STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Sheila B. Quinn
Deputy Superintendent, Division of Innovation & Effectiveness

DATE: October 18, 2016

RE: Implementation of S.C. Code § 59-29-240, Civics Test

The purpose of this memo is to provide schools with information on implementing the required civics test beginning in 2016–17. The James B. Edwards Civics Education Initiative was enacted into law on June 3, 2015. Beginning with students entering the ninth grade in 2016–17, students are required to take the civics test that is published annually by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, as a component of their high school curriculum.

- Students must take the test when taking their U.S. Government course.
- Students will be asked to answer 10 of the 100 questions from the published civics test, selected by the teacher, which may be administered in oral or written format (local decision on format).
- Passing the test is not a requirement, nor is there a minimum score. However, to encourage improved civics knowledge, districts may recognize students who pass the test. Answering 6 of the 10 questions correctly currently comprises a passing grade.
- Students in a class where the test is being administered who entered the 9th grade before 2016–17 are not required to take the test.
- Each public school (including charters) must report the percentage of students required to take the test who scored at or above the passing score to the Education Oversight Committee, who will, in turn, reflect the results on school and district report cards.

Tips for Implementation

The following is the link to the current test questions and associated answers: https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Office%20of%20Citizenship/Citizenship%20Resource%20Center%20Site/Publications/100q.pdf**.** Please note the answers, which are also

provided online, may change with elections and appointments for the various offices in applicable questions, such as Questions 20 and 21.

As with other courses, districts have local discretion for the associated curriculum. The following is a link to resources:
https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/study-test/study-materials-civics-test.

Communication of Scores

The state will collect the required information from the schools on the summer data collection survey that districts and schools use to provide information for the annual report cards. See Table 1 below:

Table I

District	High School	Number of U.S. Government Students Eligible to Take Civics Test	Number of Students Scoring 60 or higher
Abbeville	Abbeville		
	Dixie		
Aiken	Silver Bluff		
	Etc.		

Frequently Asked Questions

- How does the teacher select the ten questions? Students should be taught all of the content related to the published civics test. Ten questions should be selected by the government teacher in a manner that is consistent with administering a classroom-based test.

- Do I have to test 100 percent of my students? It is expected that all students taking the government class will take the civics test beginning with the 9th grade class of 2016. Please refer to this chart.

Which Students Taking U.S. Government Must Take the Civics Test?	
SY 2016–17	9th Grade
SY 2017–18	9th–10th Grade
SY 2018–19	9th–11th Grade
SY 2019–20	9th–12th Grade

- How do I handle a new student who has moved in late? The civics test should be given as close to the end of the course (or even as a part of the final exam) to ensure that all students may take it.

- How is my percentage calculated? Each school report card is required to contain the percentage of students at or above the passing score (6 of 10) and the number of students assessed. All students beginning with the 9th grade class of 2016 on the government teachers' rosters should be included in the assessment (see note on IEPs below). The number of students scoring at or above the passing score (6 of 10) will be divided by the number of students eligible to be assessed. The quotient will be reported as a percentage on the school report card.

- Do students with disabilities have to take the civics test? All eligible students (see table above) taking the government course should take the civics test and be afforded any accommodation consistent with the student's individualized education program. This requirement does not apply to a student (in any grade) who is exempt in accordance with the student's individualized education program.

If you have additional questions regarding implementation and reporting of the civics test, please contact Dan Ralyea, SCDE, Director, Office of Research and Data Analysis at dralyea@ed.sc.gov

cc: Instructional Leaders
Testing and Accountability Leaders
High School Principals