Social Studies Interim End-of-Course Examinations

Pursuant to Am. Sub. S.B. 165 (Enacted March, 2012)

Frequently Asked Questions

January, 2013

In March, 2012, the General Assembly passed and Governor Kasich signed Amended Substitute Senate Bill 165 (referred to below as S.B. 165). Included in this legislation was a requirement for local school district boards of education to adopt interim end-of-course examinations for American history and American government courses by July 1, 2013.

This document addresses questions related to the implementation of interim end-of-course examinations. It represents the current understanding of S.B. 165 by the Ohio Department of Education. The interpretations are tentative, are under study and are subject to change as more information becomes available. For further information about the legislation, see "Social Studies and Am. Sub. Senate Bill 165 (Enacted March 2012) Frequently Asked Questions" on the Ohio Department of Education Web site.

Overview

Q. What is the interim end-of-course examination requirement?

A. Under the provisions of S.B. 165, 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 a school district shall use the interim examinations until the state superintendent of public instruction and the chancellor of the Ohio board of regents select end-of-course examinations in American history and American government. The selection is to be made not later than July 1, 2014. The state-selected examinations are scheduled to become operational in the spring of 2015.

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

At least 20 percent of the interim end-of-course examination in American government shall address the topics on American history and American government described in the Ohio Revised Code.

Q. How will Ohio's assessment system shift from the Ohio Graduation Tests to end-of-course examinations in social studies (including the interim end-of-course examination requirement)?

A. Students in the class of 2016 will be the last students that have to meet the requirement of passing the Ohio Graduation Tests in order to graduate. Students in that class who are unsuccessful in passing

the Ohio Graduation Tests in one or more subjects will continue to have opportunities to take and pass the Ohio Graduation Tests under current testing rules. The Ohio Graduation Test in social studies will have its last administrations in the 2013-2014 school year, except for students needing additional opportunities to take and pass the social studies portion of the Ohio Graduation Tests.

S.B. 165 requires each school district board of education to adopt interim end-of-course examinations to assess mastery of American history and American government standards as detailed in state law. Students who are required to take the Ohio Graduation Tests in the 2013-2014 school year and who are taking American history and/or American government to meet graduation requirements in that year will also be subject to the interim end-of-course examinations adopted in their school district.

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, Ohio high school students taking American history and American government courses will be subject to the state-selected end-of-course examination requirement. Students who are required to take the Ohio Graduation Tests in the 2013-2014 school year and who will take American history or American government to meet graduation requirements in 2014-2015 and beyond will also be subject to the state-selected end-of-course examinations once they become operational in the spring of 2015.

Affected Students

Q. What students are required to take the interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government?

A. Districts must adopt interim end-of-course examinations by July 1, 2013. It is a local decision as to when students take the American history and American government courses. After July 1, 2013, any student in any grade taking American history and American government to meet graduation requirements would also take the designated interim end-of-course examination. The requirement to take the interim end-of-course examinations ends on July 1, 2014.

Q. Will students taking the interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government also be required to take the Ohio Graduation Test for social studies?

A. Students enrolled in the American history and American government courses during the 2013-2014 school year who have not yet passed the Ohio Graduation Test for social studies will continue to have passage of the Ohio Graduation Test as a graduation requirement. Students enrolled in the American history and American government courses during the 2014-2015 school year and who are members of the class of 2017 or are members of later classes will not have to take the Ohio Graduation Test for social studies. These students will have to take a nationally standardized assessment that measures college and career readiness and also take the state-selected end-of-course examinations for American history and American government to meet graduation requirements.

Q. Is passage of the interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government required for course completion, course passage, or graduation credit?

A. No, however, local school districts may impose such requirements if desired.

Q. Must students retake interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government if they are unsuccessful on their first attempts?

A. Decisions related to retaking interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government will be made by local school districts.

Q. Will there be accommodations for special needs students taking interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government?

A. Local school districts can make accommodations for special needs students taking interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government by following the provisions in each affected student's IEP or other applicable plan.

Q. Are students who earn credit for either American history or American government prior to the adoption of interim end-of-course examinations required to take the end-of-course examination for either course if credit has previously been earned?

A. Students are not required to take the interim end-of-course examinations for any course in which credit has previously been earned.

Q. Are students who transfer into a school district with credits in American history and/or American government required to take the interim end-of-course examinations?

A. Students are not required to take the interim end-of-course examination for any course in which credit has previously been earned.

Q. Are students taking Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses in American history and American government subject to the interim end-of-course examinations for those courses?

A. Students in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses for high school credit in American history and American government are exempt from the interim end-of-course examinations.

Q. Are students enrolled in Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) courses in American history and American government subject to the interim end-of-course examinations for those courses?

A. Students enrolled in PSEO courses for high school credit in American history and American government are exempt from the interim end-of-course examinations.

Q. Are students who are earning credit for American history or American government under credit flexibility subject to the interim end-of-course examinations?

A. Students wishing to pursue their credits for American history and/or American government via credit flexibility must include demonstrated mastery of American history and American government standards, including the historic documents listed in S.B. 165, in their instructional delivery plan. Students can test out of these courses, but the assessments used to make this determination must include the content

pertaining to the specified historic documents with at least 20% of the American government assessment based on the identified documents.

Q. When will students who receive credits by quarters or semesters be obligated to take the interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government?

A. Local districts that award credits by quarters or semesters can decide when they will administer the interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government to their students. Students should have sufficient exposure to the content of the American history and American government course syllabi found in *Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies* prior to taking the examinations.

Programmatic Issues

Q. How long must school districts administer the interim end-of-course examinations?

A. The requirement to take the interim end-of-course examinations ends on July 1, 2014.

Q. What content must be covered in the interim end-of-course examinations in American history and American government?

A. Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the American history and American government content and the historic documents identified in the legislation. The expected content is based upon the course syllabi found in *Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies*. The content on the specified historic documents should be drawn from the content statements in the course syllabus for each course as found on the Ohio Department of Education Web site. This would include content statements 5 – 9 in American history and content statements 6, 8 – 13 and 18 in American government.

Q. How should the content be distributed among the test items used with an interim end-of-course examination?

A. Test items should address as many of the historic documents found in the applicable content statements as feasible given the length and composition of the examination.

Q. What constitutes "at least twenty per cent of the end-of-course examination in American government"?

A. Items addressing the historic documents should make up at least twenty per cent of the points possible on an end-of-course examination in American government.

Q. Do school boards have to adopt the actual test items for the American history and American government examinations?

A. School boards do not have to adopt the actual test items for the American history and American government examinations. Boards may adopt commercial assessments, adopt assessments developed by district staff, adopt released examinations from other sources, or use a combination of these options.

Boards may adopt the examinations by designating the manner in which the examinations are to be procured or developed, not the actual questions used on the examinations. However, if a board would choose to adopt a set of questions, the authorizing resolution could preclude the release of the items until after the administration of the examination.

Resources

Q. What commercial test products are available to use for interim end-of-course examinations?

A. Many publishers include testing item banks with their published materials. The Ohio Department of Education does not approve or endorse products from commercial vendors for use with interim end-of-course examinations.

Q. What special provisions would have to be made to comply with S.B. 165 when using commercial test products for the interim end-of-course examinations?

A. Any commercial test product would have to be supplemented with sufficient test items to meet the requirements of S.B. 165. While there is no percentage of points or items allotted to the identified historic documents with the American history interim end-of-course examination, at least twenty per cent of the points allotted to the interim end-of-course examination in American government must be devoted to the identified historic documents.

Q. What resources does the Ohio Department of Education have to assist districts with implementing the interim end-of-course requirements?

A. The Ohio Department of Education will make the following resources available on its Web site:

- The academic content standards for American history and American government
- The model curricula for American history and American government
- The Gap Analysis Tool for examining district curricula
- The Social Studies Interim End-of-Course Examinations Frequently Asked Questions document
- The Social Studies State-Selected End-of-Course Examinations Frequently Asked Questions document
- Editions of the fall 2012 Interim End-of-Course Examinations Webcast and Webinar

The Ohio Department of Education will also be making periodic updates to information through its on-line newsletters, *The Signal*, *Ides of ODE* and *EdConnections*.