

# **Justice Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act**

## **Summary, Related Statutes, Questions and Answers**

### **A. Summary of Legislation**

In 2010, House Bill 105 amended s. 1003.41(1)(a)1, F.S., Sunshine State Standards, to:

- Require the reading portion of the language arts curriculum within the Sunshine State Standards to include civics education content for all grade levels beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

The bill amended s. 1003.4156(1)(a)3, F.S., General requirements for middle grades promotion, to:

- Require the successful completion of at least a one-semester civics education course in order to be promoted from middle grades, for students entering grade 6 beginning with the 2012-2013 school year.
- Stipulate that the middle school civics education course must address the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments; the structures and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; and the meaning and significance of historic documents, such as the Articles of Confederation, Declaration of Independence, and Constitution of the United States.

The bill amended s. 1008.22 (3)(c) 2.b, F.S., Student assessment program for public schools, to:

- Require the Commissioner to develop and administer a statewide end-of-course assessment in civics education at the middle school level. The end-of-course assessment in civics education shall be administered as a field test during the 2012-2013 school year, and beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, it shall constitute 30 percent of a student's final course grade. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a student must earn a passing score on the end-of-course assessment in civics education in order to pass the course.

The bill amended s. 1008.34(3)(c)1, F.S., School grading system; school report cards; district grade, to:

- Add the aggregate scores from the middle school civics end-of-course assessment to the calculation for school grades, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

### **B. Related Statutes for Middle Grades Promotion and Assessment Requirements in Social Studies**

[1003.41 Sunshine State Standards](#)

[1003.4156 General requirements for middle grades promotion](#)

[1008.22 Student assessment program for public schools](#)

**1008.34 School grading system; school report cards; district grade**

**C. Related Questions and Answers to the New Civics Promotion and Assessment Requirements**

**1. What Next Generation Sunshine State Standards will the Civics End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment cover?**

The course content for promotion and assessment in Civics will be based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards course requirements for M/J Civics, course #2106015.

**2. Are there specific courses based on these standards? What courses will be eligible for the Civics EOC Assessment?**

Yes. The following courses will satisfy the civics education requirement for middle school students and culminate with the administration of the Civics EOC Assessment.

Course # 2106010 M/J Civics Integrated (Year)

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Courses/PublicPreviewCourse560.aspx>

Course # 2106020 M/J Civics Integrated Advanced (Year) -

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Courses/PublicPreviewCourse563.aspx>

Course # 2106015 M/J Civics (half year)

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Courses/PublicPreviewCourse561.aspx>

Course # 2106025 M/J Civics Advanced (half year)

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Courses/PublicPreviewCourse564.aspx>

Course #2106016 M/J Civics & Career Planning (Year)

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Courses/PublicPreviewCourse562.aspx?ct=1>

Course #2106026 M/J Civics Advanced & Career Planning (Year)

<http://www.floridastandards.org/Courses/PublicPreviewCourse565.aspx?ct=1>

**3. May districts implement a civics course at any grade level?**

Yes.

**4. Will students be assessed on the grade seven economics and geography benchmarks?**

No.

**5. Why is the Civics EOC Assessment that is currently being developed written at grade level 7?**

Using the current Benchmark Classification system, the Civics benchmarks were written at the seventh grade level.

**6. Is the Reading Level in alignment with what is being done with other EOC assessments?**

Yes.

**7. Is there a seat time requirement for these courses?**

No. Florida law does not stipulate course length or seat time at middle grades.

**8. Will students earn a credit for the course?**

No. Students do not earn course credit in middle grades.

**9. How many items will be on the Civics EOC Assessment? What amount of time will be allotted for completing the test?**

These decisions are still being discussed; districts will be notified once final decisions have been made.

**10. How will the testing window be established?**

As with other EOC assessments, the Department will collect end-of-semester information and schedule accordingly. For example, beginning with the 2011-12 school year, the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment will be administered in December for those districts whose semester ends prior to the winter break, and it will be administered in January for those districts whose semester ends after the winter break. The Algebra 1 EOC Assessment will be administered again to all districts in May.

**11. Will students be required to pass the Civics EOC Assessment in order to be promoted from middle school?**

Yes. Section 1003.4156(1)(a)3, Florida Statutes, and Section 1008.22(3)(c)2.b, Florida Statutes, require that, beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, students must earn a passing score on the Civics EOC Assessment in order to successfully complete a civics education course and be promoted from the middle grades.

**12. In what years will the Civics EOC Assessment count as 30 percent of the student's final course grade?**

The 30 percent requirement of a student's final course grade is for the 2013-2014 school year.

### **13. What is the school year implementation schedule for the Civics EOC Assessment?**

2011 – 2012 The reading portion of the language arts curriculum within the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards must include civics education content.

2012 – 2013 Students entering grade 6 must achieve successful completion of at least a one-semester civics education course in the middle grades.

The Civics EOC Assessment must be administered as a **field test** at the middle school level.

2013 – 2014 A student’s performance on the statewide administered Civics EOC Assessment must constitute **30 percent of the student’s final course grade**.

Baseline data will be collected to establish a minimum passing score on the Civics EOC Assessment.

2014 – 2015 A student must earn a passing score on the statewide-administered Civics EOC Assessment in order to pass the course and be eligible for promotion from middle school.

The Civics EOC Assessment will become part of school grading.

### **14. How many times will the Civics EOC Assessment be administered in any given school year?**

It is anticipated that the Civics EOC Assessment will be administered at the end of the first half of the school year and again at the end of the school year to accommodate half-year and year-long course schedules beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Prior to that (in 2013-2014), it will be administered only at the end of the school year.

### **15. How can students retake the Civics EOC Assessment?**

Students may retake the Civics EOC Assessment during the regularly scheduled administration windows at the end of the first half of the school year and again at the end of the school year.

### **16. How will the Civics EOC Assessment impact school grades?**

The impact of this assessment on school grades cannot be determined at this time. There is no data on which to base an analysis of the impact. Implementation of this assessment in school grades will be determined with input from stakeholders and advisory groups such as the Content Advisory Committee.

**17. Will students be able to take the Civics EOC Assessment for acceleration without completing the course?**

No. The CAP system (Credit Acceleration Program) was established in order to receive high school credit. Students do not earn high school credit for the successful completion of a middle grades course.

**18. Once passing the Civics EOC Assessment is a requirement for middle grades promotion, is a student required to retake the course if he or she passes the EOC assessment but fails the course?**

A decision of this nature must be made by the local school district based upon the policies for student progression for middle grades.

**19. If a student does not pass the Civics EOC Assessment, will the student be required to retake the course?**

This is a local school district decision that should be guided by the district remediation options for students retaking the Civics EOC Assessment.

**20. Will the Civics EOC Assessment be mastery based?**

No. The Civics EOC Assessment is performance-based. This means that the assessment will be aligned to specific Next Generation Sunshine State Standards benchmarks for civics education, and it will measure student understanding of these concepts.

**21. May students retake the areas of weakness or a portion of the Civics EOC Assessment?**

No. The Civics EOC Assessment is performance-based, and students will be required to retake the entire assessment if they do not pass it.

**22. What remediation opportunities will students have?**

School districts are encouraged to create as many pathways as possible for students to ensure success on the Civics EOC Assessment. The Department will offer a new **M/J United States History with Civics** course which will be the equivalent to the middle grades course in United States History. This will allow for remediation within an existing course. The Department also anticipates offering a new **M/J Intensive Social Studies** course to be taken during the school year, through a summer-term session, or as an online course to offer remediation for students who do not pass the Civics EOC Assessment. Districts are not limited by these options; other remediation options may be provided to meet the needs of the student population.

**23. What professional development is being offered to ensure that middle grades teachers are prepared to teach civics?**

The 2010 Florida Legislature provided initial funding to The Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida in partnership with the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship for teacher professional development related to this new requirement.

**24. What is the content advisory committee and how was it assembled?**

The content advisory committee is a group of experienced civics teachers, district-level supervisors, university representatives, and professionals whose organizations are knowledgeable regarding civics instruction in Florida. They are identified by the Department of Education Assessment Office to guide the development of the end of course assessment. This committee was created through a call for nominations while maintaining a racial, gender, and geographic balance.

**25. Will the same group have oversight throughout the beta-testing and field-testing process?**

Some participants may rotate off in subsequent years and be replaced. Also, others will be nominated by school districts to participate in item review. This process will mirror the one used for Reading, Mathematics, and Science.

**26. What guidance will be given to districts regarding the portion of the Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act requiring that Civics content be integrated into Language Arts course descriptions K-12?**

The Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida recently held Civics integration meetings to begin this process. A committee of Language Arts and Social Studies supervisors and teachers met to identify areas in the state-adopted Language Arts materials where Civics content already exists. A report is being developed that identifies the gaps in this coverage. Next steps include a resource guide for teachers as well as professional development.

**27. Please clarify how Civics EOC Assessment scale scores will be used to:**

**a. Establish a passing score**

The passing score for the Civics EOC Assessment will be the minimum scale score in Achievement Level 3. This scale score will be identified through the standard-setting process that will occur in the fall of 2014, which will establish the scale-score ranges for all of the Civics EOC Assessment Achievement Levels.

**b. Set a student grade for the test**

School districts will be required to determine their own method for calculating a test grade for the purpose of calculating it as 30 percent of each student's final course grade.

- c. Eventually count as part of course average**  
This will be determined by each district school board.
- d. Calculate school grades**  
These decisions have not yet been made.
- e. Determine student and school grades in relation to retake assessments**  
These decisions have not yet been made.