

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

September 12, 2025

Agenda Item:	Rules – Notice of Intended Action – Chapters 12 & 32 (Amend)
State Board Priority:	Goal 1
State Board Role/Authority:	This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 256.7 and 259A.5.
Presenter(s):	Thomas A. Mayes General Counsel and Rules Coordinator
Attachment(s):	One
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the State Board of Education give notice of its intent to amend chapters 12 and 32.
Background:	This proposed rulemaking implements the civics examination as a graduation requirement beginning on July 1, 2026, for both high school diplomas and high school equivalency diplomas.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT[281]

Notice of Intended Action

The State Board of Education hereby proposes to amend Chapter 12, “General Accreditation Standards,” and Chapter 32, “High School Equivalency Diploma,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 256.7 and 259A.5.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 369.

Purpose and Summary

This proposed rulemaking implements the civics examination as a graduation requirement beginning on July 1, 2026.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the state of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the State Board for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 281—Chapter 4.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit comments concerning this proposed rulemaking. Written comments in response to this rulemaking must be received by the State Board no later than 4:30 p.m. on October 21, 2025. Comments should be directed to:

Thomas A. Mayes, General Counsel
Grimes State Office Building
400 East 14th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.281.8661
Email: thomas.mayes@iowa.gov

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

October 21, 2025
8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
Room B-50, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa
Or by video conference at <https://meet.google.com/rhd-dnga-ziy>
Telephone access to the video conference: +1 385-645-7961 PIN: 403 190 939#

Persons who wish to make oral comments at the public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend the hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the State Board and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its regular monthly meeting or at a special

meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Amend subrule 12.5(5) as follows:

12.5(5) *High school program, grades 9 through 12.* In grades 9 through 12, a unit is a course or equivalent related components or partial units taught throughout the academic year as defined in subrule 12.5(13). The following will be offered and taught as the minimum program as referenced in Iowa Code section 256.11(5). All students in schools and school districts shall satisfactorily complete requirements as referenced in Iowa Code sections 256.7(26), 256.11(5) “b” and “g,” and 256.11(6) “c,” and, for the school year commencing July 1, 2026, section 280.9A(1A) as enacted by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 369, in order to graduate. It is locally determined how to incorporate the content specifications into relevant standards and benchmarks.

In implementing the high school program standards, the following curriculum standards apply:

a. to l. No change.

ITEM 2. Amend rule **281—32.1(259A)**, definition of “High school equivalency diploma,” as follows:

“*High school equivalency diploma*” means the credential granted by the department to adults who did not graduate from high school and are unable to receive a high school diploma through traditional means but who are able to demonstrate attainment of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are equivalent to those that would be attained in a high school program of

study pursuant to this chapter. Commencing July 1, 2026, an adult must pass the examination described in Iowa Code section 280.9A(1A) as enacted by 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 369, to receive this credential.