

House File 220 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 220

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A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to administration of a civics examination
2 students must pass as a condition of high school graduation
3 and for issuance of a high school equivalency diploma and
4 including applicability provisions.
5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 256.9, Code 2017, is amended by adding
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 61. Approve alternative assessment
4 measures pursuant to section 280.9A, subsection 1, paragraph
5 "b".

6 Sec. 2. Section 259A.1, Code 2017, is amended to read as
7 follows:

8 **259A.1 Tests.**

9 The department of education shall cause to be made available
10 for qualified individuals a high school equivalency diploma.
11 The diploma shall be issued on the basis of satisfactory
12 competence as shown by tests covering ~~all of the following:~~
13 reading, language arts, literacy, mathematics, science, and
14 social studies, and as shown by successfully passing a civics
15 examination as set forth in section 280.9A.

16 Sec. 3. Section 280.9A, subsection 1, Code 2017, is amended
17 to read as follows:

18 1. The board of directors of each local public school
19 district and the authorities in charge of each nonpublic school
20 shall require that all students in grades nine through twelve
21 successfully complete or pass, as applicable, as a condition of
22 graduation, instruction the following:

23 a. Instruction in American history and the governments of
24 Iowa and the United States, including instruction in voting
25 statutes and procedures, voter registration requirements,
26 the use of paper ballots and voting systems in the election
27 process, and the method of acquiring and casting an absentee
28 ballot.

29 b. A civics examination that shall be the same as, and shall
30 include all questions used in, the latest available civics
31 examination administered by the United States citizenship
32 and immigration services. The proctored examination shall
33 be completed without ancillary materials and only students
34 who score a proficiency of sixty percent or higher shall
35 be considered to have successfully passed the examination.

1 Alternative assessment measures approved by the department of
2 education pursuant to section 256.9, subsection 66, may be
3 administered to children requiring special education as defined
4 in section 256B.2, subsection 1, and to students identified
5 as limited English proficient pursuant to section 280.4.
6 Each student shall be provided with an opportunity to take
7 the civics examination at least one time per school calendar
8 year. A student may take the test at any time after enrolling
9 in grade seven and may repeat the test as often as necessary
10 to demonstrate proficiency. If a student in grade seven or
11 eight passes the civics examination, the student has met the
12 graduation requirement applicable to this paragraph "b". A
13 fee shall not be imposed or collected in connection with this
14 paragraph "b".

15 Sec. 4. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to school years
16 beginning on or after July 1, 2018.

17 Sec. 5. STATE MANDATE FUNDING SPECIFIED. In accordance
18 with section 25B.2, subsection 3, the state cost of requiring
19 compliance with any state mandate included in this Act shall
20 be paid by a school district from state school foundation aid
21 received by the school district under section 257.16. This
22 specification of the payment of the state cost shall be deemed
23 to meet all of the state funding-related requirements of
24 section 25B.2, subsection 3, and no additional state funding
25 shall be necessary for the full implementation of this Act
26 by and enforcement of this Act against all affected school
27 districts.

28 EXPLANATION

29 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
30 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

31 This bill requires students enrolled in school districts
32 and accredited nonpublic schools to successfully pass as a
33 condition of graduation a proctored, or supervised, civics
34 examination that is the same as the latest available civics
35 examination administered by the United States citizenship

1 and immigration services. Individuals seeking a high school
2 equivalency diploma must also pass such an examination.
3 Students are prohibited from using ancillary materials during
4 the examination and must achieve a score of at least 60 percent
5 to successfully pass the examination.

6 Each student must be given an opportunity to take the test
7 at least once every school year, beginning in grade seven,
8 and each student may take the test, at no cost, as often as
9 necessary to demonstrate proficiency. If a student in grade
10 seven or eight passes the civics examination, the student has
11 met the graduation requirement.

12 The director of the department of education is tasked with
13 approving alternative assessment measures that school districts
14 and accredited nonpublic schools may administer to children
15 requiring special education and to English language learners.

16 The bill applies to school years beginning on or after July
17 1, 2018.

18 The bill may include a state mandate as defined in Code
19 section 25B.3. The bill requires that the state cost of
20 any state mandate included in the bill be paid by a school
21 district from state school foundation aid received by the
22 school district under Code section 257.16. The specification
23 is deemed to constitute state compliance with any state mandate
24 funding-related requirements of Code section 25B.2. The
25 inclusion of this specification is intended to reinstate the
26 requirement of political subdivisions to comply with any state
27 mandates included in the bill.