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Queens County

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January 29, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

As many of you are aware, the long-used high school equivalency test –the GED® – is changing. In 2011 the not-for-profit American Council on Education (ACE) which has provided the GED® nationwide for many years and Pearson Vu, a for-profit educational services firm, formed a new company to develop, distribute and manage a new GED® test. This new company is GED Testing Service (GEDTS). It has announced that, in January, 2014, the GED® test, its administration, content and cost will change. These changes will bring significant challenges to New York State, its adult learning programs and GED® test takers.

I recently participated in a forum about the GED® with NYSED Commissioner John King. NYSED has proposed several responses. Attached is a memo outlining the issues that the GED® changes raise for New York State and what NYSED is doing to address them. I will monitor these developments and look forward to a continuing partnership with our conference on this issue.

If you have any questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Catherine Nolan



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### General Education Development Test (GED®)

The GED® is the primary pathway to a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma. SED reports that approximately 50,000 New Yorkers 16 years of age and older have taken the exam. On average, 60% of test candidates were older than 21 years of age. Approximately 40% of all test takers were in New York City. Twenty-three percent were in Long Island, Westchester and Rockland. The remaining 37% of test candidates were in the rest of the state.

New York State has an open access policy for the GED®. Now, GED® test takers can take the test at 268 centers throughout the state. That number includes non-public centers in state prisons, residential facilities and county jails as well as 75 public sites. Half of these centers are under contract with SED and they receive \$20 per test administered. The other centers do not. Education Law §317 prohibits a fee for the GED® test. And, there is no law or state policy that requires a practice test or other measure of readiness before a candidate can take the GED® itself.

The GED® pass rate in New York is low. Only 58% of test takers passed the exam in 2010. The pass rate for New York City was 48.1%. Over the past ten years the state pass rate has ranged from a low of 53% to a high of 59%. New York State preparation programs do help. In 2010 71% of students who participated in a preparation program passed the GED® whereas only 49% of those who did not passed.

New York State appropriates \$3.65 million for the GED®. From these funds SED pays the American Council for Education (ACE) \$1.9 million for license to offer the GED®. The remaining funds pay for department staff who monitor the exam, score it and distribute the results and the subsidy for test sites under contract to SED.

Attached to this memo is a chart about GED® by state. The data comes from the American Council for Education (ACE) for 2010. Note: ACE reports that New York State had 310 test centers in 2010 but, in an October 5, 2011 memo to the Board of Regents, SED reports that there are 268 test centers in the department's state network.

#### 2014 Changes

In 2012 the American Council on Education (ACE) and Pearson Vue, a subsidiary of Pearson, entered into a joint venture called GED Testing Service (GEDTS) to distribute and manage the GED®. A representative from the joint venture said that ACE was partnering with Pearson to

update the GED® and improve its effectiveness as a measure of college and career readiness. There will, however be significant changes.

### Cost

The cost of the GED® will double in 2014. Each test now costs approximately \$60 per test at SED subsidized test sites. GEDTS will charge \$120 for the full battery of five GED® subtests in 2014. In New York the cost cannot be defrayed or passed on through test fees. New York State Education Law §317 states: “no fee shall be established for admission to the general education development exam.” The increased cost will challenge the reach of the current state appropriation for GED®.

### Test Sites

GED® test takers must take the 2014 test at GEDTS sites. There are limited sites throughout the state. The GEDTS website identifies only 19 sites in New York State for the test.

### Test Administration

The 2014 GED® test will be computer-based only. GEDTS will no longer issue the test on paper for pencils. SED acknowledges that computer testing is the future but its centers, preparation programs and test takers are not ready at this time to do computer-based testing.

### Common Core Curriculum

The 2014 GED® will be aligned with common core curriculum. New York State K-12 has endorsed and is now integrating the common core curriculum into public education. The adult learning providers, however, have not been included. They are not trained to teach the new standards and the adult learning curricula do not incorporate the new standards.

### **Next Steps**

SED, on its own and in consortium with 25 other states, is looking to alternative tests for high school equivalency. In the fall 2012 the department issued two RFPs. Both RFPs require bidders to develop a high school equivalency exam to be administered through the department’s existing network of 268 test centers. One RFP solicited bidders for both a computer and pencil/paper test and the second solicited bidders for a computer-based test. The test must be ready by 2014, aligned with common core standards and meet state standards for high school equivalency diploma. Two companies submitted bids – McGraw Hill and ETS – and their proposals are now under review. Since the RFPs are governed by procurement law, no additional details are available at this time. The RFP will be awarded by April, 2013.

I will continue to work with NYSED to assure that New York State can offer a test as well as other pathways to a high school diploma. Again, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

January 29, 2013

**GED Information By State (2010)**

State	Min. Fee	Max Fee	Min. Age	Min. Age w/ doc.	Instruction Required?	OPT required?	OPT Fee	Testing Centers
New York	\$0	\$0	19	16	No	No	n/a	310 (u)
<b>AVERAGE</b>	\$45.81	\$72.75	18	16	No (45 states)	No (34 states)	n/a	47
Alabama	\$50	\$50	18	16	No	No	n/a	53
Alaska	\$25 (f)	\$25	18	16	No	No	n/a	20
Arizona	\$65 (e)	\$90	18	16	No	No	n/a	41
Arkansas	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
California	\$150 (n)	~\$150 (n)	18 (n)	17	No	No	n/a	190
Colorado	~\$90	~\$90	17	16	No	No	n/a	54
Connecticut	\$0	\$13 (k)	19	17	No	No	n/a	23
DC	\$50	\$50	18	16	No	Yes	n/a	1
Delaware	\$75	\$75	18	16	No	Yes	\$35	6
Florida	Varies	\$70	18	16	No	No	n/a	82
Georgia	\$95	\$95	20	(m)	No	No	n/a	47
Hawaii	\$75	\$75	18	16	Yes	No	n/a	13
Idaho	\$75	\$75 (d)	18	16	No	No	n/a	8
Illinois	\$50	\$50	17	16 (c)	No	No	n/a	75
Indiana	Varies	\$60	18	17	No	Yes	Varies (t)	71
Iowa	Varies	Varies	17	17	No	Yes	n/a	42
Kansas	\$68	\$68	18	16	No	Yes	\$25	25
Kentucky	\$50	\$50	19	16	No	Yes	n/a	42
Louisiana	\$50 (L)	\$50 (L)	19	16	Yes	Yes	n/a	43
Maine	\$0	\$0	18	17	No	Yes	n/a	78
Maryland	\$45	\$45	16	16	No	No	n/a	20
Massachusetts	\$65	\$65	18	16	No	No	n/a	32
Michigan	\$30	\$380	18	16	No	No	n/a	118
Minnesota	\$50	\$120	19	16	Yes	Yes	n/a	59
Mississippi	\$40	\$40	17	16	No	No	n/a	37
Missouri	\$40	\$40	17	16	No	No	n/a	27
Montana	\$55	\$55	19	16	No	No	n/a	22
Nebraska	\$0	\$75	18	16	Yes	No	n/a	34
Nevada	\$60	\$60	18	16	No	No	n/a	20
New Hampshire	\$65	\$65	18	16	No	Yes	Varies	19
New Jersey	\$50	\$50	16	16-17 (a)	No	No	n/a	32
New Mexico	\$35	\$100	18	16	No	No	n/a	28
North Carolina	\$7.50	\$7.50	16 (b)	16	Yes	Yes	n/a	74
North Dakota	\$25	\$150	18	16 (j)	No	No	n/a	18
Ohio	\$40	\$40	19	16	No	No	n/a	99
Oklahoma	\$45	\$80	18	16	No	No	n/a	55
Oregon	\$25	\$140	18	16	No	No	n/a	46
Pennsylvania	Varies	Varies	18	16	No	No	n/a	119
Rhode Island	\$55	\$55	19	16	No	Yes	\$0-\$20	9
South Carolina	\$80	\$80	17	16	No	No	n/a	6
South Dakota	\$95 (h)	\$95	18	(i)	No	Yes	\$30 max (s)	15
Tennessee	\$50	\$75	18	17	No	Yes	n/a	38
Texas	\$41	\$150	18	16	No	No	n/a	148
Utah	\$70	\$70	17 (p)	16	No	Yes	Varies	22
Vermont	\$75	\$75	16	16	No	No	n/a	12
Virginia	\$35 (g)	\$35	18	16	No	No	n/a	82
Washington	\$75	\$75	19	16	No	No	n/a	55
West Virginia	\$0	\$0	19	16	No	Yes	n/a	74
Wisconsin	(q)	(q)	18.5 (r)	17	No	No	n/a	80
Wyoming	\$50	\$75	18	16	Yes	Yes	n/a	28

- (a) Parental consent required for 16 & 17 year olds
- (b) Release from HS
- (c) If enrolled in Lincoln's Challenge
- (d) Plus one-time first testing fee
- (e) Both prices include \$15 admin fee
- (f) optional fee may be charged for full battery
- (g) plus 10\$ first time test fee
- (h) includes \$20 application fee
- (i) in-school youth study for GED then dropout to test
- (j) if they meet ND ALC requirements
- (k) \$13 each registration for battery/test if 21 or older and a non-veteran
- (L) recommended fee
- (m) 16-19 withdrawl; 16-17 withdrawl & approval
- (n) Fees established by testing centers. Currently, ~\$150
- (o) within 60 days of being 18
- (p) or 18 and peers have graduated
- (q) set at each testing center
- (r) or 9th grade class has graduated
- (s) \$0 for ABE students
- (t) Many adult ed. Programs offer it free of charge
- (u) 268 test centers as of January 2013

NOTE: States that offer the GED free of charge: New York, Maine, West Virginia  
 New York is the only of these states to not require OPT. Maine and West Virginia offer OPT free of charge