

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS**

**BILL #:** PCS for HB 13 Middle School Civics Education Assessment

**SPONSOR(S):** PreK-12 Policy Committee

**TIED BILLS:** **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>ANALYST</b>	<b>STAFF DIRECTOR</b>
Orig. Comm.:	PreK-12 Policy Committee		Duncan	Ahearn
1)				
2)				
3)				
4)				
5)				

**SUMMARY ANALYSIS**

Current law requires middle school students to successfully complete three middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education.

The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) for House Bill 13 provides that beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, students entering grade 6 are required to successfully complete a one-semester civics education course which must include 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 the Constitution of the United States.

The PCS provides that during the 2011-2012 school year, an end-of-course assessment in civics education must be administered as a field test at the middle school level. During in the 2012-2013 school year, each student’s performance on the statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment in civics education must constitute 30% of the student’s final course grade. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, a student must earn a passing score on the end-of-course assessment in civics education in order to pass the course and receive course credit.

The PCS includes the statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment in civics education at the middle school level as a factor in designating a school’s grade beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

The PCS does not appear to create a fiscal impact on school districts or local governments. Given the timeline provided in the bill, the start-up activities will be phased in by the Department of Education. See FISCAL COMMENTS section of this analysis.

## HOUSE PRINCIPLES

Members are encouraged to evaluate proposed legislation in light of the following guiding principles of the House of Representatives

- Balance the state budget.
- Create a legal and regulatory environment that fosters economic growth and job creation.
- Lower the tax burden on families and businesses.
- Reverse or restrain the growth of government.
- Promote public safety.
- Promote educational accountability, excellence, and choice.
- Foster respect for the family and for innocent human life.
- Protect Florida's natural beauty.

## FULL ANALYSIS

### I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

#### A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

##### **Present Situation**

##### *Middle School Social Studies Requirements*

Current law requires middle school students to successfully complete three middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education.<sup>1</sup>

##### *Sunshine State Standards*

The Sunshine State Standards establish core curricula and benchmarks for student achievement. The State Board of Education is reviewing the Sunshine State Standards and replacing them with Next Generation Sunshine State Standards that specify the core content knowledge and skills that K-12 public school students are expected to acquire.<sup>2</sup> In December 2008, the State Board of Education adopted the Next Generation Sunshine Standards for Social Studies.<sup>3</sup> Below are the middle school grades and the category of knowledge required for social studies.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: geography, economics, world history, civics & government.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: geography, economics, civics & government.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade: American history, geography, history, civics & government.<sup>4</sup>

##### *Student Assessment*

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) measures student achievement in grades 3 through 10 using benchmarks from the Sunshine State Standards.<sup>5</sup> Testing and reporting schedules are required to be published two years in advance of testing. The FCAT consists of criterion-referenced

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 1003.4156, F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1003.41, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/FLStandardSearch.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Section 1008.22(3), F.S.

tests in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.<sup>6</sup> Reading and mathematics are tested annually in grades 3 through 10. Writing and science are tested once at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.<sup>7</sup> Students take the FCAT Science test in grades 5, 8, and 11.<sup>8</sup>

End-of-course assessments for subject areas may be administered in addition to the comprehensive assessments. An end-of-course assessment must be rigorous, statewide, standardized, and developed or approved by the Department of Education (DOE).<sup>9</sup>

### *School Grades*

All public schools, including charter schools, which have at least 30 students with valid FCAT scores in reading for the current and prior years and at least 30 students with valid FCAT scores in mathematics for the current and prior years are assigned a school grade.<sup>10</sup> Student achievement data from the FCAT in grades 3 through 10 are used to establish both proficiency levels and annual progress for individual students, schools, districts, and the state.<sup>11</sup>

Student assessment data used in determining school grades include:

- Aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled in the school who have been assessed on the FCAT.
- Aggregate scores of all eligible students enrolled in the school who have been assessed on the FCAT and who have scored at or in the lowest 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of students in the school in reading, math, or writing, unless these students are exhibiting satisfactory performance.
- The achievement scores and learning gains of eligible students attending alternative schools that provide dropout prevention and academic intervention services.

### **Effect of Proposed Changes**

#### *Middle School Social Studies Requirements*

The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) for House Bill 13 provides that, beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, students entering grade 6 are required to successfully complete a one-semester civics education course which must include 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 the Constitution of the United States.

#### *End-of-Course Assessment*

The PCS provides that during the 2011-2012 school year, an end-of-course assessment in civics education must be administered as a field test<sup>12</sup> at the middle school level. During in the 2012-2013 school year, each student's performance on the statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment in

---

<sup>6</sup> Section 1008.22(3)(c)2., F.S. A criterion-referenced test (CRT) is an assessment in which an individual's performance is compared to a specific learning objective or performance standard and not to the performance of other students. CRTs show how well students performed on specific goals or standards rather than just telling how their performance compares to a norm group of students nationally or locally. The FCAT is based on the *Sunshine State Standards* and measures student progress toward meeting these standards. Florida Department of Education, *FCAT Handbook: A Resource for Educators*, 5 (2005), available at <http://fcat.fldoe.org/handbk/complete.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1008.22(3)(c), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Rule 6A-1.09422(3)(a), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 1008.22(3)(c), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1008.34(3)(a)1., F.S.; Rule 6A-1.09981(4), F.A.C.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1008.34, F.S.

<sup>12</sup> **Field-test questions** are newly-developed questions that are being tried out before they can be used on a future test. Field-test questions must be tried out at least one year before they are used to decide a student's score. If the data on the field-test questions are acceptable, then the questions may be used on an actual test and count toward a student's score. These questions are removed from the released tests because they may be used in future versions of the tests. See <http://www.fldoe.org/faq/default.asp?Dept=202&ID=656>.

civics education must constitute 30% of the student's final course grade. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, a student must earn a passing score on the end-of-course assessment in civics education in order to pass the course and receive course credit.

### *School Grades*

The PCS includes the statewide, standardized end-of-course assessment in civics education at the middle school level as a factor in designating a school's grade beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

#### B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

**Section 1:** Amends s. 1003.4156, F.S., relating to general requirements for middle school promotion.

**Section 2:** Amends s. 1008.22, F.S., relating to student assessment program for public schools.

**Section 3:** Amends s. 1008.34, F.S., relating to school grading system; school report cards; and district grade.

**Section 4:** Provides an effective date of July 1, 2009.

## II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

#### A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

##### 1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state government revenues.

##### 2. Expenditures:

See FISCAL COMMENTS section.

#### B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

##### 1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government revenues.

##### 2. Expenditures:

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government expenditures.

#### C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

#### D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

DOE Comment:

Generally, the estimated first year fiscal impact at the state-level for adding one examination, in one grade and subject, administered to all students, is approximately \$1,000,000. However, given the timeline provided in the bill, the start-up activities are able to be phased in between FY10 and FY11, as follows:

- FY10 (\$500,000). Activities to include selecting a contractor or amending a current contract, convening educator and experts to assist in developing test and item specifications, as well as other start-up activities.

- FY11 (\$500,000). Activities to include developing test items and preparing field test forms and administration and reporting procedures.
- FY12 (\$500,000-1,000,000—cost depends on the number of students to be tested, assumes computer-based administration). Activities to include field-testing and analyzing the results of the civics end-of-course assessment. Since this is the first year of the Civics requirement, it is assumed that the field test sample will be much smaller than in subsequent years.
- FY13 (\$1,500,000—cost depends on the number of students to be tested, assumes computer-based administration). Activities to include administering the civics end-of-course assessment and reporting student results.<sup>13</sup>

### III. COMMENTS

#### A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

##### 1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. The bill does not appear to require a county or municipality to spend funds or take an action requiring expenditures; reduce the authority that counties and municipalities had as of February 1, 1989, to raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared in the aggregate with counties and municipalities as of February 1, 1989.

##### 2. Other:

None.

#### B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

#### C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

### IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

N/A.

---

<sup>13</sup> Department of Education, Analysis of PCS for HB 13, March 20, 2009.