

House Study Bill 97 - Introduced

SENATE/HOUSE FILE _____
BY (PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION BILL)

A BILL FOR

- 1 An Act relating to high school equivalency programs and
- 2 assessments and including effective date provisions.
- 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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

3 **259A.1 Tests Assessment of competency.**

4 The department of education shall cause to be made available
5 for qualified individuals a high school equivalency diploma.
6 The diploma shall be issued on the basis of ~~satisfactory~~
7 demonstrated competence as shown by tests covering in all of
8 the following core areas: reading, language arts, literacy,
9 mathematics, science, and social studies.

10 Sec. 2. Section 259A.2, Code 2017, is amended to read as
11 follows:

12 **259A.2 Age Application requirements.**

13 1. Every applicant must shall have attained the age of
14 eighteen years, be a nonhigh have not graduated from high
15 school graduate, and not be currently enrolled in a secondary
16 school. However, an

17 2. An applicant is not eligible for the a high school
18 equivalency diploma until after the class in which the
19 applicant was enrolled has graduated from high school.

20 3. Application shall be made to a high school equivalency
21 program or testing center approved by the department of
22 education, accompanied by an application fee in an amount
23 prescribed by the department.

24 4. The test Test scores shall be forwarded by the scorer of
25 the test to the department of education.

26 5. Evidence that an applicant demonstrates competence as
27 required under section 259A.1 shall be made available to the
28 department of education by the high school equivalency program
29 for verification purposes.

30 Sec. 3. Section 259A.3, Code 2017, is amended to read as
31 follows:

32 **259A.3 Notice and fee.**

33 Any applicant who has ~~achieved~~ demonstrated competence in
34 the minimum passing core areas under standards as established
35 by the department, and approved adopted by the state board of

1 education pursuant to section 259A.5, shall be issued a high
2 school equivalency diploma by the department of education upon
3 payment of an additional amount determined in rules adopted by
4 the state board of education to cover the actual costs of the
5 production and distribution of the diploma. The state board of
6 education may also by rule establish a fee for the issuance or
7 verification of a transcript which shall be based on the actual
8 costs of the production or verification of a transcript.

9 Sec. 4. Section 259A.5, Code 2017, is amended to read as
10 follows:

11 **259A.5 Rules — duties.**

12 1. The director of the department of education shall ~~adopt~~
13 ~~tests~~ prescribe assessments, definitions of terms, and forms
14 and resources as necessary for the administration of this
15 chapter.

16 2. The state board of education shall adopt rules
17 under chapter 17A to carry out this chapter, including but
18 not limited to rules establishing standards for content
19 and measures by which competence in core areas is to be
20 demonstrated and assessed. Such measures shall include but
21 not be limited to a test battery, credit-based measures, and
22 attainment of other academic credentials of equivalent or
23 greater rigor.

24 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE UPON ENACTMENT. This Act, being deemed of
25 immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

26 EXPLANATION

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

29 This bill modifies Code chapter 259A, which provides for
30 high school equivalency programs and assessments, and for the
31 issuance of high school equivalency diplomas by the department
32 of education.

33 Under the bill, issuance of a high school equivalency
34 diploma is to be based on an applicant's demonstrated
35 competence in core areas. Currently, the diploma is issued

1 based on satisfactory competence, which an applicant meets
2 by achieving the minimum passing standards in the same areas
3 that under the bill are described as "core areas": reading,
4 language arts, literacy, mathematics, science, and social
5 studies.

6 Currently, an applicant must submit an application to a
7 testing center, but, under the bill, application may be made
8 either to a high school equivalency program or to a testing
9 center. The bill directs high school equivalency programs to
10 make available to the department evidence of an applicant's
11 demonstrated competence.

12 The bill requires the director of the department of
13 education to prescribe assessments and resources, and strikes
14 a requirement that the director adopt tests. Currently, the
15 state board of education has the authority to adopt rules to
16 carry out the Code chapter. The bill maintains this broad
17 authority, while specifying that the rules must include but
18 not be limited to rules establishing standards for content
19 and measures by which competence in core areas is to be
20 demonstrated and assessed. Such measures shall include but
21 not be limited to a test battery, credit-based measures, and
22 attainment of other academic credentials of equivalent or
23 greater rigor.