**This Week in the Missouri Senate:  
Digital Audio File Script on HB 1646**

This week in the Missouri Senate, we review a new law that will affect those returning to school next year…

**Nat Snd / Runs : 06 / OC: States Naturalization Test.**

*“This bill would require students in Missouri to pass the civics portion of the* [*United States Naturalization Test*](https://www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship/naturalization-test)*.”*

[House Bill 1646](http://house.mo.gov/BillSummary.aspx?bill=HB1646&year=2016&code=R) will become law on Aug. 28. The measure establishes the Missouri Civics Education Initiative.

In recent years, some people have voiced criticism over what they believe to be a decrease in civics and current events education in public schools.

The proposal was debated on the Missouri Senate floor back on April 27.

Senator Jeanie Riddle of Callaway County is the bill handler.

During debate, she told her colleagues the test itself is similar to the citizenship test given those who become Americans…

**Riddle 1 / Runs :25 / OC: times as needed.**

*“It’s the one that has the students take 100 questions on the* [*U.S. Citizenship test*](https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/teachers/educational-products/100-civics-questions-and-answers-mp3-audio-english-version)*. And — just as a reminder — as a retired teacher, I understand the concern for teachers and administrators about changing standards and the tests that come with them — except that we have allowed local school districts to administer any number of ways, whether it’s oral, written or on the computer, before school or after school, during class, during lunch. They can be taken as many times as needed.”*

She adds the new law will have a second aspect to it…

**Riddle 2 / Runs :14 / OC: on this floor.**

*“In addition to the civics portion, there is a section on the* [*Constitution Project*](https://www.courts.mo.gov/civiceducation/pages/home.html) *of the* [*Missouri Supreme Court*](http://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=27) *for graduation requirements. Representative [Robert] Ross put that on. It’s the same as what Sen. [David] Pearce put on, on this floor.”*

Also during debate on April 27, Sen. Scott Sifton of Affton was able to add language from his [Senate Bill 809](http://www.senate.mo.gov/16info/bts_web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=22528993), which will require public schools to screen each student for dyslexia and related disorders…

**Sifton 3 / Runs :26 / OC: at this point.**

*“This language is on a couple different vehicles, and there’s some other education language circulating around the building on some other vehicles. Do we want to keep this one clean? That, to me, would seem to fit within the title of civics education pretty clearly. I think to do anything else, sure, you’d have to change the title. I guess I would be a little concerned at this point that if we were do anything to change the title to allow certain amendments on it, that could open this up into an omnibus education bill. The language you’re referring to is on, I think, four or five different things at this point”*

The dyslexia screening would start when a student begins kindergarten, and again before a student begins the third grade. Schools will also be allowed to screen a student who is suspected of having dyslexia or a related disorder. In addition, school districts and charter schools must provide for the treatment of a student determined to have dyslexia or a related disorder.

Even though the new law will take effect later this month, its provisions will not be included into school rules until after July 1 of next year.

Other education-related measures include [Senate Bill 586](http://www.senate.mo.gov/16info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=22246606), which modifies the definition of "current operating expenditures".

And, remember, you can follow these and other issues facing the Missouri Senate by visiting our website: [senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov).

Reporting for the Missouri Senate, I’m Dean Morgan.