



## HB1157/Education - Maryland High School Diploma - Civics Test Requirement

Ways and Means

February 17, 2021

Civics is an essential component of Maryland's state standards. The Civics Standard 1.0 states: "Students will inquire about the historical development of the fundamental concepts and processes of authority, power, and influence with particular emphasis on civic reasoning in order to become informed, responsible citizens, engage in the political process, and contribute to society." Social studies courses are structured so that students learn Civics concepts beginning in prekindergarten and continuing to high school.

Student achievement in Civics is assessed as a part of MCAP. Students are first assessed in middle school United States history, scheduled to be included in the measurement of academic achievement on the Maryland Report Card beginning in 2023. The second assessment of student achievement in Civics is in the high school American Government assessment. Currently the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) Committee is reviewing the State Board proposal to transition to end of course exams for high school graduation requirements. Should the State Board of Education approve the transition, HB1157 would result in having two required state assessments linked to the same course.

The State Frameworks for American Government and Middle School U.S. History provides guidance to local school systems on the content and assessment limits that should be addressed in local curriculum.

MSDE's commitment to civic education is maintained through the curriculum, instruction, and assessment related to MCAP. The content that Maryland students learn in preparation for the MCAP American Government exam and Middle School United States History is both deeper and broader than that which is tested by the Naturalization Test. Most of the content tested on the Civics (History and Government) portion of the federal Naturalization Test is included in the assessment limits for these courses. Links to these State Frameworks can be found [here](#). In addition to the overlap with existing state assessments, MCAP, unlike the proposed Civics Test, requires substantial student writing and demonstration of thinking skills while the naturalization exam does not.

If MSDE were to manage the administration of the Civics Test Requirement found in House Bill 1157, the Department would not be able to administer the exam in a method different from that of the other state graduation exams. The Civics Test would need to meet the same expectations for item development, test security, and psychometric validity as the MCAP assessments listed above. Differences between the two assessments include the fact that the Naturalization Test administered by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services is pre-written and publicly available. Additionally, it is designed to be given orally and not through an online multiple-choice format. There would be no field testing of items from the Naturalization Test in order to gather metrics on their performance with student groups across the state of Maryland. Additionally, forms of the assessment would need to be created for students with assessment accommodations.

MSDE is committed to supporting the growth and expansion that occurs for our children through a comprehensive social studies education. We ask that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 1157**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands at 410-767-0504, or [zachary.hands1@maryland.gov](mailto:zachary.hands1@maryland.gov).