

SESSION OF 2021

**SECOND CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT BRIEF
HOUSE BILL NO. 2039**

As Agreed to April 8, 2021

Brief*

HB 2039, as amended, would amend law related to civics and financial literacy education.

Civics Education

The bill would require, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, students enrolled in an accredited public, private, or parochial high school to pass a civics test, or series of tests, as part of the Kansas required courses of instruction for graduation. The bill would require, beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, students to be provided such civics test, or series of tests, but such students would not be required to pass such tests as a requirement for graduation. The bill would require the civics test, or series of tests, be composed of a total of 60 questions selected from the naturalization test administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The bill would allow teachers to use 20 multiple-choice questions provided on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website in the civics test or series of tests.

The bill would require each accredited high school to submit to the State Board of Education (State Board) an annual report that provides aggregate student achievement data for the civics test or series of tests. The bill would require

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the State Board to compile and present such reports to the Legislature on or before January 31 of each year.

The bill would also require accommodations for, or possible exemptions to, the civics test requirement for a student with an individualized education program.

The bill would authorize the State Board to adopt rules and regulations related to such civics test.

Financial Literacy Education

The bill would amend law regarding personal financial literacy education in state curriculum standards. Current law requires the State Board to develop such curriculum, materials, guidelines and standards for all grades within existing mathematics curriculum or other appropriate subject matter curriculum, for use by local boards of education and governing authorities of accredited nonpublic schools. The bill would maintain existing guidance for kindergarten through grade 10 but provide amended guidance for grades 11 and 12.

The bill would require, for grades 11 and 12, a personal financial literacy course to be at least one semester or two quarters in length. The bill would require the course offered to include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

- Saving and investing;
- Credit and debt;
- Financial responsibility and money management; and
- Insurance, risk management, and income.

The bill would require all public, private, or parochial high schools to implement such personal financial literacy

course in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years. The bill would require students pass such personal financial literacy course as a requirement for graduation beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.

Conference Committee Action

The second Conference Committee agreed to the provisions of HB 2039, as amended by the Senate. The second Conference Committee agreed to adopt amendments to:

- Delay the requirement to pass the civics test until the 2022-2023 school year. The bill would require that students in the 2021-2022 school year be provided the civics test, but passing it would not be mandatory for graduation;
- Require all schools to implement the personal financial literacy course for grades 10, 11, and 12 starting in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years; and
- Require students pass the financial literacy course for graduation starting in the 2024-2025 school year.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Education at the request of Representative Huebert.

[*Note:* HB 2039, as introduced, contained provisions similar to those of 2020 HB 2573.]

House Committee on Education

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Huebert, the Attorney General, and private citizens, stating the bill would enhance civics education in Kansas.

Opponent testimony was offered by representatives of the Kansas Association of School Boards and the Kansas National Education Association, stating the bill would not improve civics education and would unnecessarily impede the authority of local school boards. Written-only opponent testimony was provided by representatives of the State Board of Education and the Olathe Public Schools USD 233, and a private citizen.

The House Committee amended the bill to:

- Include a series of whereas clauses stating the purposes of the bill;
- Remove provisions related to a requirement for high school students to pass a 100-question examination on the principles of American civics to complete the requirements necessary for graduation from high school;
- Insert provisions related to a civics test as part of an existing course on the government and institutions of the United States;
- Insert provisions requiring high schools to submit certain aggregate data to the State Board and requiring the State Board to take certain action related to such data; and
- Remove requirements that the State Board provide a model examination for use by school districts or governing bodies of accredited high schools and establish a passing score for such examination.

[*Note:* The second Conference Committee retained these amendments.]

Senate Committee on Education

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Huebert and the Attorney General. Written-only proponent testimony was provided by a private citizen. The proponents generally discussed the value of a civics test to ensure students graduating from high school have the same level of civics knowledge as naturalized citizens.

Opponent testimony was provided by a representative for the Kansas Association of School Boards and the United School Administrators of Kansas, a representative of the Kansas National Education Association, and three private citizens. Written-only opponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Council for the Social Studies and the State Board. The opponents generally discussed the effectiveness of the test and whether the bill infringed on the State Board's authority.

Neutral testimony was provided by a private citizen. The conferee indicated support for the test but expressed the need to provide exemptions for students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and students with special needs.

Senate Committee of the Whole

The Senate Committee of the Whole amended the bill to require the State Board to develop curriculum, materials, and guidelines for the implementation of personal financial literacy education for grades 11 and 12 that covers topics listed in the bill. [*Note:* The second Conference Committee retained this amendment.]

Fiscal Information

The fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill as introduced does not apply to the amended bill.

Education; American civics test; graduation requirements; personal financial literacy

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