



State of Wisconsin  
2015 - 2016 LEGISLATURE

LRB-1318/1  
TKK:wlj:wj

## 2015 BILL

1     **AN ACT** *to amend* 115.29 (4) (a), 118.33 (1) (a) (intro.), 118.33 (1) (f) 1., 118.33 (1)  
2           (f) 2., 118.33 (1) (f) 2m., 118.33 (1) (f) 2r., 118.33 (2) (c), 118.33 (3m), 120.13 (37)  
3           (a) (intro.) and 120.13 (37) (b); and *to create* 118.33 (1) (d) 3., 118.33 (1) (g) 1.  
4           d. and 118.33 (1m) of the statutes; **relating to:** requiring the successful  
5           completion of the civics portion of a citizenship test as a condition for obtaining  
6           a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma.

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*Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill requires a person to correctly answer at least 60 of 100 questions on a civics test, which is identical to the civics test required to be taken by persons seeking U.S. citizenship, as a prerequisite to obtaining a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma. The bill prohibits a school board, the operator of an independent charter school, and the governing body of a private school participating in a parental choice program from granting a diploma to a pupil attending a public school, independent charter school, or participating private school unless the pupil has successfully completed the test. The bill permits the person to

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retake the test until the person has obtained a passing score. The requirement first applies in the 2016–17 school year.

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*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

1           **SECTION 1.** 115.29 (4) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

2           115.29 (4) (a) Grant ~~declarations~~ a declaration of equivalency of high school  
3 graduation to ~~persons,~~ an individual if the individual has successfully completed the  
4 civics test required under s. 118.33 (1m) (a) and if, in the state superintendent's  
5 judgment ~~they have,~~ the individual has presented satisfactory evidence of having  
6 completed a recognized high school course of study or its equivalent. The state  
7 superintendent may establish the standards by which high school graduation  
8 equivalency is determined. Such standards may consist of evidence of high school  
9 courses completed in high schools recognized by the proper authorities as accredited,  
10 results of examinations given by or at the request of the state superintendent,  
11 successful completion of correspondence study courses given by acceptable  
12 correspondence study schools, a general educational development certificate of high  
13 school equivalency issued by an agency of the U.S. government, course credits  
14 received in schools meeting the approval of the state superintendent, or other  
15 standards established by the state superintendent.

16           **SECTION 2.** 118.33 (1) (a) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

17           118.33 (1) (a) (intro.) Except as provided in pars. (d), (e), and (em), a school  
18 board may not grant a high school diploma to any pupil unless the pupil satisfies the  
19 requirement under sub. (1m) (a) and has earned:

20           **SECTION 3.** 118.33 (1) (d) 3. of the statutes is created to read:

21           118.33 (1) (d) 3. The pupil satisfies the requirement under sub. (1m) (a).

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1           **SECTION 4.** 118.33 (1) (f) 1. of the statutes is amended to read:

2           118.33 (1) (f) 1. ~~By September 1, 2004, each~~ Each school board operating high  
3 school grades shall develop and periodically review and revise a written policy  
4 specifying criteria for granting a high school diploma that are in addition to the  
5 requirements under par. (a). The criteria shall include the pupil's academic  
6 performance, successful completion of the civics test under sub. (1m) (a), and the  
7 recommendations of teachers. Except as provided in subds. 2. and 4., the criteria  
8 apply to pupils enrolled in charter schools located in the school district.

9           **SECTION 5.** 118.33 (1) (f) 2. of the statutes is amended to read:

10           118.33 (1) (f) 2. ~~By September 1, 2004, each~~ Each operator of a charter school  
11 under s. 118.40 (2r) that operates high school grades shall develop and periodically  
12 review and revise a policy specifying criteria for granting a high school diploma. The  
13 criteria shall include the pupil's academic performance, successful completion of the  
14 civics test under sub. (1m) (a), and the recommendations of teachers.

15           **SECTION 6.** 118.33 (1) (f) 2m. of the statutes is amended to read:

16           118.33 (1) (f) 2m. The governing body of each private school participating in the  
17 program under s. 119.23 shall develop and periodically review and revise a policy  
18 specifying criteria for granting a high school diploma to pupils attending the private  
19 school under s. 119.23. The criteria shall include the pupil's academic performance,  
20 successful completion of the civics test under sub. (1m) (a), and the recommendations  
21 of teachers.

22           **SECTION 7.** 118.33 (1) (f) 2r. of the statutes is amended to read:

23           118.33 (1) (f) 2r. The governing body of each private school participating in the  
24 program under s. 118.60 shall develop and periodically review and revise a policy  
25 specifying criteria for granting a high school diploma to pupils attending the private

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1 school under s. 118.60. The criteria shall include the pupil's academic performance,  
2 successful completion of the civics test under sub. (1m) (a), and the recommendations  
3 of teachers.

4 **SECTION 8.** 118.33 (1) (g) 1. d. of the statutes is created to read:

5 118.33 (1) (g) 1. d. Satisfies the requirement under sub. (1m) (a).

6 **SECTION 9.** 118.33 (1m) of the statutes is created to read:

7 118.33 (1m) (a) Beginning in the 2016–17 school year, no school board, operator  
8 of a charter school under s. 118.40 (2r), or governing body of a private school  
9 participating in a program under s. 118.60 or 119.23 may grant a high school diploma  
10 to any pupil unless, subject to the policies under sub. (2) (m), the pupil takes, during  
11 the high school grades, a civics test comprised of 100 questions that are identical to  
12 the 100 questions that may be asked of an individual during the process of applying  
13 for U.S. citizenship by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and  
14 the pupil correctly answers at least 60 of those questions.

15 (b) A pupil may retake the exam described under par. (a) until the pupil obtains  
16 the passing score required under par. (a).

17 **SECTION 10.** 118.33 (2) (c) of the statutes is amended to read:

18 118.33 (2) (c) Establish course requirements under sub. (1) (a) and approve any  
19 school board's high school graduation standards policy that is equivalent to the  
20 requirements under ~~sub.~~ subs. (1) and (1m) (a).

21 **SECTION 11.** 118.33 (3m) of the statutes is amended to read:

22 118.33 (3m) A course taken at a technical college by a child attending the school  
23 part-time or in lieu of high school under s. 118.15 (1) (b), or attending the school  
24 under s. 118.15 (1) (cm), does not fulfill any of the high school graduation  
25 requirements under sub. (1) (a) unless the state superintendent has approved the

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1 course for that purpose. If a pupil satisfies all of the high school graduation  
2 requirements under ~~sub.~~ subs. (1) and (1m) (a), the school board shall grant a high  
3 school diploma to the pupil regardless of whether the pupil satisfied all or a portion  
4 of the requirements while attending an institution of higher education under s.  
5 118.55 or a technical college.

6 **SECTION 12.** 120.13 (37) (a) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

7 120.13 (37) (a) (intro.) Notwithstanding s. 118.33 (1) and (1m), award a high  
8 school diploma to a person who meets all of the following requirements:

9 **SECTION 13.** 120.13 (37) (b) of the statutes is amended to read:

10 120.13 (37) (b) ~~Award~~ Notwithstanding s. 118.33 (1m), award a high school  
11 diploma to a person who received a high school equivalency diploma under s. 115.29  
12 (4) after serving on active duty under honorable conditions if the person meets the  
13 conditions of par. (a) 1. to 3.

14 (END)