

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1202

S.P. 491

In Senate, March 20, 2025

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

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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 <b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
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 <b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
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 <b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$1,099,491</b>	<b>\$131,846</b>
40		
41 <b>DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS</b>	<u><b>\$1,099,491</b></u>	<u><b>\$131,846</b></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.