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[SF 209](#) – Civics Education (LSB1908SV)  
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Fiscal Note Version – New

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### **Description**

[SF 209](#) requires school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to offer students in grades 9 through 12 at least one opportunity to take the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services naturalization civics test. The Iowa Department of Education would be required to develop an alternate form of that test for children with disabilities or children who are limited English proficient.

### **Background**

In December 2016, the Education Commission of the States issued a 50-state [comparison](#) of civic education policies. This report found that 47 states, including Iowa, address civic education in state statute. Every state requires students to complete coursework in civics or social studies to graduate.

The Joe Foss Institute makes a sample of the [civics test](#) available on its website free of charge. There are options for the multiple-choice test ranging from 10 to 100 questions.

### **Assumptions**

- The Department of Education has indicated it would provide translations of the examination in the seven most commonly spoken non-English languages in Iowa schools. United States Citizenship and Immigration Services offers [translated versions of the test](#) covering four of those languages. Translation to the three remaining languages is estimated to cost \$1,400 per language. It is estimated that it will cost the Department \$50,000 to develop and validate an alternative assessment for children with intellectual disabilities.
- Students would have the opportunity to take the test, in written or digital format, during regular class time. No additional teacher classroom time would be required.
- There may be additional costs to local school districts to provide translations of the test in additional languages. Because the test is optional for students, the extent of the need for additional translations cannot be determined.

### **Fiscal Impact**

[SF 209](#) is estimated to cost the Department of Education \$54,200 to develop an alternative assessment for children with intellectual disabilities and to translate the test into three additional languages.

There may be additional costs to districts if local translation into additional languages is needed. Costs to local school districts cannot be estimated.

**Sources**

Department of Education  
Education Commission of the States  
Joe Foss Institute  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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/s/ Holly M. Lyons

February 11, 2019

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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.  
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