

Social Studies and Am. Sub. Senate Bill 165 (Enacted March 2012) Frequently Asked Questions

During the last week of March 2012, the General Assembly passed and Governor Kasich signed Amended Substitute [Senate Bill 165](#) (referred to below as S.B. 165). This legislation contains a number of provisions related to social studies curriculum, assessments, graduation requirements and licensure.

This document addresses questions related to some key provisions of the legislation. As further information becomes available, this document will be updated on the Ohio Department of Education Web site.

Overview

Who: Students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2010, are affected by the revised graduation requirements. Students who enter the ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2012 are affected by the requirement to study the historic documents outlined in the legislation. Students taking American history and American government courses will be subject to end-of-course examinations after July 1, 2013.

What: Content regarding the original texts of the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, the Constitution of the United States and its amendments, with emphasis on the Bill of Rights, and the Ohio Constitution are added to Ohio social studies standards for grades 4-12.

The most substantive revisions to the social studies standards and model curriculum are associated with the high school course syllabi for American history and American government. Lesser changes are made in grades 4 and 8.

How: The Ohio Department of Education is responsible for preparing model curriculum and state tests for social studies to meet the requirements of the legislation.

When: Each local school district board of education must adopt interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government by July 1, 2013. Those examinations are to include the specific historical documents required. Therefore, school districts' new course syllabi for American history and American government should be in place in time to permit the development of those examinations.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Chancellor of the Board of Regents are required to select end-of-course examinations in American history and American government by July 1, 2014. Plans call for the state's new assessment system to be operational during the 2014-2015 school year.

Social Studies Curriculum

Q: What are the **key provisions** related to the social studies curriculum?

A: [ORC 3301.079\(A\)\(1\)\(b\)](#)

Not later than July 1, 2012, the state board shall incorporate into the social studies standards for grades four to twelve academic content regarding the original texts of the **Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, the Constitution of the United States and its amendments, with emphasis on the Bill of Rights, and the Ohio Constitution, and their original context**. The state board shall revise the model curricula and achievement assessments as necessary to reflect the additional American history and American government content. The state board shall make available a list of suggested grade-appropriate supplemental readings that place the documents prescribed by this division in their historical context, which teachers may use as a resource to assist students in reading the documents within that context.

[ORC 3313.60\(D\)](#)

Except as provided in division (E) of this section, basic instruction **or demonstrated mastery** in geography, United States history, the government of the United States, the government of the state of Ohio, local government in Ohio, the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Constitution of the state of Ohio are required before pupils may participate in courses involving the study of social problems, economics, foreign affairs, United Nations, world government, socialism and communism.

[ORC 3313.603\(M\)](#)

It is important that high school students learn and understand United States history and the governments of both the United States and the state of Ohio. Therefore, beginning with **students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2012**, the study of American history and American government shall include the study of all of the following documents in their original context: the Declaration of Independence; the Northwest Ordinance; the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the Bill of Rights; and the Ohio Constitution.

The study of American history and government will include the historical evidence of the role of documents such as the Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers to firmly establish the historical background leading to the establishment of the provisions of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Q: **Which Ohio Constitution** will be taught?

A: Citizens of the Ohio territory wrote a constitution in 1802 to fulfill the requirements outlined by the Northwest Ordinance to become a state. In 1851, Ohioans held a constitutional convention

and adopted a new constitution which serves as the foundation of Ohio's government today. In 1912, there were significant revisions to Ohio's 1851 constitution but no new constitution was adopted. The **1851 constitution** will be examined in original text.

Q: What should be the **length** of the American history and American government courses? Can these courses be year-long courses?

A: The length of the American history and American government courses, beyond what is needed to provide the one-half unit of credit each, is **up to local districts**. As districts examine the social studies standards and compare the expectations for the two courses with current practices, they can make a judgment as to the appropriate length for each of the courses. The Ohio Department of Education does not have any recommendation regarding the length of any course.

Q: When should districts have the **new syllabi** for the high school courses in place?

A: Each local school district board of education must adopt **interim end-of-course examinations** in American history and American government by **July 1, 2013**. Those examinations are to comply with the legislation's mandates requiring instruction related to specific historical documents. With that requirement, school districts' new course syllabi for American history and American government should be in place in time to permit the development of those examinations.

Q: Will high schools that currently offer American history and American government to juniors and seniors **have to move those courses** to the freshman and sophomore years in order to comply with the requirement to have such instruction before pupils may participate in courses involving the study of social problems, economics, etc.?

A: "Basic instruction" in United States history and the government of the United States (among other subjects) is required before pupils may participate in courses involving a variety of topics such as social problems, the United Nations, etc. **This revision allows students to demonstrate mastery in the specified content in lieu of having to have basic instruction in those subjects.**

If the elementary and middle school social studies programs have addressed all of the topics requiring "basic instruction" under law, there should be no reason under the provisions of this law to change when the high school American history and American government courses are offered.

Q: **Where** are the historic documents cited in the legislation in their original text?

A: [Declaration of Independence](#)
[Northwest Ordinance of 1787](#)
[U.S. Constitution](#)
[Bill of Rights](#)
[Ohio Constitution \(1851\)](#)
Ohio's Constitution (1851) [with all amendments](#) through 2010

Q: Where will the list of grade-appropriate supplemental readings be located?

- A: The model curriculum will contain resources to help districts with supplemental readings to assist with instruction on the historic documents.
- Q: Will the Ohio Department of Education identify resources for grades 4 – 12 or just the elementary grades?
- A: The model curriculum will contain resources for any grade or course syllabi where changes have been made.

Social Studies Assessments

- Q: What are the key provisions related to the social studies assessments?

A: [ORC 3301.0712\(B\)\(3\)](#)

Not later than July 1, 2013, each school district board of education shall adopt interim end-of-course examinations to assess mastery of American history and American government standards as detailed in state law. Each high school of the district shall use the interim examinations until the state superintendent and chancellor select end-of-course examinations in American history and American government, not later than July 1, 2014.

The end-of-course examinations in American history and American government shall require demonstration of mastery of the American history and American government content for social studies standards and the historic documents identified in the legislation.

At least 20 percent of the end-of-course examination in American government shall address the topics on American history and American government in Ohio Revised [Code](#).

- Q: Will the entering freshman class in 2012 take the interim examinations?

A: The revised course content provisions pertain to **students who enter the ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2012**. Districts must adopt interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government by July 1, 2013. After July 1, 2013, any student in any grade taking American history and American government would take interim examinations, since it is a local decision as to when students take these subjects.

- Q: What are the end-of-course examination requirements?

A: Local interim end-of-course examinations must assess student knowledge of the historic documents cited in the legislation.

- Q: Are there particular grade levels at which the interim and state-selected end-of-course examinations must be given?

A: **There are no particular grade levels at which these courses must be taught and the end-of-course examinations administered**. The end-of-course examinations are to be administered whenever students are completing the courses in American history and American government. This would be at the end of the school year for a year-long course, at the end of the semester for a semester-long course, and at the end of a trimester for a trimester-long course. These examinations will be administered to all students enrolled in the course, no matter what grade level(s) are represented among the enrolled students.

- Q: How much of the end-of-course examinations will cover the specified documents?
- A: **Twenty percent of the American government end-of-course examination addresses the topics on American history and American government.** No percentage is given for the American history end-of-course examination.

Social Studies Graduation Requirements

- Q: What impact is there on graduation requirements?
- A: The **graduation requirements for American history and American government have not changed.** They continue to be one-half unit for each course. What has changed is that they are now listed separately from the social studies units required for graduation. Instead of being a subset of three social studies units, the American history and American government requirements are now listed separately and the social studies units required for graduation are now two units.
- Q: What options do districts have to fulfill the graduation requirements for American history, American government and social studies?
- A: The options are fairly wide open. Ohio requires one-half unit of American history and one-half unit of American government. School districts can impose their own requirements for these courses above and beyond the one-half unit required for each course. The remaining two units of social studies are electives under Ohio law. Schools may include whatever courses suit the goals and purposes of their social studies programs and that provide sufficient opportunities for students to earn the requisite units of credit.

Social Studies Licensure

- Q: What are the key provisions related to licensure?
- A: A valid educator license for teaching social studies in the applicable grade is sufficient to teach the additional American history and American government content.
- Q: Does removing American history and American government from the social studies units required for high school graduation impact teacher licensure for these courses?
- A: No. S.B. 165 permits a valid license for teaching social studies in the applicable grade to be sufficient to teach the content outlined in the legislation.