



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 1664

H.P. 1235

House of Representatives, May 5, 2021

**An Act To Integrate African American Studies into American
History Education**

Received by the Clerk of the House on May 3, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative TALBOT ROSS of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and
Representative: EVANS of Dover-Foxcroft.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4706**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 313, §§8 and 9, is further
3 amended to read:

4 **§4706. Instruction in American history, African American studies, Maine studies and**
5 **Maine Native American history**

6 Instruction in American history, African American studies, government, citizenship
7 and Maine studies must be aligned with the parameters for essential instruction and
8 graduation requirements established under section 6209.

9 **1. American history.** American history, government and citizenship, including the
10 Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the importance of
11 voting ~~and~~, the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, and African American studies,
12 including African American cultural systems and the experience of African Americans
13 throughout American history, must be taught in and required for graduation from all
14 elementary and secondary schools, both public and private. African American studies must
15 be included in the review of content standards and performance indicators of the system of
16 learning results conducted in accordance with section 6209, subsection 4.

17 **2. Maine studies.** Maine history, including the Constitution of Maine, Maine
18 geography and environment and the natural, industrial and economic resources of Maine
19 and Maine's cultural and ethnic heritage, must be taught. ~~A required component~~ Required
20 components of Maine studies is are Maine Native American studies and Maine African
21 American studies, which must be included in the review of content standards and
22 performance indicators of the learning results conducted in accordance with section 6209,
23 subsection 4. The Maine Native American studies must address the following topics:

- 24 A. Maine tribal governments and political systems and their relationship with local,
25 state, national and international governments;
- 26 B. Maine Native American cultural systems and the experience of Maine tribal people
27 throughout history;
- 28 C. Maine Native American territories; and
- 29 D. Maine Native American economic systems.

30 **Sec. 2. Resource development; advisory group; curriculum audit; report.**

31 The Department of Education is responsible for fulfilling the requirements of this section.

32 **1. Development of resources.** The department shall identify and make available to
33 schools resources and materials for teaching African American studies, including Maine
34 African American studies, pursuant to this Act.

35 **2. Advisory group.** The department shall, within 30 days after the effective date of
36 this Act, convene a volunteer advisory group to collect information and prepare materials
37 for the teaching of African American studies and Maine African American studies. The
38 advisory group must include scholars of African American history and culture;
39 representatives from African American civil rights organizations in the State, African
40 American history and cultural organizations and the Gerald E. Talbot Collection at the
41 University of Southern Maine; the Maine State Archivist; and members of the public with
42 personal experience that would inform the collection of information and preparation of

1 materials under this section. The department shall include at least one member from the
2 advisory group in any group or committee convened to review the parameters for essential
3 instruction and graduation requirements for social studies pursuant to Title 20-A, section
4 6209, subsection 4.

5 **3. Guidance; best practices; exemplar modules.** The department shall develop
6 guidance, best practices and exemplar modules to support the integration of African
7 American studies and Maine African American studies into the instruction of American
8 history and Maine history.

9 **4. Curriculum audit.** The department shall develop a process that supports and
10 enables a local school administrative unit to conduct an internal audit of its curriculum to
11 ensure an equitable representation of African American voices and an accurate historical
12 account of African American history and culture.

13 **5. Reporting.** The department shall submit a report on the progress of the
14 implementation of this Act to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having
15 jurisdiction over education matters no later than April 1, 2022.

16 **Sec. 3. Effective date.** That section of this Act that amends the Maine Revised
17 Statutes, Title 20-A, section 4706 takes effect July 1, 2023.

18 SUMMARY

19 This bill includes instruction on African American studies and Maine African
20 American studies, including African American cultural systems and the experience of
21 African Americans throughout American history, in the Department of Education's
22 required units of instruction on American history and Maine studies. The bill requires the
23 department to convene a volunteer advisory committee to collect information and prepare
24 materials for teaching African American studies and Maine African American studies and
25 to develop and provide guidance, best practices and exemplar modules to local school
26 administrative units to integrate African American studies and Maine African American
27 studies into their curriculum. The bill also requires the department to develop a process to
28 enable a local school administrative unit to conduct an internal audit of its curriculum to
29 ensure an equitable representation of African American voices and an accurate historical
30 account of African American history and culture. The bill also requires the department to
31 submit a report on the progress of the implementation of this Act to the joint standing
32 committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters no later than April
33 1, 2022.