board to include basic course requirements for middle school and high school and academic standards when prescribing such courses of study; requiring state board to publish approved list of instructional resources; requiring the state board to provide testing or assessment instruments for the history and civics courses of instruction; requiring passing assessment score for credit; expanding the amendments to the Constitution of the United States to be emphasized as a part of the instruction during Celebrate Freedom Week; and requiring public middle and high schools to give instruction on Holocaust and other genocides.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-2-7c. Program in personal finance.

(a) The Legislature finds and declares that persons with an understanding of personal finance are better prepared to manage their money and that providing a personal finance program in secondary schools in West Virginia will prepare students to handle their finances.

(b) To provide students a basic understanding of personal finance, the state board shall develop a program of instruction on personal finance which may be integrated into the curriculum of an appropriate existing course or courses for students in secondary schools.
(c) Beginning with the 2021 - 2022 school year, each public high school student shall complete a one credit course of study in personal finance as a requirement for high school graduation in place of existing economics coursework requirements. This coursework must include an end-of-course examination. The State Board of Education shall develop the curriculum for this coursework before July 1, 2021.

§18-2-8c. Cursive writing to be a required course.

(a) The State Board of Education shall require all public schools to teach cursive writing in grades 3 through 5, inclusive.

(b) This section shall be known as the “Gertrude Martin Act.”

§18-2-9. Required courses of instruction.

(a) (1) In all public, private, parochial, and denominational schools located within this state there shall be given prior to the completion of the eighth grade at least one year of instruction in the history of the State of West Virginia. The schools shall require regular courses of instruction by the completion of the 12th grade in the history of the United States, in civics, in the Constitution of the United States, and in the government of the State of West Virginia for the purpose of teaching, fostering, and perpetuating the ideals, principles, and spirit of political and economic democracy in America, and increasing the knowledge of the organization and machinery of the government of the United States and of the State of West Virginia. The required courses shall include instruction on the institutions and structure of American government, such as the separation of powers, the Electoral College, and federalism. The required courses shall include instruction that provides students an understanding of American political philosophy and history, utilizing writings from prominent figures in Western civilization, such as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Thomas Jefferson. The courses of instruction shall offer an objective and critical analysis of ideologies throughout history including, but not limited to, capitalism, republicanism, democracy, socialism, communism, and fascism. The required courses shall
emphasize the use of primary sources and interactive learning techniques, such as mock
scenarios, debates, and open and impartial discussions.

(2) The state board shall, with the advice of the state superintendent, and after
consultation with other entities, prescribe the courses of study, including the basic course
requirements for middle school and high school, and the academic standards listed in subdivision
(1) of this subsection for these courses of study covering these subjects for the public schools,
and publish an approved list of instructional resources pursuant to §18-2A-1 et seq. of this code.
The curriculum used in the delivery of instruction shall cover the standards adopted for such
courses. The other entities for consultation may include such organizations as the Florida Joint
Center for Citizenship, the College Board, the Bill of Rights Institute, Hillsdale College, the Gilder
Lehrman Institute of American History, the Constitutional Sources Project, educators, school
administrators, postsecondary education representatives, elected officials, business and industry
leaders, parents, and the public. It shall be the duty of the officials or boards having
authority over the respective private, parochial, and denominational schools to prescribe
courses of study for the schools under their control and supervision similar to those required for
the public schools. A passing assessment score is required for credit.

(3) The state board shall provide testing or assessment instruments for the history and
civics courses of instruction required by this section. These testing instruments shall:

(A) Be aligned with the academic standards required by this section;
(B) Be mandatory for students enrolled in those courses of instruction;
(C) Be cumulative by including questions about knowledge learned in prior history and
civics courses; and
(D) Measure students’ factual and conceptual knowledge including how the facts
interrelate and the reasons behind historical documents and events.

(4) To further such study, every high school student eligible by age for voter
registration shall be afforded the opportunity to register to vote pursuant to §3-2-22 of this code.
(b) The state board shall cause to be taught in all of the public schools of this state the subject of health education, including instruction in any of the grades six through 12 as considered appropriate by the county board, on: (1) The prevention, transmission, and spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other sexually transmitted diseases; (2) substance abuse, including the nature of alcoholic drinks and narcotics, tobacco products, and other potentially harmful drugs, with special instruction as to their effect upon the human system and upon society in general; (3) the importance of healthy eating and physical activity to maintaining healthy weight; and (4) education concerning cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid, including instruction in the care for conscious choking, and recognition of symptoms of drug or alcohol overdose. The course curriculum requirements and materials for the instruction shall be adopted by the state board by rule in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Resources. The state board shall prescribe a standardized health education assessment to be administered within health education classes to measure student health knowledge and program effectiveness. 

(c) An opportunity shall be afforded to the parent or guardian of a child subject to instruction in the prevention, transmission, and spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other sexually transmitted diseases to examine the course curriculum requirements and materials to be used in the instruction. The parent or guardian may exempt the child from participation in the instruction by giving notice to that effect in writing to the school principal. 

(d) After July 1, 2015, the required instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation in subsection (b) of this section shall include at least 30 minutes of instruction for each student prior to graduation on the proper administration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the psychomotor skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The term “psychomotor skills” means the use of hands-on practicing to support cognitive learning. Cognitive-only training does not qualify as “psychomotor skills”. The CPR instruction must be based on an instructional program established by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross, or another program which is nationally recognized and uses the most current national evidence-
based emergency cardiovascular care guidelines and incorporates psychomotor skills
development into the instruction. A licensed teacher is not required to be a certified trainer of
cardiopulmonary resuscitation to facilitate, provide, or oversee such instruction. The instruction
may be given by community members, such as emergency medical technicians, paramedics,
police officers, firefighters, licensed nurses, and representatives of the American Heart
Association or the American Red Cross. These community members are encouraged to provide
necessary training and instructional resources such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation kits and
other material at no cost to the schools. The requirements of this subsection are minimum
requirements. A local school district may offer CPR instruction for longer periods of time and may
enhance the curriculum and training components, including, but not limited to, incorporating into
the instruction the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED): Provided, That any instruction
that results in a certification being earned must shall be taught by an authorized CPR/AED
instructor.

(e) A full week of classes during the week selected by the county board of education shall
be recognized as Celebrate Freedom Week. The purpose of Celebrate Freedom Week is to
educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the
values on which this country was founded.

Celebrate Freedom Week must shall include appropriate instruction in each social studies
class which:

(1) Includes an in-depth study of the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration
of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Constitution of the United States with
an emphasis on the Bill of Rights amendments that are crucial to the survival of democracy and
freedom, such as the Bill of Rights and the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and nineteenth
amendments;

(2) Uses the historical, political, and social environments surrounding each document at
the time of its initial passage or ratification; and
(3) Includes the study of historical documents to firmly establish the historical background leading to the establishment of the provisions of the constitution and Bill of Rights by the founding fathers for the purposes of safeguarding our constitutional republic.

The requirements of this subsection are applicable to all public, private, parochial, and denominational schools located within this state. Nothing in this subsection creates a standard or requirement subject to state accountability measures.

(f) Beginning the 2018-2019 school year, students in the public schools shall be administered a test the same as or substantially similar to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services between their ninth and 12th grade years as an indicator of student achievement in the area of civics education. The test results may be reported in the aggregate to the county board for evaluation by the board’s curriculum director and reported to the board members. Nothing in this subsection creates a standard or requirement subject to state accountability measures.

(g) All public, middle and high schools located within this state shall give instruction on the Holocaust and other genocides in order to teach students knowledge of the Holocaust and other genocides, identify relevant global actors in historical genocides, inform students of social and political contextual factors that influence genocides, describe the outcomes of genocides; familiarize students with, as applicable, the history, context, and explanation of the Holocaust and other genocides, and the influence of the Holocaust and other genocides on law, history, government, migration, religion, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values, and culture.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to expand the required courses of instruction in personal finance, cursive writing, history and civics, and the Holocaust and other genocides.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.