

SB 216 - VERSION ADOPTED BY BOTH BODIES

03/16/2023 0679s
4May2023... 1394h
06/15/2023 2183EBA

2023 SESSION

23-0969
10/08

SENATE BILL **216**

AN ACT making changes to the requirements for civics education in schools.

SPONSORS: Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Lang, Dist 2; Sen. Gendreau, Dist 1; Sen. Gray, Dist 6; Sen. D'Allesandro, Dist 20; Sen. Fenton, Dist 10; Sen. Altschiller, Dist 24; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Ward, Dist 8; Sen. Gannon, Dist 23; Sen. Whitley, Dist 15; Sen. Avard, Dist 12; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Sen. Murphy, Dist 16; Sen. Abbas, Dist 22

COMMITTEE: Education

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill establishes requirements for the teaching of civics in schools, and defines a civics education.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Three

AN ACT making changes to the requirements for civics education in schools.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Schools; Instruction in Civics Education. Amend RSA 189:11 to read as follows:

2 189:11 Instruction in National and State History and Government, **and Civics**.

3 I. In all public and ~~[private]~~ **non-public** schools in the state there shall be given regular
4 courses of instruction in the history, government and constitutions of the United States and New
5 Hampshire, including the organization and operation of New Hampshire municipal, county and state
6 government and of the federal government. ~~[Such instruction shall begin not later than the~~
7 ~~beginning of the eighth grade and shall continue in all high schools as a component of a one credit~~
8 ~~course of instruction required for high school graduation in United States and New Hampshire~~
9 ~~history and a one half credit course of instruction required for high school graduation in United~~
10 ~~States and New Hampshire government/civics.]~~

11 ***I-a. In all public, chartered public, non-public, and privately incorporated schools***
12 ***that serve as public schools in the state, there shall be given:***

13 (a) ***Dedicated class time for civics in each elementary grade, which can be***
14 ***integrated with other subjects;***

15 (b) ***A half-year course, or the equivalent of a half-year civics course in middle***
16 ***school (grades 6, 7, or 8);***

17 (c) ***A half-year course of instruction in civics in high school required for high***
18 ***school graduation; and***

19 (d) ***A one-year course of instruction in history, government, and constitutions of***
20 ***the United States and New Hampshire in high school required for high school graduation.***

21 ***I-b. In this section, "civics" means a nonpartisan educational program that***
22 ***addresses the following:***

23 (a) ***Civic knowledge, the acquisition of knowledge of the history, heritage, civic***
24 ***life, and civic institutions of the United States of America and the state of New Hampshire.***

25 (b) ***The acquisition of skills, such as the ability to analyze text and determine***
26 ***the reliability and biases of sources.***

27 (c) ***An understanding of the ways in which civic institutions operate and how***
28 ***individuals may be involved in civic life.***

(d) *An appreciation for free speech and civil discourse, using historical references, such as the federalist-antifederalist papers, the major debates at the Constitutional Convention of 1787, congressional and public debates leading to the Civil War, and Civil Rights debates of the 1950s and 1960s.*

I-c. A school district shall develop and offer the United States and New Hampshire ~~[government/civics]~~ **history, government, and constitutions course and civics courses under paragraph I-a.** ~~[and]~~ At a minimum, the ~~[course]~~ **courses** shall include instruction in the following areas:

(a) Opportunities and responsibilities for civic involvement.

(b) Skills to effectively participate in civic affairs.

(c) The ***Declaration of Independence***, U.S. Constitution, and the principles stated in the Articles and Amendments of the U.S. Constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of the United States.

(d) The New Hampshire constitution and the principles stated in the articles of the New Hampshire constitution that provide the foundation for the democratic government of New Hampshire.

(e) The structure and functions of the 3 branches comprising federal and state governments: legislative, judicial, and executive.

(f) The role, opportunities, and responsibilities of a citizen to engage in civic activity.

(g) The role and interactions of the state of New Hampshire and local governments within the framework of the U.S. Constitution and of extended powers and functions provided to local governments.

(h) How federal, state, and local governments address problems and issues by making decisions, creating laws, enforcing regulations, and taking action.

(i) The role and actions of government in the flow of economic activity and the regulation of monetary policy.

(j) How intolerance, bigotry, antisemitism, and national, ethnic, racial, or religious hatred and discrimination have evolved in the past, and can evolve, into genocide and mass violence, such as the Holocaust, and how to prevent the evolution of such practices.

II. As a component of instruction under ~~[paragraph I]~~ **this section**, a locally developed competency assessment of United States government and civics that includes, but is not limited to, the nature, purpose, structure, function, and history of the United States government, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and noteworthy government and civic leaders, shall be administered to students as part of the required high school course in history and government of the United States and New Hampshire. To be eligible for a graduation certificate, a student in a **public, chartered public, non-public school, or a privately incorporated school that serves as a public school in the state**, shall attain a locally sanctioned passing grade on the competency assessment, and a

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1 grade of 70 percent or better on the 128 question civics (history and government) naturalization
2 examination developed by the 2020 United States Citizen and Immigration Services. Schools are
3 required to provide accommodations and may modify the naturalization examination for a child with
4 a disability in accordance with the child's individualized education program. By June 30 of each
5 year, each school district, *chartered public or non-public school, or a privately incorporated*
6 *school that serves as a public school in the state*, shall submit the results of the United States
7 Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) test to the department of education.

8 2 Application; Civics Education. The amendment to RSA 189:11 by this act shall be
9 implemented by the department of education, schools, and school districts by July 2024.

10 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.