

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Requiring a civics test for high school graduation

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Overview

Amends Minnesota's high school graduation requirements by requiring students to pass a civics test containing the questions that applicants for U.S. naturalization must answer.

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- 1 **Graduation requirements.** Amends Minnesota's high school graduation requirements to include a requirement that students pass a civics test containing the questions that applicants for U.S. naturalization must answer.
- 2 **Required knowledge and understanding of civics.** (a) Defines "civics test" to mean the 100 questions U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officers use to select the questions they pose to applicants for naturalization.

(b) Requires students who are enrolled in a public or nonpublic school or in an adult basic education program and are pursuing a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, to correctly answer at least 60 of the 100 questions on the civics test. Requires school districts and schools to record on the student's transcript whether the student passed the civics test. Makes a home school student subject to this requirement if the student receives a diploma from a school other than a home school. Allows school districts and schools to exempt students with disabilities from this requirement if the student's individualized education program team determines the requirement is inappropriate and establishes an alternative requirement. Allows a school district or school to administer the civics test in a language other than English.

(c) Directs school districts and schools to determine the form and manner in which to administer the civics test as part of the social studies curriculum and allows a secondary

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school student, beginning in grade 7, to take and retake the test in whole or in part until the student correctly answers 60 of the 100 questions on the civics test.

(d) Prohibits the commissioner, school districts, and schools from charging students any fees related to this test.

Makes this section effective for students graduating in the 2016-2017 school year and later.

- 3** **Required academic standards.** Includes the content of the civics test in the statewide social studies standards.

Makes this section effective immediately.

- 4** **Graduation requirements.** Incorporates the content of the civics test questions into the three and one-half social studies credits required for high school graduation.

Makes this section effective immediately.

- 5** **Statewide and local assessments.** Excludes the civics test from the prohibition against developing statewide social studies assessments.

Makes this section effective immediately.

- 6** **School performance reports.** Requires the education commissioner to report the total number of students by grade taking the civics test and the number of students by grade who correctly answered at least 60 questions.

Makes this section effective immediately.