

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE | NO. 19-12 |
| | DATE January 16, 2013 |

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS
COMPREHENSIVE AMERICAN JOB CENTER DIRECTORS
AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER DIRECTORS
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT 166 GRANTEES
YOUTHBUILD GRANTEES

FROM: JANE OATES 
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Information Related to the 2014 General Education Development (GED®) Test Series

- Purpose.** To provide the workforce development system with information related to the 2014 General Education Development (GED®) Test series.
- Background.** A major overhaul of the GED® Test is underway. The American Council on Education (ACE), a non-profit education leadership organization, and Pearson, a for-profit education and testing company, announced a joint venture in March 2011. A newly created for-profit organization will maintain the GED® Testing Service name (formerly a program of ACE), and establish the GED® 21st Century Initiative. This joint effort focuses on the development of a computer-based GED® Test series. With release of the new GED® Test series on January 2, 2014, administration of the GED® paper version will only occur in limited circumstances (i.e. for disability accommodations and in correctional facilities for a period of time after 2014).

Content of the 2014 GED® Test is being changed to improve the assessment of high school equivalency and align with career and college readiness goals. This notice provides information from the GED® Testing Service on key changes in the content of the GED® Test, delivery, costs, teacher preparation, and information resources. It also provides details about the closeout of the 2002 GED® Test series and contact information for state adult education and GED® administrators to learn more about the changes in each state.

Information provided in this TEN is pertinent to all states, including those that have a common measures waiver and report on the WIA Youth Degree and Certificate Attainment rate as well as those who do not have a common measures waiver and report on the Credential Attainment rate for adults, dislocated workers, and older youth. Credentials include, but are not limited to, a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, such as the GED®.

3. **Questions related to the 2014 GED® Test.** Answers to questions about the 2014 GED® Test can be found at <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/new-assessment>. The Employment and Training Administration has highlighted several key questions below and also created additional questions specific to workforce professionals.

Will every state move to the 2014 GED® Test? Decisions related to assessments used for the purpose of awarding a state’s high school diploma equivalency credential, including the GED® Test, are made at the state level. The current 2002 test series will expire at the end of 2013 and will no longer be available. States are currently deciding how to manage this change. To learn what states are doing related to the 2014 GED® Test adoption, implementation, cost, and other issues, please reach out to the appropriate state director of adult education listed on the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Web site at http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=DAE, and/or the state GED® Administrator™ at <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/ged-testing-administrator>.

How will the 2014 GED® content differ from the 2002 GED® Test? The 2014 GED® test will have four subject-area tests – Social Studies, Science, Mathematical Reasoning, and Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA). The subject-area tests will be closely aligned with college and career readiness standards, including the Common Core State Standards, a set of English language arts and mathematics standards and topics that learners across the country are expected to learn as well as other state standards. The RLA test combines the Language Arts Reading and Writing test content areas, which were separate in the 2002 Series GED® Test. The new subject-area tests will be more rigorous and will emphasize learners’ abilities to apply knowledge and skills, to reason, and to analyze information. The GED® Testing Service will conduct a standardization study in 2013 with a diverse sample of graduating high school seniors representing a range of learners expected to graduate from high school. The study will ensure that the high school equivalency “cut point” on the new test series has parity with the performance expectations for current high school graduates. A similar process was used to determine the passing standard for the 2002 Series GED® test. The new test will provide a new detailed score report with subscores for each subject, and will provide candidates with information about career and college readiness skills and knowledge that may be more rigorous than the high school equivalency “cut point.”

How will the test delivery occur? The 2014 GED® Test will only be administered through computer-based testing at Official GED® Testing Centers. Computer-based testing is a standardized mode of test-delivery that includes technology-based tools for data management, consistency in delivery, scoring, reporting and enhanced security monitoring and enforcement. The testing centers will provide the appropriate secure testing environment with test proctors. The GED® test is not offered online.

How much will the testing cost? According to the GED® Testing Service, the cost to testing jurisdictions (primarily states) for the new 2014 GED® assessment will remain at \$120 through the end of 2014. Similar to the implementation of the 2002 GED® Test series, each state implementing the 2014 GED® Test will set test-taker fees based on whether or not the state provides a subsidy. ETA encourages workforce services providers to reach out to

their state adult education and/or GED® Administrators™ to learn about their states' cost policies as these policies are developed.

Can test scores from the 2002 GED® series be combined with 2014 GED® test scores?

All 2002 GED® testing must be completed by the end of 2013, and individuals must have their 2002 GED® credentials before the series expires. Test scores from the 2002 Series GED® Test taken in 2013 cannot be combined with test scores from the new GED® test series taken in 2014. GED® Testing Service has launched a communications campaign to educate test-takers about the 2002 Series Closeout, and equip them with information and tools they need to finish the 2002 series before 2014. As part of this campaign, GED® Testing Service is providing materials to help communicate the closeout to organizations, media, and GED® test-takers at the community level. Materials and other closeout information can be found at <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/closeout>.

How can teachers and test administrators prepare themselves for the 2014 GED® Test?

A national test preparation program featuring an expanding array of personalized learning resources is planned by GED® Testing Service. An on-going source of information on the 2014 GED® test is the GED® Testing Service Web site, <http://www.gedtestingservice.com>. The Web site provides an overview of the new GED®, an *Assessment Guide*, and the opportunity to sign up for e-mail updates on 2014 GED® test development, and other resources. The *Assessment Guide* for teachers, examiners and administrators is a free Portable Document Format (PDF) download from the GED® Testing Service Web site link, <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/home>. The guide describes the new GED® assessment framework, its alignment with Common Core Standards, and Webb's Depth of Knowledge model, test item types and examples, information on scoring short answer and extended response questions, and other essential information on the new test series. User-friendly webinar slides are also available and provide a comprehensive overview of all three chapters of the guide.

Are there other professional development resources to help prepare instructors for the 2014 GED® Test? In addition to the instructional resources offered by the GED® Testing Service mentioned above, six partner organizations, including ED's Office of Vocational and Adult Education, are working together to develop training opportunities for instructors, such as train-the-trainer events, to enhance their capacity to prepare learners for the new series and to improve understanding of college and career readiness standards.

What are the implications for student instruction? The GED® Testing Service highlights several important considerations for teachers to prepare learners for the new test:

- Incorporate the use of computers into GED® test preparation to increase learners' comfort with computer-based testing;
- Emphasize critical thinking skills and the application of critical thinking in all content areas;
- Teach content, not just test-taking strategies, so that learners can demonstrate skills and competencies; and
- Teach writing to emphasize the skills of analysis and the ability to read critically in order to identify and draw on evidence in source materials.

How can workforce development professionals, such as case managers, prepare themselves for the 2014 GED® test? Case managers and other workforce development professionals are encouraged to incorporate standards required in the new test, including college and career readiness standards, into their service delivery strategies. This can include, for example, documenting specific goals related to finishing all segments of the 2002 GED® Test before 2014, or taking and completing the new test starting in 2014, when preparing or modifying Individual Service Strategies. In addition, the new assessment will be supported by enhanced reporting, so learners will be provided sub-scores to identify which subject-area or element of a subject-area needs improvement. Sub-scores on the practice test will be supplemented with information and links to instructional materials. Thus, the enhanced reporting and feedback can be used as a tool for case managers to identify needs, inform service delivery decisions, and enhance learning and future instruction.

Is additional information about the 2014 GED® Test available to the public? As mentioned above, GED® Testing Service has developed a number of informational materials, webinars, and a comprehensive assessment guide for educators and test-takers. Specific information related to changes to the test can be found at <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/new-assessment>.

4. **Action Requested.** ETA requests that recipients share this with staff, workforce services providers, organizational partners, and other entities engaged in the preparation, instruction, or support of high school diploma equivalency credential attainment, including the GED® Test. ETA also encourages recipients to reach out to their state director of adult education and/or GED® Administrator™ to learn about related decisions and policies.
5. **Inquiries.** Questions regarding this guidance should be directed to the appropriate ETA Regional Office.