



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0420-2022, **Version:** *

Res. No. 420

Resolution calling on the New York City Department of Education to provide civic engagement training for all public high school students and to award credentials to students who complete such training.

By Council Members Dinowitz, Williams, Louis, Yeger, Joseph, Stevens, Richardson Jordan, Brewer, Schulman, Farías, Restler, Lee, De La Rosa, Ung, Hanks, Abreu and Riley

Whereas, The Civics Secures Democracy Act of 2021 (S.879/H.R.1814), sponsored by United States Senator Christopher Coons and United States Representative Rose DeLauro, includes in its definition of civic education the “[d]evelopment of civic behaviors, including civic habits and practices such as voting, serving on juries, engagement in deliberative discussions, volunteering, attending public meetings, and other activities related to civic life”; and

Whereas, a June 2020 Brookings Institution report by Rebecca Winthrop, entitled “The Need for Civic Education in 21st-Century Schools,” noted a lack of engagement in civic behaviors, especially among young voters, and called on schools to play a pivotal role in increasing civic engagement by “helping young people develop and practice the knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors needed to participate in civic life”; and

Whereas, CivXNow, a cross-partisan coalition of over 250 nonprofit and philanthropic organizations and higher education institutions, points out that civic education must help students develop the attitudes and skills they need to engage in important civic behaviors, including voting, volunteering, attending public meetings, and engaging in other ways with their communities; and

Whereas, New York City (NYC) public high schools enroll about 315,000 students, who, with appropriate instruction and support, could become actively engaged in civic and community activities in NYC; and

Whereas, All NYC youth aged 11 and older are eligible to take part in NYC's Participatory Budgeting process, which invites community members to come together to discuss and propose how \$5 million of the NYC budget should be spent to build stronger communities; and

Whereas, NYC youth aged 16 and older are eligible to be appointed by the Borough Presidents to serve on NYC's 59 Community Boards, which deal with community issues, including land use, transportation, small businesses, youth programs, education, and the environment; and

Whereas, Participation in Government and Civics, usually taught in grade 12, is a required course for high school graduation in New York State, but does not specify that students must be actively engaged in civic behaviors as part of the course; and

Whereas, The New York City Department of Education (DOE) could provide civic engagement training through the Participation in Government and Civics course, through other curricula, or through a variety of in-school and after-school clubs, organizations, and activities in order to get students actively engaged in civic behaviors while still in high school; and

Whereas, The DOE could provide credentials to students to signify the successful completion of civic engagement training such that students would be able to include that credential on their college applications, job applications, and résumés; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York call on the New York City Department of Education to provide civic engagement training for all public high school students and to award credentials to students who complete such training.

LS #11317 and #11516
11/15/22
RHP