CHAPTER 103

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS — UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP TEST

S.F. 369

AN ACT requiring students to pass the United States citizenship and immigration services naturalization civics test as a condition of high school graduation and high school equivalency diplomas.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. Section 256.9, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new subsections:

NEW SUBSECTION. 69. *a.* Develop and distribute to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools a test in multiple-choice format that consists of all of the questions contained in the most recent version of the civics test developed by the United States citizenship and immigration services.

b. On or before the January 31 immediately subsequent to each general election which is a presidential election, update the test described in paragraph *"a"* and distribute the updated test to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools.

NEW SUBSECTION. 70. *a.* Study the relationship between high school graduation rates and the number of students who attain a passing score on the civics test described in section 280.9A, subsection lA, and submit a report that contains the results of the study to the general assembly on or before June 30, 2029.

b. This subsection is repealed July 1, 2029.

Sec. 2. Section 256E.7, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:

NEW PARAGRAPH. *0r.* Be subject to and comply with the requirements of section 280.9A, subsection lA, related to the administration of a civics test in the same manner as a school district.

Sec. 3. Section 256F.4, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:

NEW PARAGRAPH. *r.* Be subject to and comply with the requirements of section 280.9A, subsection lA, related to the administration of a civics test in the same manner as a school district.

Sec. 4. Section 259A.1, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

259A.1 Assessment of competency.

The department of education shall cause to be made available for qualified individuals a high school equivalency diploma. The diploma shall be issued ~~on the basis of demonstrated~~ to qualified individuals who successfully pass the civics test as set forth in section 280.9A, and demonstrate competence in all of the following core areas: reading, language arts, literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Sec. 5. Section 280.9A, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. *a.* Commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2026, the board of directors of each local public school district and the authorities in charge of each accredited nonpublic school shall administer to students enrolled in grades nine through twelve the most recent version of the test distributed to the school district or accredited nonpublic school by the director of the department of education pursuant to section 256.9, subsection 69, in written or electronic format, and shall ensure that each student receives one passing score on the test as a condition of graduation. The board of directors of a local public school district and the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school shall not be required to administer the test to a student who has received a passing score on the test.

b. A student must answer at least sixty percent of the questions on the test described in paragraph *"a"* correctly to attain a passing score. A student who fails to answer at least sixty percent of the questions on such test correctly may retake the test as many times as is necessary.

c. The board of directors of a local public school district or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school shall not impose or collect any fee in connection with the administration of the test described in paragraph *"a"*.

d. The board of directors of a local public school district and the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school may do all of the following:

(1) Modify the test described in paragraph *"a"* for a student who has an individualized education program or a plan under section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §794.

(2) Develop and administer an alternate test to a student who has a significant intellectual disability.

(3) Modify the test described in paragraph *"a"* for a student who is an English learner as defined in section 280.4.

e. On or before June 30 of each year, the board of directors of each local public school district and the authorities in charge of each accredited nonpublic school shall submit the results of the test described in paragraph *"a"* to the department of education.

f. The state board of education shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer this subsection.

Approved May 27, 2025