



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1202

S.P. 491

In Senate, March 20, 2025

**An Act to Establish the African American Studies Advisory Council
and Provide Funding to Support African American Studies**

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative MURPHY of Scarborough and
Senators: HICKMAN of Kennebec, PIERCE of Cumberland, RAFFERTY of York,
Representatives: DHALAC of South Portland, MITCHELL of Cumberland, OSHER of Orono,
SARGENT of York, SATO of Gorham.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§18-H** is enacted to read:

3 **18-H.**

4 Education African American Studies Expenses and 20-A MRSA
5 Advisory Council Legislative Per Diem §14

6 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §14** is enacted to read:

7 **§14. African American Studies Advisory Council**

8 The African American Studies Advisory Council, referred to in this section as "the
9 advisory council," is established to serve as a resource to educators, schools and the
10 department to ensure the implementation of African American studies in accordance with
11 section 4706.

12 **1. Members.** The advisory council consists of the following 13 members:

13 A. Two Senators appointed by the President of the Senate and 2 members of the House
14 of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House;

15 B. One member appointed by the President of the Senate from a list provided by the
16 administrator of the Gerald E. Talbot Collection at the University of Southern Maine;

17 C. One member of the public with expertise in Maine African American culture and
18 history appointed by the Speaker of the House;

19 D. One member who is a representative of an African American civil rights
20 organization appointed by the President of the Senate from a list provided by a
21 statewide African American civil rights organization;

22 E. Four members appointed by the Commissioner of Education as follows:

23 (1) An elementary school teacher;

24 (2) A middle school teacher;

25 (3) A high school teacher; and

26 (4) A curriculum director with experience in African American studies; and

27 F. Two members from the University of Maine System who specialize in teacher
28 education appointed by the Chancellor of the University of Maine System. Of these 2
29 members, one must have experience teaching in African American studies.

30 To the extent practicable, appointing authorities under this subsection shall appoint
31 members with expertise in Maine African American culture and history.

32 **2. Cochairs.** The advisory council shall elect 2 of the members of the advisory council
33 who are Legislators as cochairs of the advisory council. The cochairs are authorized to
34 appoint subcommittees.

35 **3. Terms; vacancy.** Members of the advisory council serve 2-year terms. When a
36 vacancy occurs, the appointing authority shall fill the vacancy by appointing a member
37 from the same category as the member who vacated the advisory council and that member
38 continues to serve for the remainder of the term.

39 **4. Quorum.** A majority of the members of the advisory council constitutes a quorum.

- 1 **5. Duties.** The advisory council shall:
- 2 A. Assist school administrative units and educators in the exploration of a wide range
- 3 of educational materials and resources relating to African American studies;
- 4 B. Identify materials and resources for implementing African American studies;
- 5 C. Involve other knowledgeable organizations and individuals able and willing to assist
- 6 with the duties described in paragraphs A and B, including, but not limited to,
- 7 museums, the Maine State Archives and educators;
- 8 D. Make recommendations to the department regarding:
- 9 (1) African American studies curricula;
- 10 (2) Revisions to the African American studies component of the system of learning
- 11 results pursuant to section 6209;
- 12 (3) Funding of African American studies in school administrative units; and
- 13 (4) Opportunities for teacher professional development, training and technical
- 14 assistance to assist school administrative units and educators in implementing
- 15 African American studies; and
- 16 E. Use data gathered pursuant to the representative statewide sampling conducted by
- 17 the department under subsection 7 of African American studies curricula in school
- 18 administrative units to establish a baseline measure of the implementation of African
- 19 American studies in school administrative units.

20 **6. Report.** Beginning January 15, 2027 and annually thereafter, the advisory council

21 shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction

22 over education matters on the progress of the implementation of African American studies

23 and the results of the representative statewide sampling conducted by the department under

24 subsection 7 of African American studies curricula in school administrative units and any

25 baseline measures of the implementation of African American studies established by the

26 advisory council.

27 The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters

28 may report out a bill related to a report of the advisory council in the legislative session in

29 which it is received.

30 **7. Staffing; sampling.** The department shall provide staffing assistance to the advisory

31 council and shall conduct representative statewide sampling of African American studies

32 curricula in school administrative units.

33 **8. Funding.** The advisory council may seek and accept funding from any source,

34 public or private.

35 **Sec. 3. Appointments to advisory council; convening.** No later than 30 days

36 following the effective date of this Act, the appointing authorities shall make their

37 appointments to the African American Studies Advisory Council as established in the

38 Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 18-H and notify the

39 Commissioner of Education. Within 30 days of the appointments being made, the

40 Commissioner of Education shall call and convene the first meeting of the advisory council

41 and preside over the election of cochairs.

1 **Sec. 4. Professional development in African American studies.** The
 2 Department of Education shall develop professional development opportunities for
 3 educators in African American studies.

4 **Sec. 5. Teacher certification; study.** The State Board of Education shall convene
 5 a stakeholder group, including, but not limited to, representatives from the Department of
 6 Education and higher education teacher preparation programs, to study the development of
 7 an endorsement in African American studies on an educator credential or the inclusion of
 8 a requirement for an African American studies course as a requirement for an educator
 9 credential in this State. The State Board of Education shall submit a report to the Joint
 10 Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than January 15, 2026.

11 **Sec. 6. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
 12 allocations are made.

13 **EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF**

14 **Innovative Teaching and Learning Z394**

15 Initiative: Provides one-time funds to support the work of the African American Studies
 16 Advisory Council and to administer and provide grants to school administrative units to
 17 expand or implement an African American studies curriculum. Funds appropriated for this
 18 purpose do not lapse but must be carried forward to the next fiscal year to be used for the
 19 same purpose.

20 GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
21 All Other	\$1,000,000	\$0
22		
23 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$1,000,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>

24 **Innovative Teaching and Learning Z394**

25 Initiative: Provides ongoing funds for one Interdisciplinary Instruction Specialist position
 26 to serve as a content specialist in African American studies and to provide outreach to
 27 school administrative units with support and technical assistance in curriculum
 28 development and implementation of African American studies.

29 GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
30 POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	1,000	1,000
31 Personal Services	\$90,081	\$122,986
32 All Other	\$9,410	\$8,860
33		
34 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$99,491</u>	<u>\$131,846</u>

36 **EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF**
 37 **DEPARTMENT TOTALS**

38		
39 GENERAL FUND	\$1,099,491	\$131,846
40		
41 DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	<u>\$1,099,491</u>	<u>\$131,846</u>

SUMMARY

1
2 This bill does the following.

3 1. It establishes the African American Studies Advisory Council to serve as a resource
4 to educators, schools and the Department of Education to ensure the implementation of
5 African American studies in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A,
6 section 4706. Appointments to the advisory council must be made within 30 days of the
7 effective date of the legislation by the appointing authorities. The duties of the advisory
8 council include:

9 A. Assisting school administrative units and educators in the exploration of a wide
10 range of educational materials and resources relating to African American studies;

11 B. Identifying materials and resources for implementing African American studies;

12 C. Making recommendations to the Department of Education regarding African
13 American studies curricula, revisions to the system of learning results, funding and
14 opportunities for professional development, training and technical assistance; and

15 D. Using data gathered pursuant to the representative statewide sampling conducted by
16 the Department of Education of African American studies curricula in school
17 administrative units to establish a baseline measure of the implementation of African
18 American studies in school administrative units.

19 The advisory council is directed to submit an annual report to the joint standing
20 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters beginning January
21 15, 2027.

22 2. It directs the Department of Education to develop professional development
23 opportunities for educators in African American studies.

24 3. It directs the State Board of Education to convene a stakeholder group to study the
25 development of an endorsement in African American studies on an educator credential or
26 the inclusion of a requirement for an African American studies course as a requirement for
27 an educator credential in this State and report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education
28 and Cultural Affairs no later than January 15, 2026.

29 4. It provides an appropriations and allocations section to:

30 A. Establish in the Department of Education a content specialist position in African
31 American studies and to provide outreach to school administrative units with support and
32 technical assistance in curriculum development and implementation of African American
33 studies; and

34 B. Provide \$1,000,000 in one-time, nonlapsing funds in fiscal year 2025-26 to the
35 Department of Education to support the work of the African American Studies Advisory
36 Council and administer and provide grants to school administrative units to expand or
37 implement African American studies curricula.