

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: L

Date: September 26, 2013

Title	Report of the Adult Education and Literacy Advisory Committee to the Virginia Board of Education on Updates to the 2014 Tests of General Education Development (GED)		
Presenter	Dr. Susan M. Clair, Director/Acting GED Administrator, Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) Dr. Thomas M. Brewster, Chair, Adult Education and Literacy Advisory Committee to Board of Education		
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Purpose of Presentation:

For information only. No action required.

Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Action Requested:

No action requested.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

X	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
X	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
X	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Goal 1: The 2014 GED[®] test addresses accountability by offering a computer-based test whose successful completion requires that adult students learn rigorous academic content and employ many of the computing skills needed for success in postsecondary education and employment.

Goal 2: The 2014 GED[®] test sets rigorous standards for high school equivalency completion as set by the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education produced by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE); the Common Core State Standards; and standards used by Texas, Virginia, and other states. The GED[®] test is changing to help more adults become career and college ready with the goal of opening up doors to better paying jobs, new careers,

college classrooms, and a brighter future.

Goal 3: The 2014 GED[®] test expands opportunities to learn college and career readiness content and computer literacy skills that prepare adult learners for postsecondary education and the work force.

Significant changes have been in development to both content and delivery for the 2014 GED[®] test on computer. Test delivery will only be available at approved Pearson VUE Authorized Testing Centers (PVTC). The cost of the GED[®] test on computer will increase from \$58 in Virginia to \$30/section (\$120 total). Those who have incomplete and non-passing results on the current test version will lose those scores when the 2014 test is released. Professional development for teachers, examiners, and administrative staff occurred last year continuing into this year. Adult education and literacy programs have initiated outreach campaigns to alert those who have taken one section or all sections of the test but who have not passed to finish the test.

Summary of Important Issues:

This report highlights information about the 2014 GED[®] test on computer. Test-takers can register to take the test online 24/7 and receive instant score results. The GED[®] offers two score reports, the GED[®] Score and the GED[®] Score with Honors. The four content areas of the test include: reasoning through language arts, mathematical reasoning, science, and social studies. The skills and knowledge on the new test are aligned with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. Several adult education and literacy programs in Virginia have established Pearson VUE Authorized Testing Centers and are currently able to deliver the test on computer. Other adult education programs are in various stages of implementation and should be ready by January 1, 2014. The OAEL, in collaboration with the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, continues to offer professional development on the new GED[®] 2014 test for adult educators. Waivers were provided to correctional facilities to continue with the GED[®] 2002 paper-based test until a transition to computer-based testing is complete.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources: The GED[®] 2014 computer-based test costs \$30/section (\$120 total) and will remain through 2015. GEDTS[®]/Pearson VUE has established this test-taker fee. Testing centers will receive payment from GEDTS[®] of \$5 per scheduled hour. Virginia's adult education and literacy programs may be able to offset the cost of the test through priorities identified in state funding and payment from GEDTS[®]. The impact of the new test fee on Virginia's adult learners will be evaluated in 2014.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

N/A

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board receive this report.

The 2014 GED® Test on Computer

For the majority of test takers, the 2014 GED® test will be available only as a computer-based test. It will not be an online test. Test takers will report to a Pearson VUE authorized testing center in order to take the test. They will register and pay for the test using an online system. The computer skills that test takers will need to employ on the test include basic typing and manipulation of on-screen items using a mouse. This includes using drop-down menus and drag-and-drop activities, selecting or de-selecting an item by clicking on it, scrolling, and opening and closing embedded items such as the calculator.

Prospective test takers can register online to take the GED® computer-based test. They can schedule to take one or more of the four content-area tests at times that are most convenient for them. Adults without access to the Internet can contact the GED Testing Service® (GEDTS) phone support line to register for the test.

Test takers can also receive instant (unofficial) score results the same day they take the test. Score reports will incorporate a personalized study plan with correlation to test preparation curricula. The GED® test offers two score levels. The GED® Score is measured at or higher than the minimum needed to demonstrate high school equivalency-level skills and abilities. The GED® Score with Honors is measured at or higher than the minimum needed to demonstrate career and college readiness (CCR). The GED® Score with Honors indicates that the tester will likely be able to go into credit-bearing classes or be successful in a job training program.

The 2014 GED® test will be made up of four tests: Science, Social Studies, Math, and Reasoning through Language Arts. Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA) combines the former Language Arts Reading and Language Arts Writing tests into a single test. RLA will be 150 minutes (including a 10-minute break), Mathematical Reasoning 90 minutes, Science 90 minutes, and Social Studies 90 minutes. The maximum score on each test will be 200, with a minimum passing score of 150. Six hundred points will be required to pass the entire GED® test battery and earn a credential.

College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education

The 2014 GED® test meets the higher standards for high school completion as set by the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education produced by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), the Common Core State Standards, and standards used by Texas, Virginia, and other states. Expectations for student performance will be aligned with Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), measuring task complexity as opposed to difficulty. Eighty percent of the test will be at DOK levels 2 and 3, while 20 percent will be at DOK level 1. There will be no items at DOK level 4.

Pearson VUE Authorized Testing Centers Operated by Virginia Adult Education Programs

To offer the GED® test on computer, Virginia adult education and literacy programs must become Pearson VUE Authorized Testing Centers (PVTC). To maintain a high level of test security, Pearson VUE testing centers require the use of a Web camera and digital signature pad

to ensure the integrity of the test and the credential. The average cost to Virginia's adult education programs to convert to a Pearson VUE authorized GED® testing center is \$5,600. Funds for the conversion of these test centers were provided through Race to GED state grants. Ten adult education and literacy programs in Virginia have established Pearson VUE Authorized Testing Centers and are currently delivering the test on computer. Forty one adult education programs are in various stages of implementation and should be ready by January 1, 2014.

Cost of the GED® 2014 Test on Computer

The cost for the total battery of tests will remain at \$120, or \$30 per test module. The \$120 includes \$40 of compensation that is paid directly to test centers. Included in the \$120 cost are test center compensation, test registration and scheduling, provision of testing accommodations, test scoring, and data management. Beginning January 1, 2014, the GED Testing Service® will waive 100 percent of the fees for up to two retakes per failed content area test, provided those retakes occur within 12 calendar months.

Professional Development

The Office of Adult Education and Literacy and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) at Virginia Commonwealth University continue to provide regional workshops for teachers and program administrators on the 2014 GED® test. The OAEL provided professional development for adult educators at the Virginia Institute for Lifelong Learning at Radford University in July 2013. The VALRC provides online instruction to prepare teachers for the new content on the test. In addition, instructional videos; webinars; and a Teacher's Guide, an eight-week, self-paced course, are accessible on the GED Testing Service® Web site.

Waivers for Correctional Facilities to Continue with the 2002 Paper-based GED Test

GED Testing Service® has granted waivers to correctional facilities that allow the facilities to continue to use the 2002 paper-based test for a limited time while the facilities transition to computer-based testing.