

Committee on American Civics

October 11, 2021, at 7:15 PM

Southern School District

Notice is hereby given of a meeting of the Board of Education, Southern School District #1 on October 11, 2021, at 7:15 PM at Southern Jr./Sr. High School Board Room in Wymore. A current agenda is also available at the office of the Superintendent.

I hereby certify that the above notice was posted in three public places as follows:

Southern Elementary School

Southern Jr./Sr. High School

U.S. Post Office in Wymore

- I. Call Committee Meeting to Order
 - A. Committee on American Civics Statute 79-724
 - B. Accept Public Comment on American Civics
 - C. District Policies Related to the Committee in American Civics
 - D. Review K-12 Social Studies Curriculum
 - E. Patriotic Exercises K-12
 - F. Requirements (8th & 12th Grade) Under the Committee on American Civics
- II. Adjournment



1 NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

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Nebraska Revised Statute 79-724

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Chapter 79

79-724.

Committee on American civics; created; duties; school board, State Board of Education, and superintendent; duties.

It is the responsibility of society to ensure that youth are given the opportunity to become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil citizens to ensure a strong, stable, just, and prosperous America. Such a citizenry necessitates that every member thereof be knowledgeable of our nation's history, government, geography, and economic system. The youth in our state should be committed to the ideals and values of our country's democracy and the constitutional republic established by the people. Schools should help prepare our youth to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good. Civic competence is necessary to sustain and improve our democratic way of life and must be taught in all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools. A central role of schools is to impart civic knowledge and skills that help our youth to see the relevance of a civic dimension for their lives. Students should be made fully aware of the liberties, opportunities, and advantages we possess and the sacrifices and struggles of those through whose efforts these benefits were gained. Since young people are most susceptible to the acceptance of principles and doctrines that will influence them throughout their lives, it is one of the first duties of our educational system to conduct its activities, choose its textbooks, and arrange its curriculum in such a way that the youth of our state have the opportunity to become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil American citizens.

(1) The school board of each school district shall, at the beginning of each calendar year, appoint from its members a committee of three, to be known as the committee on American civics, which shall:

- (a) Hold no fewer than two public meetings annually, at least one when public testimony is accepted;
- (b) Keep minutes of each meeting showing the time and place of the meeting, which members were present or absent, and the substance and details of all matters discussed;
- (c) Examine and ensure that the social studies curriculum used in the district is aligned with the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section [79-760.01](#) and teaches foundational knowledge in civics, history, economics, financial literacy, and geography;
- (d) Review and approve the social studies curriculum to ensure that it stresses the services of the men and women who played a crucial role in the achievement of national independence, establishment of our constitutional government, and preservation of the union and includes the incorporation of multicultural education as set forth in sections [79-719](#) to [79-723](#) in order to instill a pride and respect for the nation's institutions and not be merely a recital of events and dates;
- (e) Ensure that any curriculum recommended or approved by the committee on American civics is made readily accessible to the public and contains a reference to this section;
- (f) Ensure that the district develops and utilizes formative, interim, and summative assessments to measure student mastery of the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section [79-760.01](#);
- (g) Ensure that the social studies curriculum in the district incorporates one or more of the following for each student:
 - (i) Administration of a written test that is identical to the entire civics portion of the naturalization test used by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services prior to the completion of eighth grade and again prior to the completion of twelfth grade with the individual score from each test for each student made available to a parent or guardian of such student; or
 - (ii) Attendance or participation between the commencement of eighth grade and completion of twelfth grade in a meeting of a public body as defined by section [84-1409](#) followed by the completion of a project or paper in which each student demonstrates or discusses the personal learning experience of such student related to such attendance or participation; or



(iii) Completion of a project or paper and a class presentation between the commencement of eighth grade and the completion of twelfth grade on a person or persons or an event commemorated by a holiday listed in subdivision (6) of this section or on a topic related to such person or persons or event; and

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

(2) All social studies courses approved for grade levels as provided by this section shall include and adequately stress contributions of all ethnic groups to (a) the development and growth of America into a great nation, (b) art, music, education, medicine, literature, science, politics, and government, and (c) the military in all of this nation's wars.

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

(a) The discussion of noteworthy events pertaining to American history or the exceptional acts of individuals and groups of Americans;

(b) The historical background, memorization, and singing of patriotic songs such as the Star-Spangled Banner and America the Beautiful;

(c) The development of respect for the American flag as a symbol of freedom and the sacrifices of those who secured that freedom; and

(d) Instruction as to proper conduct in the presentation of the American flag.

(4) In at least two of the three grades from the fifth grade to the eighth grade in all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools, time shall be set aside for the teaching of American history from the social studies curriculum, which shall be taught in such a manner that all students are given the opportunity to (a) become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil citizens who possess a deep understanding of and respect for both the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Nebraska and (b) prepare to preserve, protect, and defend freedom and democracy in our nation and our world.

(5) In at least two courses in every high school, time shall be devoted to the teaching of civics and American history as outlined in the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section [79-760.01](#), during which specific attention shall be given to the following matters:

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

(b) The benefits and advantages of representative government, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our government, and the dangers and fallacies of forms of government that restrict individual freedoms or possess antidemocratic ideals such as, but not limited to, Nazism and communism;

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

(d) The application of knowledge in civics, history, economics, financial literacy, and geography to address societal issues.

(6) Appropriate patriotic exercises suitable to the occasion shall be held under the direction of the superintendent in every public, private, denominational, and parochial school on George Washington's birthday, Abraham Lincoln's birthday, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, Native American Heritage Day, Constitution Day, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving Day, or on the day or week preceding or following such holiday, if the school is in session.

(7) Every school board, the State Board of Education, and the superintendent of each school district in the state shall be held directly responsible in the order named for carrying out this section. Neglect thereof by any employee may be considered a cause for dismissal.

Source

Laws 1949, c. 256, § 19, p. 697;

Laws 1969, c. 705, § 1, p. 2705;

Laws 1971, LB 292, § 3;

R.S.1943, (1994), § 79-213;

Laws 1996, LB 900, § 398;

[Laws 1999, LB 272, § 86](#);

[Laws 2011, LB544, § 1](#);

[Laws 2019, LB399, § 1](#).

Effective Date: September 1, 2019

Cross References



- Flag display requirements**, see section [79-707](#).
- Violation**, penalty, see section [79-727](#).

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2002
Organization of the Board, Board Officers, Check Signing, and
Committees

1. Membership, Term and Election

- a. The Board of Education shall be comprised of six members who will be elected at large.
- b. Those who wish to serve on the board shall file, be elected, and serve terms of office on the board according to law.

2. Internal Organization and Officers

a. President

- i. At the regular January meeting, the board shall elect from among its members a president who shall serve in that capacity for one year.
- ii. The president shall preside at all board meetings, and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law or by action of the board.

b. Vice President

- i. At the regular January meeting, the board shall elect from among its members a vice president who shall serve in that capacity for one year.
- ii. The vice president shall preside in the absence of the president, and shall perform such other duties as are assigned by the board.

c. Secretary

- i. At the regular January meeting, the board shall elect a secretary who need not be a member of the board. The secretary shall serve in that capacity for one year. If the secretary is a member of the board, an assistant secretary may be named and his or her duties and compensation set by the board.

- ii. The secretary shall see that an accurate record of the proceedings of the board is kept, that a copy of the proceedings is provided to each board member and to the superintendent, and that a concise summary of each month's meeting is published along with a list of all approved claims. The secretary shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by law and assigned by the board.

d. Treasurer

- i. At the regular January meeting, the board shall elect, employ, or appoint a treasurer who need not be a member of the board if permitted by law. The treasurer shall serve in that capacity for one year, unless the board designates a longer term for the treasurer.
- ii. The treasurer may be designated to sign checks and certain other documents. The treasurer is the custodian of the monies of the district.
- iii. The treasurer shall give bond or equivalent insurance coverage payable to the district as prescribed by law with the cost of the bond being paid by the district.
- iv. The treasurer shall issue no warrant of payment of claim against the district until such claim has been duly authorized.

3. Signing and Authorizing Checks, Warrants, and other Instruments.

- a. Unless otherwise delegated by the board, the president and secretary of the board shall sign checks, warrants, and other instruments of the district.
- b. The board may delegate another person to sign and validate any checks, warrants, and other instruments. Facsimile signatures of board members may be used.
- c. The board delegates that the vice president or treasurer may sign any warrant in the absence of either the president or the secretary.

4. Board Officer Voting and Tie Breakers

- a. The vote to elect board officers may be taken by secret ballot, but the total number of votes for each candidate shall be recorded in the minutes.
- b. In the event any officer cannot be elected by a majority after 10 votes; no votes occur after ten motions fail for lack of a "second,"; or no member volunteers to serve as an officer for a particular position, the tie will be broken by the applicable method:
 - i. If the board is split between two members, the officer will be determined by coin flip. The winning member will be the officer for the upcoming year unless the position changes by action of the board.
 - ii. If the board is split between more than two members who wish to serve as the officer, any member wanting to serve as the officer will put his or her name into a drawing. The name drawn out will be the officer for the upcoming year unless the position changes by action of the board.
 - iii. If no member is willing to serve as an officer for a position which is required to be a member of the board, all non-officers' names will be put into a drawing. The name drawn out will be the officer for the upcoming year unless the position changes by action of the board.

5. Committees

- a. The board shall authorize such special committees as it deems necessary. The board president shall appoint members to the committee, and designate its function, tasks it is to perform, and a completion date for its work.
- b. On or before the beginning of each calendar year, the board shall appoint three members to form a Committee on American Civics. The committee's duties shall be those prescribed by Nebraska statutes, which include:
 - i. Hold no fewer than two public meetings annually, at least one where public testimony is accepted;

- ii. Keep minutes of each meeting showing the time and place of the meeting, which members were present or absent, and the substance and details of all matters discussed;
- iii. Examine and ensure that the social studies curriculum used in the district is aligned with the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01 and teaches foundational knowledge in civics, history, economics, financial literacy, and geography;
- iv. Review and approve the social studies curriculum to ensure that it stresses the services of the men and women who played a crucial role in the achievement of national independence, establishment of our constitutional government, and preservation of the union and includes the incorporation of multicultural education as set forth in sections 79-719 to 79-723 in order to instill a pride and respect for the nation's institutions and not be merely a recital of events and dates;
- v. Ensure that any curriculum recommended or approved by the committee on American civics is made readily accessible to the public and contains a reference to this section;
- vi. Ensure that the district develops and utilizes formative, interim, and summative assessments to measure student mastery of the social studies standards adopted pursuant to section 79-760.01;
- vii. Ensure that the social studies curriculum in the district incorporates one or more of the following for each student:
 - 1. Administration of a written test that is identical to the entire civics portion of the naturalization test used by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services prior to the completion of eighth grade and again prior to the completion of twelfth grade with the individual score from each test for each student made available to a parent or guardian of such student; or
 - 2. Attendance or participation between the commencement of eighth grade and completion of twelfth grade in a meeting of a public body as defined by section 84-1409 followed by the completion of a

project or paper in which each student demonstrates or discusses the personal learning experience of such student related to such attendance or participation; or

3. Completion of a project or paper and a class presentation between the commencement of eighth grade and the completion of twelfth grade on a person or persons or an event commemorated by a holiday listed in section 79-724(6) or on a topic related to such person or persons or event;
- viii. Take all such other steps as will assure the carrying out of the provisions of this section and provide a report to the school board regarding the committee's findings and recommendations.

6. Vacancies

- a. A vacancy on the board of education shall exist when any one of the following occurs:
 - i. A member submits his or her formal resignation from the board.
 - ii. A member removes himself or herself from the district or is absent from the district for a continuous period of sixty days.
 - iii. A member misses more than two consecutive regular board meetings unless excused by a majority of the remaining members.
 - iv. Such other reasons as are set forth in Nebraska statutes.
- b. The board shall make note the vacancy in its minutes and shall give notice of the date the vacancy occurred, the office vacated, and the length of the unexpired term to (1) the election commissioner or county clerk, and (2) the public by published notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the district.
- c. Vacancies shall be filled in the manner set forth in Nebraska statutes.

Adopted on: 7-9-2018
Revised on: 6-8-2020
Reviewed on: 2-10-2020

6012
Flag Display and Patriotic Observances

The district shall display the flags of the United States of America and the State of Nebraska prominently on the grounds of every school building each day that school is in session.

Each building principal shall be responsible for the care and display of the flags at his/her assigned building, and shall adhere to the rules and customs pertaining to the use and display of the flags as set forth in the United States Code.

Each day, at the time designated by the building administrator, staff shall ensure that students in grades K-12 will be led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in the presence of the flag of the United States of America. Pupil participation in the recitation of pledge shall be voluntary. Pupils who elect not to participate shall sit or stand silently and must respect the rights of those students choosing to participate.

Adopted on: 2-11-2019

Revised on: _____

Reviewed on: _____

6032
Constitution Day Education

Each year on September 17, designated as Constitution Day, the school district will conduct a program designed to highlight the historic and continuing importance of the United States Constitution. When September 17 falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the district will provide this program during the preceding or following week.

The program shall be implemented within the guidelines of the U.S. Department of Education and in accordance with any other applicable laws and/or regulations.

Adopted on: 3-11-2019

Revised on: _____

Reviewed on: _____

There are some requirements that we need to meet in our Social Studies Curriculum. September 17th is designated as Constitution Day. This is to highlight the historic and continuing importance of the United States Constitution. We had all students watch a video that was a refresher course covering the Constitution. We must also incorporate 1 of 3 items into the curriculum to meet requirements and this must be done prior to the completion of 8th grade and again prior to the completion of 12th grade. We have chosen to administer the entire civics portion of the naturalization test used by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The score of this test must be made available to a parent or guardian of the student.

Sincerely,

Jeff Murphy
7-12 Principal