

# Technical Assistance on the Civics Test Requirements and Options for Students with Disabilities

## The Initiative

The American Civics Education Initiative, introduced and passed in the Utah State Legislature during the 2015 general session, requires all Utah students graduating on or after January 1, 2016 to pass a basic civics test, or an alternate assessment, as a condition for receiving a high school diploma or adult education secondary diploma. UCA 53A-13-109.5.

## Requirements of the Civics Test

The USBE DRAFT Administrative Rule R277-700-8 proposes applying this requirement to any student who graduates on or after January 1, 2016. Students who pass the test in one LEA and transfer to another LEA are not required to retake the test in the new LEA. Students may take either the Standard Test or an Alternate Test, as determined appropriate by the student's IEP team (consistent with Board Rule) and documented within the IEP. NOTE: Board Rule permits the use of the alternate for any student within six months of intended graduation who has not yet passed the basic civics test.

## The Standard Test

The USBE-created sample basic civics test is a multiple-choice test; a Local Education Agency (LEA) can determine the test format which must include 50 of the 100 questions used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services as part of that agency's determination that an applicant for U.S. citizenship meets the basic citizenship skills specified in 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1423.

Students must correctly answer a minimum of 35 of the 50 questions in order to pass the test. Students may take the test at any grade level and as many times as is needed in order to pass the test.

## The Alternate Test

A student may qualify for an alternate assessment if the student has a disability and the alternate assessment is consistent with the student's IEP or if the student is within six months of intended graduation and has not yet passed the basic civics test. To pass the alternate assessment, the student must pass six of ten questions selected from the civics test item pool of 100 questions. The assessment is an oral exam; however, the administration method may be modified for a student with a disability in accordance with the student's IEP. IEP forms should be updated to include discussion of the newly-required civics test and allow IEP teams to determine participation options.

## Reporting

The USBE will not be collecting data on this assessment; however, IEP test participation decisions may be monitored. Tracking the completion of this requirement will be the responsibility of the LEA. Local curriculum directors and social studies specialists should work with their assessment and special education directors to make local policies and develop procedures to administer the appropriate tests and indicate on transcripts that all students receiving a regular high school diploma have met the requirements.

## Student Participation and Graduation

Parents may ask about “opting” their child out of this assessment. While an option for parents, parents and students need to know the student will not graduate with a high school diploma if the student does not participate in this assessment.

## Resources

- For more information, refer to [American Civics Education Initiative: Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the Utah Education Network’s website.
- Questions for the basic civics test and alternate assessment must be taken from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ [official list of civics questions and answers for the naturalization test](#).
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services offers a variety of [study materials](#) for the Civics Test, including the [Civics Practice Test](#).
- For more information, refer to Utah Code Annotated [53A-13-109.5. American civics education initiative](#) and [USB E Administrative Rule R277-700-8. Civics Education Initiative](#).