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## Your Question:

You asked for information on states that have history curriculum requirements that include culturally competent information, particularly with regard to African American history.

## Our Response:

In recent years, a number of states have passed legislation directly related to the inclusion of some degree of African American history in their state standards and/or curriculum. The concept of cultural competency is more often addressed at the state level as it relates to teacher/staff training. Below, I have included some information and examples of recent legislation on both history standards/curriculum requirements and cultural competency. Please feel free to reach out if you have any further questions.

### History Curriculum Requirements

There have been several bills passed in the last few legislative sessions broadly related to multicultural curriculum requirements. These bills include changes to history curriculum and standards around issues such as the holocaust and genocide, religious freedom, LGBTQ issues and African American history. Below are a few examples of bills enacted in the 2017, 2018 and 2019 sessions that are specific to African American history:

- [Arkansas SB 519 \(2017\)](#) Requires the commissioner of education to update resources for teaching the historical contributions of African Americans. Emphasis shall be placed on the historic work of civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr.
- [Indiana SB 337 \(2017\)](#) Requires each school corporation, charter school and accredited nonpublic school to offer the study of ethnic and racial groups as a one semester elective course in its high school curriculum.
- [Nevada SB 107 \(2017\)](#) requires the Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools to identify a curriculum for diversity studies in cooperation with faculties of universities researching ethnic and diversity studies as well as other qualified individuals. The standards must be written in such a manner as to allow local school districts and charter schools to modify content to reflect and support students in the community.
- [Illinois HB 4346 \(2018\)](#) requires that black history be taught in every public elementary school and high school through an online program or course.
- [Oklahoma HB 3221 \(2018\)](#) requires the social studies curriculum to include information about Juneteenth, which commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.
- [Colorado HB 1192 \(2019\)](#) mandates funding instruction in public schools of history and civil government of the United States and Colorado — including but not limited to the history, culture and social contributions of American Indians, Latinos, African Americans and Asian Americans; the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals within these minority groups; and the intersectionality of significant social and cultural features within these communities.
- [Connecticut HB 7082 \(2019\)](#) adds African American, Puerto Rican and Latino studies to the required programs of study for public schools and requires all local and regional boards of education to include these topics in their curriculum beginning with the 2021-22 school year.
- [Maryland SB 879 \(2019\)](#) requires public schools to devote a part of at least one school day to appropriate exercises that relate to Black History Month, with an emphasis on Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass and the contributions they made to the fight against slavery.
- [West Virginia HB 2422 \(2019\)](#) adds the Emancipation Proclamation to the required documents to be studied during Celebrate Freedom Week.

## Cultural Competency

The responsibility to implement culturally responsive practices in the classroom falls most often to the teacher, and much attention is placed on ensuring teachers are culturally competent and aware so that they can teach in a way that is culturally appropriate. The research also focuses on ensuring that teachers are responsive to their students and community's cultures. Below are examples of a few states' approaches to cultural competency.

- **Alaska:** The [Division of Instructional Support](#) implements the [Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools](#). The [standards](#), which were developed in collaboration with the Alaska Native Knowledge Network in 1998, focus on five areas: students, educators, curriculum, schools and communities. According to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, the [standards](#) are “available to schools as a tool to use when building up the rich and varied cultural traditions practiced throughout Alaska.” The Division of Instructional Support provides a range of resources on implementation of the standards: a [framework](#) for how the standards should apply to the previously identified target areas, an implementation guide for educators, and a [fact sheet](#) that provides information on how local culture can be included in classroom instruction.
- **Colorado:** The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education Office is tasked with supporting Colorado districts, schools and educational leaders in the academic, linguistic, and social and emotional challenges and opportunities of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The office is tasked with ensuring equitable access to grade-level standards and a well-rounded education. Colorado also provides teachers the opportunity to obtain a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education license endorsement.
- **New York:** Training on cultural awareness and best practices is required during teacher training in New York. As a result of the Dignity for All Students Act, New York teachers are required to complete [DASA training](#), which includes training on multicultural environments. The New York Department of Education webpage demonstrates an interest in promoting culturally responsive instruction; however, it appears that management and support is left to districts and schools.