

SENATE, No. 4703

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator RAJ MUKHERJI
District 32 (Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes State Seal of Civic Readiness to recognize certain students attaining high level of proficiency in civics.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the State Seal of Civic Readiness and
2 supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. The State Seal of Civic Readiness is established to
8 recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of
9 proficiency in civic knowledge, skills, and applied engagement. The
10 State Seal of Civic Readiness shall be awarded by the local board of
11 education to graduating high school seniors who meet the criteria
12 established by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection
13 b. of this section. School district participation in this program shall
14 be voluntary.

15 b. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules
16 pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
17 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), establishing criteria for the award of a State
18 Seal of Civic Readiness. The criteria shall build directly upon the
19 State's existing high school graduation requirements in social
20 studies or any other subject area and shall not establish additional
21 high school graduation requirements. The criteria shall
22 provide multiple flexible pathways and be designed to ensure
23 equitable access for students in every school district by utilizing
24 existing school, district, and community resources. The criteria
25 shall require a student to demonstrate:

26 (1) proficiency in civic knowledge, including the United States
27 Constitution, the New Jersey Constitution, the federal and State
28 legislative process, and constitutional rights and civil liberties,
29 through successful performance in relevant social studies
30 coursework consistent with existing graduation requirements or
31 through other State-required assessments;

32 (2) voluntary engagement in approved community service or an
33 extracurricular activity with a civic focus, including:

34 (a) volunteering for a charitable or religious organization that
35 provides services to the poor or sick;

36 (b) participating in Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Model
37 Congress, the American Mock Trail Association, or similar youth
38 organizations;

39 (c) participating in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps or
40 the Civil Air Patrol;

41 (d) participating in political campaigns, government internships,
42 or civic or legislative programming;

43 (e) participating in school-sponsored extracurricular activities
44 with a focus in civics; or

45 (f) enlisting in the United States Armed Forces prior to
46 graduation; and

47 (3) completion of a capstone project or portfolio relating to
48 citizenship in the community.

1 c. The Commissioner of Education shall prepare and deliver to
2 participating school districts a certificate to be awarded to the
3 student and an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the transcript of
4 the student indicating that the student has been awarded the State
5 Seal of Civic Readiness. The commissioner shall also provide any
6 information the commissioner deems necessary for a school district
7 to successfully participate in the program. A participating school
8 district shall maintain appropriate records in order to identify
9 students who have earned the State Seal of Civic Readiness and
10 shall award the certificate and affix the appropriate insignia to a
11 qualifying student's transcript.

12 d. The commissioner shall submit a report to the Governor, and
13 the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
14 19.1), by September 1 of each school year that includes the number
15 of students awarded the State Seal of Civic Readiness in the
16 previous school year.

17
18 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
19 the second full school year following the date of enactment.
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22 STATEMENT

23
24 This bill establishes the State Seal of Civic Readiness to
25 recognize high school graduates who have attained a high level of
26 proficiency in civic knowledge, skills, and applied engagement.
27 Under the bill, the State Seal of Civic Readiness would be awarded
28 by the local board of education to graduating high school seniors
29 who meet criteria established by the State Board of Education. The
30 bill provides that school district participation in this program is
31 voluntary.

32 The bill requires the State Board of Education to promulgate
33 rules establishing criteria for the award of a State Seal of Civic
34 Readiness. The criteria would build directly upon the State's
35 existing high school graduation requirements in social studies or
36 any other subject area and would not establish additional high
37 school graduation requirements. The criteria would provide
38 multiple flexible pathways and is required to be designed to ensure
39 equitable access for students in every school district by utilizing
40 existing school, district, and community resources. Under the bill
41 the criteria would require a student to demonstrate:

42 (1) proficiency in civic knowledge, including the United States
43 Constitution, the New Jersey Constitution, the federal and State
44 legislative process, and constitutional rights and civil liberties,
45 through successful performance in relevant social studies
46 coursework consistent with existing graduation requirements or
47 through other State-required assessments;

1 (2) voluntary engagement in an approved community service or
2 extracurricular activity with a civic focus; and

3 (3) completion of a capstone project or portfolio relating to
4 citizenship in the community.

5 The bill requires the Commissioner of Education to prepare and
6 deliver to participating school districts a certificate to be awarded to
7 the student and an appropriate insignia to be affixed to the student's
8 transcript indicating the awarding of the State Seal of Civic
9 Readiness. The commissioner would also provide any information
10 the commissioner deems necessary for a school district to
11 successfully participate in the program. The bill requires a
12 participating school district to maintain appropriate records in order
13 to identify students who have earned the State Seal of Civic
14 Readiness and to award the certificate and affix the appropriate
15 insignia to a qualifying student's transcript.

16 Finally, the bill requires the commissioner to submit a report to
17 the Governor and the Legislature by September 1 of each school
18 year that includes the number of students awarded the State Seal of
19 Civic Readiness in the previous school year.