

## CHAPTER 122

( HB 535 )

AN ACT relating to civic education.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. KRS 158.141 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) *Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of the 2025-2026 school year, and each year thereafter, graduation requirements for each student in every public high school in Kentucky graduating with a regular diploma shall include successful completion of either:*
  - (a) *A one-half (1/2) credit course in civic literacy that includes instruction in the areas required in subsection (5) of this section; or*
  - (b) ~~on July 1, 2018, to graduate from a Kentucky public high school with a regular diploma, a student shall pass~~ *A civics test composed of one hundred (100) questions drawn from those that are set forth within the civics test administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to persons seeking to become naturalized citizens.*
- (2) *A local board of education shall determine which option under subsection (1) of this section shall be required for graduates of the school district.*
- (3) *If the board requires the completion of subsection (1)(b) of this section:*
  - (a) *The board shall prepare or approve a test composed of the questions described in subsection (1)(b) of this section and shall disseminate the test to all public high schools of the district. The test shall be administered by each~~the~~ public high school~~s~~ in the~~each~~ district;*
  - (b) *A public high school shall provide each student with the opportunity to take the test as many times as necessary for the student to pass the test without the use of instructional aids during testing, including but not limited to textbooks and internet browser searching. A student shall not receive a regular high school diploma until the student successfully completes the test as specified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;*
  - (c) *A student shall be considered to have successfully completed the test if at least seventy percent (70%) of the questions are answered correctly. A student who has passed a similar test within the previous five (5) years may provide the board with evidence of successful completion and shall not be required to take the test under this section;*
  - (d) *By September 1, 2026, and each year thereafter, each school district requiring a civics test for graduation shall submit annual testing data to the Kentucky Department of Education. The department shall compile the data and by November 1 of each year submit an annual report to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Education. The report shall include:*
    1. *The first-time successful completion rate of the civics test; and*
    2. *The average number of times a student takes the civics test for successful completion; and*
  - (e) *Provisions of this section shall be subject to the requirements and accommodations of a student's individualized education program as defined in KRS 158.281 or a Section 504 Plan as defined in KRS 156.027.*
- ~~(4)(3)~~ *Students pursuing an early graduation program as established in KRS 158.142 shall complete the requirement prior to the student's graduation.*
- (5) *A civic literacy course shall include but not be limited to instruction in the following areas:*
  - (a) *An overview of America's founding history, including but not limited to key texts; the role and operations of local, state, and national governments; the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; federalism; civil liberties; and civil rights;*
  - (b) *Principles of the United States government;*

- (c) *The Constitution of Kentucky and the Constitution of the United States;*
  - (d) *Institutions of the United States government and the responsibilities of the executive branch, legislative branch, and judicial branch;*
  - (e) *State government and local governments and the role of each;*
  - (f) *Political parties and interest groups;*
  - (g) *Campaigns and elections;*
  - (h) *United States Congress;*
  - (i) *Domestic policy;*
  - (j) *Foreign policy;*
  - (k) *Comparative systems;*
  - (l) *International relations; and*
  - (m) *Major issues facing government*~~[public high school shall provide each student with the opportunity to take the test as many times as necessary for the student to pass the test. A student shall not receive a regular high school diploma until the student passes the test].~~
- (6) *The Kentucky Board of Education shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS 156.160 to establish academic standards for civic literacy*~~]~~
- ~~(4) A student passes the test if at least sixty percent (60%) of the questions are answered correctly.~~
- ~~(5) A student who has passed a similar test within the previous five (5) years shall not be required to take the test under this section.~~
- ~~(6) Provisions of this section shall be subject to the requirements and accommodations of a student's individualized education program as defined in KRS 158.281 or a Section 504 Plan as defined in KRS 156.027.~~

**Signed by Governor April 9, 2024.**