
High School Equivalency Testing Program, Rule

The Background:

The current rule allowing the GED testing program references the Department of Education. Administration of the GED testing program was moved several years back to Labor and Workforce Development. The first amendment corrects the rule.

The GED test has been revised and new passing scores have been enacted. The second amendment corrects the rule.

The GED Testing Service, operated by the American Council on Education, was created as a public service for returning WWII veterans in 1942. It was made available to the public in 1944 and has operated as a non-profit organization until it was announced in October 2011 that it had been purchased by PearsonVue, an international, for-profit company. The concern for cost and accessibility was immediate with the first announcement by Pearson Vue that the cost would be \$200 (they have lowered the cost at this juncture to \$120). As limited information from PearsonVue became available, so did concern for data ownership as well as state choice and control over the credentials it issues.

Legislators in Tennessee expressed their concerns to Adult Education leadership and SB2511/HB2861 was introduced last year requiring The Department of Labor and Workforce Development to report its progress in developing an alternative to the education committees of the house and senate by February 1, 2013. That report was delivered. This year, additional legislation was introduced.

Pursuant to SB0105/HB0387 which calls for the creation of a pathway, other than the GED® diploma, to be implemented for individuals who did not graduate from high school which will be fully recognized by the State of Tennessee as its equivalent, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development offers the following:

After a full year of research by the Division of Adult Education and the University of Tennessee Center for Literacy, Education and Employment, a full year of monthly conference calls as a member of a 37-state coalition formed to consider options to the new GED® Test via monthly teleconference calls, presentations from vendors via teleconference sharing legislation and research, and the formation of a Task Force consisting of the agencies listed in SB105/HB378, it is the recommendation of this Division that the HiSET™ high school equivalency test developed by Educational Testing Services (ETS) through the University of Iowa be adopted as an alternative to the GED® Test in Tennessee beginning January 1, 2014.

The Recommendation:

The SBE staff recommends acceptance of the rule changes on first reading.

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Amend Rule 0520-01-03-.06 (6)(a) by deleting the word “Education” and inserting instead “Labor and Workforce Development.”

Amend Rule 0520-01-03-.06 (6)(d) by deleting the paragraph in its entirety and inserting instead the following language:

- (d) In order to pass, the average standard score on the GED test shall not be less than four hundred-fifty (450) and no score on any one (1) component of the test battery shall be less than four hundred-ten (410).

Amend Rule 0520-01-03-.06 by adding the following language:

- (7) The High School Equivalency Testing (HiSET) Program and the Issuance of Equivalency Diplomas.
 - (a) The testing program is operated in accordance with the HiSET manual of the Education Testing Service and the rules established by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.
 - (b) The chief examiners shall ensure that all examinees meet the state requirements for age, residency, proper identification, and any other qualifications prior to admission to the testing session.
 - (c) A candidate must be eighteen (18) years of age before being eligible to take the HiSET test. A seventeen (17) year old may be allowed to take the examination upon recommendation of the local school superintendent. The superintendent may require written documentation from the applicant to support this recommendation. This rule shall not be used to circumvent participation in the regular high school program.
 - (d) The HiSET test is consists of five core areas that count twenty (20) points each. In order to pass, the total composite score on the HiSET test shall not be less than forty-five (45) and no score on any one core area of the test battery shall be less than eight (8).