

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE  
SECOND SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 1069**

Introduced by Brasch, 16.

Read first time January 17, 2018

Committee: Education

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to schools; to amend sections 79-724 and  
2 79-727, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions  
3 relating to the committee on Americanism; to eliminate a penalty; to  
4 provide duties for the State Board of Education and the State  
5 Department of Education; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the  
6 original sections.

7 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 79-724, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is  
2 amended to read:

3 79-724 It is the responsibility of society to ensure that youth are  
4 given the opportunity to become competent, responsible, patriotic, and  
5 civil citizens to ensure a ~~An informed, loyal, just, and patriotic~~  
6 ~~citizenry is necessary to a~~ strong, stable, just, and prosperous America.  
7 Such a citizenry necessitates that every member thereof be fully literate  
8 about our ~~acquainted with the~~ nation's history, government, geography,  
9 and economic system. The youth in our state should be committed to the  
10 ideas and values of our country's democracy and the constitutional  
11 republic established by the people. Schools should help prepare our youth  
12 to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good. Civic  
13 competence is necessary to sustain and improve our democratic way of life  
14 and must be taught in all public, private, denominational, and parochial  
15 schools. A central role of schools is to impart civic knowledge and  
16 skills that help our youth to see the relevance of a civic dimension for  
17 their lives. Students should be made fully aware of the liberties,  
18 opportunities, and advantages of which we are possessed and the  
19 sacrifices and struggles of those through whose efforts these benefits  
20 were gained ~~and that he or she be in full accord with our form of~~  
21 ~~government and fully aware of the liberties, opportunities, and~~  
22 ~~advantages of which we are possessed and the sacrifices and struggles of~~  
23 ~~those through whose efforts these benefits were gained.~~ Since youth is  
24 the time most susceptible to the acceptance of principles and doctrines  
25 that will influence men and women throughout their lives, it is one of  
26 the first duties of our educational system to conduct its activities,  
27 choose its textbooks, and arrange its curriculum in such a way that the  
28 youth of our state become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil  
29 American citizens ~~the love of liberty, justice, democracy, and America~~  
30 ~~will be instilled in the hearts and minds of the youth of the state.~~

31 (1) Every school board of a school district shall, at the beginning

1 of each school year, appoint from its members a committee of three, to be  
2 known as the committee on Americanism. The committee on Americanism  
3 shall:

4 (a) Hold no fewer than three public meetings annually, at least one  
5 where public testimony is accepted;

6 (b) Keep minutes of all meetings showing the time and place of the  
7 meeting, which members were present and absent, and the substance and  
8 details of all matters discussed;

9 (c) ~~(a)~~ Carefully examine and ensure that the social studies  
10 curriculum used in the district is aligned to the social studies  
11 standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01 and teaches and assesses  
12 foundational knowledge in civics, history, economics, financial literacy,  
13 and geography;

14 (d) Review and approve the social studies curriculum to ensure that  
15 it adequately stresses , inspect, and approve all textbooks used in the  
16 teaching of American history and civil government in the school. Such  
17 textbooks shall adequately stress the services of the men and women who  
18 achieved our national independence, established our constitutional  
19 government, and preserved our union and is shall be so written to include  
20 the incorporation of curriculum standards as set forth in sections 79-719  
21 to 79-723 so contributions by ethnic groups as to develop a pride and  
22 respect for our institutions and not be a mere recital of events and  
23 dates;

24 (e) Ensure any curriculum that is recommended or approved by the  
25 committee on Americanism is made readily accessible to the public and  
26 contains a reference to this section;

27 (f) Ensure the district develops and utilizes formative, interim,  
28 and summative assessments, including at a minimum, but not limited to,  
29 the one-hundred-question civics portion of the naturalization examination  
30 administered by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to  
31 determine student mastery of the social studies standards adopted

1 pursuant to section 79-760.01 administered no later than eighth grade and  
2 eleventh grade, with the individual score from such examination for each  
3 student reported to the parents or guardians of such student and the  
4 aggregate scores for each school district reported annually to the  
5 department;

6 (g) ~~(b)~~ Assure themselves as to the character of all teachers  
7 employed and their knowledge and acceptance of the American form of  
8 government; and

9 (h) ~~(c)~~ Take all such other steps as will assure the carrying out of  
10 the provisions of this section and provide a report to the school board  
11 regarding the committee's findings and recommendations.

12 (2) All social studies ~~American history~~ courses approved for grade  
13 levels as provided by this section shall include and adequately stress  
14 contributions of all ethnic groups (a) to the development and growth of  
15 America into a great nation, (b) to art, music, education, medicine,  
16 literature, science, politics, and government, and (c) to the war  
17 services in all wars of this nation.

18 (3) All grades of all public, private, denominational, and parochial  
19 schools, below the sixth grade, shall devote at least one hour per week  
20 to exercises or teaching periods for the following purpose:

21 (a) The discussion ~~recital~~ of stories having to do with American  
22 history or the deeds and exploits of American heroes;

23 (b) The historical background, memorization, and singing of  
24 patriotic songs such as ~~and the insistence that every pupil memorize the~~  
25 Star-Spangled Banner and America the Beautiful; and

26 (c) The development of reverence for the flag and instruction as to  
27 proper conduct in its presentation.

28 (4) In at least two of the three grades from the fifth grade to the  
29 eighth grade in all public, private, denominational, and parochial  
30 schools, time ~~at least three periods per week~~ shall be set aside for ~~to~~  
31 ~~be devoted to~~ the teaching of American history from the social studies

1 curriculum approved textbooks, which shall be taught in such a way that  
2 all students are given the opportunity to become competent, responsible,  
3 patriotic, and civil citizens who possess a deep understanding of the  
4 United States Constitution and the Constitution of Nebraska and be  
5 prepared to preserve, protect, and defend freedom and democracy in our  
6 nation and our world as to make the course interesting and attractive and  
7 to develop a love of country.

8 (5) In at least two courses in grades of every high school, time at  
9 least three periods per week shall be devoted to the teaching of civics  
10 and American history as outlined in the social studies standards adopted  
11 pursuant to section 79-760.01, during which courses specific attention  
12 shall be given to the following matters:

13 (a) The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution,  
14 and the Constitution of Nebraska, and the structure and function of local  
15 government in this state;

16 (b) The benefits and advantages of our form of government, and the  
17 rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our government, and the  
18 dangers and fallacies of forms of government that restrict individual  
19 freedoms or possess antidemocratic ideals such as, but not limited to,  
20 Nazism and communism; dangers and fallacies of Nazism, Communism, and  
21 similar ideologies; and

22 (c) The duties of citizenship, including active participation in the  
23 improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world and the  
24 value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests; and -

25 (d) The application of knowledge in civics, history, economics,  
26 financial literacy, and geography in order to address meaningful issues  
27 within our society.

28 (6) Appropriate patriotic exercises suitable to the occasion shall  
29 be held under the direction of the superintendent in every public,  
30 private, denominational, and parochial school on George Washington's  
31 birthday, Abraham Lincoln's birthday, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s

1 birthday, American Indian Day, Flag Day, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and  
2 Thanksgiving Day, or on the day or week Lincoln's birthday, Washington's  
3 birthday, Flag Day, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day, or on the day  
4 preceding or following such holiday, if the school is in session.

5 (7) Every school board, the State Board of Education, and the  
6 superintendent of each school district in the state shall be held  
7 directly responsible in the order named for carrying out this section,  
8 and neglect thereof by any employee or appointed official shall be  
9 considered a dereliction of duty and may be considered a cause for  
10 dismissal.

11 Sec. 2. Section 79-727, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is  
12 amended to read:

13 79-727 The State Board of Education shall adopt and promulgate  
14 rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of sections 79-724  
15 through 79-726. The State Department of Education shall ensure that all  
16 requirements of such sections and such rules and regulations are carried  
17 out by each school district. Any person violating the provisions of  
18 sections 79-724 to 79-726 is guilty of a Class III misdemeanor.

19 Sec. 3. Original sections 79-724 and 79-727, Reissue Revised  
20 Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.