



SF 2341 – Civics Education High School Graduation Requirement (LSB5706SV)
Analyst: Robin Madison (515.281.5270) robin.madison@legis.iowa.gov
Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

[Senate File 2341](#) adds a new requirement for high school graduation beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. Under the Bill, students would be required to pass, with a score of at least 60.0% correct, the civics examination administered by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in order to receive a high school diploma. The Bill requires that the examination include all 100 questions used for awarding U.S. citizenship.

The Bill requires that each student be afforded the opportunity to take the citizenship examination at least once each school year in grades 7 through 12 until the student has achieved a passing score. The Bill specifies that completion of the examination in grade 7 or 8 qualifies for purposes of high school graduation. The Bill further specifies that the examination be proctored and completed without the use of ancillary materials.

The Bill requires the Department of Education to approve alternative assessment measures for students requiring special education and those identified as limited English proficient.

Background

In September 2017, the Education Commission of the States issued an [overview](#) of the [Civics Education Initiative](#) of the nonprofit [Joe Foss Institute](#). The report found that 17 states had implemented measures requiring students to take the citizenship examination, and eight of those states had made it a requirement for graduation. At least four of the states require a selection of 50 or fewer questions on the examination, rather than the full 100.

The Joe Foss Institute makes the [examination](#) available on its website free of charge. The online examination issues a certificate of completion with the student's score.

Assumptions

The Department of Education will translate the examination into the seven most common non-English languages among the school districts and make those available on its website. The Department will also develop an alternative assessment for children with disabilities. The Department estimates this cost to be \$60,000.

School districts will offer the exam at least once each year to students in grades 7 through 12. The test will require the use of classroom time currently devoted to other activities or it will be offered in a proctored setting outside of regular classroom time, which will incur additional costs for proctoring.

Fiscal Impact

[Senate File 2341](#) is estimated to have a fiscal impact of \$60,000 for the Department of Education to develop assessments for students requiring special education and those identified as limited English proficient. It is anticipated that the Department of Education will absorb those costs into its FY 2019 budget.

School districts may incur additional costs as a result of [SF 2341](#) in order to provide the required proctoring of examinations. The extent of those costs is unknown.

Sources

Department of Education
Iowa Association of School Boards
Education Commission of the States
Joe Foss Institute

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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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.
