

2025 -- H 5836

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CURRICULUM

Introduced By: Representatives Morales, Biah, Furtado, Stewart, Handy, Potter,
Caldwell, Batista, DeSimone, and McGaw

Date Introduced: February 28, 2025

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-22 of the General Laws entitled "Curriculum [See Title 16
2 Chapter 97 — the Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding thereto the
3 following section:

4 **16-22-39. Ethnic studies course.**

5 (a) Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, every high school shall be required to offer a
6 yearlong “ethnic studies” course studying American history and the experiences of racialized
7 communities in Rhode Island and the United States. This course’s coverage shall specifically
8 include:

9 (1) Native American and Indigenous history, Black and African American history, Asian
10 American and Pacific Islander history, the Armenian Genocide, Arab American history, and Latin
11 American history;

12 (2) Fostering critical thinking skills, and a deeper analysis of structures of power and race;
13 and

14 (3) Improved educational outcomes.

15 (b) The ethnic studies course shall be a social studies ‘core credit’ and a high school
16 graduation requirement starting with graduating classes of 2030.

17 (c) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall make available to all
18 school districts instructional materials that may be used as guidelines for development of a unit of
19 instruction under this section.

1 (d) Each ethnic studies course shall require a student-led project; provided, however, that
2 each such project shall be consistent with the history and social studies standards and frameworks
3 promulgated by the Rhode Island board of education. Civics projects may be individual, small
4 group or class wide, and designed to promote a student's ability to: reason, make logical arguments
5 and support claims using valid evidence.

6 (e) Each school district shall be encouraged to work with grassroots organizations and local
7 institutions in developing community-based ethnic studies teacher training and curriculum.

8 (f) The department of elementary and secondary education (the “department”) shall
9 coordinate with school districts to build and expand diverse educator pipelines to support with the
10 delivery of ethnic studies

11 (g)(1) Curriculum development. Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, there shall be a
12 student-led ethnic studies leadership council to oversee the implementation of the requirements of
13 this section and supporting the development and instruction of curriculum, along with methods for
14 course evaluation.

15 (2) The council shall be comprised of one student representative and teacher liaison from
16 each school district selected by the district superintendent and a representative from five (5)
17 different community organizations that identify as being “youth-led” per the department. The
18 department shall be responsible for convening the leadership council with the first meeting to take
19 place by October 2025.

20 (3) After implementation, the leadership council shall continue as a permanent body to
21 evaluate and update ethnic studies.

22 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CURRICULUM

1 This act would require every high school to offer a yearlong “ethnic studies” course
2 studying Rhode Island and American history and the experiences of racialized communities in
3 Rhode Island and the United States. This act would also direct the establishment of an ethnic studies
4 leadership council to oversee implementation of the requirements of this section.

5 This act would take effect on July 1, 2025.

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