

# Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



**Agenda Item:** F

**Date:** June 26, 2014

<b>Title</b>	Report of the Adult Education and Literacy Advisory Committee to the Virginia Board of Education on the 2014 General Educational Development (GED®) Testing Program		
<b>Presenter</b>	Dr. Susan M. Clair, Director, Office of Adult Education and Literacy, Department of Education Dr. Thomas Brewster, Chair, Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Advisory Committee		
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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:**

	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:**

In March 2013, the Superintendent of Public Instruction approved the state’s adoption of the 2014 GED® test as the state approved alternative high school credential. The GED® test was selected because it is widely accepted and recognized by postsecondary education and employers.

On January 2, 2014, the GED® Testing Service (GEDTS) made significant changes to the GED® test in terms of both content and delivery. The 2014 GED® test changed from paper-based testing to a test delivered on computer at authorized Pearson VUE Testing Centers. The 2014 GED® test has four subject areas instead of the five subject areas on the previous test. These subject areas are: Reasoning Through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies.

The 2014 test ensures expanded opportunities for adult students to learn the content and skills necessary for success in the workplace and postsecondary education. The 2014 GED<sup>®</sup> test also meets higher standards for high school completion as set by the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, the Common Core State Standards, and standards used by Texas, Virginia, and other states.

### **Summary of Important Issues:**

On July 1, 2014, HB 1007 (Byron) changes all references in the *Code of Virginia* from “General Educational Development (GED<sup>®</sup>)” to “high school equivalency examinations approved by the Board of Education.”

The Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) administers three funding streams that support the 2014 GED<sup>®</sup> program: Race to GED, Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) program, and General Adult Education (GAE) grant funds.

State Race to GED funds are used for (1) outreach to adult learners, (2) instruction to prepare for the GED<sup>®</sup> test, (3) GED<sup>®</sup> testing, and (4) preparation for computer-based GED<sup>®</sup> testing.

The ISAEP grant funds \$2,247,581 of approved ISAEP programs across the state. This amount of \$2,247,581 has not changed since the program’s inception in 1999. The substantive increase in the 2014 GED<sup>®</sup> test cost to \$120, as well as the individual cost of \$6 for each of the four GED Ready<sup>™</sup> subject tests, is funded by school division ISAEP program funding.

The General Adult Education (GAE) grant funds \$1,051,800 in support of Virginia adult education programs. These funds are used to support adult secondary school classes for credit, GED<sup>®</sup> instructional preparation classes, civics education classes, and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. As with the ISAEP program, the substantive increase in the cost of the 2014 GED<sup>®</sup> test and the GED Ready<sup>™</sup> test will be borne by either the individual adult education tester or the GAE supported adult education program.

### **MyGED<sup>™</sup>**

MyGED<sup>™</sup> is the start-to-finish Web portal for GED<sup>®</sup> test takers and those instructors who work with them. The MyGED<sup>™</sup> portal is a personalized online program that guides test takers through the entire testing process, including registering and scheduling to take the test, taking the GED Ready<sup>™</sup> practice test, and receiving score reports.

### **GED Ready<sup>™</sup>**

The GED Ready<sup>™</sup> test is the official GED<sup>®</sup> practice test and provides a testing experience similar to the actual GED<sup>®</sup> test. The GED Ready<sup>™</sup> score report evaluates a student’s readiness (or lack of readiness) for the actual test.

## **The Cost of the 2014 GED® Program**

The cost to take the complete GED® test prior to 2014 was \$58. The cost to take the 2014 GED® test is \$30 per subject. There are four sections of the official test for a total of \$120 to take the full battery. This reflects a 48% increase to take the 2014 test. Individuals who do not pass all subject areas of the test may retest at a reduced rate of \$10 per subject area test for two test repetitions. The cost to take the GED Ready™ practice test is \$6 per subject area. There are four subjects to the practice test for a total of \$24.

## **Pearson VUE Testing Centers**

As of June 2014, there are 140 Pearson Vue testing centers capable of administering the 2014 GED® test. This number will vary based on testing demand within the state. Some Pearson Vue testing centers in the state do not administer the GED® test.

## **GED® Options, the Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEP) program, and Release from Compulsory Attendance**

The GED® Options program is the nationwide GEDTS program that allows eligible students 16 or 17 years of age enrolled in a K-12 school division and those individuals exempted from compulsory attendance to take the GED® test. Virginia's Options program, the ISAEP program, serves this group of learners. All ISAEP students must receive approval from the Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) prior to the scheduling of their GED® testing. This approval requires testing eligibility and program requirement attainment verification by the school division superintendent or his or her designee. As of July 1, 2014, all ISAEP programs will be required to administer the GED Ready™ practice test or a GEDTS vendor approved practice test to determine eligibility for enrollment in the ISAEP program and for final GED® testing. Students under the age of 18 who have been released from compulsory attendance by the court system or by the school division must provide documentation of release to OAEL. OAEL will then authorize the eligible student to take the GED® test.

## **Transitional Waiver Program (TWP)**

There are 25 jails and detention centers that are under a transitional waiver contract. Each of these sites will become computer-based testing sites at different times throughout 2014, with all of the sites being active computer sites by January 1, 2015.

## **Transition from OAEL Credentialing to GED Credentialing™**

As part of the 2014 GED® Program, the GEDTS offered states the option of providing a Web-based credentialing service called GED Credentialing™. OAEL transitioned to the GED Credentialing™ service on January 2, 2014. GED® test takers who need a copy of their GED® transcript or GED® certificate can create an account and order either an electronic or paper copy of their credentials. To date in Virginia, 2,512 e-transcripts, 819 e-certificates, 835 paper transcripts, and 777 official paper copies of the GED® certificate have been processed by the GED Credentialing™ service.

## **Virginia GED® Testers to Date**

Between January 1 and June 1, 2014, 1,671 Virginia testers have taken one or more of the 2014 GED® subject area tests. Of these individuals, 937 have completed the entire battery of tests and 500 have passed the complete battery of the GED® test. The Virginia pass average is 53 percent while the national pass average is 48 percent.

Between January 1 and June 1, 2013, 9,728 individuals in Virginia took the entire GED® test, of which, 6,988 passed the complete battery, reflecting a pass rate of 71%. Comparison of this year's data to last year's data shows that present GED® test completers are 9% of the number completed last year and that present GED® passers are 7% of the number passing last year.

The impact of these reduced numbers and expanded cost is of yet indeterminate due to the lack of quantifiable data and reportable field data.

## **Alternative High School Equivalency Exams**

Two High School Equivalency assessment options are currently available in addition to the GED® test - the *High School Equivalency Test* (HiSET®), from the Educational Testing Service, and CTB/McGraw Hill's *Test Assessing Secondary Completion*™ (TASC). According to a recent report compiled by the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, 40 states have selected the 2014 GED® computer-based test as their approved alternative high school assessment, three states selected all three high school equivalency tests, seven states selected only the HiSET, and three states selected only the TASC. OAEL is researching these other high school equivalency options.

## **Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

The cost for the GED Ready™ practice test is \$24 for all four subject area tests, or \$6 per individual subject area test. The cost to take the full battery is \$120, or \$30 per subject. Many programs are using 2013-14 Race to GED® funds to purchase vouchers to help offset the cost to test takers when they take the practice test and/or the official GED® test. Some regional adult education programs are offering to pay for the full cost or partial cost of the test if test takers meet certain program incentive requirements.

## **Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

N/A

## **Superintendent's Recommendation:**

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