



**Written Testimony on HB 2039  
House Education Committee**

Submitted by Brent Yeager, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services  
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Chairman Huebert and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2039, a bill that would require students to pass an American civics test to graduate from high school. The Olathe school district believes that civics education is an essential part of our curriculum; however, we oppose this bill for several reasons.

HB 2039 would create a new, high stakes testing requirement for civics that would:

- create an additional barrier to high school graduation and
- place greater emphasis on the test instead of the learning experience.

Civics is currently a graduation requirement for Kansas students. Students must demonstrate an understanding of knowledge acquired through a combination of experiences, including, but not limited to, testing and completion of projects. This learning design is consistent with that of other academic courses required for graduation.

In addition to acquiring a working knowledge of government, history, law, and democracy, we encourage civic participation and engagement. Through the Civic Leadership Academy, students have access to extended professional learning experiences. They can connect classroom learning with post-secondary and career opportunities. Through professional learning experiences, students can engage in job shadowing, earn industry-standard certifications, complete internships, and accept 'client' projects.

We believe Olathe's curriculum is robust. Experiential and project-based learning is more likely to accomplish the goal of preparing students to be informed and engaged citizens than implementing a high-stakes graduation requirement.

The proposed testing requirement could be especially problematic for students with learning disabilities and for those students who struggle with test-taking in general. A student's inability to pass the exam successfully could negatively impact their ability to seek employment or other educational opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [byeagerec@olatheschools.org](mailto:byeagerec@olatheschools.org) or (913) 780-8022.