



***GED® and High School Equivalency Changes in New York:  
What You Need to Know  
(May 2013)***

**Starting in 2014, New York State will replace the GED® exam and use a new test to award a High School Equivalency Diploma.**

The test of General Educational Development (GED®) is a national, privately-owned test that has been the primary pathway to a high school equivalency diploma (HSE) for over 25,000 New Yorkers every year. In response to upcoming changes to the GED® exam including higher costs and standards, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) took action to seek comparable, affordable assessments that could serve as an alternative to the new GED®. Through an RFP process, NYSED selected CTB/McGraw-Hill to develop a new high school equivalency assessment that will replace the GED® test in New York starting in January 2014. The new HSE test is called the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC).

**New Yorkers will continue to have access to free high school equivalency testing. No fees will be charged to test-takers for the new TASC exam.**

New York State has allocated funds to subsidize the full cost of the TASC exam for test-takers and has preserved the state law prohibiting fees. This means that individuals will NOT be charged fees to take the official high school equivalency exam through NYSED-approved test centers.

**The new Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) will be similar to the current GED® exam, but will change in difficulty and format over time.**

The TASC exam in 2014 will be similar in structure and length to the current GED® test:

- Available in English and Spanish, as well as versions to accommodate disabilities.
- 5 sections: English Language Arts Reading, ELA Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies;
- Primarily multiple choice, with one essay. More complex items will be added in 2015.

The exam will increase in difficulty to fully align with Common Core standards over a three-year period, allowing time to ramp up instruction and testing infrastructure.

**New York will transition to Computer-Based Testing over time, with existing test centers.**

The new TASC exam will be available in paper-based (PBT) and computer-based (CBT) formats. The percentage of CBT across the state will increase each year, from 20% in 2014 to 60% by 2016. NYSED anticipates that the existing statewide network of 269 test centers will continue providing testing for the new TASC exam and that the test center reimbursement policy will remain the same.

**Other Pathways to a High School Equivalency Diploma may be available.**

NYSED plans to enlist an expert panel to approve other assessments and pathways that the State will recognize for a NYS High School Equivalency Diploma. This may include the new GED® exam and/or other assessments not yet identified. These options would be recognized but not subsidized by the State, which means fees could potentially be charged to students for these alternatives.

**Partial GED® scores will expire at the end of 2013. Pass the GED® now.**

New Yorkers who have taken and passed parts of the GED® test should make extra effort to complete the GED® in 2013 before the test changes. The GED Campaign to Finish is a citywide initiative to help connect students, especially ages 17-24, with free support to prepare and pass the GED®. For more information: visit [www.GEDCompass.org](http://www.GEDCompass.org) or call 718-557-2525.

### **Key Issues for a Successful HSE Transition**

Since the GED® changes were initially announced, educators, providers and advocates have come together to examine implications for students and the testing system, and convey key issues to State and City policy makers. To support the upcoming HSE transition, the Campaign for Tomorrow's Workforce (CTW) recommends action in the following key areas:

- ***Raise Public Awareness.*** Given the brand-name recognition of the GED®, the State and City must take action to inform colleges, employers, training programs, and the general public, of newly established pathways to a high school equivalency diploma. If multiple pathways are offered, the State should publicize clear information about student options, costs, and implications. These steps are critical to prevent confusion and ensure recognition so that new HSE recipients are not at a disadvantage.
- ***Prepare System for Higher Standards and Computer-Based Testing.*** It will be critical to provide adequate professional development for adult educators on Common Core standards, and invest in technology infrastructure and capacity for education programs to build students' computer literacy skills and for test centers to implement computer-based testing.
- ***Expand HSE Preparation and Testing Capacity.*** Preparation is the most significant factor in determining success on the current HSE exam, boosting the pass rate by 30 percentage points. To maximize the number of GED® passers before the 2014 transition and prepare more students for the new HSE exam, additional investment is needed to expand HSE preparation programs and testing seats.