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AB-422 State Seal of Civic Engagement. (2025-2026)

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Assembly Bill No. 422

CHAPTER 692

An act to amend Section 51471 of the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

[Approved by Governor October 13, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 13, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 422, Jackson. State Seal of Civic Engagement.

Existing law requires, on or before January 1, 2020, the Superintendent of Public Instruction to recommend to the State Board of Education criteria for awarding a State Seal of Civic Engagement to pupils who have demonstrated excellence in civics education and participation and have demonstrated an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government. Existing law requires the Superintendent to, among other criteria, consider the successful completion of history, government, and civics courses, including courses that incorporate character education, and voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities. Existing law requires, on or before January 31, 2021, the state board to adopt, reject, or modify the criteria recommended by the Superintendent.

This bill would require the Superintendent to, when the state board next revises the criteria for the State Seal of Civic Engagement, recommend to the state board revised criteria for awarding the State Seal of Civic Engagement, requiring, along with meeting all other eligibility criteria for the award, a demonstrated understanding of the importance of preserving democracy and its vital institutions, as specified.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 51471 of the Education Code is amended to read:

51471. (a) On or before January 1, 2020, the Superintendent shall recommend to the state board criteria for awarding a State Seal of Civic Engagement to pupils who have demonstrated excellence in civics education and participation and have demonstrated an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government. In developing criteria for the State Seal of Civic Engagement, the Superintendent shall incorporate the Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning, developed by the Education Commission of the States, and any and all other best practices for civic learning and engagement. In developing criteria for the State Seal of Civic Engagement, the Superintendent shall also consult with a diverse group of credentialed, current, classroom teachers who teach the subject of history-social science, including government, in secondary schools. The Superintendent shall also consider including criteria based on each of the following:

- (1) Successful completion of history, government, and civics courses, including courses that incorporate character education.

(2) Voluntary participation in community service or extracurricular activities.

(3) Any other related requirements as it deems appropriate.

(b) In developing criteria pursuant to subdivision (a), the Superintendent shall ensure, to the greatest extent feasible, that the criteria:

(1) Provide all pupils with an opportunity to earn the State Seal of Civic Engagement.

(2) Recognize pupil excellence or outstanding achievement.

(3) Are not based primarily on pupil achievement that is already recognized through grades or other standard measures of pupil achievement.

(4) To the extent possible, result in a seal that confers some benefit to pupils beyond secondary school.

(c) On or before January 31, 2021, the state board shall adopt, reject, or modify the criteria recommended by the Superintendent pursuant to subdivision (a).

(d) When the state board next revises the criteria for the State Seal of Civic Engagement, the Superintendent shall recommend revised criteria to the state board for awarding the State Seal of Civic Engagement, requiring, along with meeting all other eligibility criteria for the award, a demonstrated understanding of the importance of preserving democracy and its vital institutions, including, but not limited to, the free press, free access to libraries, compulsory education, and the federalist system. The Superintendent shall limit recommendations to content that is not already included in the criteria established pursuant to subdivision (c).

(e) School district participation in this program is voluntary.