

1 HB405
2 191143-2
3 By Representatives Rogers and Moore (M)
4 RFD: Education Policy
5 First Read: 13-FEB-18

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8 SYNOPSIS: Existing law requires the State Board of
9 Education and all local boards of education to
10 develop and implement a comprehensive character
11 education program in grades K-12.

12 This bill would require a comprehensive
13 character education program to be taught in grades
14 K-12 in each public school, consisting of
15 instruction provided five times a week during the
16 school year, for a duration of not less than 40
17 minutes per day.

18 This bill would also require the
19 comprehensive character education program to
20 address methods of discouraging bullying and
21 violent acts against fellow students.

22
23 A BILL
24 TO BE ENTITLED
25 AN ACT
26

1 To amend Section 16-6B-2, Code of Alabama 1975,
2 relating to the core curriculum for public K-12 education; to
3 require the comprehensive character education program to be
4 taught in grades K-12 in each public school at least five
5 times each week during the school year for a length of time of
6 not less than 40 minutes per day; and to require the program
7 to also address methods of discouraging bullying and violent
8 acts against fellow students.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

10 Section 1. Section 16-6B-2, Code of Alabama 1975, is
11 amended to read as follows:

12 "§16-6B-2.

13 "Every Alabama student shall be given instruction in
14 grades kindergarten through twelve to prepare him or her to
15 enter the world of work and/or to complete course work at the
16 postsecondary level. In addition to a comprehensive core
17 curriculum of academics, each local board of education shall
18 offer a program of vocational/technical education.

19 "(a) The following words and phrases used in this
20 section shall, in the absence of a clear implication
21 otherwise, be given the following respective interpretations:

22 "(1) REQUIRED COURSES. Courses which are required to
23 be taken by every student enrolled in public schools in the
24 State of Alabama.

25 "(2) ELECTIVE COURSES. Courses which are neither
26 mandatory nor required to be taken by any student enrolled in
27 public schools in the State of Alabama.

1 "(b) The Legislature finds that students must become
2 more literate in the basic skills needed to earn a living or
3 to continue their education. The Legislature further finds
4 that the English language is a common bond that holds our
5 society together. It is necessary that the State Board of
6 Education adopt curriculum policies to ensure that Alabama
7 students have a command of the spoken and written English
8 language. The Legislature further finds that in Alabama
9 schools, students earning a standard high school diploma are
10 only required to earn two credits of mathematics after they
11 enter the ninth grade prior to graduation. The Legislature
12 further finds that special attention must be given to the
13 Alabama courses of study. The State Board of Education shall
14 establish a rigorous and meaningful core curriculum including,
15 but not limited to, all of the following courses for grades
16 nine through twelve in public schools to be phased in
17 beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 1996-97
18 scholastic year:

19 "(1) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
20 English.

21 "(2) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
22 mathematics, including but not limited to material designed to
23 ensure that no high school student fails to learn basic
24 mathematical skills and computer literacy.

25 "(3) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
26 science.

1 "(4) Four years (equivalent of four credit units) of
2 social studies with an emphasis on history, music history,
3 fine arts history, geography, economics, and political
4 science. History courses shall include material on the history
5 of the United States and the Constitution of the United
6 States. The Legislature further requires that the curriculum
7 content of American history shall include the teaching of
8 important historical documents including the Constitution of
9 the United States, The Declaration of Independence, The
10 Emancipation Proclamation, The Federalist Papers, and other
11 such documents important to the history and heritage of the
12 United States.

13 "(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that credit
14 for required basic core academic courses may be earned in
15 conjunction with vocational courses and/or programs. It is the
16 intent of the Legislature that local boards of education offer
17 and schedule students into vocational programs.

18 "(d) It is the intent of the Legislature that, in
19 addition to the required courses, elective courses including,
20 but not limited to, foreign languages, fine arts, physical
21 education, wellness education, and vocational and technical
22 preparation be available to all students as determined by the
23 local board of education. For purposes of this section,
24 American Sign Language is a foreign language; a public school
25 may offer such a course; and a student who successfully
26 completes the course is entitled to receive credit for the
27 course toward satisfaction of a foreign language requirement,

1 pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Alabama State
2 Board of Education. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year,
3 the preceding sentence shall apply to hearing-impaired
4 students; and beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, and
5 each school year thereafter, the preceding sentence shall
6 apply to all students. Nothing in this chapter shall be
7 construed to diminish the current requirements of the State
8 Board of Education with respect to health and physical
9 education instruction in grades K-12 or to reduce the effect
10 of Section 16-40-1 regarding health and physical education.

11 "(e) The State Board of Education shall adopt
12 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and
13 standards to require that:

14 "(1) The required courses set forth in this section
15 shall be taken by every student enrolled in grades nine
16 through twelve of public schools to be phased in beginning
17 with students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-97
18 scholastic year. The State Superintendent of Education after a
19 hearing in which he or she determines there exists just cause
20 may grant a one-time delay of one year for a school system
21 from implementation of any one of the required courses.

22 "(2) The required courses set forth in this section
23 shall be successfully passed by a student enrolled in grades
24 nine through twelve of public schools prior to such student's
25 graduation or receipt of a diploma, phased in beginning with
26 students entering the ninth grade in the 1996-97 scholastic
27 year. Students identified as eligible for special education

1 services as provided by federal and state law shall be
2 required to meet the provisions set forth in the individual
3 education plan prescribed to meet their individual needs as
4 required by law. The State Board of Education shall continue
5 to set graduation requirements; however, such graduation
6 requirements shall not provide less in the way of requirements
7 in the areas of English, math, science, and social studies as
8 provided in this chapter.

9 "(3) In addition to the required courses, a number
10 of elective courses shall be successfully passed by a student
11 enrolled in grades nine through twelve of public schools prior
12 to such student's graduation or receipt of a diploma, phased
13 in beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the
14 1996-97 scholastic year. The State Board of Education shall
15 determine the number and classification of units of credit
16 required for high school graduation.

17 "(f) The State Board of Education, on the
18 recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education, shall
19 prescribe the minimum contents of courses of study for all
20 public elementary and high schools in the state. In every
21 elementary school there shall be taught at least reading
22 including phonics, spelling, handwriting, arithmetic, oral and
23 written English, geography, history of the United States and
24 Alabama, elementary science, hygiene and sanitation, physical
25 education, the arts, including musical and visual arts,
26 environmental protection, and such other studies as may be
27 prescribed by the local board of education. Instruction in

1 handwriting shall include cursive writing so that students are
2 able to create readable documents through legible cursive
3 handwriting by the end of the third grade. Moreover, the State
4 Board of Education shall require the following courses for
5 grades one through eight in all public schools to be phased in
6 beginning with students entering grades one through eight in
7 the 1995-96 scholastic year: English, social studies,
8 mathematics, and science shall be taught each year in grades
9 one through eight. English shall include, but not be limited
10 to, material designed to develop language arts, such as
11 reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Social
12 studies shall emphasize geography and history of the United
13 States and Alabama.

14 "(g) The State Board of Education shall adopt
15 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and/or
16 standards to require college and university departments of
17 education to review their existing educational programs for
18 all prospective teachers in order to ensure that they are
19 properly prepared to teach the courses required by law.

20 "(h) The State Board of Education and all local
21 boards shall develop and implement ~~within ninety (90) days of~~
22 ~~July 7, 1995~~ commencing with the 2018-2019 school year, a
23 comprehensive character education program for ~~all~~ grades K-12
24 to consist of ~~not less than ten minutes~~ instruction ~~per day~~
25 provided five times each week during the school year, for a
26 length of time of not less than 40 minutes per day for each
27 class. The instruction shall focus on ~~focusing upon~~ the

1 students' development of the following character traits:
2 Courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect
3 for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control,
4 courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity,
5 punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect
6 for the environment, patience, creativity, sportsmanship,
7 loyalty, and perseverance. Each plan of instruction shall
8 include the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag. The
9 program shall also address methods of discouraging bullying
10 and violent acts against fellow students.

11 "(i) The State Board of Education shall adopt
12 necessary policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and/or
13 standards to ensure quality vocational/technical education
14 programs.

15 "(j) Each local board of education shall certify on
16 an annual basis to the State Board of Education that the
17 applicable schools in the school district are meeting the
18 cursive writing requirements under subsection (f) and the
19 comprehensive character education program requirements under
20 subsection (h). The State Board of Education may adopt rules
21 to implement this subsection."

22 Section 2. This act shall become effective on the
23 first day of the third month following its passage and
24 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.