

Senate File 2341 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2341
BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 3119)

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 2018, is amended by adding
2 the following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 60. Approve alternative assessment
4 measures pursuant to section 280.9A, subsection 1, paragraph
5 "b".

6 Sec. 2. Section 259A.1, Code 2018, is amended to read as
7 follows:

8 **259A.1 Assessment of competency.**

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 demonstrated~~
12 to qualified individuals who successfully pass the civics
13 examination as set forth in section 280.9A, and demonstrate
14 competence in all of the following core areas: reading,
15 language arts, literacy, mathematics, science, and social
16 studies.

17 Sec. 3. Section 280.9A, subsection 1, Code 2018, is amended
18 to read as follows:

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

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

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

1 be considered to have successfully passed the examination.
2 Alternative assessment measures approved by the department of
3 education pursuant to section 256.9, subsection 60, may be
4 administered to children requiring special education as defined
5 in section 256B.2, subsection 1, and to students identified
6 as limited English proficient pursuant to section 280.4.
7 Each student shall be provided with an opportunity to take
8 the civics examination at least one time per school calendar
9 year. A student may take the test at any time after enrolling
10 in grade seven and may repeat the test as often as necessary
11 to demonstrate proficiency. If a student in grade seven or
12 eight passes the civics examination, the student has met the
13 graduation requirement applicable to this paragraph "b". A
14 fee shall not be imposed or collected in connection with this
15 paragraph "b".

16 Sec. 4. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to school years
17 beginning on or after July 1, 2019.

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

29 EXPLANATION

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

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

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

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

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

17 The bill applies to school years beginning on or after July
18 1, 2019.

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