

HB 284 – Maryland High School Diploma—Civics Test Requirement

Ways and Means

February 5, 2020

American Government or the alternative Bridge Plan for Academic Validation in American Government, is a requirement for graduation. The middle school United States history assessment will be included in the measurement of academic achievement on the Maryland Report Card beginning in 2022.

Crosswalks between Maryland’s existing state tests in American Government and United States History have been provided to illustrate the redundancy between existing state assessments and the proposed Civics test. 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 284, the department cannot administer the exam in a method different for 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 assessment 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 **House Bill 284**. For further information, please contact Tiffany Clark, Esq., Annapolis office: 410-260-6028 or Baltimore office: 410-767-0090 or e-mail tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov.