

Date of Hearing: July 2, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Al Muratsuchi, Chair
SB 510 (Richardson) – As Amended April 21, 2025

SENATE VOTE:

SUBJECT: Pupil instruction: treatment of African Americans

SUMMARY: Requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), when the State Board of Education (SBE) next revises the history-social science curriculum framework or adopts new instructional materials after January 1, 2026, to consider including in that curriculum framework or including in its evaluation criteria for instructional materials, content on the historical, social, economic, and political contributions of African Americans during the Spanish colonization of California, the Gold Rush Era, and Antebellum. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the IQC, when the SBE next revises the history-social science curriculum framework or adopts new instructional materials, after January 1, 2026 to consider including in that curriculum framework or including in its evaluation criteria for instructional materials, content on the historical, social, economic, and political contributions of African Americans during the Spanish colonization of California, the Gold Rush Era, and Antebellum, including, but not limited to, addressing African Americans' experience with:
 - a) Discriminatory laws;
 - b) Barriers to land ownership, and
 - c) Their efforts to establish economic and social stability in California.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the IQC, during its next revision of the History-Social Science curriculum framework, to consider including instruction on the Election of President Barack Obama and the significance of the United States electing its first African American President. (Education Code (EC) 33543)
- 2) Requires the governing boards of school districts, in their adoption of instructional materials for use in the schools, to accurately portray the cultural and racial diversity of our society, including the role and contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, persons with disabilities, and members of other ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic status groups in the total development of California and the United States. (EC 60040)
- 3) Requires instruction in social sciences to include the early history of California and a study of the role and contributions of people of all genders, Native Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, European Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, persons with disabilities, and members of other ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic status groups, to the economic, political, and social development of California

and the United States of America, with particular emphasis on portraying the role of these groups in contemporary society. (EC 51204.5)

- 4) Requires the IQC to develop, and the SBE to adopt, modify, or revise, a model curriculum in ethnic studies to ensure quality courses of study in ethnic studies. Requires the model curriculum to be developed with participation from faculty of ethnic studies programs at universities and colleges with ethnic studies programs and a group of representatives of local educational agencies (LEAs), a majority of whom are kindergarten to grade 12, inclusive, teachers who have relevant experience or education background in the study and teaching of ethnic studies. (EC 51226.7)
- 5) Requires, subject to an appropriation, a student, commencing with students graduating the 2029-30 school year, to complete a one-semester course in ethnic studies that meets one of the following four options:
 - a) A course based on the model curriculum developed by the IQC;
 - b) An existing ethnic studies course;
 - c) An ethnic studies course taught as part of a course that has been approved as meeting the A–G requirements of the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU); or
 - d) A locally developed ethnic studies course approved by the governing board of the school district or the governing body of the charter school. (EC 51225.3)

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “SB 510 is essential to ensure African American students receive a more accurate, inclusive, and honest education about California and U.S. history. For too long, the contributions, experiences, and struggles of African Americans have been minimized or left out of school curricula. This bill directly addresses that by requiring instruction on the harm California has done to African Americans, including during Spanish colonization, the Gold Rush Era, and through discriminatory laws and barriers to land ownership.

SB 510 ensures that students learn about the economic, social, and political contributions of African Americans, as well as their resilience in the face of systemic oppression. By including African American perspectives in the broader context of history, economics, and civics, the bill helps foster greater understanding of the ongoing fight for equity and justice.

This legislation is a step toward correcting historical omissions, empowering African American students with representation, and educating all students to be more informed and socially conscious citizens.”

Content Standards, Frameworks, and Model Curricula. The Legislature has vested the IQC and the SBE with the authority to develop and adopt state curriculum and instructional materials. The IQC develops curriculum frameworks in each subject by convening expert panels,

developing drafts, and holding public hearings to solicit input. Changes are frequently made in response to public comment. The SBE then adopts the frameworks in a public meeting. The SBE also adopts, in a public process, instructional materials aligned to those frameworks for grades K-8. School district governing boards and charter schools then adopt instructional materials aligned to these standards and frameworks. This process has traditionally occurred on a regular schedule, giving schools a predictable timetable to plan and budget for changes to the curriculum. Local adoption of new curricula involves significant local costs, including resources for professional development.

These existing processes involve practitioners and experts who have an in-depth understanding of curriculum and instruction, including the full scope and sequence of the curriculum in each subject and at each grade level, constraints on instructional time and resources, and the relationship of curriculum to state assessments and other measures of student progress.

African American perspectives and experiences in the History and Social Science Framework.

According to the Senate Education Committee, California's History-Social Science Framework (Framework), adopted by the SBE in July 2019, features the experiences and perspectives of African Americans throughout the history of the United States. Examples of such topics include:

- *Grade Four: California: A Changing State* – Recognizing the presence of people of African descent throughout much of California's history contributing to the Spanish exploration of California, the Spanish–Mexican settlement of the region, the founding of the Alta California settlements, California's subsequent development throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- *Grade Five: United States History and Geography: Making a New Nation* – Understanding the history and impact of slavery, both as a legal and economic institution and as an extreme violation of human rights; understanding how principles of the American Revolution (especially natural rights of freedom and the opportunity for democracy) motivated African Americans—both free and unfree—to try to secure those rights for all by their service in the war itself.
- *Grade Eight: United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict* – Examining the Antebellum South by studying the lives of plantation owners and other white Southerners; the more than 100,000 free African Americans in the South; as well as the laws, such as the fugitive slave laws of 1793 and 1850, that curbed their freedom and economic opportunity. Contextualizing the national abolitionist movement that arose during the nineteenth century and the opposition and risks faced by leaders like Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriett Jacobs, Charles Remond, Harriet Tubman, and Robert Purvis; how slavery was replaced by black peonage, segregation, Jim Crow laws, and other legal restrictions on the rights of African Americans, capped by the Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in 1896.
- *Grade Nine: Elective Courses in History–Social Science – Modern California:* Understanding California's economic growth after World War II, while recognizing how racial discrimination prevented African Americans from being part of certain neighborhoods as homeowners, and how banks found ways to deny entry.

- *Grade Eleven: United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change in Modern United States History* – Understanding the first Great Migration of over a million African Americans from the rural South to the urban North during and after World War I, which changed the landscape of Black America. Understanding how the continued flow of migrants and the practical restrictions of segregation in the 1920s helped to create the Harlem Renaissance, the literary and artistic flowering of Black artists, poets, musicians, and scholars recognizing how racial violence, discrimination, and segregation inhibited African Americans’ economic mobility, opportunity, and political participation.

Additionally, the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, adopted by the SBE in 2021, includes course outlines which include content related to African American history, as well as a description of an African American Studies standalone course, in which “students explore the history, cultures, struggles, and politics of African Americans as part of the African diaspora across time.”

Governor’s Budget proposal on review of state’s curriculum development. The Governor’s Budget also proposes an appropriation of \$1 million to a county office of education (COE) to contract with a research or non-profit organization to study the processes by which other states develop curriculum guidance and make recommendations about how to improve and streamline California’s processes. It requires the selected organization, by January 1, 2027, to explore the following topics related to the development of curriculum guidance in other states, including:

- The process and cycle for developing curriculum frameworks and other instructional guidance, and for selecting aligned instructional resources;
- How curriculum guidance and instructional resources are evaluated for the extent to which they support the teaching and learning of state content standards; and
- What additional guidance, tools, professional development or other resources, including digital resources and platforms, are provided to educators to support the teaching and learning of state content standards.

Arguments in support. The Oakland Unified School District writes, “SB 510 is a critical step toward ensuring that our state’s curriculum and instructional materials reflect a fuller and more accurate portrayal of African American experiences—particularly during key periods such as the Spanish colonization of California, the Gold Rush Era, and the Antebellum period. While existing frameworks have incorporated important African American contributions, this bill appropriately highlights areas of history that are often underrepresented, including discriminatory laws, restrictions on land ownership, and African Americans’ enduring efforts to establish economic and social stability in the state.

Oakland Unified serves a richly diverse student body, and it is imperative that our curriculum honors the stories and struggles of all communities. SB 510 will empower educators to teach a more inclusive and truthful narrative of California and U.S. history, offering students greater representation and deeper engagement with the past. When students see their communities reflected in what they learn, they are more likely to connect with their education and develop into informed, empathetic citizens.”

Related legislation. AB 1078 (Jackson), Chapter 229, Statutes of 2023, makes various changes to the requirements on local school governing boards regarding the adoption of instructional

materials for use in schools, including a provision that would prohibit a governing board from disallowing the use of an existing textbook, other instructional material, or curriculum that contains inclusive and diverse perspectives, as specified.

AB 48 (Leno, Chapter 81, Statutes of 2011) required California public schools to provide Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful representations of our diverse ethnic and cultural population in the K-12 grade history and social studies curriculum.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

California Faculty Association
Democrats of Rossmore
Israeli-American Civic Action Network
Oakland Unified School District

Opposition

None on file

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