



Colorado
Legislative
Council
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SB16-148

FISCAL NOTE

FISCAL IMPACT: State Local Statutory Public Entity Conditional No Fiscal Impact

Drafting Number: LLS 16-0882

Date: March 11, 2016

Prime Sponsor(s): Sen. Hill
Rep. Moreno; Lundeen

Bill Status: Senate Education
Fiscal Analyst: Josh Abram (303-866-3561)

BILL TOPIC: REQUIRE CIVICS TEST BEFORE GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL

Summary of Legislation

Under current law, each high school student must satisfactorily complete a civics course as a condition of high school graduation. This bill requires that high school students also correctly answer at least 60 questions from the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as a condition of high school graduation. The new graduation requirement is applicable beginning with the freshman class on the 2016-17 school year.

Local education providers (LEPs, i.e., school districts, charter schools, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services) may allow a student to take the test in whole or in part on multiple occasions while enrolled in high school and if necessary, to repeat the test until the student correctly answers at least 60 questions. The LEP is required to note successful completion of the test on the student's transcript. Each LEP has authority and flexibility in determining how to administer the test. An LEP must not use the results of the civics test as a measure of student academic growth for use in evaluating educators.

Students receiving special education services are exempt from the new graduation requirement unless the student's individualized education plan would require it. The superintendent or principal of an LEP may also exempt a student who meets all other graduation requirements, and demonstrates extraordinary circumstances that justify the exemption.

School District Impact

Local education providers will have increased costs and workload to implement the bill. The official list of 100 civics questions included on the naturalization test, as well as free study materials, are available on the USCIS website. LEPs are not required to develop their own assessment. LEPs will need to access the online test, make printed copies in some cases, manage the administration for all high school students at least one time between ninth and twelfth grade, and adjust graduation requirements accordingly.

Under current law, school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) may submit a separate estimate of fiscal impacts within seven days of a bill's introduction. Estimates submitted by districts or BOCES for this bill can be found on the Legislative Council website at this address: <http://1.usa.gov/23AxLIT>

Effective Date

The bill takes effect August 10, 2016, if the General Assembly adjourns on May 11, 2016, as scheduled, and no referendum petition is filed.

State and Local Government Contacts

Education

Research Note Available

An LCS Research Note for SB16-148 is available online and through the iLegislate app. Research notes provide additional policy and background information about the bill and summarize action taken by the General Assembly concerning the bill.