

SF 369 Civics Test Information and FAQs

[Senate File 369](#) (SF 369) became effective on July 1, 2025. The civics test is to be administered starting with the 2026-27 school year. 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 369 directs the Iowa Department of Education to develop a multiple-choice test comprised of all questions from the most recent version of the civics test issued by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and distribute the test to school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools.

The Department must update the multiple-choice test on or before Jan. 31 following a general election inclusive of a presidential election. The Department will implement these updates accordingly and may also revise the test on an as-needed basis.

The statute establishes a requirement, beginning with the school year starting July 1, 2026, for the board of directors of a school district or authorities in charge of an accredited nonpublic school to administer the civics test developed and distributed by the Department to students in each of grades 9 through 12. The test shall be offered annually at each grade level to provide students multiple opportunities to achieve a passing score. The school district or accredited nonpublic school shall ensure that each student attains at least one passing score as a condition of graduation.

- A passing score means a student has answered at least 60 percent of the test questions correctly.
- A student may retake the test as many times as is necessary to secure a passing score.

A school district or accredited nonpublic school may modify the civics test for a student with an individualized education program (IEP), a Section 504 plan, or who is an English learner. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, the district or school may develop and administer an alternate assessment.

School districts and accredited nonpublic schools must report test results to the Department annually by June 30.

Charter schools are subject to the same requirements related to administration of the civics test.

Individuals seeking a high school equivalency diploma must complete and pass the civics test as a condition of receiving the diploma.

The legislation also directs the Department to study the relationship between high school graduation rates and the number of students who attain a passing score on the required civics test. The results are to be included in a report submitted to the General Assembly on or before June 30, 2029.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Preparing for Success

1. What resources are available to support students in taking the test?

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has several resources that may be helpful to students. Students can utilize this test [study guide](#).

Test Administration and Reporting

2. How should the test be delivered?

The test is available as a Google Form and PDF on the Department's [Social Studies Instruction webpage](#). SF 369 requires school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools to administer the multiple-choice test developed by the Iowa Department of Education. To support local

implementation, the Department has provided the civics test in multiple formats. School districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools may determine the method of delivery, including use of a local platform (e.g., Microsoft Forms, Canvas), provided the Department-developed test content is used.

3. Does the test need to be timed?

No. The civics test is not required to be timed.

4. Does the civics test have to be proctored?

Yes. Regardless of the delivery format, the test should be proctored to ensure test security and appropriate administration practices. Completion of a formal test security module is not required prior to proctoring.

5. In what grades can students take the test?

The test must be offered annually in each of grades 9 through 12, and students may take it at any point during those grade levels.

6. Can students retake the test if they don't pass the first time?

Yes. Students may retake the test as many times as needed to achieve a passing score.

7. Can a parent "opt out" of the civics test requirement?

No. The civics test is a graduation requirement established by the Iowa Legislature in 2025. Under Senate File 369, there is no provision allowing a parent to opt a student out of this requirement.

8. How do districts report student test results to the Iowa Department of Education?

Beginning in the 2026–27 school year, school districts will report student results through the Student Information System (SIS), which will include a field for entering each student's percent correct on the test. Accredited nonpublic schools that do not report through Student Reporting in Iowa (SRI) will submit results through the nonpublic student data file.

Accommodations and Alternative Test

9. For students that have an IEP/504 or are English learners that complete the civics test in sections, does the civics test need to be administered within one year?

Yes. The test should be completed in one school year.

10. What support may be provided to students with an IEP or 504 plan?

Senate File 369 provides that a school district or accredited nonpublic school may modify the test or develop and administer an alternate test for a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan, a significant cognitive disability, or for a student who is an English learner.

The IEP or 504 team determines whether a modification is appropriate. Modifications may include, but are not limited to, administering the test in smaller sections or individual items while maintaining the security of the remaining test content. Regardless of any modification, student results must still be reported as a percentage.

11. Can a student with an IEP use accommodations on the civics test?

Yes. A student with an IEP may use accommodations approved by the IEP team. Accommodations should be consistent with those used during the student's regular instruction and assessment.

12. If a student does not have any access or academic needs listed in the IEP, can they still take a modified version of the civics test?

The IEP team determines the appropriate format and any accommodations needed for the student to participate in the civics test.

13. Is there an example of an alternate test for students participating in the alternate assessments?

Yes, for students that are participating in the alternate assessments, a sample modified test will be posted on the Department's social studies webpage.

14. Is there a braille or large print version of the civics test available for districts to use?

Yes. Information on obtaining a braille or large print version of the civics test will be available on the Department's website.

15. How does this graduation requirement apply to students participating in a 4+ program?

Students with IEPs who have not earned a regular high school diploma prior to July 1, 2026, and who have not achieved a passing score on the civics test (or an approved modified or alternate version), must do so in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma.

16. What support may be provided to English learners?

SF 369 allows school districts and accredited nonpublic schools to modify the test or provide an alternative for students with an IEP or 504 plan, who have a severe intellectual disability, or who are English learners. For all students, including English learners, supports should align with accommodations routinely provided to the learner during instruction and assessment. If the test is modified, results should still be reported as a percentage.

17. Can all students use accessibility tools on the civics test?

Students can use accessibility features that are routinely used during instruction and assessment. These may include text to speech, read aloud, bilingual dictionary, separate setting, braille and large print. For examples of universal and designated features, please reference the [Iowa Statewide Assessment System Accessibility Manual](#).

Unique Circumstances

18. If a district awards a homeschool student credit for courses completed in the homeschool setting, which leads to the homeschool student earning a public school diploma, does the homeschool student have to take the test as a graduation requirement?

Yes. Any homeschooled student seeking to earn a public school diploma must meet all graduation requirements under Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 12, as well as any additional requirements established by the local district, including the civics test requirement. However, if a Homeschool Assistance Program (HSAP) awards homeschool students who participate in their programs certificates of attendance, these students do not have to take the test.

19. We have a foreign exchange student that is a 12th grader. Do they have to pass the test?

If a foreign exchange student is receiving a diploma from a district, they must pass the civics test graduation requirement. If they are receiving a certificate of completion, but still must return to their home country to finish high school and earn a diploma, they do not have to take the civics test.

Contacts

- For general questions, contact Stefanie Wager at stefanie.wager@iowa.gov or 515-419-2876.
- For questions related to special education accommodations or students with significant cognitive disabilities, contact Jennifer Denne at jennifer.denne@iowa.gov or 515-326-5332.
- For questions related to assessing English learners, contact Terri Schuster at terri.schuster@iowa.gov or 515-681-2492.
- For questions related to Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners, contact Tori Carsrud at tori.carsrud@iowa.gov or 515-577-7894.