

**Senate Study Bill 1057 - 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.