# Indiana repeals high school ethnic studies mandate amid federal compliance concerns



The state of Indiana has repealed its mandate requiring high schools to offer an ethnic studies course, a move officials say is necessary to comply with federal education guidance and align with President Donald Trump’s directives concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in public schools.

The repeal was included in House Bill 1002, a comprehensive 120-page bill described as a "deregulation" measure, aimed at removing what Republican lawmakers considered redundant or outdated provisions from Indiana’s education laws. The bill passed both chambers of the Indiana General Assembly on Thursday and is now awaiting the signature of Governor Mike Braun.

Since 2018, Indiana law required every high school in the state to offer at least one semester-long elective course on ethnic studies annually. This requirement was part of broader academic standards that presented course options focusing on cultural self-awareness, histories, and practices of various ethnic and racial groups. Topics included, for example, the origins and contributions of diverse communities in America.

Senator Jeff Raatz, Republican from Richmond, explained on the Senate floor that the federal Department of Education requested that certain courses, including ethnic studies, be removed from state requirements. “It comes from Washington, D.C., which we get over a billion dollars for in education,” he said, referring to the federal funding Indiana receives.

Rep. Bob Behning, a Republican from Indianapolis, noted that the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) had asked for the ethnic studies language to be struck because it might violate a 2023 executive order from President Trump restricting the consideration of race in educational policies. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights had issued a "dear colleague" letter earlier this year cautioning educational institutions against race-based decisions and warning that failure to comply could risk federal funding.

Indiana schools receive significant federal support, with $1.88 billion allocated for K-12 education, averaging approximately $1,815 per student, according to the Education Data Initiative.

Courtney Crown, a spokeswoman for the IDOE, said in correspondence that the department is reviewing all state education standards and requirements to ensure alignment with recent federal and state directives. Crown indicated that the federal Department of Education instructed all state educational agencies to reaffirm compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, emphasising that compliance is "a material condition for the continued receipt of federal financial assistance."

The Trump administration’s letter interprets a 2023 U.S. Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action in higher education admissions as broadly applicable to all race-conscious policies in education.

However, some lawmakers have expressed disagreement with the reasoning behind the repeal. Rep. Vernon Smith, a Democrat from Gary who helped enact the original 2018 legislation, described the end of the requirement as “painful.” He said, “We fought hard to get that into the curriculum for schools.”

Senator Greg Taylor, Democratic representative from Indianapolis and author of the 2018 ethnic studies legislation, also criticised the repeal. Speaking on the Senate floor, Taylor said, “If the students wanted to take the course, and they had enough students sign up, they could take the course. It didn't require that they teach African American studies. It didn't require that they teach Latin American studies. It didn't require that they teach Native American studies.” He added, “We are better than this.”

Smith questioned whether the removal of a single elective course truly endangered the state's federal funding, suggesting the state was responding out of fear rather than necessity. He stated, “It has nothing to do with the curriculum or instruction or anything like that. They’re panicking and responding to the wishes of the president…”

The House Bill 1002 passed the Senate with a vote of 27-21, effectively rescinding the ethnic studies requirement for Indiana high schools. The final decision now rests with Governor Mike Braun.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/dei-trump-indiana-ethnic-studies-course-elective-removed-standards> - This article supports the claim that Indiana will no longer require high schools to offer ethnic studies courses to comply with federal guidelines, particularly due to concerns over federal funding.
2. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/indiana/2025/04/25/racial-class-mandate-ends-and-more-education-bills-2025-legislative-session/> - This source corroborates the end of Indiana's ethnic studies course mandate and explains the role of federal funding in the decision, citing legislative and federal pressures.
3. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/indiana/2025/04/22/wayne-township-schools-ends-diverse-business-policy-after-dei-pressure/> - This article mentions the broader context of DEI pressure in Indiana, including the end of diverse business policies, which relates to the repeal of the ethnic studies requirement.
4. <https://mirrorindy.org/indiana-schools-must-end-race-based-programs-or-risk-losing-federal-funding/> - This article provides details on the federal guidance that prompted Indiana schools to end race-based programs, including a warning about potential loss of federal funding.
5. <https://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/dear-colleague-letter-schools-universitites-indiana-department-education-iche> - This source explains how Indiana schools were instructed to end 'race-based' programming under threat of losing federal funding, aligning with broader federal directives.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source is mentioned as the original article source but does not provide specific additional evidence beyond the summary.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiowFBVV95cUxQY3RwU0hUc1hiVExtdWQzMnRDOEYxSTc3N2dqelcxd1pObjRzWGJhVUZQVFR4S0FHZ09oY2xLR2R4a19tX0NYV2FsSFRJLTNlb19PRmJTME1TeWdMZ0tQZkJ1UkMyUlo3Q1VBdjVDSkJheVBOWXV4UWVRcHBCWVF1bWdOU2haZVBDMEJrRzNjMXljaWdqaEhzMUdxTEt2TG5vYzU4?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data