

House File 165 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 165
BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 30)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act requiring students to pass the United States citizenship
2 and immigration services naturalization civics test as
3 a condition of high school graduation and high school
4 equivalency diplomas.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. Section 259A.1, Code 2025, is amended to read as
2 follows:

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

4 The department of education shall cause to be made available
5 for qualified individuals a high school equivalency diploma. The
6 diploma shall be issued ~~on the basis of demonstrated~~ to qualified
7 individuals who successfully pass the civics examination as set
8 forth in section 280.9A, and demonstrate competence in all of
9 the following core areas: reading, language arts, literacy,
10 mathematics, science, and social studies.

11 Sec. 2. Section 280.9A, Code 2025, is amended by adding the
12 following new subsection:

13 NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. a. Commencing with the school year
14 beginning July 1, 2026, the board of directors of each local
15 public school district and the authorities in charge of each
16 nonpublic school shall require that all students in grades nine
17 through twelve attain, as a condition of graduation, a passing
18 score on an assessment that consists of the multiple choice
19 questions contained in the most recent version of the civics
20 test developed by the United States citizenship and immigration
21 services.

22 b. A student must answer at least sixty percent of the
23 questions on the assessment described in paragraph "a" correctly
24 to attain a passing score. A student who fails to answer at
25 least sixty percent of the questions on such assessment correctly
26 may retake the assessment as many times as is necessary.

27 c. The board of directors of a local public school district
28 or the authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school
29 shall not impose or collect any fee in connection with the
30 administration of the assessment described in paragraph "a".

31 d. The state board of education shall adopt rules pursuant to
32 chapter 17A to administer this subsection.

33 **EXPLANATION**

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

1 This bill requires students to pass the United States
2 citizenship and immigration services naturalization civics test
3 as a condition of high school graduation and high school
4 equivalency diplomas.

5 The bill provides that the board of directors of each local
6 public school district and the authorities in charge of each
7 nonpublic school are to require, commencing with the school year
8 beginning July 1, 2026, all students in grades 9 through 12
9 to attain, as a condition of graduation, a passing score on
10 an assessment that consists of the multiple choice questions
11 contained in the most recent version of the civics test developed
12 by the United States citizenship and immigration services. A
13 student must answer at least 60 percent of the questions on
14 the assessment correctly to attain a passing score. A student
15 who fails to answer at least 60 percent of the questions on
16 the assessment correctly may retake the assessment as many
17 times as is necessary. The bill prohibits school districts and
18 accredited nonpublic schools from imposing or collecting any fee
19 in connection with the administration of the assessment. The
20 bill requires the state board of education to adopt rules to
21 administer these provisions. The bill provides that individuals
22 seeking a high school equivalency diploma must also pass such an
23 examination.