

Florida Department of Education approves new curriculum that makes students patriotic, 'upright and desirable' citizens

Oliva said the new civic education curriculum could be reflected on end-of-course exams by the 2023-24 school year.

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The State Board of Education on Wednesday approved a new rule aimed at shaping civic education in public schools.

The rule, which centers in part on teaching students about characteristics that make an “upright and desirable” citizen, is the culmination of legislation passed by state lawmakers earlier this year.

Making changes that inject patriotism into the curriculum was a priority of top Republican lawmakers and Gov. Ron DeSantis during the legislative session that ended April 30.

At a bill-signing event in June, DeSantis called the civic curriculum “fundamental.”

The rule approved Wednesday directs the state Department of Education to require that students understand the nation’s founding documents. It also involves instilling patriotic values in schoolchildren.

According to the rule, traits of a desirable citizen include respect for “the military, elected officials, civic leaders, public servants, and all those who have defended the blessings of liberty in pursuit of the common good, even at personal risk.”

The rule also requires that students be taught “how political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy essential to preserving the United States constitutional republic.”

Department of Education Chancellor Jacob Oliva said the new rule, in conjunction with updated civic education standards approved by the board in July, is “timely” as the state looks to purchase new textbooks. “We are on course to do a social studies textbook bid, or a call for new textbooks for social studies classes, in November. And we want to get all this great work done prior to ... that call for new textbooks,” Oliva told the state board.

Oliva said the new civic education curriculum could be reflected on end-of-course exams by the 2023-24 school year.

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