

SESSION OF 2026

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 381

As Recommended by Senate Committee on
Education

Brief*

SB 381 would require the State Board of Education (State Board) to develop, and school districts to provide instruction, on communist and socialist ideologies and regimes for students in grades K-12. The bill also would require students entering grade 9 at an accredited public, private, or parochial school to pass an American civics examination as a condition for graduation.

Examination

The bill would require the examination to consist of 100 questions that are substantially similar to questions administered to applicants seeking naturalized United States citizenship and would permit the examination to be administered as part of the curriculum for the required course in the government and institutions of the United States.

Examination Allowances

The bill would also establish allowances for students including:

- The examination may be taken as often as necessary to obtain a passing score;
- Students may begin taking the examination starting in grade 7, upon request of the student; and

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

- Administration of the examination and the provision of any accommodations for a student with an individualized education plans (IEPs) would be governed by the student's IEP.

The bill would authorize the State Board to adopt rules and regulations to implement the bill. The rules and regulations could include, but would not be limited to:

- Providing a model examination for use by any school district or by the governing body of any accredited private or parochial high school; and
- Establishing the passing score for any such model examination.

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Education at the request of Senator Starnes.

Senate Committee on Education

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Senator Starnes and representatives of Cicero Action, Moms for Liberty Johnson County KS Chapter, and a private citizen. The proponents generally stated the bill is intended to address concerns about civic literacy and knowledge of U.S. history, including understanding of communism and socialism.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by three private citizens.

Opponent testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Association of School Boards, Kansas National Education Association, and Kansas Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The opponents generally stated the bill

conflicts with local control and the authority of both the State Board and local school boards to establish graduation requirements and determine curriculum.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by representatives for the State Board, USD 259 (Wichita Public Schools), and a private citizen.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note provided by the Division of the Budget on the bill, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) indicated enactment of the bill would require the agency to review the history and government curriculum standards for students in grades K-12, with guidelines developed by the State Board. The State Board would also need to review the curriculum recommendations and develop the required test. In addition, the test would have to be converted to accessible formats, including Braille.

KSDE states it would need one-time expenditures of \$30,200 State General Fund in FY 2027 to implement provisions of the bill. This estimate includes \$7,200 for 144 hours of facilitation time (\$50 per hour), including virtual and in-person meetings, as well as follow-up meetings; \$7,000 for travel and stipend costs, including subsistence expenditures, for 20 attendees; guidance, printing, and training costs of \$6,000; and accessible test conversion costs of \$10,000.

The Kansas Association of School Boards indicates enactment of the bill would require school districts to either purchase curriculum or spend staff time to develop curriculum for the bill's requirements. Administration of the new exam would also increase administrative expenditures. Because the bill would allow students to take the exam as many times until a passing grade can be achieved, the number of tests that would be administered is not known; as a result, a fiscal effect cannot be estimated.

Any fiscal effect associated with the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2027 Governor's Budget Report*.

Curriculum; communist; socialist; civics; graduation