



www.lsc.ohio.gov

OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
and Drafting

Legislative Budget
Office

S.B. 272
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 272's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Koehler

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Patrick Campbell, Budget Analyst

Highlights

- Districts and schools that serve students in grades 9-12 may incur minimal administrative costs to administer and score the civics portion of the U.S. naturalization test to students who choose to take it in lieu of the American government end-of-course exam.
- The bill may reduce GRF-funded state testing costs if a significant number of students choose to take the civics test instead of the end-of-course exam.

Detailed Analysis

The bill permits high school students to take a civics assessment in lieu of the American government end-of-course exam beginning in the 2026-2027 school year. Under the bill, this assessment must be identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Agency (USCIS) for a person to become a naturalized citizen of the United States, and a student must score at least 60% on the exam to pass. A student who does not pass can retake the assessment until they receive a passing score. The bill does not prescribe how the exam is to be administered, but rather requires that each school district board of education determine how it will administer the assessment. Under continuing law, students enrolled in a course in American government under an advanced standing program, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or College Credit Plus, have to take the corresponding AP, IB, or college exam rather than this civics exam.

Districts and schools may incur some minimal administrative costs in preparing and scoring the exams. The naturalization test is typically administered orally to prospective U.S. citizens, using up to 20 out of 128 possible questions. USCIS publishes the complete set of test

questions and acceptable answers publicly on its website.¹ Because the exam's questions already exist, districts and schools will not incur any costs to develop the assessment's questions. However, the bill grants districts and schools discretion to determine how they will administer the exam. Therefore, districts and schools may also incur certain costs to administer the test orally, on paper, electronically, or by any other method their local board of education decides to adopt. Districts and schools will likely leverage existing resources to prepare the exams, such as paper, printers, computers, and online resources, incurring minimal costs to administer the assessment.

The bill may lead to lower state testing system costs, resulting in potential savings to the GRF, if a significant number of students shift to the civics test. The cost structure of the state's testing contract with its main testing vendor (Cambium) provides certain aggregate dollar amounts for state test deliverables, including test development, administration, scoring and reporting, support and training, and project management. If usage of the American government end-of-course exam were to decline significantly, scoring and reporting costs, for example, may be lower. Ultimately, any savings likely will depend on the extent of any decreased end-of-course exam usage and contract negotiations with the testing vendor. State testing costs are currently primarily supported by GRF line item 200437, Student Assessment. In FY 2026, the contract between the Department of Education and Workforce and Cambium allocates \$5.3 million for social studies end-of-course exams, including the American government exam.

¹ See USCIS's [2025 Civics Questions and Answers \(PDF\)](#).