



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 2064

graduation requirement; civics test

Sponsors: Representatives Montenegro, Barton, Borrelli, et al.

X Committee on Government and Higher Education

Caucus and COW

House Engrossed

OVERVIEW

HB 2064 directs the State Board of Education to include the requirement for students to pass a civics test in the high school academic graduation standards, beginning in the 2016-17 school year.

HISTORY

According to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), *naturalization* is the process of granting U.S. citizenship to a foreign citizen or national after he or she meets specific requirements outlined in the Immigration and Nationality Act. One of the requirements is that most applicants must pass a naturalization test, consisting of two components:

- 1) English language proficiency
- 2) Knowledge of U.S. history and government (known as the civics test)

The civics test is based on 100 U.S. history and government questions. It is administered by a USCIS Officer who asks up to 10 questions on the list. An applicant must correctly answer at least 6 out of the 10 questions to pass the test.

A.R.S. § 15-203 outlines the duties and requirements of the State Board of Education (SBE), including the requirement for SBE to prescribe minimum competency requirements for high school graduation (§15-203 (A)(13)). SBE last updated the Arizona Social Studies Standard in 2006, more information on these Standards can be found at: <http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/academic-standards/social-studies/>

PROVISIONS

1. Requires the SBE to include in the high school graduation standards a requirement for students to correctly answer at least 60 out of 100 questions on a test identical to the civics component of the naturalization test used by USCIS.
 - a. The new requirement is effective for the 2016-17 school year.
 - b. Passage of the test is required in order to graduate from high school or obtain a general equivalency diploma.
 - c. The requirement applies to district and charter schools.
2. Allows a school district governing board to determine the manner and method to administer the test.
3. Permits a student who does not pass the test to retake it until he or she passes.

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4. States that students who receive special education are not required to pass the test unless specific conditions are met.