



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 2064

graduation requirement; civics test

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

DPA Committee on Government and Higher Education

DPA Caucus and COW

X As Transmitted to the Governor

OVERVIEW

HB 2064 directs the State Board of Education to include the requirement for students to pass a civics test in the high school competency requirements for graduation, 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 competency requirements 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 high school equivalency diploma.
 - c. The requirement applies to district and charter schools.
2. Allows a school district governing board or charter school governing body to determine the manner and method to administer the test.
3. Requires the school to document on a student's transcript when the student passes the test.
4. Permits a student who does not pass the test to retake it until he or she passes.

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5. States that students who receive special education are not required to pass the test unless specific conditions are met.
6. Allows the act to be cited as the “American Civics Act.”