

Committee Report

REGULAR CALENDAR

February 18, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

**The Majority of the Committee on Education to which
was referred HB 320,**

**AN ACT requiring a civics competency assessment as a
high school graduation requirement. Having
considered the same, report the same with the following
amendment, and the recommendation that the bill
OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT.**

Rep. Michael Moffett

FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEE

MAJORITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee:	Education
Bill Number:	HB 320
Title:	requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.
Date:	February 18, 2021
Consent Calendar:	REGULAR
Recommendation:	OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT 2021-0271h

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill, as amended, requires that as a graduation requirement, NH high school students shall score at least 70% on the 128- question citizenship exam created by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Provisions are included for districts to make local accommodations for special education students. Numerous other states have already successfully put this requirement in place to better ensure that high school students possess civics education fundamentals in order to be more informed and engaged U.S. citizens.

Vote 12-8.

Rep. Michael Moffett
FOR THE MAJORITY

Original: House Clerk
Cc: Committee Bill File

REGULAR CALENDAR

Education

HB 320, requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement. **MAJORITY: OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT. MINORITY: INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE.**

Rep. Michael Moffett for the **Majority** of Education. This bill, as amended, requires that as a graduation requirement, NH high school students shall score at least 70% on the 128- question citizenship exam created by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Provisions are included for districts to make local accommodations for special education students. Numerous other states have already successfully put this requirement in place to better ensure that high school students possess civics education fundamentals in order to be more informed and engaged U.S. citizens. **Vote 12-8.**

Original: House Clerk
Cc: Committee Bill File

REGULAR CALENDAR

February 18, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

**The Minority of the Committee on Education to which
was referred HB 320,**

**AN ACT requiring a civics competency assessment as a
high school graduation requirement. Having
considered the same, and being unable to agree with
the Majority, report with the following resolution:
RESOLVED, that it is INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE.**

Rep. Patricia Cornell

FOR THE MINORITY OF THE COMMITTEE

MINORITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee:	Education
Bill Number:	HB 320
Title:	requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.
Date:	February 18, 2021
Consent Calendar:	REGULAR
Recommendation:	INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE

STATEMENT OF INTENT

While the minority agrees that civics is an integral component of a student's education, we feel that this bill, requiring students to attain 70% or better on the 2020 Civics Naturalization examination, in addition to a passing grade on the already required civics competencies required by state statutes, in order to graduate, is not the path to accomplish this. High school graduation requirements include one credit in United States and New Hampshire history; 1/2 credit in United States and New Hampshire government/ civics; and 1/2 credit in world history, global studies, or geography. Teaching to the test is always discouraged, but that is what this bill would do, with memorized information soon forgotten. Students would memorize the answers, rather than acquiring knowledge and understanding. We believe in local control, and we should trust our local school districts to be providing civics education to our students. If this is not happening, it should be addressed by local school boards.

Rep. Patricia Cornell
FOR THE MINORITY

Original: House Clerk
Cc: Committee Bill File

REGULAR CALENDAR

Education

HB 320, requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.
INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE.

Rep. Patricia Cornell for the **Minority** of Education. While the minority agrees that civics is an integral component of a student's education, we feel that this bill, requiring students to attain 70% or better on the 2020 Civics Naturalization examination, in addition to a passing grade on the already required civics competencies required by state statutes, in order to graduate, is not the path to accomplish this. High school graduation requirements include one credit in United States and New Hampshire history; 1/2 credit in United States and New Hampshire government/ civics; and 1/2 credit in world history, global studies, or geography. Teaching to the test is always discouraged, but that is what this bill would do, with memorized information soon forgotten. Students would memorize the answers, rather than acquiring knowledge and understanding. We believe in local control, and we should trust our local school districts to be providing civics education to our students. If this is not happening, it should be addressed by local school boards.

Original: House Clerk

Cc: Committee Bill File

Rep. Moffett, Merr. 9
Rep. Layon, Rock. 6
February 8, 2021
2021-0271h
06/04

Amendment to HB 320

1 Amend the bill by replacing section 1 with the following:

2

3 1 Civics Instruction. Amend RSA 189:11, II to read as follows:

4 II. As a component of instruction under paragraph I, a locally developed competency
5 assessment of United States government and civics that includes, but is not limited to, the nature,
6 purpose, structure, function, and history of the United States government, the rights and
7 responsibilities of citizens, and noteworthy government and civic leaders, shall be administered to
8 students as part of the **required** high school course in history and government of the United States
9 and New Hampshire. ~~[Students who attain a passing grade on the competency assessment shall be
10 eligible for a certificate issued by the school district. The United States Citizenship and Immigration
11 Services (USCIS) test may be used to satisfy the requirement of this paragraph.]~~ **To be eligible for
12 a graduation certificate, a student shall attain a locally sanctioned passing grade on the
13 competency assessment, and a grade of 70 percent or better on the 128 question civics
14 (history and government) naturalization examination developed by the 2020 United States
15 Citizen and Immigration Services. Schools may modify the naturalization examination for
16 a child with a disability in accordance with the child's individualized education program.**
17 By June 30 of each year, each school district shall submit the results of either the locally developed
18 competency assessment of United States government and civics or the United States Citizenship and
19 Immigration Services (USCIS) test to the department of education.

Voting Sheets

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK



Amendment

1/22/2021 9:56:47 AM
Roll Call Committee Registers
Report

2021 SESSION

Education

Bill #: HB 320 Motion: OTP AM #: 02716 Exec Session Date: 2-18-2021

<u>Members</u>	<u>YEAS</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>NV</u>
Ladd, Rick M. Chairman	✓		
Cordelli, Glenn Vice Chairman	✓		
Boehm, Ralph G.	✓		
Allard, James C.	✓		
Lekas, Alicia D.	✓		
Moffett, Michael	✓		
Hobson, Deborah L. <i>Jeanne Motter</i>	✓		
Andrus, Louise	✓		
Ford, Oliver J.	✓		
Layon, Erica J.	✓		
Soti, Julius F.	✓		
Myler, Mel	✓		
Luneau, David J.		✓	
Shaw, Barbara E. Clerk	✓		
Cornell, Patricia	✓		
Tanner, Linda L.	✓		
Ellison, Arthur S.	✓		
Mullen, Sue M.	✓		
Ley, Douglas A.	✓		
Woodcock, Stephen L.		✓	
TOTAL VOTE:	18	2	

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK



1/22/2021 9:56:47 AM
Roll Call Committee Registers
Report

2021 SESSION

Education

Bill #: HB320 Motion: OTP/A AM #: 02716 Exec Session Date: 2-18-2021

<u>Members</u>	<u>YEAS</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>NV</u>
Ladd, Rick M. Chairman	✓		
Cordelli, Glenn Vice Chairman	✓		
Boehm, Ralph G.	✓		
Allard, James C.	✓		
Lekas, Alicia D.	✓		
Moffett, Michael	✓		
Hobson, Deborah L. <i>Jeanne Notter</i>	✓		
Andrus, Louise	✓		
Ford, Oliver J.	✓		
Layon, Erica J.	✓		
Soti, Julius F.	✓		
Myler, Mel		✓	
Luneau, David J.		✓	
Shaw, Barbara E. Clerk	✓		
Cornell, Patricia		✓	
Tanner, Linda L.		✓	
Ellison, Arthur S.		✓	
Mullen, Sue M.		✓	
Ley, Douglas A.		✓	
Woodcock, Stephen L.		✓	
TOTAL VOTE:	12	8	

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE HOUSE CLERK



1/22/2021 9:56:47 AM
Roll Call Committee Registers
Report

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Education

Bill #: HB 320 Motion: OTP/A AM #: 02716 Exec Session Date: 2-18-2021

<u>Members</u>	<u>YEAS</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>NV</u>
Ladd, Rick M. Chairman	✓		
Cordelli, Glenn Vice Chairman	✓		
Boehm, Ralph G.	✓		
Allard, James C.	✓		
Lekas, Alicia D.	✓		
Moffett, Michael	✓		
Hobson, Deborah L. <i>Jeanne Notter</i>	✓		
Andrus, Louise	✓		
Ford, Oliver J.	✓		
Layon, Erica J.	✓		
Soti, Julius F.	✓		
Myler, Mel		✓	
Luneau, David J.		✓	
Shaw, Barbara E. Clerk	✓		
Cornell, Patricia		✓	
Tanner, Linda L.		✓	
Ellison, Arthur S.		✓	
Mullen, Sue M.		✓	
Ley, Douglas A.		✓	
Woodcock, Stephen L.		✓	
TOTAL VOTE:	12	8	

Rep. Moffett, Merr. 9
Rep. Layon, Rock. 6
February 8, 2021
2021-0271h
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7 responsibilities of citizens, and noteworthy government and civic leaders, shall be administered to
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18 competency assessment of United States government and civics or the United States Citizenship and
19 Immigration Services (USCIS) test to the department of education.

Hearing Minutes

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

PUBLIC HEARING ON HB 320

BILL TITLE: requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.

DATE: February 4, 2021

LOB ROOM: 201/203 **Time Public Hearing Called to Order:** 1:00 PM

Time Adjourned: 1:55 PM

Committee Members: Reps. Ladd, Cordelli, Shaw, Boehm, Allard, A. Lekas, Moffett, Hobson, Andrus, Ford, Layon, Soti, Myler, Luneau, Cornell, Tanner, Ellison, Mullen, Ley and Woodcock

Bill Sponsors:

Rep. Moffett
Rep. Rouillard

Rep. Pearl
Rep. Shaw

Rep. Lang
Rep. Hobson

TESTIMONY

* Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

***Rep. Mike Moffett – Bill Sponsor**

- Presented the bill

Rep. Mel Myler

- High stake test because you have to pass it for graduation
- Legislative members should all have to take this test!
- Q. Can pass at any grade level? A: Yes.

Anne-marie Banfield – Advocate for Parental Rights

- Members of the Supreme Court have advocated for this bill
- Other states have passed similar laws
- Kids, upon graduation should know basics for how government works
- Knowledge of civics and government are necessary for the community

Carl Ladd – NHSAA

- Former student of Rep. Moffett
- Note sure this bill is necessary
- Already in RSA regarding civics and built into the competencies for civics
- All civics teachers are working hard to ensure that the content areas are being addressed

Megan Tuttle – NHEA

- Likes the idea but it may be vague in wording
- More specific in curriculum

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Barbara Shaw, Clerk

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

PUBLIC HEARING on Bill # HB 320
BILL TITLE: requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement
DATE: 2-4-2021

ROOM: 201-203

Time Public Hearing Called to Order: 1:00 PM

Time Adjourned: 1:55-PM

(please circle if present) all presents

Committee Members: Reps. Ladd, Cordelli, Shaw, Boehm, Allard, A. Lekas, Moffett, Hobson, Andrus, Ford, Layon, Soti, Myler, Luneau, Cornell, Tanner, Ellison, Mullen, Ley and Woodcock

TESTIMONY

* Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

① Rep. Mike Moffett - sponsor
* written testimony

② Rep. Mel Myler
• high ~~stake~~ stake test because you have to pass it for graduation
• Legislatives members should all have to take this test!

• Can pass at any grade level? Ans. Yes.

③ Annemaria Banfield - Advocate Parental Rights
• members of Supreme Court have advocated for this bill.
• other states have passed similar laws
• kids upon graduation should know basics for how government works
• knowledge of civics and government are necessary for the community

④ Carl Ladd - NH SAA.
• former student of Rep. Moffett!
• not sure this bill is necessary

- already in RSA, regarding civics and built into the competencies for civics.
 - all civics teachers are working hard to insure that the content areas are being addressed
- ⑤ Megan Tuttle - NHA - (self today)
- likes the idea but it may be vague in wording.
 - more specific in curriculum.

Respectfully submitted,
Rep. Barbara Shaw,
Clerk

House Remote Testify

Education Committee Testify List for Bill HB320 on 2021-02-04

Support: 15 Oppose: 27 Neutral: 3 Total to Testify: 3

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Testifying</u>	<u>Signed Up</u>
Ladd, Carl	carl@nhsaa.org	603.225.3230	A Lobbyist	New Hampshire School Administrators Association	Oppose	Yes (3m)	2/4/2021 8:22 AM
Banfield, Ann Marie	Banfieldannmarie@gmail.com	603.714.5814	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	Yes (3m)	2/3/2021 9:57 PM
Wilson, Rebecca	bwilson@nhsba.org	603.228.2061	A Lobbyist	NHSBA	Oppose	Yes (2m)	2/4/2021 11:05 AM
Aron, Judy	judy.aron@leg.state.nh.us	603.843.5908	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	2/3/2021 11:02 PM
Rathbun, Eric	ericrathbun@gmail.com	860.912.3751	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/3/2021 11:05 PM
See, Alvin	absee@4Liberty.net	7380656	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	2/3/2021 11:41 PM
Johnson, Dawn	Dawn.Johnson@leg.state.nh.us	603.305.8466	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	2/4/2021 11:02 AM
Spielman, Kathy	jspielman@comcast.net	603.397.7879	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/4/2021 8:46 AM
Spielman, James	jspielman@comcast.net	603.868.1626	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/4/2021 8:48 AM
Prudhomme O'Brien, Katherine	Nhstaterep@gmail.com	603.339.4598	An Elected Official	Rockingham 06/Derry	Support	No	2/4/2021 9:35 AM
Laura, Hardwick	laura.a.hardwick@doc.nh.gov	2711855	A Member of the Public	Myself	Neutral	No	2/4/2021 9:39 AM
Torosian, Peter	FlyBirdAir@aol.com	603.340.6261	An Elected Official	Rockingham Count District # 14	Support	No	2/4/2021 10:11 AM
Koch, Helmut	helmut.koch.2001@gmail.com	603.491.3306	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/4/2021 10:22 AM
Koch, Laurie	kochlj@aol.com	603.491.2000	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/4/2021 10:25 AM
ploszaj, tom	tom.ploszaj@leg.state.nh.us	603.279.9965	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	2/4/2021 10:36 AM
Spillane, James	james@jamespillane.org	603.463.5623	An Elected Official	Rockingham 2	Support	No	2/4/2021 11:34 AM
Camarota, Linda Rea	lrcamarota@gmail.com	603.540.8911	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	2/4/2021 12:46 PM
White, Melissa	melissa.white@doe.nh.gov	603.271.3855	State Agency Staff	NH DOE	Neutral	No	2/4/2021 12:56 PM
Madsen, Martha	martha.madsen@law.unh.edu	603.344.2933	A Member of the Public	The NH Institute for Civics Education	Oppose	No	2/4/2021 12:58 PM
Organek, Kimberly	kimberlyorganek@gmail.com	603.560.6788	A Member of the Public	Myself	Neutral	No	2/4/2021 1:10 PM
Layon, Erica	erica.layon@leg.state.nh.us	603.479.9595	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	2/4/2021 1:53 PM
Doherty, David	ddoherty0845@gmail.com	603.485.2788	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/4/2021 2:02 PM
Ward, Joanne	Usquevagh@mac.com	603.772.5145	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	2/4/2021 2:14 PM
Ryan, Moira	army51kilo@hotmail.com	603.404.8891	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	2/4/2021 8:30 PM
Tentarelli, Liz	LWV@kenliz.net	603.763.9296	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	1/28/2021 3:14 PM

Pauer, Eric	secretary@BrooklineGOP.org	202.241.3072	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	1/30/2021 12:25 PM
Simkin, Terrance	terrysimkin@comcast.net	603.290.2386	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	1/31/2021 8:26 AM
Garen, June	jzanesgaren@gmail.com	603.393.8134	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	1/31/2021 8:31 PM
Damon, Claudia	cordsdamon@gmail.com	603.226.4561	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	1/31/2021 8:36 PM
Spencer, Louise	kentstusa@aol.com	603.491.1795	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	1/31/2021 10:52 PM
Podlipny, Ann	apodlipny57@comcast.net	603.370.1914	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/1/2021 6:32 AM
Corell, Elizabeth	Elizabeth.j.corell@gmail.com	603.545.9091	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/1/2021 8:40 AM
Torpey, Jeanne	jtorp51@comcast.net	603.493.8262	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/1/2021 11:52 AM
Straiton, Marie	M.straiton@comcast.net	603.496.2717	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/1/2021 2:04 PM
Carter, Lilian	lcarter0914@gmail.com	603.560.7047	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/1/2021 3:36 PM
Hampton, Doris	dandmhamp38@gmail.com	603.783.4418	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/1/2021 4:05 PM
Rettew, Annie	abrettew@gmail.com	603.651.7000	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/2/2021 8:15 AM
Perencevich, Ruth	rperence@comcast.net	603.225.7641	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/2/2021 8:51 PM
Richman, Susan	susan7richman@gmail.com	603.868.2758	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/2/2021 9:45 PM
Frey, Gina	ginagfrey@gmail.com	603.554.8850	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/3/2021 12:05 PM
Hinebauch, Mel	melhinebauch@gmail.com	603.224.4866	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/3/2021 6:42 AM
Frey, Kevin	ginagfrey@gmail.com	603.554.8850	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/3/2021 12:10 PM
Blanchard, Sandra	sandyblanchard3@gmail.com	603.724.3768	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/3/2021 12:31 PM
Brennan, Nancy	burningnan14@gmail.com	5291969	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	2/3/2021 7:14 PM
Greene, Bob	bob.greene@leg.state.nh.us	603.880.3929	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	2/4/2021 12:49 AM

Testimony

Archived: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:04:25 AM
From: [Madsen, Martha](#)
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 1:16:05 PM
To: ~[House Education Committee](#)
Subject: Regarding HB 320
Importance: Normal

Dear House Education Committee,

I applaud Rep. Michael Moffett for his concern about NH civic learning! And for his inclination to act on this important issue.

I am in the process --as I listen to you --of putting together a NH Civic Learning Roundtable which will include civics teachers, administrators, youth, and other experts. I would like to invite Rep. Moffett to join us!

We will begin with a document called a state policy menu that was put together by a nonpartisan group of educators. Here is a link to the document we will use as a guide.

https://civxnow.org/sites/default/files/basic_page/CivXNow%20Policy%20Menu%20-%20FINAL.pdf

Executive - CivXNow

Executive 2 Summary Today, only nine states require a full year of civic education in high school. Ten states don't require it at all. In 31 states, students only have to learn about our democracy for one semester.

civxnow.org

Assessment is essential, but NH is known as a leader in competency- based learning and performance-based assessments. We know that durable learning happens when students are engaged with the material in a hands-on way. Our students need knowledge but also the skills and attitudes to use that knowledge well.

I respectfully request that the education committee consider waiting until our Roundtable's work is done in October 2021 so we can explore all options and come up with bipartisan consensus on the best ways to increase and improve civic learning in our beautiful state!

Martha

Martha M. Madsen
Executive Director
New Hampshire Institute for Civics Education
(603)513-5121
martha.madsen@law.unh.edu
www.nhcivics.org
@nhcivics

Archived: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:04:25 AM
From: Madsen, Martha
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 2:38:22 PM
To: ~House Education Committee
Subject: Re: Regarding HB 320
Importance: Normal

Dear House Education Committee,

Assessment is essential, but NH is known as a leader in competency- based learning and performance-based assessments. We know that durable learning happens when students are engaged with material in a hands-on way. Our students need knowledge but also the skills and attitudes to use that knowledge well.

I respectfully request that the education committee consider retaining HB 320 until our Roundtable's work is done in October 2021 so we can explore all options and come up with bipartisan consensus on the best ways to increase and improve civic learning in our beautiful state! Our Roundtable is bipartisan, nonpartisan, includes our Trustees Dan Feltes and Chuck Douglas, and representatives of the NHDOE, the NH Bar, the NH Historical Society, superintendents, principals, parents, teachers, and students.
Thank you for your interest in civic learning,

Martha

Martha M. Madsen
Executive Director
New Hampshire Institute for Civics Education
(603)513-5121
martha.madsen@law.unh.edu
www.nhcivics.org
@nhcivics

From: Madsen, Martha
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 1:15 PM
To: HouseEducationCommittee@leg.state.nh.us <HouseEducationCommittee@leg.state.nh.us>
Subject: Regarding HB 320

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Martha

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Executive Director
New Hampshire Institute for Civics Education
(603)513-5121
martha.madsen@law.unh.edu
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@nhcivics

1

HB320 Civics Bill Testimony – Feb. 4, 2021

For the record, I'm [Representative Mike Moffett](#), Merrimack District 9 which includes Loudon and Canterbury.

Mark Twain said that “Everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.”

Similarly, it seems like everyone talks about the woeful state of civics knowledge among most Americans, but no one does anything about it.

Well, HB320 provides us with a wonderful opportunity to *do* something about it.

This measure would require a universal civics assessment as a graduation requirement utilizing the 100 question history and civics examination currently being administered to prospective naturalized citizens. This proposal came up a bit short the last time around but we're hopeful it will now move forward.

It's not a radical bill. This exam is already a graduation requirement in Arizona, Idaho, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Louisiana among other states.

So why do I and others want to see NH join these other states in requiring this exam?

Because we want to *do* something about the woeful state of civics knowledge. There are countless examples one can find on the internet of young people, or older people being quizzed about some very basic American government and history and demonstrating sheer ignorance.

This reflects badly on their education experience.

It all especially resonates with me, as a former civics teacher. And as someone who has taught for three different colleges in NH I've been consistently disappointed, if not appalled, at the utter lack of civics knowledge displayed by college students.

Every school district handles civics education differently. Some do better than others. This assessment requirement would establish a common baseline of fundamentals for all schools.

What concerns many of us is that so many schools do not give their students the basic civics instruction they deserve, that their parents expect, and that society needs. Some schools conflate contemporary issues classes with civics classes, with the result that many civics classes end up focusing on things like climate change, as opposed to constitutions.

I want to respond to some concerns I've heard about this measure:

- 1) **That we shouldn't dictate curriculum.** Actually, we already do, and we *should* have statutes to give schools direction. We already have Civics requirements on the books. I co-sponsored one of them with Senator D'Allesandro. This bill would provide some teeth, some meaning to the legislature's intent and desire to have serious learning take

place regarding history and government. And as mentioned earlier, many states already do this. I don't think we should mandate that every student take a French class, or trigonometry, but I do think it is our responsibility to expect that high school graduate have some civics knowledge, along with basic math and English skills, at a minimum.

- 2) **That this is a stressful and unnecessary quote unquote "high stakes" requirement.** It's arguably high stakes in that it is a graduation requirement. But the testable material is out there. It's really easy to study for. Students have the questions and answers ahead of time. Many fourth graders and eighth graders will satisfy this requirement even before high school, and this will be a source of pride for them and their families. And as one of my high school principals used to say, "Students deserve a chance to fail." Some wonderful life lessons come from being challenged. Shielding youngsters from challenges holds them back and does them no favors. And this bill allows local flexibility in administering it to special needs students.
- 3) **That this measure will encourage quote unquote "Teaching to the test."** Those of us in the education world know that "teaching to the test" is a pejorative expression often used by those who are threatened by assessments and accountability. Teaching to the test can be important. Driver Ed instructors teach to the test. It's called a Drivers Exam. Law professors teach to the test. It's called a Bar Exam. The radiography x-ray professors at NHTI teach to the test. It's called the national registry exam which ensures x-ray techs know what they're doing. Any of us who ever need x-rays should hope that radiography professors teach to the test. So beware of those who disparage quote unquote "teaching to the test."

In wrapping this up wrap I'll say that this is the type of measure that parents WANT. And as someone who believes in and supports public education, I believe that this measure that will increase support and confidence in public schools. And this bill that has bipartisan support and confidence. I mentioned Senator D'Allesandro and I co-sponsoring similar measures in the past. Senator Martha Fuller Clark co-sponsored this the last time. **This** bill also has sponsorship from both parties. It's a nice opportunity for bipartisanship that I hope will not be lost.

Which brings me, in closing, to the late Rep. Mary Gile, who once chaired this committee. She was a friend and colleague of many years, going back to when we were both at NHTI. She actually used a photo I took of her for her first campaign brochure back in 1996. Anyway, when this bill first came up three years ago, she was very excited about it. Mary was a Canadian who became a naturalized American citizen and in so doing had to satisfy some similar testing requirements. At the bill's hearing she waxed enthusiastically about this legislation's potential. But when it came to exec session she voted against it.

And I understood why. Both parties caucus before Exec sessions and pretty much decide how votes are going to go in advance. It is what it is. It's something that may be an interesting topic in some Civics class.

But AFTER the students have taken the Naturalization test and know a little bit about government. Thanks for your patience and forbearance, and I'd be happy to take any questions.

Archived: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:04:25 AM

From: [Michelle Siudut](#)

Sent: Friday, February 5, 2021 3:08:12 PM

To: [~House Education Committee](#); [Ruth Ward](#); [Denise Ricciardi](#); [Erin Hennessey](#)

Cc: [Josh Yokela](#); [Melissa Litchfield](#)

Subject: HB320

Importance: Normal

Members of the House Education Committee,

America's story is unlike any other. Our students should learn about and know the basis of freedom and independence that our founding fathers strove for.

I would like to encourage the Committee to support HB320. Thank you.

--

Michelle Siudut

Affirming Support for Alternatives to the USCIS Naturalization Test as a Measure of the Civic Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions of Students

A Position Statement of National Council for the Social Studies—Approved March 2018

Introduction

What is the intent of civic education? At its core, civic education should provide students with the ability to take informed action to address problems relevant to life in a democratic republic. It should target the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to ensure that young people are truly capable of becoming active and engaged participants in civic life.¹ Authentic assessment in civic education should thus reflect the importance of the three core components of civic teaching and learning—knowledge, skills, and dispositions—drawing on proven practices in civic education.² The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) affirms this conception of civic education and assessment and encourages educational policymakers at the state and local level, as well as teachers, to consider alternatives to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Test as a high-stakes or ultimate measure of civic learning and readiness.

Intended Audience

This position statement is intended for all audiences with an interest in civic education, but especially desires to inform those decision makers within states, districts, and schools who seek to ensure civic literacy and readiness within our next generation.

Background

Civic literacy is a pressing concern among many stakeholders and decision makers at the state and national level. Consider, for example, the worries over student proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics; poor scores over the years have raised questions about the civic literacy and competency of students in American public schools.³ Relatedly, additional data suggest that participation in civic life is low, and the ability of citizens to engage with each other seems a struggle.⁴ Indeed, it is not just the supposed lack of knowledge that is a concern. It seems that for many, the skills and dispositions of civic life are also lacking.

As a result of these growing concerns, the call has been raised for improvements in how students are prepared for civic life, including some measure of civic literacy and learning that will demonstrate that those students are indeed prepared for engagement in their communities and nation.⁵ Among these proposed measures is the use of the USCIS Naturalization Test as a measure of student civic competence and a guide

for instruction. This proposal is increasingly popular, with strong national advocates and significant supporters in state legislatures across the country. While this effort to improve civic literacy and learning through implementation of a common standardized assessment is admirable, it does not in fact serve as an adequate measure and threatens to derail the effort at implementing both a quality civic education and an effective associated assessment.

Effective Civic Education

Let us consider what we mean by effective and quality civic education. The National Council for the Social Studies itself has addressed this a number of times, most recently in the 2013 position statement “Revitalizing Civic Learning in Our Schools.” Drawing a great deal from the *Guardian of Democracy* report (2011), NCSS argues that effective civic learning should focus on 6 proven practices:

1. *Classroom Instruction*: This is tied directly to content knowledge; students need a common foundation of knowledge across the social science disciplines to be the most informed citizens they can be. This includes an emphasis on critical thinking and disciplinary literacy, with a pedagogical approach that avoids rote memorization in favor of practical application, the use of primary sources, and engaging with the content.

2. *Discussing Current Events and Controversial Issues*: It is hard to prepare students for civic life when we are reluctant to engage with them on the issues of the day. Helping them understand how to discuss controversial issues without rancor is a necessary component of civic education, and requires an emphasis on developing not just the knowledge necessary for civil (and civic) discussion, but also the skills and dispositions. Indeed, NCSS has itself recognized this importance by releasing recent position papers related to this component.⁶
3. *Service Learning*: Service learning has a long, and sometimes controversial, history in citizenship education.⁷ Proponents argue that it provides students the opportunity to engage in the practice of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through critical thinking, problem-solving, and community engagement. What this means, however, is that service learning needs to be actual service learning, rather than the “volunteer do goodism” that sometimes passes for it within schools.⁸
4. *Extracurricular Activities*: Providing students the opportunity to engage in civic life outside of their classrooms and schools again encourages them to gain deeper knowledge, practice the skills, and demonstrate the dispositions that should be encouraged within civic education. This might include, for example, field trips to participate in community meetings, taking part in mock trials, or participating in student-led groups.
5. *School Governance*: What better way to encourage engagement with civic life than by including students in the governance of the community in which they spend most of their time: the school. Once again, allowing students to play a role in the decision-making aspect of school governance requires the development of a particular set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This may take many forms, from the “We the School” model found at Constitution High School in Philadelphia that has students heavily involved in the rule-making and decision-making within the school, to having a student presence within the traditional parent-teacher and school advisory councils.
6. *Simulations of Democratic Processes*: This last area of quality civic education encompasses a great deal, and includes elements from areas already discussed. This is, in many ways, about building skills and dispositions by engaging in simulations that reflect what they will be doing as full-fledged participants in civic life. These simulations may occur at the classroom level, or encompass the broader school community, or even contain an extracurricular component.

These six areas of civic education practice have since been explored more deeply in Guilfoile and Delander’s (2014) “Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning”; these practices are the ones most likely to best prepare students for civic life beyond the classroom and school. More recently, Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg (2017) suggested that these practices expand to include:

1. *News Media Literacy Education*: Helping students understand how to make sense of what they see, hear, and learn from all sorts of media, with a critical but not cynical lens. This ensures, for example, that as consumers of daily news media, students will be able to distinguish so-called fake news from legitimate argument and news.
2. *Social and Emotional Learning*: This area reflects the idea that we are best capable of engaging in civic life when we are our best selves; whether it is decision-making or empathetic communication, understanding our social and emotional knowledge helps us grow into our roles as participants within our community.
3. *School Climate Reform*: Addressing inequitable relationships within schools, whether in school discipline models or access to curriculum, facilitates additional civic growth on the part of the student.
4. *Action Civics*: This additional area of civic educational practice encompasses much of what has already been discussed, engaging students in practicing the roles and responsibilities of citizenship by taking charge and making proposals and decisions that can have long-term consequences. Action civics reinforces the knowledge, skills, and dispositions so important in civic learning and literacy.⁹

This is the sort of quality civic education approach that is most likely to have a positive and long-term impact on student civic engagement.

The USCIS Naturalization Test

The USCIS Naturalization Test is a series of 100 questions provided by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service, intended as one step in the naturalization process for immigrants pursuing citizenship. While there are 100 questions, the person pursuing citizenship needs only to get 6 of 10 correct on the delivered exam, which is most often provided orally in English.

This test, as constructed, was not designed to measure civic literacy and learning but rather memorization of information related to the United States of America. It does not get to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions so necessary for civic life; instead, it assesses memorized answers, freely available

online. This test thus does not truly measure student civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. It is a relatively simple test to pass for even the most uninterested student. There is also no evidence that implementing a version of this test would result in greater civic engagement.¹⁰ As described in the *Guardian of Democracy* Report (2011) supported by NCSS and later reinforced by the Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning (2014) and “The Republic is Still at Risk” (2017), understanding for an effective and engaged civic life requires more than simple content knowledge. While the Naturalization Test as presently constructed does assess a surface level of civic knowledge that may be quickly forgotten, it ignores the skills and dispositions component so necessary for true civic literacy and learning. Indeed, rote knowledge of civics content does not equal understanding of what it means to be a citizen.¹¹

If the USCIS Naturalization Test becomes the cornerstone of civic literacy and the driving force in civic education reform for state and district education policymakers, the negative impact on instruction is likely to be significant.

To be clear, the Naturalization Test may serve as a minimal introduction to civic knowledge, and the work of supporters is to be applauded for making an effort to improve and encourage some level of civic learning. But the test itself touches only one area within the Six Proven Practices, and thus only the knowledge element of the civic education trinity of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Indeed, it only skims the surface of that knowledge as well, through an easily memorized and then forgotten collection of questions and answers. Instruction should align with assessment; if the USCIS Naturalization Test becomes the cornerstone of civic literacy and the driving force in civic education reform for state and district education policymakers, the negative impact on instruction is likely to be significant.

Effective Instruction in Civics

While the Naturalization Test serves as a means of measuring a basic level of civic knowledge, the fear is that this will be as far as many states will be likely to go, and it is a poor tool for civic instruction. Indeed, we see a trend developing already

across many states that have adopted this test; they require only some version of the Naturalization Test as a graduation or promotion requirement, ignoring the other areas so important in civic learning and literacy. It is not a stretch to think that instruction would be aligned with such an assessment, despite the flaws in such an approach. Let us consider what a quality alternative to the USCIS Naturalization Test as the main approach to civic literacy would look like.

We should consider, first, that whatever approach is taken, it is aligned with state standards and, ideally, draws on best practice and elements of the NCSS *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework* as well as the Six Proven Practices. An appropriate approach might be, for example, to incorporate the National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment. This assessment provides a range of questions that go deeper than what we would find on the Naturalization Test. For example, questions ask students not only what document lists the rights of an American citizen, but how those rights might impact decision-making, community relationships, and the common good. This, again, gets beyond simply assessing for basic knowledge; it becomes more about what you can do with that knowledge.

Another option would be a project or performance-based model that requires students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions we want them to have. The Civic Action Project (CAP) from the Constitutional Rights Foundation would be one example of this approach. This model requires students to identify a problem or issue within their community and develop, present, and in some cases implement a way to address the problem. This approach requires students to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions and draws across most of the Six Proven Practices and the additional elements suggested by Levine and Kawashima-Ginsberg (2017). While there is no standardized assessment protocol for programs like CAP, the goal here is to ensure instruction that addresses the triad of civic literacy, avoiding the limitations imposed by a dependence on the Naturalization Test. An “end-product” that demonstrates civic literacy and learning would better provide for alignment between instruction and assessment.

Other options for instruction exist for a portfolio or project-based model that provides for a broad spectrum of civic learning. Online games which integrate elements across the spectrum of knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for a well-rounded civic education could serve as a strong component of a civics portfolio. iCivics, for example, has developed a number of quality online simulations that address necessary content while encouraging skill development; these provide a place to begin when considering what an online assessment might look like that moves beyond simple foundations.

Some states with strong and growing civic education programs might serve as laboratories to explore different methods of assessment around civic literacy and learning. Illinois, for

example, mandates a civics course that engages students in discussion, service-learning, and, most excitingly, simulations of democratic practice. Tennessee has adopted a project-based approach to measuring civic learning and engagement that requires students to model best practices and demonstrate their civic competency through a variety of measures similar to what we have touched on here. Arizona, while using the Naturalization Test as a measure of civic knowledge, has also established a strong and growing program, *Excellence in Civic Engagement*, that assesses and recognizes schools and stakeholders for the extent to which the Six Proven Practices are integrated into the school and classroom community and beyond. Here we have an evident demonstration of civic knowledge balanced with the modeling of skills of dispositions. Other states, such as Kansas and Nebraska, continue to consider approaches such as this to address the need for quality civic learning and assessment.

Conclusion

The concern over the growing emphasis on the Naturalization Test as an adequate measure of civic literacy is that it will ultimately become the sole measure of civic literacy; instruction follows assessment, and many states that have adopted the test have done so without any additional consideration of the many different factors that make up true civic literacy. The measure of civics knowledge provided by the USCIS Naturalization Test is minimally beneficial, but using it alone as a measure of civic literacy or a path towards instruction neglects the vital skills and dispositions necessary for ensuring a well-rounded, literate, and engaged citizen. Options and opportunities for quality assessment, aligned with quality instruction, in civics abound. Let us embrace them and ensure that our instruction aligns with our assessment, and our students are truly prepared for the demands of participation in civic life. 🌍

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LOCALLY DEVELOPED HIGH SCHOOL CIVICS/GOVERNMENT COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS UNDER RSA 189:11

Non-Regulatory Guidance Document
for Schools and Districts in New Hampshire

August 2020

Prepared by the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

Carla Evans, Michelle Boyer, Erika Landl, & Chris Brandt

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Purpose & Background

This document provides non-regulatory guidance to improve the quality of New Hampshire’s locally developed high school civics/government competency assessments pursuant to [Revised Statutes Annotated \(RSA\) 189:11](#) and subsequent amendments found in [Senate Bill \(SB\) 45](#) and [House Bill \(HB\) 1496](#). The intended audiences include district and school administrators, curriculum coordinators, instructional coaches, and classroom teachers.

The need for this document was established after the review of several locally developed government/civics assessments voluntarily submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE). These assessments were found to vary greatly with respect to their level of alignment to state statute and the cognitive complexity reflected in the items/tasks used to evaluate student competence in government/civics. For example, one submitted locally developed government/civics assessments consisted of a 10-item multiple choice test; whereas, another was a 5-page test comprised of selected response, constructed response, and performance tasks (essay prompts).

In order to solicit and gather input from educators across the state on the content and scope of a guidance document, the NHDOE convened a half day stakeholder meeting on February 20, 2020 in Concord. Forty educators and invited guests attended. The full list of participants, including positions and district/organization name, can be found in Appendix A.

Organization

This guidance document is organized into six sections:

- I. Review of Current State Statute
- II. Strengths & Limitations of U.S. Citizenship Exam to Fulfill NH State Statute
- III. Guidance on Improving the Quality of Locally Developed Government/Civics Competency Assessments Pursuant to NH State Statute
- IV. Civics/Government Competency Assessments Evaluation/Review Tool
- V. Example Questions by Subdomain and Civics/Government Competency Assessments
- VI. Guidance on Improving the Comparability of Teacher Judgments about Student Achievement on Civics Competency Assessments Pursuant to NH State Statute

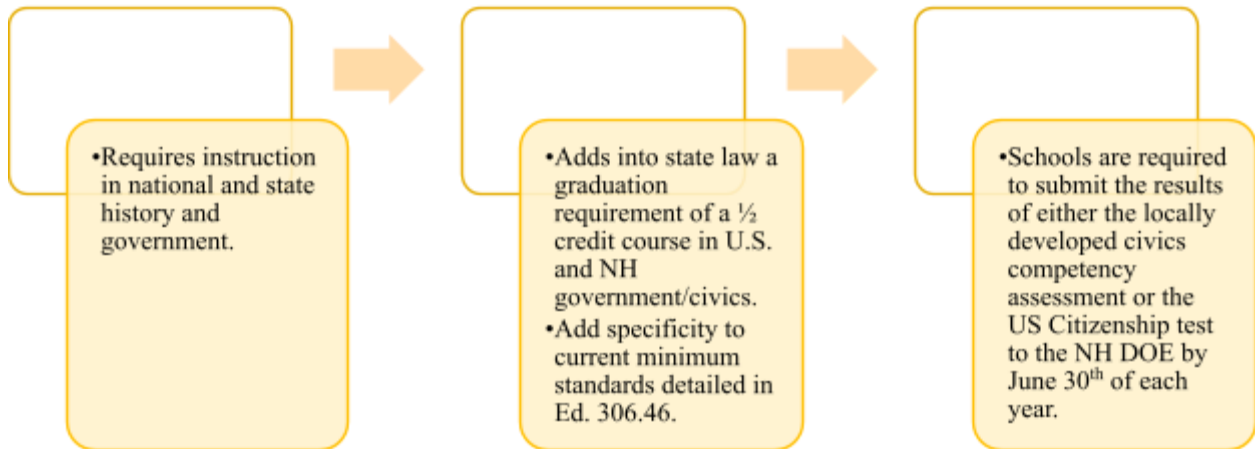
Section I: Review of Current State Statute

Course Requirements

Figure 1 shows how [RSA 189:11](#) was later amended by [Senate Bill \(SB\) 45](#) in August 2017 and by [House Bill \(HB\) 1496](#) in July 2018. New Hampshire’s revised state statute RSA 189:11 requires instruction in national and state history and government.

Figure 1

Overview of New Hampshire State Statutes Related to US and NH Government/Civics Assessment



SB 45 adds into state law a graduation requirement of a one-half credit course in United States and New Hampshire government/civics. SB 45 also stipulates that school districts develop or offer a US and NH government/civics course that at a minimum includes instruction in the nine subdomains listed in Table 1. The bulk of the instructional and assessment content relates to US and NH government. The one-half credit graduation requirement in civics and government required under state statute can occur at the school or district’s discretion, as long as it is during high school.

Table 1

Domains and subdomains in New Hampshire State Statute (RSA 189:11 and SB 45) Related to Government/Civics Instructional and Assessment Content

Domains	Subdomains
The nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the US government	<p>(c) The US Constitution and the principles stated in the Articles and Amendments of the US Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of the United States.</p> <p><u>(d) The NH Constitution and the principles stated in the articles of the NH Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of NH.</u></p> <p>(e) The structure and functions of the 3 branches comprising federal and state governments: legislative, judicial, and executive.</p>

	<p>(g) <u>The role and interactions of the state of NH and local government within the</u> framework of the US Constitution and of extended powers and functions provided to local governments.</p> <p>(h) How federal, <u>state, and local governments</u> address problems and issues by making decisions, creating laws, enforcing regulations, and taking action.</p> <p>(i) The role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity and the regulation of monetary policy.</p>
The rights and responsibilities of citizens	<p>(a) Opportunities and responsibilities for civic involvement.</p> <p>(b) Skills to effectively participate in civic affairs.</p> <p>(f) The role, opportunities, and responsibilities of a citizen to engage in civic activity.</p>
Noteworthy government and civics leaders	No subdomains listed.

Note. Underlined/bold text indicates content not included in the U.S. Citizenship Exam. Subdomains retain the letters assigned in SB 45.

Assessment Requirements

RSA 189:11 also requires (as a component of instruction) the administration of a locally developed competency assessment of United States government and civics. State statute does not require all schools within a district (or even classrooms within a school) to give the same civics competency assessment to students, or administer the assessment at the same time. The competency assessment must include, but is not limited to, the three domains and nine subdomains reflected in Table 1.

The [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test](#) (hereafter referred to as U.S. Citizenship Exam) may also be used to satisfy the requirement of RSA 189:11. The assessment—whether locally developed or the U.S. Citizenship Exam—is intended to be competency-based not course-based. The law states that students “who attain a passing grade on the competency assessment shall be eligible for a certificate issued by the school district.”

Reporting Requirements

HB 1496 further amends RSA 189:11 stipulating that schools must submit student-level results of either the locally developed government/civics competency assessment or the results of the U.S. Citizenship Exam to the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) by June 30th of each year. The NHDOE collects information from each school as to the number of students who passed or failed and the assessment they were administered—whether a locally developed government/civics competency assessment or the U.S. Citizenship Exam. NH state statute does not define what constitutes passing or failing on the civics/government competency assessment; therefore, schools and districts across the state independently determine how they will determine what constitutes passing achievement in order to report pass/fail scores to the NHDOE.

Section II: Strengths & Limitations of U.S. Citizenship Exam to Fulfill NH State Statute

The U.S. Naturalization Test has civics and English portions. The English test is not discussed in this guidance document. The civics portion is drawn from [100 questions and answers](#) provided on the [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) (USCIS) website. To pass the naturalization test, applicants are orally asked up to 10 out of the 100 questions provided in advance on the website. Applicants must correctly answer six of the 10 questions to pass the civics portion; the test ends after six questions are answered correctly. There is no requirement that the six to 10 questions sample from across the domains. However, administering the U.S. Citizenship Exam meets the assessment requirement in NH state statute.

According to NH educators convened by the NHDOE in February 2020, most NH schools and districts that administer the U.S. Citizenship Exam to fulfill NH state statute do not administer it as intended. As mentioned, the U.S. Citizenship Exam is an oral exam whereby applicants are administered 6-10 questions (from the longer list of 100 provided to them ahead of time) and when the applicant answers six questions correctly the exam stops and the applicant passes.

Many NH schools and districts have taken the 100 questions and answers provided on the USCIS website and created a 100-question multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank test. These 100 questions relate to American government, American history, and integrated civics—only a third of which are aligned with the domains and subdomains detailed in NH state statute. No specificity is offered in NH state statute as to the design, use, or administration of the U.S. Citizenship Exam.

The main limitations, therefore, of the U.S. Citizenship Exam to fulfill NH state statute relate to the incongruence between what the U.S. Citizenship Exam is intended to measure and the depth and breadth of the civics content domains/subdomains specified in SB 45 and listed in Table 1 above. The underlined text in Table 1 highlights content that is specific to New Hampshire state and local governments, and is not covered by the U.S. Citizenship Exam.

Other limitations expressed by NH educators convened in February 2020 relate to the U.S. Citizenship Exam's design (i.e., mostly selected response items), which mainly elicits students' low level thinking skills. Educators used words such as “memorization, limited, rote, inauthentic, low DOK (depth of knowledge), easy, shallow, and no performance component” to describe the U.S. Citizenship Exam. The strengths of the U.S. Citizenship Exam, according to the NH educators convened, center on its standardized format, making it easy and efficient to administer and score.

Section III: Guidance on Improving the Quality of Locally Developed Government/Civics Competency Assessments Pursuant to NH State Statute

This guidance supports the development of high-quality government/civics high school competency assessments pursuant to state law. The guidance is organized in terms of four key considerations, each of which is described below.

Considerations Related to *Sufficiency of Evidence to Make Competency Determinations*

Determining competency is fundamentally an assessment decision. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005) defines a competency as: “More than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context” (p. 4). An assessment (or series of assessments) used to determine competency, therefore, needs to collect **sufficient evidence** about a student’s knowledge, skills and dispositions to meet complex demands in a given context. Sufficiency is a judgment about having enough credible evidence to support claims, uses, and decisions that result from assessments. Sufficiency refers to both the *quantity* and *quality* of assessment evidence¹.

Two common examples of competency assessments include the DMV driving exam and medical licensing exams. What do both of these exams have in common? There is a knowledge component (written driver’s test; clinical knowledge exams) and also a performance component (behind-the-wheel road test; integrated clinical encounter with a standardized patient). The combination of the two components allows students to demonstrate competency through typical content knowledge and the application (or transfer) of their knowledge and skills in a new or novel situation.

A judgment about sufficiency of evidence for making a competency determination must be based upon at least the following factors: content alignment, cognitive complexity, score reliability, and test fairness. Each is discussed in more detail below.

Considerations Related to *Content Alignment and Cognitive Complexity of Competency Assessments to State Statute Domains and Subdomains*

A principled assessment design approach can be used to ensure adequate content alignment and cognitive complexity. This approach requires test/assessment developers to clearly articulate: the claims they want to be able to make about what students know and can do, the knowledge and skills that comprise the intended learning/measurement targets, the evidence necessary to demonstrate mastery of those knowledge and skills, and the tasks and task features that will elicit that evidence (Mislevy, 1995; Mislevy & Haertel, 2006). This implies that a test must be designed (not retrofitted) to elicit the intended evidence about students’ desired knowledge and skills. In this context, the knowledge and skills are the three domains and nine subdomains from state statute in Table 1 and the claim is that the student has (or has not) demonstrated adequate competency to meet expectations or pass.

Evidence of adequate content alignment is typically examined in large-scale assessments through the use of documentation and expert judgment. The documentation shows the alignment between the assessment and the academic content standards the assessment is designed to measure in

¹ See <https://www.nciea.org/blog/assessment/how-much-enough> for more details about sufficiency and how much is enough in the context of competency-based systems.

terms of content (i.e., knowledge and process), the full range of the content standards (breadth), balance of content, and cognitive complexity (depth). Cognitive complexity (sometimes referred to as depth of knowledge) is about the mental processes taking place in the mind of the learner. For example, recalling a basic fact requires a different level of mental processing than evaluating a claim using multiple pieces of evidence. One misconception about cognitive complexity is that the more obscure the question, the more cognitively complex it is. However, cognitive complexity is not about item difficulty. Every person in the school, district, or state could get a question wrong, which would make it difficult—but not necessarily cognitive complex. For example: Who was the Vice President for President Rutherford?² This question prompts fact recall (or DOK1), and does not elicit higher-order thinking skills.

Content experts evaluate the test blueprint and determine what changes, if any, need to be made to support appropriate alignment. In its simplest form, a test blueprint is a table that summarizes how the items in a test are distributed in terms of key features such as content areas, domains or subdomains, learning objectives, depth of knowledge, item types, and total item numbers. A test blueprint provides a mechanism for broadly evaluating the appropriateness of the assessment for supporting the intended claim. In other words, a blueprint is used to ensure that test developers measure the content areas captured by the tested construct consistently and in a manner that supports the intended purpose and use of the test.

The inferences made about student achievement must be supported by the evidence gathered from the assessment event. For this reason, the test purpose and claim(s) to be supported should influence all aspects of the assessment design including the selection of item types, content representation, and depth of knowledge targets. Different item types have different pros and cons and may be more/less appropriate given the purpose of assessment. Figure 2 briefly highlights some of the major pros and cons for three item types—selected response, constructed response, and performance tasks. Selected response items include multiple choice, select all that apply, matching, and true/false. Constructed response may be fill-in-the-blank or short answer. Performance tasks require students to demonstrate understanding by applying their knowledge and skills to a new or novel situation.

There is an obvious association between item type and cognitive complexity. It is highly unlikely (if not impossible) to ask a selected response item that requires students to demonstrate strategic thinking (DOK3). Consider the cognitive complexity of the three examples provided in Figure 2. In the selected response example, students are asked to recall the three branches of government; whereas, in the performance task example, students are asked to analyze a current or historic event and justify their chosen event in light of the prompt. The former focuses on lower-level thinking skills; whereas the latter focuses on higher-level thinking skills. Because performance tasks can be designed to make student thinking visible and elicit complex judgments, they are well-suited to gather evidence of higher-level thinking skills.

² By the way, President Rutherford did not have a Vice President.

Figure 2
Selected Pros and Cons of Different Item Types

Selected Response	Constructed Response	Performance Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice, select all that apply, matching, and true/false. • Pros: easy to administer and score; students can typically complete more items in same amount of time which allows for more breadth. • Cons: typically low level of cognitive complexity (DOK1-2)(i.e., low depth); more susceptible to guessing. • Example: What are the three branches of the US government? Select all that apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill-in-the-blank or short answer. • Pros: require students to explain their thinking at least to some degree (DOK1-2); typically one right answer or solution. • Cons: short answer responses require more time to administer and score than selected response items; do not typically supply evidence of higher DOK 3-4. • Example: Name the branches of the US government and explain how their structures and functions are unique, but complementary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require students to apply their knowledge and skills to a new or novel situation. • Pros: high quality performance tasks measure the depth of student knowledge and skills (i.e., DOK 3-4); more than one right answer or solution. • Cons: more time to administer and score; difficult to score reliably without clear guidelines/criteria and calibration sessions; limited breadth of content. • Example: Describe and analyze a current or historic event in federal or state history that highlights the structure and function of the three branches of government. Provide a rationale for your chosen event.

Considerations Related to *Score Reliability* of Competency Assessments

High-quality summative assessments (classroom or large-scale) must have clear scoring guidelines or criteria. Clear scoring guidelines or criteria allow for the possibility of reliable scoring across teachers, schools, and districts. Certain item types such as selected response are easier to score reliably as they have only one right choice or choices—assuming, of course, that the item itself is well written and the response options are mutually exclusive and clear. Most selected response items are scored dichotomously as either correct or incorrect.

Constructed response items that are short answer, however, may be scored based on responses that are correct to different degrees. For example, 0, 1 and 2 for incorrect, somewhat correct, and completely correct responses, respectively. In other words, a student can get partial credit for an item response depending on the degree to which it meets expectations. The scoring guidelines need to be transparent so that the items are scored consistently across teachers.

Performance-based assessments are difficult to score reliably without clear scoring guidelines or criteria, typically found in a rubric. There are different types of rubrics—analytic/holistic; generic/specific. It is beyond the scope of this guidance to detail the pros and cons of the different rubric types, but rubrics that qualitatively describe the expected range of performance across levels and clearly specify which aspects of the task the rubrics will be used to evaluate promote reliable scoring. In general, rubrics that are low inference, such that different raters are likely to arrive at the same score for a given response, lead to more reliable scoring. Providing benchmark responses for different score points, as well as annotating exemplar student responses and rubrics with task specific ‘look fors’ can improve rater reliability as can training and calibration scoring sessions at the school or district level.

Reliability in the actual scoring of the competency assessment within schools and districts is not enough, however, to ensure that the judgments about student competency (pass/fail) are comparable within and across schools and districts in the state. Section VI provides guidance on improving the comparability of teacher judgments with respect to student achievement in civics.

Considerations Related to *Test Fairness* for all Students

Test fairness means that results for students on an assessment do not depend on racial/ethnic background, disability status, English learner status, or other non-ability related characteristics. To ensure fairness there needs to be careful attention to the language, images, required background knowledge, visual clutter, white space, and other features of the assessment that could negatively impact the performance of certain student groups. [Universal Design for Learning](#) principles are key to making assessments accessible to students with disabilities by providing multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement.

Section IV: Civics/Government Competency Assessments Evaluation/Review Tool

The four considerations related to the design of a civics/government competency assessment pursuant to state statute could also be used to evaluate the quality of an existing civics/government competency assessment. Appendix B contains an evaluation/review tool that uses questions to solicit reviewer feedback with respect to the four considerations. The evaluation/review tool could be used by peer reviewers within or across districts to provide formative feedback on ways to improve the quality of a civics/government competency assessment.

In order to demonstrate how to evaluate the quality of a civics competency assessment using the supplied review tool, two examples of civics/government competency assessments were reviewed. These two examples were selected from among those submitted as part of the February 2020 stakeholder meeting. Appendix C contains the two reviewed examples. Table 2 summarizes the review notes for the two civics/government competency assessments using the review tool. The review notes describe the assessment and detail the strengths and weaknesses with respect to the four guidance considerations above. The purpose of including the review notes is to show educators how to review a civics/government competency assessment for key considerations such as sufficiency of evidence, content alignment, cognitive complexity, clear scoring guidelines/criteria, and test fairness.

Table 2

Summary of the Review Notes for Two Civics/Government Competency Assessments Using the Review Tool

Name & Item Description		Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Reviewed Example 1—28th Amendment: <i>Performance Task</i></p>	<p>Students are asked to develop an idea for a 28th Amendment that is not already in the Constitution, Bill of Rights or other Amendments. Students needed to identify the what and why behind their amendment, how the amendment would make its way through the proposal and ratification process, and explain the actions or steps that the student and other citizens should take to ensure the passage of the amendment. The final work product was a letter to the appropriate public official who could help move the amendment forward.</p>	<p>Higher cognitive complexity (DOK 3). Language is clear and visually uncluttered which supports test fairness.</p>	<p>Insufficient evidence to make competency determination. Limited content alignment to breadth of the domains/ subdomains in SB 45. Scoring criteria included in the form of an analytic rubric, but the rubric includes expectations not found in the student directions. Final work product is limited to demonstrating knowledge/skills through writing which may limit some students (particularly students with certain disabilities or LEP students) from showing what they know; this does not support test fairness.</p>
<p>Reviewed Example 2—2018 Naturalization Test: <i>Selected Response, Constructed Response, and Essays</i></p>	<p>Assessment consists of 50 items from the U.S. Citizenship Exam and 2 essay questions. The 50 items include 39 selected response and 11 constructed response. All but 2 of the 50 items are aligned to the domain about the nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the US government. Two questions are aligned to the domain of the rights and responsibilities of citizens.</p>	<p>Cognitive complexity ranges from DOK 1 to 3.</p>	<p>Insufficient evidence to make competency determination because there are no questions related to NH civics/ government. Inadequate content alignment to the breadth and depth of domains/subdomains in SB 45. Scoring guidelines and criteria not provided. Unclear how teachers make pass/fail determination.</p>

	<p>Most of the constructed response are fill-in-the-blanks with names of the President, State Senator, Chief Justice, etc. which relates to the domain noteworthy government and civics leaders.</p> <p>Choose 2 out of 7 essay topics from a menu of questions—one essay must be selected from the domain about the nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the US government; the other essay must be related to the rights and responsibilities of citizens.</p>		
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Note: Reviewed examples are in Appendix C. The Review tool can be found in Appendix B.

Section V: Example Questions by Subdomain and Civics/Government Competency Assessments

In order to support the development of high-quality civics competency assessments, a small group of NH educators³ volunteered to curate example questions by subdomain and civics/government competency assessments. Specifically, these educators helped to (a) develop a set of example questions that elicit evidence of each subdomains in SB 45 at multiple levels of cognitive complexity; and (b) arrange a selection of those example questions into two civics competency assessment examples. The civics competency assessment examples were designed to collect sufficient evidence of the domains/subdomains in SB 45 and have adequate content alignment and cognitive complexity to support competency determinations.

The example questions and two civics competency assessment examples are not intended to be exhaustive—reflecting every possible question or arrangement of questions into competency assessments. The purpose is to show NH educators how to design questions that elicit evidence of a particular subdomain and design high-quality civics competency assessments that meets the four guidance considerations related to the design of a civics/government competency assessment in Section III.

Example Questions by Subdomain

The first step in developing example questions that align with each domain/subdomain specified in SB 45 was to examine the [100 questions](#) used to help individuals prepare for the U.S. Citizenship Exam. Appendix D contains a table that shows which U.S. Citizenship Exam questions align to the domains/subdomains in SB 45. Questions that do not appear to align to the domains/subdomains are grouped by category after the table.

Then, the NH educators created example questions that elicit evidence of the subdomain at multiple levels of cognitive complexity as the U.S. Citizenship Exam questions are mainly fact recall (DOK1). Table 2 contains these example questions. The example questions by subdomain were then used as a selection pool to create two civics competency assessments—one that is more selected response with some constructed response items and the other that is more essay-based.

³ Appendix A denotes the four volunteers with ** beside their name.

Table 2

Example Questions by Subdomain

Domain	Subdomains	Examples of Questions that Elicit Evidence of the Domain/Subdomain
1) The nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the US government	(c) The US Constitution and the principles stated in the Articles and Amendments of the US Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of the United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selected questions from the U.S. Citizenship Exam study guide as aligned to this subdomain—see Appendix D. ● Generate a visual representation, graphic organizer, or other means to teach another student about the US Constitution and the principles stated in the Articles and Amendments of the US Constitution. ● Compare and contrast the principles of the Articles of Confederation to the U.S. Constitution. What principles were added to the Constitution? Why were these principles added or removed? Are there principles included in the Articles that are not included in the Constitution? Which principles, if any, appear in both? ● The Constitution is hard to read and understand for most people. Analyze a section of the Constitution and rewrite so it provides an accessible explanation of that particular section. ● Explain how the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation led to the drafting of the U.S. Constitution.
	(d) The NH Constitution and the principles stated in the articles of the NH Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of NH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The New Hampshire Constitution does not contain a Preamble which outlines the foundation for the democratic government of NH. Our Constitution has two parts: a Bill of Rights and Articles. Explore both the Bill of Rights and the Articles. What elements showcase the foundation of democratic government? Generate a Preamble which explains our democratic foundation. ● The NH Constitution has not always protected the rights of citizens. Describe one example and explain how the situation was resolved and the lasting impact on our government.

<p>(e) The structure and functions of the 3 branches comprising federal and state governments: legislative, judicial, and executive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selected questions from the U.S. Citizenship Exam study guide as aligned to this subdomain—see Appendix D. ● Generate a visual representation, graphic organizer, or other means to teach another student how the US government is organized (i.e., the structure and functions of the 3 branches comprising federal and state governments). ● Name the branches of the US government and explain how their structures and functions are unique, but complementary. ● Describe and analyze a current or historic event in federal or state history that highlights the structure and function of the three branches of government. Justify your chosen event/s. ● The American system of government relies on checks and balances in order to function efficiently, fairly, and properly. Gather and analyze multiple sources of evidence to either (1) describe an historical example of checks and balances among the three branches and how that served to equalize power in your chosen context OR (2) gather examples that showcase how this system did not equalize power between the three branches.
<p>(g) The role and interactions of the state of NH and local government within the framework of the US Constitution and of extended powers and functions provided to local governments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selected questions from the U.S. Citizenship Exam study guide as aligned to this subdomain—see Appendix D. ● In what ways and to what extent does the US Constitution grant power to the States? ● Analyze a NH Supreme Court Case (i.e., <i>Claremont vs. Governor of NH</i>). In what ways and to what extent does the case highlight the role and interactions between the state of NH and local government? ● How do NH and local government function in light of the larger US Constitution? For example, does the federal government have the right to “defund” the educational system in a state, if said state does not comply with federal guidelines? ● How does a state not over reach its power according to the US Constitution? Describe two examples where states defied the parameters set forth in the Constitution and what lasting impact of these acts of defiance? ● How has the 10th Amendment been used to expand the rights/powers of state governments?

<p>2) The rights and responsibilities of citizens</p>	<p>(h) How federal, state, and local governments address problems and issues by making decisions, creating laws, enforcing regulations, and taking action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an example of how federal, state, and/or local governments address problems and issues? • Consider both the State of New Hampshire and the United States Constitution and a current event like one of the following listed below. Using both Constitutions as reference and evidence, discuss which governing entity should control oversight and/or implementation? (The response to COVID-19; Legalize marijuana; Universal healthcare; etc.)
<p>(a) Opportunities and responsibilities for civic involvement.</p>	<p>(i) The role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity and the regulation of monetary policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the federal government's monetary response to COVID-19 an example of the role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity? Explain. • Analyze an historic and/or a recent example of the role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity and the regulation of monetary policy (e.g., great depression and stimulus/bailout in 2008 and 2020). Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts to respond to the following prompt: To what degree and how should the government respond to an economic crisis? Use evidence to justify your conclusions. • Many city governments subsidize the construction of sports stadiums as a way to attract or hold on to sports teams. Write an argument for this practice, using the economic functions of government in support of your claim. Then present an alternative view, arguing against your initial claim.
<p>(a) Opportunities and responsibilities for civic involvement.</p>	<p>(a) Opportunities and responsibilities for civic involvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected questions from the U.S. Citizenship Exam study guide as aligned to this subdomain—see Appendix D. • Research the organization of your local government. What opportunities are there for citizens to participate? • Research and choose an issue within your community to solve. Create an action plan to solve the problem, which outlines the role of local, state, federal and/or non-governmental organizations to achieve your plan. • What are the main rights and responsibilities of citizens in the NH and US Constitution? • Compare the extent to which citizens can directly engage in federal, state, and local government. Cite the US Constitution and NH Constitution as evidence.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the rights, opportunities, and responsibilities for civic involvement? ● Civic activity occurs every day in the United States around issues such as Black Lives Matter, gun control, abortion, LGBTQ rights, etc. Juxtapose multiple perspectives drawn from source materials (e.g., literature, music, historical events, media, etc.) with the intent to develop a complex or multimedia product and personal viewpoint on the role, opportunities, and responsibilities of a citizen to engage in civic activity. ● Historically, how have the rights of citizens been denied and what have been more/less effective skills to participate in civic affairs? ● How have citizens reacted to the denial of their rights historically and in modern times? ● How does the Constitution allow citizens to address the violation of their rights? <p>Same as 2a.</p>
<p>3) Noteworthy government and civics leaders</p>	<p>(b) Skills to effectively participate in civic affairs.</p> <p>(d) The role, opportunities, and responsibilities of a citizen to engage in civic activity.</p> <p>None listed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selected questions from the U.S. Citizenship Exam study guide as aligned to this subdomain—see Appendix D. ● Analyze multiple sources of evidence to justify your choice for a noteworthy government or civics leader from the last 100 years that exemplifies important character qualities or traits. ● The NY Times has a series on historical figures that have been overlooked in history. Use the NY Times series as inspiration to write your own obituary for an overlooked remarkable figure from history, citing appropriate evidence and support to justify your claim. ● Use reasoning and evidence to generate criteria for making and supporting an ‘argument of judgment’ (e.g., Was FDR a noteworthy president?).

Note. Subdomains retain the letters assigned in SB 45.

Example Civics/Government Competency Assessments

Two examples of civics competency assessments were created to show how different item types can be used and combined to elicit evidence of student knowledge and skill across the domains and subdomains specified in SB 45. Table 3 provides these civics/government competency assessment examples and how the questions are aligned to the domains/subdomains in SB 45. The first example is a mixture of U.S. Citizenship Exam questions and constructed response items; the second example is a mixture of constructed response and performance-based (essay) items. The latter is more cognitively complex than the former, but both collect sufficient evidence to make competency determinations.

As mentioned previously, these two examples are not the only way that civics competency assessments can be designed to fulfill NH state statute or the design considerations detailed in Section III. Additionally, there is no state requirement that the civics competency assessment be administered at one point in time, therefore, educators may consider dividing up the civics competency assessment—especially one comprised of many open-response questions—over the course of the semester or year after the related instruction occurs.

Table 3

Two Civics Competency Assessment Examples

Domain/ Subdomain in SB 45	Civics Competency Assessment Example #1:	Civics Competency Assessment Example #2:
1d	<p><i>Mixture of US Citizenship Exam Study Guide and Constructed Response Items</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is the supreme law of the land? 2) What does the Constitution do? 3) The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words? 4) What is an amendment? 5) What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution? 6) What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment? 7) How many amendments does the Constitution have? 10) What is freedom of religion? 12) What is the “rule of law”? 41) Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government? 48) There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them. 54) How old do citizens have to be to vote for President? 	<p><i>Mixture of Constructed Response and Performance-Based Items</i></p> <p>Compare and contrast the principles of the Articles of Confederation to the U.S. Constitution. What principles were added to the Constitution? Why were these principles added or removed? Are there principles included in the Articles that are not included in the Constitution? Which principles, if any, appear in both?</p>

	<p>Generate a visual representation, graphic organizer, or other means to teach another student about the US Constitution and the principles stated in the Articles and Amendments of the US Constitution.</p>	
1d	<p>Name one way citizens engage in democracy in the state of NH that is different from civic engagement in the US federal government. How do the principles in NH's Constitution differ from the principles in the US Constitution?</p> <p>State one principle stated in the articles of the NH Constitution that provides the foundation for the democratic government of NH? How does the NH Constitution provide a foundation for the democratic government of NH?</p>	<p>The New Hampshire Constitution does not contain a Preamble which outlines the foundation for the democratic government of NH. Our Constitution has two parts: a Bill of Rights and Articles. Explore both the Bill of Rights and the Articles. What elements showcase the foundation of democratic government? Generate a Preamble which explains our democratic foundation.</p>
1e	<p>13) Name one branch or part of the government.</p> <p>14) What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?</p> <p>15) Who is in charge of the executive branch?</p> <p>16) Who makes federal laws?</p> <p>17) What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?</p> <p>18) How many U.S. Senators are there?</p> <p>19) We elect a U.S. senator for how many years?</p> <p>21) The House of Representatives has how many voting members?</p> <p>22) We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?</p> <p>24) Who does a U.S. Senator represent?</p> <p>25) Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?</p> <p>26) We elect a President for how many years?</p>	<p>Name the branches of the US government and explain how their structures and functions are unique, but complementary.</p>

	<p>27) In what month do we vote for President?</p> <p>30) If the president can no longer serve, who becomes President?</p> <p>31) If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes president?</p> <p>32) Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?</p> <p>33) Who signs bills to become laws?</p> <p>34) Who vetoes bills?</p> <p>35) What does the President's cabinet do?</p> <p>36) What are two Cabinet-level positions?</p> <p>37) What does the judicial branch do?</p> <p>38) What is the highest court in the United States?</p> <p>39) How many justices are on the Supreme Court?</p>	
1g	<p>42) Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?</p> <p>How do NH and local government function in light of the larger US Constitution? For example, does the federal government have the right to “defund” the educational system in a state, if said state does not comply with federal guidelines? Explain.</p>	<p>How do NH and local government function in light of the larger US Constitution? For example, does the federal government have the right to “defund” the educational system in a state, if said state does not comply with federal guidelines? Explain.</p>
1h	<p>What is an example of how federal, state, and/or local governments address problems and issues?</p>	<p>Consider both the State of New Hampshire and the United States Constitution and a current event like one of the following listed below. Using both Constitutions as reference and evidence, discuss which governing entity should control oversight and/ or implementation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The response to COVID-19 * Legalize marijuana * Universal healthcare
1i	<p>11) What is the economic system in the United States?</p>	<p>Analyze an historic and/or a recent example of the role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity and the regulation of</p>

	<p>How is the federal government’s monetary response to COVID-19 an example of the role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity? Explain.</p>	<p>monetary policy (e.g., great depression and stimulus/bailout in 2008 and 2020). Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts to respond to the following prompt: To what degree and how should the government respond to an economic crisis? Use evidence to justify your conclusions.</p>
2a	<p>49) What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens? 50) Name one right only for United States citizens. 51) What are two rights for everyone living in the United States? 55) What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy? 56) When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms? 57) When must all men register for the Selective Service?</p> <p>What are the main rights and responsibilities of citizens in the NH and US Constitution?</p>	<p>Compare the extent to which citizens can directly engage in federal, state, and local government. Cite the US Constitution and NH Constitution as evidence.</p>
2b	<p>Historically, how have the rights of citizens been denied and what have been more/less effective skills to participate in civic affairs?</p>	<p>Historically, how have the rights of citizens been denied and what have been more/less effective skills to participate in civic affairs?</p>
2d	<p>Same as 2a.</p>	<p>Same as 2a.</p>
3	<p>20) Who is one of your state’s U.S. Senators now? 23) Name your U.S. Representative. 28) What is the name of the President of the United States now? 29) What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now? 40) Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now? 43) Who is the Governor of your state now? 47) What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?</p>	<p>Analyze multiple sources of evidence to justify your choice for a noteworthy government or civics leader from the last 100 years that exemplifies important character qualities or traits. Explain using evidence.</p>

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| | <p>62) Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?</p> <p>67) The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.</p> <p>68) What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?</p> <p>69) Who is the “Father of Our Country”?</p> <p>70) Who was the first President?</p> <p>75) What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?</p> <p>77) What did Susan B. Anthony do?</p> <p>79) Who was President during World War I?</p> <p>80) Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?</p> <p>82) Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?</p> <p>85) What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?</p> | |
|--|---|--|

Section VI: Guidance on Improving the Comparability of Teacher Judgments about Student Achievement on Civics Competency Assessments Pursuant to NH State Statute

Currently, NH schools and districts do not share common performance standards that describe what constitutes passing or failing in the civics content domain and learning expectations measured by a locally developed civics/government competency assessment or the U.S. Citizenship Exam—nor are they legally required to do so. Schools and districts across the state independently decide how they will determine what constitutes passing achievement in order to report pass/fail scores to the NHDOE. For example, some schools and districts use a certain percentage of items that must be correct to pass based on a 100-question civics exam adapted from the U.S. Citizenship Exam study guide. This percentage correct varies across schools and districts, and doesn't take into account what questions a student missed. In other words, a percentage doesn't signal how well students performed on the specific domains/subdomains measured by the civics competency assessment. Consider a student who missed every question related to the U.S. Constitution, as well as the structure and functions of the three branches comprising federal and state governments, but still earned a passing score. Should this student be considered competent in civics and earn a passing score, regardless of the fact that their knowledge of the fundamentals of our democratic government is lacking?

Additionally, multiple civics/government competency assessments exist within the state and even sometimes within districts at present. How can the state ensure that the competency judgments made about student performance are comparable in scope and nature to the content domain and learning expectations, regardless of the civics competency assessment administered to students locally? The answer to this question assumes that all locally-administered civics competency assessment are appropriately aligned to the domains/subdomains in NH state statute (see Table 1) in terms of content, breadth, balance of the content, and depth. See the Section III for a detailed discussion of adequate content alignment, cognitive complexity, and associated evidence.

One approach to promote comparability of teacher judgments about student achievement on the civics competency assessment(s) within and across schools and districts in NH is to create common achievement level descriptors. Achievement level descriptors (ALDs) delineate how well students should perform on the knowledge and skills measured by the civics competency assessment. The levels define appropriate expectations of student performance in civics by the end of grade 12 as measured by locally developed civics competency assessment(s) and/or the US Citizenship Exam. The purpose of ALDs is to have something in common across the state that promotes comparable judgments about student competency. State statute does not require such comparability so the adoption of the common ALDs would be voluntary.

There are several approaches that could be used to create civics ALDs. For example, teachers from across the state could examine student work resulting from selected high-quality civics competency assessments and describe the different profiles of student responses with respect to what constitutes passing achievement. To do this, teachers would start by discussing what should count as passing on the test given the domains and subdomains required under state statute. Teachers could then sort student work into two groups (pass/fail) and describe what criteria they used to sort the student work as they did. These criteria could be codified into a descriptor that teachers across the state could voluntarily use to determine passing/failing.

Another approach would be to adopt or modify an ALD from the national civics testing program. For example, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has achievement level descriptors at three levels—Basic, Proficient, and Advanced—for the Grade 12 Civics Assessment. The NAEP civics framework and associated ALDs could be reviewed by a group of NH educators and adopted/modified so it is aligned with the domains/subdomains in NH state statute.

Conclusion

NH state statute requires high schools to administer either the U.S. Citizenship Exam or a locally developed government/civics competency assessment. Results are reported at the student-level to the NH DOE by June 30th of each school year. Many schools and districts around the state of NH are currently administering a modified version of the U.S. Citizenship Exam to meet the requirements of the law, but there are limitations to the use of this exam relative to the domains and subdomains in state statute (i.e., alignment to state statute SB 45).

This non-regulatory guidance provides NH educators with information on how to evaluate and improve the quality of locally developed civics assessments intended to meet state statute. NH educators could also use this guidance to develop a companion civics assessment that could be combined with the U.S. Citizenship Exam to ensure sufficient evidence about students' competency pursuant to state law. The examples of civics competency assessment provided in this document support educators in this endeavor.

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Appendix A: List of Participants (February 20, 2020) Stakeholder Input Meeting

NEW HAMPSHIRE EDUCATORS

Full Name	Position	District/Organization Name
Ami Rich	Social Studies Head Teacher at Nashua HS North	Nashua School District
Amy Doolin**	Teacher	Newfound Regional High School
Andrew Bergang	Middle School Social Studies Teacher	Strong Foundations Charter School
Andrew J. Pyszka	Teacher	SAU #19/ Goffstown School District
Ann Hadwen	Curriculum Administrator	Exeter Region Cooperative School District
Arthur Adamakos	Principal	Manchester Memorial High School
Caitlen McCarthy-Madore**	Teacher	Rochester School District (Spaulding High School)
Christina O'Hara	Dean of Humanities	Bedford High School
Christopher Andriski	Assistant Superintendent of Schools	SAU 16
Christopher Herr	Social Studies Teacher	Concord High School
Derek Leslie	7th grade SS -- Learning Area Leader	SAU 16 -- ERCSD
Elizabeth Gouzoules**	8th Grade Social Studies History Teacher & Curriculum Advisor	Rochester School District
Heather Saluto	High School Teacher	SAU 16 (Exeter High School)
James Tucker	8th grade Social Studies Teacher	Kearsarge Middle School
James Gorman	Co-Director	CSI Charter School
Jeff Peterson	Social Studies Department Chair	Alvirne High School, Hudson, NH
Jessica Faloretti	High School Social Studies Teacher	Hinsdale High School
Joanne Johnson	Curriculum Peer Coach	Nashua School District
Jude Chauvette	Curriculum Director	Nottingham Elementary
Kaitlyn Hills**	Director of Curriculum and Instruction	GWRSD
Laurel Dumont	Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning	John Stark Regional High School
Maggie Roberts	Social Studies Teacher	Laconia School District
Matthew Krogman	District Curriculum Specialist	Hopkinton School District

Matthew McDonald	Teacher	Souhegan Cooperative School District
Melinda Pfaff	Social Studies Teacher	Alvirne High School, Hudson, NH
Nichole O'Brien	High School Social Studies Teacher	Pinkerton Academy
Pamela Hill	Social Studies Teacher	Merrimack Valley School District
Rob Huckins	Social Studies Department Chair	Merrimack School District
Ryan Francoeur	Curriculum Coordinator	Winnacunnet High School
Sarah Robinson	Social Studies Teacher	Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District
Sarah Stout	Teacher	MC2
Shannan Mckenna	Director of Social Studies and World Languages	Windham School District
Stacy Brown	Teacher	Winnacunnet High School
Steve Goyette	Director of the Humanities	Salem High School
Todd Allen	Assistant Superintendent	Oyster River School District
Tyler Nekton	Social Studies Department Chair	Epping School District
Nicole Woulfe	Gr 6 Social Studies Teacher	Sanborn Regional School District
Mike Dupont	Teacher	The Founders Academy

**Note: These individuals also helped create and provide input into the civics/government competency assessment examples found in Section V.

INVITED GUESTS

Full Name	Position	District/Organization Name
Dianna Terrell	Associate Professor	Saint Anselm College
Felicia Sullivan	Associate Director	Jobs for the Future (JFF)

Appendix B: NH Civics/Government Competency Assessments Evaluation/Review Tool

Instructions: The questions listed under each criteria should be used to prompt reviewer thinking in order to evaluate the quality of locally developed civics assessments. Not all prompts may be relevant or answerable depending on the assessment. The boxes next to each criteria provide a note-taking space for reviewers to document their analysis during the review.

Criteria	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Adequate evidence of content alignment and cognitive complexity: To what extent do you see alignment between the civics competency assessment(s) and domains/subdomains listed in state statute (content, breadth and balance)?</p> <p>Is the civics competency assessment(s) as cognitively challenging as the state statute to which it is aligned?</p>		
<p>Scored using clear guidelines and criteria: Are scoring guidelines provided? Are the guidelines clear?</p> <p>If a rubric is included, to what extent is it aligned to the assessment task and state statute?</p> <p>Are the score categories clearly defined and represent a sensible progression of knowledge and skills across performance levels?</p> <p>To what extent would the scoring guidelines and rubric lead different raters to arrive at the same score for a given response?</p>		

Fair and unbiased for all students:

To what extent is the competency assessment visually clear and uncluttered (e.g., appropriate white space and/or lines for student responses, graphics, and/or illustrations are clear and support the assessment content, the font size seems appropriate for the students)?

To what extent are the directions and questions presented in as straightforward a way as possible for a range of learners?

To what extent is the vocabulary and context presented by the competency assessment free from cultural or other unintended bias?

Sufficient evidence to make competency determinations:

To what extent does the civics competency assessment elicit sufficient evidence for judging the level of student knowledge and understanding related to the state statute at the pass/fail level?

OVERALL FEEDBACK ON CIVICS COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Assessment(s) Name:

Strengths (paragraph or bulleted list):

Weaknesses (paragraph or bulleted list):

Recommendations (bulleted list):

Appendix C: Reviewed Civics/Government Competency Assessment Examples

Reviewed Example 1



28th Amendment

What issues or concerns do you have with our country/government today? What changes or additions to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights would you like to see made to address your concerns?

Task: Develop an idea for the 28th Amendment that is not already in the Constitution, Bill of Rights or other Amendments.

- Make sure to identify the *what* and the *why* behind your Amendment.
- Describe how your amendment would make its way through the proposal and ratification process. Check out the [Amendment Process at the National Archives](#).
- Explain the actions or steps that you and other citizens should take to ensure the passage of your amendment.

Product: Write a letter to the appropriate public official who can help you move your amendment forward. Your public official should be in a role that would allow him or her to realistically consider and possibly take action on your proposal. Use the following links to help you determine who to send your letter to... [CitizensCount](#) & [NH Offices](#)

28th Amendment Rubric

Rubric

	Exemplary	Proficient	Basic Proficiency	Limited Proficiency	NM
Civics & Government	I describe how society has changed since the 27th amendment making my proposal necessary	Justify why your amendment is necessary using evidence	I propose and explain my 28th Amendment	I identify how to amend the Constitution	
Civic Engagement	I sent my letter!	I demonstrate the importance of citizens' roles in the amendment process	I explain why this person was chosen to receive the letter	I chose an appropriate person for my proposal	
SS Applications	I provide evidence that disproves the arguments against my amendment	I identify arguments people make against my amendment	I incorporate evidence (in text citations) that supports the necessity of my proposed amendment	I include outside information in my amendment proposal and create a work cited	

Reviewed Example 2

2018 Naturalization Test: Civics Questions 1-50

1. What is the supreme law of the land?
A. The Declaration of Independence
B. The Constitution
C. State laws
D. Federal laws
2. What does the Constitution do?
A. creates treaties
B. establishes the government
C. protects the rights of government
D. establishes natural rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness
3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
A. life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness
B. legislative, executive, and judicial branches
C. We the people
D. truth, justice, and the American way
4. What is an amendment?
A. an article
B. a change or addition
C. an abbreviation
D. a substitution
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
A. the Bill of Rights
B. the Due Process Rights
C. the Fundamental Rights
D. the Primary Rights
6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?
A. right to bear arms
B. right to due process of law
C. freedom of speech
D. freedom from unreasonable search or seizure
7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?
A. 10
B. 27
C. 50
D. 435
8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?
A. established the laws of the United States
B. announced independence from Great Britain
C. established the checks and balances of the American government
9. What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?
A. life and liberty
B. liberty and property
C. free speech and free press
D. free exercise of religion and right to petition
10. What is freedom of religion?
A. religious officials are not subject to the law
B. you have the freedom to practice Christian religions
C. you can practice any religion, or no religion
D. you can practice any religion, as long as it is recognized by the government

24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?

- A. a district within a state
- B. the United States
- C. the entire state
- D. all U.S. citizens

25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?

- A. larger land area
- B. larger amount of taxes paid
- C. larger population
- D. all states have the same number of representatives

26. We elect a President for how many years?

- A. 2 years
- B. 4 years
- C. 6 years
- D. 8 years

27. In what month do we vote for President?

- A. January
- B. December
- C. September
- D. November

28. What is the name of the President of the United States now? _____

29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now? _____

30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

- A. Speaker of the House
- B. president pro tempore of the Senate
- C. Vice President
- D. Secretary of State

31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

- A. Speaker of the House
- B. president pro tempore of the Senate
- C. Vice President
- D. Secretary of State

32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?

- A. the Congress
- B. the President
- C. the Vice President
- D. the Secretary of Defense

33. Who signs bills to become laws?

- A. Speaker of the House
- B. president pro tempore of the Senate
- C. Vice President
- D. President

34. Who vetoes bills?

- A. Speaker of the House
- B. president pro tempore of the Senate
- C. Vice President
- D. President

35. What does the President's Cabinet do?

- A. advise the President
- B. lead their departments
- C. store the U.S. laws
- D. both A and B

36. What are two Cabinet-level positions? _____

37. What does the judicial branch do?

- A. interpret laws
- B. make laws
- C. enforce laws

38. What is the highest court in the United States?

- A. U.S. District Court B. U.S. Court of Appeals C. U.S. Supreme Court

39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?

- A. 7 B. 9 C. 12 D. 3

40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now? _____

41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. Which one of the following powers is NOT a power of the federal government?

- A. tax B. declare war C. driver's licences D. print money

42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?

- A. provide education C. create post offices
B. raise an army D. regulate interstate commerce

43. Who is the Governor of your state now? _____

44. What is the capital of your state? _____

45. What are the two major political parties in the United States? (put both)

- A. Republican B. Democrat C. Independent D. Progressive

46. What is the political party of the President now?

- A. Republican B. Democrat C. Independent D. Progressive

47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now? _____

48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.


49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?

- A. to serve on a jury B. to pay taxes C. to obey laws

50. Name one right only for United States citizens.

- A. to vote B. to bear arms C. freedom of religion

ESSAY QUESTIONS - You must answer two of the following seven (7) questions. One question from A-D and one question from E-G. **Explain your answers - do not just answer with yes or no.**

- A) What are the constitutional differences (term length, powers, size, etc.) between the House and the Senate? How do these differences influence the operational style and institutional role of each institution? Should the size of the House of Representatives be increased to be more representative?
 - B) What factors influence the selection of federal judges? Should the Senate defer to presidential choices? Should the judicial filibuster be eliminated? Should Supreme Court justices be elected? Should they serve life terms?
 - C) Consider the presidential term of office. Should it be lengthened or shortened? Should the 22nd Amendment be repealed? Should the "natural born citizen" requirement be eliminated?
 - D) Consider the available methods of amending the Constitution (both for proposal and ratification). What have been the most significant amendments to the Constitution? Do you think the process for amending the Constitution should be made easier?
- 
- E) What are the benefits of being a citizen? What are the responsibilities that go along with citizenship? What will happen to our rights and privileges if we don't meet those responsibilities?
 - F) Is it important for citizens to voice their opinions and participate in the decision making process? Why, or why not? What are some ways you can make your voice heard?
 - G) What are some things in your community that need improving? What could you do about it?

Appendix D: U.S. Citizenship Exam Questions by Domain/Subdomain in SB 45

**Uses numbering from the [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Civics Questions for the Naturalization Test](#)*

Domain	Subdomain	Citizenship Test Questions
<p>1. The nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the US government</p>	<p>c) The US Constitution and the principles stated in the Articles and Amendments of the US Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of the United States.</p>	<p>1) What is the supreme law of the land? 2) What does the Constitution do? 3) The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words? 4) What is an amendment? 5) What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution? 6) What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment? 7) How many amendments does the Constitution have? 10) What is freedom of religion? 12) What is the “rule of law”? 41) Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government? 48) There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them. 54) How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?</p>
	<p>d) The NH Constitution and the principles stated in the articles of the NH Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of NH.</p>	<p>None.</p>

	<p>e) The structure and functions of the 3 branches comprising federal and state governments: legislative, judicial, and executive.</p>	<p>13) Name one branch or part of the government. 14) What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful? 15) Who is in charge of the executive branch? 16) Who makes federal laws? 17) What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress? 18) How many U.S. Senators are there? 19) We elect a U.S. senator for how many years? 21) The House of Representatives has how many voting members? 22) We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years? 24) Who does a U.S. Senator represent? 25) Why do some states have more Representatives than other states? 26) We elect a President for how many years? 27) In what month do we vote for President? 30) If the president can no longer serve, who becomes President? 31) If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes president? 32) Who is the Commander in Chief of the military? 33) Who signs bills to become laws? 34) Who vetoes bills? 35) What does the President's cabinet do? 36) What are two Cabinet-level positions? 37) What does the judicial branch do? 38) What is the highest court in the United States? 39) How many justices are on the Supreme Court?</p>
	<p>g) The role and interactions of the state of NH and local government within the framework of the US Constitution and of extended powers and functions provided to local governments.</p>	<p>42) Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?</p>

	<p>h) How federal, state, and local governments address problems and issues by making decisions, creating laws, enforcing regulations, and taking action.</p> <p>i) The role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity and the regulation of monetary policy.</p>	
<p>2. The rights and responsibilities of citizens</p>	<p>a) Opportunities and responsibilities for civic involvement.</p> <p>b) Skills to effectively participate in civic affairs.</p> <p>d) The role, opportunities, and responsibilities of a citizen to engage in civic activity.</p>	<p>11) What is the economic system in the United States?</p> <p>49) What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?</p> <p>50) Name one right only for United States citizens.</p> <p>51) What are two rights for everyone living in the United States?</p> <p>55) What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?</p> <p>56) When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?</p> <p>57) When must all men register for the Selective Service?</p> <p>None.</p> <p>Same as 2a.</p>
<p>3. Noteworthy government and civics leaders</p>	<p>None listed.</p>	<p>20) Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators now?</p> <p>23) Name your U.S. Representative.</p> <p>28) What is the name of the President of the United States now?</p> <p>29) What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?</p> <p>40) Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?</p> <p>43) Who is the Governor of your state now?</p> <p>47) What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?</p> <p>62) Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?</p>

- 67) The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.
- 68) What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?
- 69) Who is the “Father of Our Country”?
- 70) Who was the first President?
- 75) What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?
- 77) What did Susan B. Anthony do?
- 79) Who was President during World War I?
- 80) Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?
- 82) Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?
- 85) What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

U.S. Citizenship Exam Questions that do not align to NH domains/subdomains

Historical Documents

- 8) What did the Declaration of Independence do?
- 9) What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?
- 63) When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
- 76) What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

Geography

- 44) What is the capital of your state?
- 88) Name one of the longest rivers in the United States.
- 89) What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?
- 90) What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?
- 91) Name one U.S. territory.
- 92) Name one state that borders Canada.
- 93) Name one state that borders Mexico.
- 94) What is the capital of the United States?
- 95) Where is the Statue of Liberty?

Political Parties

- 45) What are the two major political parties in the United States?
- 46) What is the political party of the President now?

General History

- 58) What is one reason colonists came to America?
- 59) Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
- 60) What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?
- 61) Why did the colonists fight the British?
- 64) There were 13 original states. Name three.
- 65) What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
- 66) When was the Constitution written?
- 71) What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?
- 72) Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.
- 73) Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.
- 74) Name one problem that led to the Civil War.
- 78) Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.
- 81) Who did the United States fight in World War II?
- 83) During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?
- 84) What movement tried to end racial discrimination?
- 86) What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?
- 87) Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.

Miscellaneous

- 52) What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?
- 53) What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
- 96) Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
- 97) Why does the flag have 50 stars?
- 98) What is the name of the national anthem?
- 99) When do we celebrate Independence Day?
- 100) Name two national U.S. holidays.

HB 320 - AS INTRODUCED

2021 SESSION

21-0357

06/04

HOUSE BILL **320**

AN ACT requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.

SPONSORS: Rep. Moffett, Merr. 9; Rep. Pearl, Merr. 26; Rep. Lang, Belk. 4; Rep. Rouillard, Hills. 6; Rep. Shaw, Hills. 16; Rep. Hobson, Rock. 35

COMMITTEE: Education

ANALYSIS

This bill requires high school students to attain a grade of 70 percent or better on the civics naturalization examination developed by the United States Citizen and Immigration Service.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struck through.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

AN ACT requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Civics Instruction. Amend RSA 189:11, II to read as follows:

2 II. As a component of instruction under paragraph I, a locally developed competency
3 assessment of United States government and civics that includes, but is not limited to, the nature,
4 purpose, structure, function, and history of the United States government, the rights and
5 responsibilities of citizens, and noteworthy government and civic leaders, shall be administered to
6 students as part of the **required** high school course in history and government of the United States
7 and New Hampshire. ~~[Students who attain a passing grade on the competency assessment shall be
8 eligible for a certificate issued by the school district. The United States Citizenship and Immigration
9 Services (USCIS) test may be used to satisfy the requirement of this paragraph.]~~ **To be eligible for
10 a graduation certificate, a student shall attain a locally sanctioned passing grade on the
11 competency assessment, and a grade of 70 percent or better on the 100 question civics
12 (history and government) naturalization examination developed by the 2020 United States
13 Citizen and Immigration Services. Schools may modify the naturalization examination for
14 a child with a disability in accordance with the child's individualized education program.**
15 By June 30 of each year, each school district shall submit the results of either the locally developed
16 competency assessment of United States government and civics or the United States Citizenship and
17 Immigration Services (USCIS) test to the department of education.

18 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.



New Hampshire School Boards Association

Barrett M. Christina, Executive Director
Travis Thompson, President, Exeter Regional Cooperative
Amy Facey, First Vice-President, Souhegan Cooperative
Brenda Willis, Second Vice-President, Derry Cooperative
Shannon Barnes, Past-President, Merrimack

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February 4, 2021

Dear Chairman Ladd and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Becky Wilson, and I serve as the Director of Governmental Relations for the New Hampshire School Boards Association. Due to some technical issues with registering to testify today, I am sending along a copy of NHSBA's testimony in regards to HB 320. We want to thank the sponsors of this bill (Rep. Moffett, Rep. Pearl, Rep. Lang, Rep. Rouillard, Rep. Shaw, Rep. Hobson), as NHSBA shares the belief that civics education is an important topic, and should remain a focus for New Hampshire students. However for the reasons outlined in this testimony, NHSBA is in opposition of HB 320.

As is noted in the proposed language of HB 320, students are already required to attain a passing grade on a competency based assessment, showing evidence of the student's ability to understand and apply the concepts of nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the United States government, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and noteworthy government and civic leaders. Adding an *additional* graduation requirement, mandating students pass the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test, seems redundant and also contrary to the strong push and focus for New Hampshire high school graduation requirements to focus on competency.

NH has long been working to decrease reliance on high stakes, one time standardized tests as a measure of a student's ability to show evidence of skills. Requiring all students attain a specific grade, on this specific test is unnecessary and creates an additional burden on the student. Should districts choose, the language currently in statute allows districts the option of utilizing the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test, as their civics assessment to meet the graduation requirement, although this may not be seen as best instructional practice as a measure of competency.

Competency based systems provide multiple opportunities to show learning and mastery, through project based learning, and real world application of skills. While NHSBA

supports the belief that students must show competency of United States government and civics, we do not feel that a student's ability to "pass" the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test, will measure a student's competency, understanding or application of the concepts involved in civics. It simply measures the student's ability to answer questions in a specific format, or a student's ability to memorize information and retain it for a period of time required to pass the test.

HB 320 places additional focus on standardized testing on already overwhelmed high school students, and creates an additional hurdle for students to overcome. Local school boards are tasked with awarding diplomas based on each district's requirements. However, New Hampshire minimum standards state that the instructional program shall enable students to demonstrate achievement of "graduation competencies" not a level of achievement on specific standardized tests. NHSBA continues to support local governance when determining graduation requirements for individual districts. NHSBA would like to again express our acknowledgement and appreciation of the importance of civic education for our students, and please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of any assistance.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rebecca R. Wilson".

Rebecca R. Wilson, NHSBA Director of Governmental Relations

Bill as
Introduced

HB 320 - AS INTRODUCED

2021 SESSION

21-0357

06/04

HOUSE BILL **320**

AN ACT requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.

SPONSORS: Rep. Moffett, Merr. 9; Rep. Pearl, Merr. 26; Rep. Lang, Belk. 4; Rep. Rouillard, Hills. 6; Rep. Shaw, Hills. 16; Rep. Hobson, Rock. 35

COMMITTEE: Education

ANALYSIS

This bill requires high school students to attain a grade of 70 percent or better on the civics naturalization examination developed by the United States Citizen and Immigration Service.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struck through.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

AN ACT requiring a civics competency assessment as a high school graduation requirement.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Civics Instruction. Amend RSA 189:11, II to read as follows:

2 II. As a component of instruction under paragraph I, a locally developed competency
3 assessment of United States government and civics that includes, but is not limited to, the nature,
4 purpose, structure, function, and history of the United States government, the rights and
5 responsibilities of citizens, and noteworthy government and civic leaders, shall be administered to
6 students as part of the **required** high school course in history and government of the United States
7 and New Hampshire. ~~[Students who attain a passing grade on the competency assessment shall be
8 eligible for a certificate issued by the school district. The United States Citizenship and Immigration
9 Services (USCIS) test may be used to satisfy the requirement of this paragraph.]~~ **To be eligible for
10 a graduation certificate, a student shall attain a locally sanctioned passing grade on the
11 competency assessment, and a grade of 70 percent or better on the 100 question civics
12 (history and government) naturalization examination developed by the 2020 United States
13 Citizen and Immigration Services. Schools may modify the naturalization examination for
14 a child with a disability in accordance with the child's individualized education program.**
15 By June 30 of each year, each school district shall submit the results of either the locally developed
16 competency assessment of United States government and civics or the United States Citizenship and
17 Immigration Services (USCIS) test to the department of education.

18 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.