

High School Equivalency: Resource Guide for the Workforce System

Developed for the U.S. Department of Labor by the Manhattan Strategy Group under Contract # DOL141RQ20734.

The U.S. Department of Labor Education & Training Administration does not endorse any specific products or vendors mentioned throughout the Guide.

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Audience and Purpose.....	4
Guide Structure	4
Using This Document.....	4
Key Terms and Acronyms.....	5
A. HSE Background Information.....	6
Importance of HSE	6
HSE Attainment Data.....	6
The Link between HSE and College and Career Readiness Standards.....	7
State Reactions to New HSE Content and HSE Alternatives	8
B. The Most Common HSE Options – GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC	9
B1. The 2014 GED®.....	9
B2. The HiSET.....	10
B3. The TASC	11
Workforce System Implications for the GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC.....	12
Need-To-Know Checklist for the GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC.....	13
C. Requesting And Interpreting Scores on the GED® TEST, HiSET, and TASC.....	18
Workforce System Implications for Requesting and Interpreting HSE Test Scores.....	20
Need-To-Know Checklist for Interpreting HSE Test Scores.....	20
D. Other HSE Options – Multi-state, single state, and online.....	21
D1. Multi-State Options	21
D2. State or Locally Developed HSE Options	21
Workforce System Implications for Other HSE Options	23
Need-To-Know Checklist for Other HSE Options.....	24
E. Matrix of High School Equivalency State Websites.....	26
Workforce System Implications for the HSE Matrix	28
Need-To-Know Checklist for the HSE Matrix.....	28
F. Accommodations on the GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC.....	30
F1. GED® Accommodations.....	30
F2. HiSET Accommodations.....	31
F3. TASC Accommodations	32
Workforce System Implications for GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC Accommodations	32
Need-To-Know Checklist for GED®, HiSET, and TASC Accommodations.....	33

- G. HSE Testing In Correctional Settings 34
 - Workforce System Implications for HSE in Correctional Settings 34
 - Need-To-Know Checklist for HSE in Correctional Settings 35
- H. Adult Learning..... 37
 - H1. Andragogy Theory and Principles 37
 - H2. Toolkit for Adult Learning Theory and Principles..... 37
 - H3. Adult Learning Styles..... 38
 - H4. Workplace Training and Education..... 38
 - H5. Adult Learner Motivation 38
 - H6. Adult Learning Slide Presentations..... 38
 - Workforce System Implications for Adult Learning Theory..... 38
 - Need-To-Know Checklist for Adult Learning Theory 39
- I. HSE and Federal Student Aid Eligibility..... 40
 - Workforce System Implications for HSE and Student Aid..... 40
 - Need-To-Know Checklist for HSE and Student Aid..... 41
- J. WIOA References to HSE 42
 - 1. Performance Measures..... 42
 - 2. Use of Funds for Youth Investment Activities..... 42
 - 3. Job Corps Definitions 43
 - 4. High-Performing Job Corps Centers 43
 - 5. Job Corps Management Information 43
 - 6. YouthBuild Grants 43
 - 7. YouthBuild Participant Eligibility 44
 - 8. Adult Education and Literacy Definitions 44
 - Workforce System Implications for HSE References in WIOA 45
 - Need-To-Know Checklist for HSE References in WIOA 45

INTRODUCTION

The content and process for obtaining high school equivalency (HSE) credentials has changed significantly. These changes, many of which are ongoing, have profound implications for persons seeking a high school equivalency credential as well as for the national workforce system, which promotes, delivers, or connects with the options for equivalency. Precipitated by the 2014 changes in the test of General Educational Development (GED®), including major adjustments in test management, content, cost, and test administration, the national and state-by-state landscape for high school equivalency now includes a growing number of alternative HSE options.

Audience and Purpose

This Resource Guide was developed to provide current information and resources about the options for high school equivalency to individuals employed within the national workforce system. Individuals within workforce-focused organizations/agencies who serve clients who have not attained a high school diploma should be familiar with the major options for HSE that are in use nationwide. Additionally, individuals who have job functions related to the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) need basic information about HSE in order to address the needs of clients who do not have high school diplomas and are eligible to be served under WIOA. Other stakeholders in the national workforce system or in partnership with that system—including adult education providers, postsecondary counselors and staff, community-based organization staff, etc.—may also find the information and resources in this Guide useful.

The Guide represents an inventory of key documents within the HSE issue/topic that are widely accepted and used. As a general HSE resource, it is not inclusive of the many closely related issues and content areas such as work readiness or employability skills or other related resources such as work readiness credentials or career pathway models.

Guide Structure

The Guide features ten topical sections. With the exception of the *HSE Background Information* section, each section follows a similar structure. That is, each section presents information and searchable resources followed by a text box of Workforce System Implications and concluding with a set of Need-to-Know questions. Workforce system implications discuss possible ways in which the section topic and information may impact programs/staff within the national workforce system. These implications are expanded in the Need-to-Know discussion using a checklist format of leading questions. Questions are divided into those for *state level* workforce system staff and stakeholders and those for *local level* workforce system staff and stakeholders. Because the answers to these questions typically are different from state to state, the answers to them are too varied to describe in this document. However, the questions provide a recommended format for discussion and represent useful state and local information to share between systems and stakeholders.

Using This Document

The Resource Guide may be used in a variety of ways including but not limited to:

- ✓ Enhance an individual’s general or specific knowledge of the current landscape of HSE
- ✓ Provide a content structure for professional development about HSE within your state or area
- ✓ Provide a content structure for cross-system HSE discussion

Additionally, the Guide may be tailored to your specific needs and sections of information could be abstracted for certain uses such as planning, report preparation, collaboration and partner discussions. Although the Guide information does not provide an answer to the question of *which HSE test is the best for my clients or area*, it provides both basic descriptions of the popular HSE options and helpful links to more detailed sources.

Key Terms and Acronyms

AEFLA – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)

CCR – College and Career Ready

Common Core – Common Core State Standards. Developed in 2009 by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Common Core is a set of academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. They are learning goals that outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade.

GED® – The test of General Educational Development. A registered trademark of the American Council on Education and Pearson Vue who own and manage the GED®.

HiSET – High School Equivalency Test. The HiSET test is a new (2014) high school equivalency product of the Educational Testing Service and Iowa Testing Programs.

HSE – High School Equivalency

TASC – Test Assessing Secondary Completion. The TASC is a new (2014) high school equivalency product of the CTB/McGraw-Hill company.

USED-OCTAE – U. S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education

USDOL-ETA – U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration

WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

A. HSE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Importance of HSE

For most Americans, the path to a secure economic future begins early in life with positive family, social, and educational experiences that typically result in a high school diploma and a clear plan for pursuing postsecondary education or other job skills training. However, an alarmingly large number of individuals disconnect from traditional education or skills training pathways, often without obtaining a basic high school credential. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation 2012 report, [*Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity*](#), the longer a person is without a high school credential or without the skill training necessary for a family-sustaining wage, the more likely that individual will remain in poverty and require significant public welfare and social services.

HSE Attainment Data

As reported in the 2012 [American Community Survey](#), 25.7 million people between ages 18 and 64 are without a high school diploma or equivalent, representing more than 13 percent of this population. As reported by two sources – [Pew Research Center](#) and the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) - this demographic dropout statistic is decreasing for minority students although the achievement gap in standardized test performance between white and non-white populations remains a significant concern within secondary education. Also, as an impact of the 2008-2012 economic recession, many states have seen an increase in the number of older, unemployed, or underemployed adults who are accessing high school credential options as they plan for future employment.

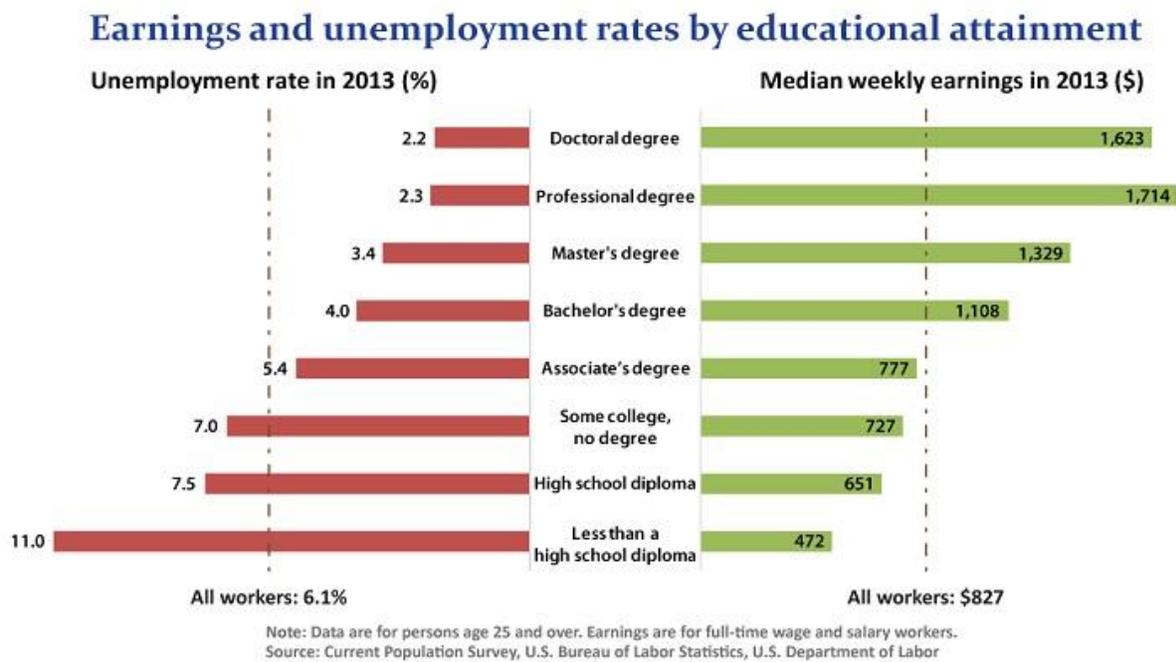
Although the nation's public school graduation rate has increased eight percentage points—to 74.7%—in the last decade, estimates of the actual numbers of 18-24 year-olds who lack high school credentials range from five to six million individuals. Dropout rates for minority students are more than double those of white students. Students from low-income families (defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as 70 percent of the lower living standard income level) dropped out of high school at six times the rate of their peers from higher-income families. Research by the [American Youth Policy Forum](#) shows that only about one-quarter of those who fail to graduate with their peers eventually receive diplomas. Another one-quarter will eventually complete the GED® test and receive a high school equivalent credential. However, an alarming one-half never attain a high school credential.

A study conducted by the Washington State Board for Community and State Colleges, referred to as the [Tipping Point](#), was instrumental in solidifying the connection between attaining HSE and future success, defined as the ability to earn a family-sustaining wage. Specifically, the five-year longitudinal study of over 10,000 adult basic education students enrolled in the Washington college system revealed that the tipping point to attain economic self-sufficiency was a high school diploma or its equivalent plus at least two semesters of college credits and a recognized educational/employment credential.

The GED® test is the most widely recognized alternative to a high school diploma. According to the [2012 GED® Statistical Report](#), 607,000 individuals took the full test and 418,000 passed it. Most GED® candidates were male (56 percent) and about half were white (48 percent). About three-fourths reported they had completed 10th grade

(71 percent) and, on average, candidates had been out-of-school for nine years when they took the test. The average age of GED® test takers is 26. Nationally, one in every seven high school diplomas is a GED® certificate and one in every 20 college entrants has completed the GED® test. Although the [value of the GED®](#) test has been [challenged](#) in recent years, it is commonly recognized as an important milestone in gaining the education and skills needed to succeed in today’s economy. With increasing evidence of the role education plays in helping individuals earn family-sustaining wages—including the value of postsecondary certificates—a high school diploma or equivalent is one of the steps needed to succeed in today’s labor market.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [reports](#) that personal income and employment rates are significantly correlated to educational attainment. Whereas the average wage earner in the U.S. makes about \$815 per week, an adult without a high school diploma or equivalent earns only \$472. In 2013, the unemployment rate for these individuals was over 11%. They are typically the first individuals to realize the impact of a downturn in the economy. According to the [Alliance for Excellent Education](#), not attaining a high school diploma or its equivalent results not only in challenges for the individual, but in significant costs to society at large in areas such as limited economic productivity and related tax revenue potential. There is also the need for public funds for supportive programs including public welfare, remedial public education, workforce vices, and incarceration.



The Link between HSE and College and Career Readiness Standards

The past decade began the [content standards movement](#), initiating secondary education systems across the nation to reform their K-12 curricula to be more rigorous and align with research and best practices. In 2009, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers designed and promoted the [Common Core State Standards](#) (also called the Common Core). The Common Core is a set of academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. Simply put, they are learning goals that outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade.

The goal of the Common Core is to ensure all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live. The standards are frequently referred to as “college and career readiness (CCR)” because they are designed to align with the entry level expectations of colleges, workforce training programs, and employers. As of 2014, 46 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories have voluntarily adopted and are moving forward with the Common Core.

In response to the K-12 content standards and CCR movement noted above, the GED® Testing Service and other HSE providers (existing and new) took immediate action to upgrade the rigor of their HSE assessments and align their test content with the college and career readiness content of the Common Core.

State Reactions to New HSE Content and HSE Alternatives

State adult education systems and other HSE delivery systems including Job Corps and non-government affiliated adult education providers, have reacted to the changes in the GED® test in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. Some states expressed concern that the cost of the new 2014 GED® test was too high or may not be stable over time. Other concerns included the sole use of a computer-based format and/or content that is too rigorous for many dropouts or adult immigrants. In some states, state legislation authorizing the use of the GED® test needed to be amended due to the changes in test ownership and the need for new GED® contract. Also, due to the magnitude of the GED® content changes, state level policy makers wanted to take a fresh look at options in order to endorse a single HSE test. These concerns led many states to rethink and redesign their HSE program delivery and options. While some states have finalized decisions on their HSE options, many states are currently working on their new policies and approaches.

State agencies that have authority over the state’s HSE delivery system, and more specifically the State Director of Adult Education in a state, typically initiated the concept of reviewing new HSE options within the state. Depending on a state’s adult education governance structure, changes to a state’s HSE system followed various final selection (of one or more HSE tests) and formal approval routes with some approvals being finalized at the state agency level while in other states approval was necessary from the state legislature. It should be pointed out that state endorsement of a particular HSE option may be different from the approved option on a Native American reservation within that state.

B. THE MOST COMMON HSE OPTIONS – GED® TEST, HISET, AND TASC

The three most common examinations used to determine high school equivalency are the General Educational Development (GED®) test, the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET), and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). State adult education programs typically promote and endorse one or more of these approaches and offer a high school equivalency diploma that is officially sanctioned by the state in policy or law. [The National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium](#) (NAEPDC), a consortium of state directors of adult education, has developed a state-by-state listing of the HSE tests endorsed by each state. In addition, an enhanced state-by-state HSE matrix is included in this Guide with hyperlinks directly to state HSE websites.

As of January 1, 2015 March 14, 2014, there are 40 states committed to offering the [GED®](#) test (AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HA, ID, IL, KS, KY, MD, MI, MN, MS, NE, NV, NJ, NM, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WI, WY, and D.C.). Of those 40, 27 use the GED® exam as their only HSE option and 13 states provide multiple HSE options, either the [HiSET](#) or the [TASC](#). Although seven states are using the TASC, three states are using that option exclusively. Of the 12 states using the HiSET, seven are using that test exclusively. At the time of the survey, eight states that offer the GED® option exclusively were in the process of deciding on additional HSE options beyond the GED® exam.

B1. The 2014 GED®

Main web link: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/ged-testing-service>

The GED® (general educational development) exam is a nationally recognized HSE test that is managed via a partnership between the nonprofit [American Council on Education](#) and the for-profit [Pearson](#) learning company. The GED® exam has been widely used since 1942 to provide out-of-school youth and adults with an opportunity to earn their high school equivalency credential in the U.S., Canada, and internationally. The test is aligned with current U.S. high school standards (including the [Common Core](#) standards) and [career and college readiness expectations](#).

Formerly only a paper-pencil test, the GED® exam is now (as of January 2014) delivered exclusively on computers. This provides a consistent testing experience nationwide. The computer-based testing format is not delivered through the Internet due to the need for a high level of security. There are four parts to the test: Reading through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning (two tests – one with a calculator, one without), and Science, and Social Studies. The GED® test offers two scoring levels, a minimum score needed to demonstrate high school equivalency and higher score level that demonstrates college and career readiness. The GED® test is normed on high school juniors and seniors. A passing score for the basic high school equivalency is established at the 40th percentile of the norming population.

In addition to English, the GED® tests are available in Spanish and French, large print, audio, and Braille. Tests and test preparation are also offered to persons incarcerated and on military bases in addition to more traditional settings. Individuals living outside the United States, Canada, or U.S. territories may be eligible to take the GED® test through Pearson VUE [testing centers](#).

The GED® testing service website features links designed specifically for different audiences, including students, educators, policy makers, media, and the public. Current research is featured on the website including detailed annual [statistical reports](#) that include state-by-state comparative data.

HSE Publishers Products for the 2014 GED®

Main web link: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/2014publishers>

The GED® Testing Service webpage includes information about 21 national publishers that offer instructional materials specifically for the 2014 GED® test. Web links and other contact information for each publisher are included as well as a notation as to which publishers offers the official GED® practice test. The website also includes links to individual product titles that a publisher has to offer.

GED® Test Acceptance

According to GED® Testing Service, “about 95 percent of U.S. colleges and universities accept GED® graduates in the same manner as high school graduates.” GED® graduates also qualify for federal student aid. Like high school graduates, GED® certificate holders need to complete any required admissions tests such as the ACT, SAT, or other placement and achievement tests required by the particular college. Also, four-year universities require high school course prerequisites be met if being admitted before completion of a community college transfer program.

Most colleges will accept a GED® certificate in lieu of a high school diploma, with community colleges almost always accepting GED® scores. However, a GED® certificate on its own may not be considered sufficient and should be combined with good references and tests scores in order to ensure college acceptance.

Source: Lisa Weinstein. [How do Colleges Look at a High School Diploma Vs. a GED®?](#) (March 2013)

B2. The HiSET

Main web link: <http://hiset.ets.org/>

The HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) test is a product of the [Educational Testing Service](#) (ETS) and [Iowa Testing Programs](#) (ITP). It was developed as an option to measure high school equivalency. The HiSET assesses the students’ ability to demonstrate their high school-level proficiency and their readiness for higher education or the workplace. The HiSET is available in both paper- and computer-delivered testing formats. It is administered at state-selected and operated test centers. Test takers are tested in five core areas: reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Test content is aligned with current practice in all states. Test takers can use existing prep courses and materials to prepare for the HiSET exam. Test takers are given scores in all core areas, as well as a total score.

Similar to the GED® test, the items that are included in the HiSET exam are pilot-tested, validated, and normed on graduating high school juniors and seniors. Item types include both multiple-choice and essay questions. Three

equated forms of the HiSET exam are available each calendar year to accommodate retakes. Scores are issued for each subtest and for the total battery. The passing standard is configured at the 40th percentile.

As of January 1, 2015, the following twelve states are using and supporting the HiSET: CA*, IA, LA, ME, MA, MO, MT, NV*, NH, NJ*, TN*, WY* (The asterisk denotes states that also offer and support the GED®. Also, CA, NV, NJ, and WY offer all three options – HiSET, GED®, and TASC).

HSE Publishers Products for the HiSET

Main web link: <http://www.newreaderspress.com/Items.aspx?hierId=9050>

[ProLiteracy](#)'s publishing division, [New Readers Press](#), offers three instructional products that are aligned to the HiSET. These materials include a set of pre-HSE workbooks, an HSE math workbook, and one set of instructional materials on visual literacy.

B3. The TASC

Main web link: <http://www.tasctest.com/>

The TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) test was developed by [CTB/McGraw-Hill](#) as a national high school equivalency assessment. It assesses five subject areas including Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. It measures examinees' levels of achievement relative to that of graduating high school seniors, and career and college readiness, as outlined by the Common Core state standards.

The TASC test can be taken at any state-approved testing site. It is available in both paper-and-pencil and online formats. TASC test items will gradually increase in depth of knowledge rigor over three years, 2014-2016, to gradually accommodate college ready content. Three TASC test forms are available each year, in English and Spanish, for paper-and-pencil and online tests. TASC's alternative forms include large print, Braille, and audio.

As of January 1, 2015, the following six states are using and supporting the TASC: CA*, IN, NV*, NJ*, NY, WV, WY* (the asterisk denotes states that also offer and support the GED® exam. Also, CA, NV, NJ, and WY offer all three options, the TASC, GED®, and HiSET.)

HSE Publishers Products for the TASC

Main web link: <http://www.newreaderspress.com/Items.aspx?hierId=9000>

[ProLiteracy](#)'s publishing division, [New Readers Press](#), offers four instructional products that are aligned to the TASC. These materials include a set of pre-HSE workbooks, a thinking skills workbook, a set of instructional materials on visual literacy, and a workbook of test taking strategies including two practice tests. The site also provides information about the required electronic calculator.

HiSET and TASC Acceptance

According to the HiSET and TASC publishers, colleges and universities within the states using the respective test acknowledge the equivalency diploma as a result of the diploma being sanctioned and issued by the state education authority. Since both of these HSE options are relatively new, states that have committed to their use have been and are taking actions to communicate information about their HSE option to colleges, universities, and employers.

Workforce System Implications for the GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC

Audience for these Implications – The move to multiple options for high school equivalency has implications for workforce agencies (within the public workforce system operating through the USDOL-ETA) and their stakeholders. This Guide provides information about HSE options for workforce system staff at both the state and local levels. In general, staff at the state level are encouraged to use this information to become informed about HSE changes and opportunities that are important to their roles as workforce system policy makers and program administrators. This Guide may be used to provide information and resources for local or regional workforce system staff as they manage day-to-day program services that target clients in need of HSE.

Service Delivery – Since many clients of the workforce system lack the necessary preparation for further education and employment, it is important for workforce system staff to know which HSE options are available and/or accepted (by postsecondary and employers) in their state. Options of available HSE examinations and preparation may have changed in recent months. Many clients in need of HSE will require assistance to connect with an HSE provider as well as assistance to determine which HSE option to pursue. For workforce system staff who operate HSE instructional programs, there is a need to know what instructional materials are available and/or recommended by the test publisher. Please note that a complementary College and Career Readiness (CCR) Guide is available on the same website as this HSE Guide.

Partnerships – Since workforce system staff and stakeholders frequently communicate, interact, and partner with adult education providers at the state and local levels, it is important to have knowledge about the options for HSE in their state. At the state level, every state maintains an adult education system (i.e., state administrative recipient of WIOA adult education funding) website. A directory of state adult education program is available on the adult education [state director organization website](#). State adult education websites in turn provide local directories of funded adult education providers which typically include adult schools, community based organizations, colleges, school districts, and prisons/jails. Typically, if a state endorses a specific HSE exam and provides preparation instruction, colleges and employers accept that credential. However, both colleges and employers have the individual freedom to accept or not accept any HSE credential or to add additional educational requirements to their enrollment or hiring criteria.

Professional Development – Workforce system staff would benefit from professional development to learn about the types of tests offered as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each test. For workforce system staff who work directly with HSE instructional staff, it would be useful to know where to find HSE curriculum and instructional resources. As noted in the section above, the test publisher provides links to curriculum and instructional materials on their website. The Need-to-Know checklist included in this Guide provides a template for information that may be included in professional development related to HSE.

Infrastructure – The delivery of HSE instruction and testing requires considerable infrastructure investments such as instructional and testing facilities, staff, and other delivery system basics. Although many workforce system organizations do not administer HSE instruction or testing, some do (e.g., Job Corps). Workforce system entities that do not administer HSE systems should understand how such systems work in their state or local areas and whether or not there are infrastructure barriers such as lack of testing centers or facility accommodations for persons with disabilities. The [Jobs Accommodation Network](#), sponsored by USDOL, is a resource for learning about workplace accommodations regarding infrastructure and policy issues.

Checklist of “Need-To-Know” Information

The checklist below includes recommendations for essential knowledge about the three major HSE options: GED® exam, HiSET, and TASC. The checklist uses a question format. Some of the more basic items are answered in the preceding text in this section while other need-to-know information, especially at the local level, may be attained by following the hyperlinks noted in this Guide or by contacting your local HSE experts (e.g., adult education providers). The checklist is separated by two levels of workforce system staff – state and local. Many of the checklist items are similar, but the scope of information may vary between the state (broader knowledge) and the local (more specific information) level.

Need-To-Know Checklist for the GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***Why is HSE important from an economic perspective – to the state, to the nation, and to the individual?***

Rationale: An understanding of the economic benefits of HSE clarifies the value of HSE to an individual as well as to a community, state and nation.

- ✓ ***What are the demographics for your state with regard to high school diploma/equivalency attainment? How do these compare to the nation? How does HSE data differ by subgroup (e.g., minority populations, incarcerated, age levels)?***

Rationale: Understanding these demographics reveals needs or gaps in HSE services.

- ✓ **What are the three most popular options for HSE attainment and what options are available in the U.S. and in your state?**

Rationale: States vary in HSE options – see state-by-state HSE listing in Section E.

- ✓ **What do neighboring states use for HSE? Does your state recognize/accept those HSE types?**

Rationale: Understanding neighboring state HSE options is helpful when planning for or providing HSE services to clients in your state.

- ✓ **How accepted (by employers and postsecondary institutions) are HSE credentials in your state?**

Rationale: Understanding the level of acceptability or recognition by employers and postsecondary institutions in your state is helpful to determine the level of HSE promotion and services by workforce service providers.

- ✓ **Does the test align with the high school standards used by our state?**

Rationale: States differ in the degree of alignment between HSE tests and K-12 adopted standards. Knowing your state’s degree of alignment is helpful when promoting HSE.

What to know about each test in your state:

- ✓ **Who (agency) administers the test(s) at the state level and who provides the HSE credential?**

Rationale: States differ as to which state agency is responsible for HSE issuance. Understanding this for your state is important for HSE information access and for partnership or collaboration purposes.

- ✓ **How is the test administered? Who manages the testing center process?**

Rationale: Understanding the testing process is helpful for referring clients to HSE testing centers and providing information to clients about testing expectations.

- ✓ **What content area subtests are included?**

Rationale: Understanding the HSE subtest array is helpful to provide general information to clients about what to expect or what to prepare for as they consider attempting an HSE exam.

✓ **What accommodations are available for special needs conditions or populations?**

Rationale: Understanding the accommodations types and accommodations request processes is helpful to assist and inform special needs clients. Also see Section F in this Guide.

✓ **How do students in our state perform (i.e., passing rates) on the test?**

Rationale: Understanding state HSE performance levels reveals needs and gaps in the HSE process.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

✓ **Why is HSE important from an economic perspective – to the state, to the local area, and to the individual?**

Rationale: An understanding of the economic benefits of HSE clarifies the value of HSE to an individual as well as to a community, state and nation.

✓ **What are the demographics for your state and your local geographic area with regard to high school diploma/equivalency attainment? How does your area compare with the state? How does HSE data differ by subgroup (e.g., minority populations, incarcerated, age levels in your local area)?**

Rationale: Understanding these demographics reveals needs or gaps in HSE services.

✓ **What HSE test options are available to your clients?**

Rationale: States vary in HSE options – see state-by-state HSE listing in Section E. Workforce staff need to know what is valued in the state/region/area.

✓ **Where is HSE preparation provided in your area and where is testing conducted? Are there any access issues with regard to preparation or testing?**

Rationale: Knowing the location of HSE testing centers and the access logistics is important for client general information and referral purposes.

✓ **How accepted (by employers and postsecondary institutions) are HSE credentials in your local area?**

Rationale: Understanding the level of acceptability or recognition of specific HSE tests by employers and postsecondary institutions in your state is helpful to determine the level of HSE promotion and services by workforce service providers.

✓ **Does the test align with the high school standards used by the high schools in your area?**

Rationale: States differ in the degree of alignment between HSE tests and K-12 adopted standards. Knowing whether or not the HSE exam aligns with local high school standards and curricula is helpful for understanding any differences between the regular high school diploma and the HSE credential used in your state.

What to know about each test used in your state:

✓ ***Who (agency) administers the test(s) at the state and at the local level and who provides the HSE credential?***

Rationale: Understanding this for your state is important for HSE information access and for partnership or collaboration purposes.

✓ ***How is the test given? Who manages the testing center process?***

Rationale: Understanding the testing process is helpful for referring clients to HSE testing centers and providing information to clients about testing expectations.

✓ ***What content area subtests are included?***

Rationale: Understanding the HSE subtest array is helpful to provide general information to clients about what to expect or what to prepare for as they consider attempting an HSE exam.

✓ ***What accommodations are available for special needs conditions or populations?***

Rationale: Understanding the accommodations types and accommodations request processes is helpful to assist and inform special needs clients. Also see Section F in this Guide.

✓ ***What is the test cost to the student and how does the cost of the test impact students in general?***

Rationale: Understanding the cost of the test to students and the impact of the test cost to students in general provides helpful information relating to workforce program funding issues where HSE is a component.

✓ ***How do business and employers view the credibility of the test(s) used in this state?***

Rationale: Understanding how the selected test is viewed by the business community and employers in your state is critically important to serving workforce system clients that are seeking HSE.

✓ ***How long does it take on average to prepare and complete (pass all subtests) the HSE test?***

Rationale: Understanding the typical HSE timeframe is helpful for client advising and HSE planning.

✓ ***How is the test scored and what are the minimums for passing?***

Rationale: Understanding the scoring process and minimum passing scores is helpful for interpreting client HSE results and assisting them with further educational plans.

✓ ***How long does it take on average to prepare and complete (pass all subtests) the HSE test?***

Rationale: Understanding the typical HSE timeframe is helpful for client advising and HSE planning.

✓ ***If there are multiple HSE options in our area, how do we determine which option to recommend to a client?***

Rationale: Learning about the options available (through the HSE administering agency) and pros and cons regarding each option, will be helpful in advising clients about selecting their best HSE option. For workforce system staff that wish to advise clients as to their “best” HSE option, it is recommended that the workforce system staff seek information and advice from their adult education HSE professional within their geographic area.

The answers to many frequently asked HSE questions are found on the following test publisher

FAQ Sites: GED® [FAQ](#) HiSET [FAQ](#) TASC [FAQ](#)

C. REQUESTING AND INTERPRETING SCORES ON THE GED® TEST, HISET, AND TASC

Test scores are established by the test developer using psychometric processes and norming techniques. In order to establish high school equivalency minimum passing scores on each subtest, the test developers administer tests to high school seniors and set the “cut score,” or minimum passing score, at a point at which approximately 40 to 45 percent of the norming group would not pass. For example, if the cut score is set at the 45th percentile on the norming group, it means that in order to pass the HSE subtest an examinee would have scored at or better than 45 percent of the representative high school students in the norming group. Attaining a score at or higher than the minimum cut score is interpreted by the test developers to be “high school equivalent.”

The following table identifies each subtest of the three popular HSE tests and identifies the publisher’s recommended minimum score necessary for passing each subtest. Although most do not, individual states do have the flexibility to set higher passing scores. The GED® 2001-2013 is included in this table since many examinees have taken this earlier version of the GED® test. The HiSET and the GED® test both feature a second minimum score that is higher than the minimum passing score for high school equivalency (coded in **red** below). It represents a score above which an examinee is considered college and career ready. For example, if an examinee scores 15 or above on the HiSET math test, they are not only considered high school equivalent in math, they are considered ready for college math.

High School Equivalency Test	Language Arts Reading	Language Arts Writing/ Reasoning through Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies	Minimum Subtest Score and (College and Career Readiness (CCR) Subtest Minimum Score)	Minimum Total Battery Score Needed To Pass and (CCR Score)	Maximum Subtest Score Possible
HISET	X	X	X	X	X	8 (15)	45 (75)	20
GED® 2001-2013	X	X	X	X	X	410 (500)	2250 (2500)	800
GED® 2014		X	X	X	X	150 (170)	600 (680)	200
TASC	X	X	X	X	X	500	2500 (na)	800

Additional score information on the GED® 2014 test – The new GED® 2014 test forms do not specify numbers of test questions. They are based on raw score points instead, since items are no longer worth just one point each. The final raw score point totals are as follows:

- Reasoning Through Language Arts – 65 raw score points
- Mathematical Reasoning – 49 raw score points
- Science – 40 raw score points
- Social Studies – 44 raw score points

Scores from the 2014 GED® test are transformed to a common scaled score metric, to make the scores easier to use and interpret across the content areas. The 2014 scale runs from 100 to 200, with 150 scaled score points as the Passing Standard for high school equivalency and 170 scaled score points as the GED® Score with Honors, reflective of readiness for career and college.

Additional score information on the TASC – The passing score is 500 for each TASC test subject area with the additional requirement to score at least two out of eight on the Writing prompt to pass Writing. Students pass the TASC test overall when they have passed each of the five subject area tests.

Although the TASC considers its established minimum score an indicator of college and career readiness, the developers have announced that over the next three years, TASC will offer increased coverage of college and career readiness standards by using additional item types, including constructed-response items and technology-enhanced items. Automated essay scoring will be introduced in 2016. The purpose of this transition is to allow educators to gradually adjust their teaching methods as they align with college and career readiness standards.

Additional score information for the HiSET – The HiSET offers examinees a Comprehensive Score Report that contains the following information:

- Examinee contact information (name) and ID number
- Report and test date(s)
- Whether or not examinees have taken all five HiSET subtests and, if so, whether the examinee has met the three HiSET passing criteria:
 - Scored at least eight out of 20 on each subtest
 - Scored at least two out of six on the essay
 - Achieved a total scaled score on all five HiSET subtests of at least 45 out of 100
- A cumulative record of the examinees highest scaled score for each subtest

Requesting Test Scores for the GED® Test, TASC, and HiSET – Examinees receive their test scores through electronic or regular mail processes shortly after taking a test. This time varies by test publisher, but typically occurs within a few business days. Examinees may request duplicate copies of their test scores or transcripts through the website of the respective test publisher or through the state agency that serves as the administrative agent of the test. Examinees may request transcripts or they may request (from the state agent only) duplicate copies of the HSE diploma. However, each state establishes policies as to the process for the request and for any fees for the service.

[The GED® Testing Service website for transcript requests](#) includes links to individual state administrative agencies that handle transcript or diploma requests. However, the GED® testing service has a process called the [Parchment Exchange](#) for third parties to request GED® transcripts on behalf of individuals. The third party must have proof of consent from the examinee.

Both the [HiSET score explanation website](#) and the [TASC score explanation website](#) asks individuals to contact the state administering agency for processes for receiving transcripts and diplomas and points out that each state that offers their test has established its own transcript and diploma requesting policies and fees. Third party requests for HiSET or TASC transcripts are also handled directly through the administering state agency. See Section E below for website links to each state administering agency for the HiSET and the TASC.

Workforce System Implications for Requesting and Interpreting HSE Test Scores

Workforce system clients who have attained HSE will have test scores in their educational background records. It would be beneficial for workforce system personnel to be able to interpret HSE scores to gain an understanding of the level of performance and the content areas of strengths and weaknesses. A thorough understanding of the client's educational record would assist service delivery efficiency and outcomes. In addition, a basic understanding of HSE scoring could be a part of professional development for workforce system personnel. Workforce system personnel who wish to access or to be able to view client HSE transcripts are advised to contact the state agency that administers the HSE exam to learn about that state's unique process and policies regarding access to HSE scores.

Need-To-Know Checklist for Interpreting HSE Test Scores

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***What is a passing score on the HSE test(s) used in this state?***
- ✓ ***What is a “good” score, or top score on the HSE test(s) used in this state?***
- ✓ ***In this state, are actual HSE scores important to our major employers and/or to our colleges?***

Rationale: Knowing basic information about HSE scores is important for a general understanding of the specific HSE test(s) used in your state. Additionally, determining if actual scores matter to major employers or colleges reveals the degree to which high scores are important to value and promote for clients.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***What is a passing score and a “good” score on the HSE test(s) used in this state?***
- ✓ ***Are actual HSE scores important to the major employers or colleges in my local area?***
- ✓ ***How will an understanding of HSE test scores (e.g., strengths and weaknesses) help me assist a client with referrals to further education or employment?***

Rationale: Knowing basic information about HSE scores is important for a general understanding of the HSE test(s) used in your state, regional and local areas. Determining if actual scores matter to major employers or colleges reveals the degree to which high scores on HSE tests are important to value and promote for clients. Also, understanding the range of scores possible would be helpful to assist clients with discussions or referrals to further education or employment.

D. OTHER HSE OPTIONS – MULTI-STATE, SINGLE STATE, AND ONLINE

In addition to the three major HSE exams (GED® test, HiSET, and TASC) being used in all 50 states, a handful of states have endorsed other alternative HSE processes or exams. These other options are noted below along with a brief description of the student progress reporting system, the National Reporting System (NRS), that is required for all adult education programs funded through AEFLA of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Also, the information in this section concerning online high school credential programs may be helpful to workforce system personnel who have questions about the availability or credibility of such diplomas.

D1. Multi-State Options

D1a. The National External Diploma Program

Main web link: <http://www.casas.org/nedp>

The National External Diploma Program (NEDP) is an applied performance assessment system that assesses the high school level skills of adults and out-of-school youth. The NEDP evaluates the reading, writing, math, and workforce readiness skills of participants in life and work contexts. Administered by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), it is currently available in 76 agencies located in six states (CT, MD, NY, RI, VA, WA) and the District of Columbia. In addition to the basic skills test components, the NEDP includes self-assessments in career interests and skills required for transition to postsecondary education and employment. HSE diplomas may be awarded by the state or by an individual school district.

D1b. The National Migrant Education High School Equivalency Program

Main web link: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/hep/index.html>

The Migrant Education High School Equivalency Program (HEP) helps migratory and seasonal farm workers (or children of such workers) who are 16 years of age or older and not currently enrolled in school to obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma and, subsequently, to gain employment or begin postsecondary education or training. The program serves more than 7,000 students annually. HEP participants receive developmental instruction and counseling services intended to prepare them to complete a GED® test or other HSE test as well as assisting students to enroll in postsecondary education. The major support services offered through HEP are counseling, job placement, health care, financial aid stipends, housing for residential students, and cultural and academic programs.

D2. State or Locally Developed HSE Options

There are a number of HSE options that are in limited use nationally or at the state level. States such as CA, VT, HA, and WI have developed HSE options for at risk populations and dropouts that reflect their state content standards. Also, some independent school districts offer competency-based HSE options for students in dropout prevention programs or for recent dropouts. These local district HSE options are typically endorsed by the district board of education. They are available only to individuals in that district. Finally, there are a number of nationally

advertised online HSE options available commercially or at no charge to the client. It is important to note that some of the online commercial options may be either fraudulent and/or not recognized by postsecondary institutions or employers.

Below are resource links to a variety of these national, state, and local options.

D2a. The California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE)

Main web link: <http://www.chspe.net/>

The CHSPE is a test established in state law for students who need to verify high school level skills. Those who pass the test receive a Certificate of Proficiency from the State Board of Education, which is equal by law to a California high school diploma. People who are 16 years of age or older may take the test, while younger people who meet other criteria may also be able to take the test. This test is given three times each year at many sites in California. The test covers three subjects: reading, writing, and math. There is a fee to take the test. Although federal agencies are not bound by state laws, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management has ruled that the Certificate of Proficiency shall be accepted in applications for federal civilian employment. The U.S. Department of Education and Federal Student Aid recognizes the CHSPE as the equivalent of a high school diploma in applications for federal financial aid. All persons and institutions subject to California law that require a high school diploma for any purpose must accept the certificate as satisfying the requirement.

D2b. Vermont Adult Diploma Program

Main web link: <http://education.vermont.gov/adult-education/transcripts>

The Vermont Adult Diploma Program (ADP) is designed specifically for adults with experience in meeting family and work responsibilities. ADP works best with adults age 20 or older who have been out-of-school for several years. Individuals 18-19 years of age can enroll with a placement form from the ADP assessor in their local center. Students can work at their own pace and at a location convenient to them, tailor assignments to fit with their own experiences and needs, and receive individualized feedback and support from the ADP assessor. The process requires students to complete performance-based projects to demonstrate performance standards that align with the EFF Content Standards and the Vermont Framework of Standards.

D2c. Hawaii Competency-Based Community School Diploma (HCBCSD)

Main web link: <http://wahcs.leilehua.k12.hi.us/geninfo/geninfo/cbprogram.html>

The Competency-Based High School Diploma Program, approved by the Hawaii Board of Education, provides adults who do not have a high school diploma with a valid option to obtain a Hawaii Community School Diploma through the community schools for adults. The purpose of the CBCSDP is to enable adult learners to become functionally literate adults, productive and contributing citizens/community members, effective family members, and productive workers. The curriculum is aligned to the adult learner standards: [Equipped for the Future](#), and the [CASAS](#) Life and Work competencies. The contextual activities are designed to help adults become functionally

competent individuals within the following units: Community Resources, Government and Law, Consumer Economics, Health, and Occupational Knowledge.

D2d. Wisconsin High School Equivalency Diploma

Main web link: <http://ged-hsed.dpi.wi.gov/>

Wisconsin provides five options to adults over 18 who do not have a high school diploma. These options include: 1) Pass the GED® tests; complete the health, citizenship, and employability skills and career awareness counseling requirements; 2) Document 22 high school or college credits; 3) Finish 24 semester credits or 32 quarter credits at a university or technical college, including instruction in any area of study they did not cover in high school; 4) Complete a foreign degree or diploma program; and 5) Complete a competency program offered by a technical college or community-based group that has been approved by the state superintendent of public instruction as a high school completion program.

D2e. Online HSE programs

An internet search for online high school diploma options will reveal many options, most of which are fee-based. However, a few online options are offered by public institutions at little or no cost to the client. Determining the legitimacy of an online HSE program is necessary to ensure the high school diploma will be accepted by postsecondary institutions and/or employers. One important tool for determining authenticity is checking a program's accreditation from a [reputable school accreditation agency](#). A second verification method is to research the program through the national or local [Better Business Bureau](#).

Two recent articles describing the process for verifying the legitimacy of online HSE programs may be reviewed at: <http://www.scambook.com/blog/2012/08/5-myths-about-getting-your-online-ged-or-high-school-diploma/> and <http://blog.ecollegefinder.org/2013/05/09/online-high-school-diploma-or-ged-legitimate/>.

Workforce System Implications for Other HSE Options

Workforce system personnel who serve clients without high school diplomas should be familiar with all state-endorsed alternative HSE programs available in their state. The matrix of state HSE options located in Section E of this Guide, identifies which states are using options in addition to the GED® test, HiSET, and TASC. The summary information in this section could be adapted for use in professional development for workforce system staff and stakeholders. Additionally, both state and local level workforce system personnel and stakeholders should become familiar with the student and program performance measures within that system.

Need-To-Know Checklist for Other HSE Options

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders:

- ✓ ***What alternative HSE options (other than GED®, TASC, or HiSET) are in use in your state?***

Rationale: Knowing the complete array of available HSE options would be helpful in planning and implementing HSE services or providing client guidance.

- ✓ ***How accepted (by employers and postsecondary institutions) are these other HSE credentials in your state?***

Rationale: Understanding the level of acceptability or recognition of specific HSE tests by employers and postsecondary institutions in your state is helpful to determine the level of HSE promotion and services by workforce service providers.

- ✓ ***What is the relationship between these other options and college and career readiness standards?***

Rationale: Knowing the degree to which these other HSE options align with the state's college and career readiness K-12 or adult education standards is helpful for determining whether or not to promote those options.

- ✓ ***Are any credible online high school diploma options available in your state?***

Rationale: Understanding which online high school diploma options are credible is helpful to promote the credible options and advise against and recognize fraudulent HSE options.

- ✓ ***What outcomes are measured under the adult education National Reporting System (NRS)? How is HSE reported under that system?***

Rationale: Understanding how HSE is measured and reported within WIOA and specifically within the adult education system is helpful for program collaboration purposes.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders:

- ✓ ***What alternative HSE options (other than GED®, HiSET, or TASC) are in use in your state and in local area?***

Rationale: Knowing the complete array of available HSE options would be helpful in planning and implementing HSE services and providing client guidance.

- ✓ ***How accepted (by employers and postsecondary institutions) are these other HSE credentials in your area?***

Rationale: Understanding the level of acceptability or recognition of specific HSE tests by employers and postsecondary institutions in your local area is helpful to determine the level of HSE promotion and services by workforce service providers.

✓ ***What is the relationship between these other options and college and career readiness standards?***

Rationale: Knowing the degree to which these other HSE options align with the state's college and career readiness K-12 or adult education standards is helpful for determining whether or not to promote those options in your local area.

✓ ***Are any credible online high school diploma options available for my clients?***

Rationale: Understanding which online high school diploma options are credible is helpful to promote the credible options and advise against and recognize fraudulent HSE options.

✓ ***Who (agency) administers these test(s) at the local level and who provides the HSE credential?***

Rationale: Knowing which organizations administer these tests and who provides the credential is helpful in the client referral process.

✓ ***What content area subtests are included?***

Rationale: Understanding the content covered by these HSE options is important to client guidance.

✓ ***What accommodations are available for special needs conditions or populations?***

Rationale: Understanding the accommodations types and accommodations request processes is helpful to assist and inform special needs clients. Also see Section F in this Guide.

✓ ***How do individuals in your local area perform (e.g., passing rates) on these HSE options and how does that compare to the state or national performance data?***

Rationale: Understanding the performance comparisons is helpful to judge the value of the HSE options for your clients.

✓ ***What outcomes are measured under the adult education National Reporting System (NRS)? How is HSE reported under that system?***

Rationale: Understanding how HSE is measured and reported within WIOA and specifically within the adult education system is helpful for program collaboration purposes.

E. MATRIX OF HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY STATE WEBSITES

The following listing provides a web link to each state’s HSE options. For example, California offers four different HSE options while Arkansas only offers the GED® test. Many state HSE websites (e.g., New York) provide considerable detail about the test, the testing process, professional development opportunities, and other relevant information, while other state websites provide basic summary information and encourage the user to contact local adult education providers or state-authorized testing centers. An OTHER category has been included to highlight HSE options that are either unique to the state (not available nation-wide) or offered only within specific geographic locations within a state. The latter scenario pertains to the six states (and Washington DC) that offer the National External Diploma Program (NEDP). As an option to high school equivalency exams, it should be noted that many states allow local school districts or state-supported adult education centers to offer high school credit make-up classes for out-of-school youth and adults who have only a small number of credits to pass in order to receive their regular K-12 high school diploma from a cooperating school district.

The chart below is a snapshot of high school equivalency options as of **January 1, 2015**. Some states including NC, TX, HA, VA, and WY (and possibly others) have initiated formal processes which could lead to changes in the HSE options their state supports. The reader is encouraged to contact their state adult education agency for the most up-to-date information. Please note that the test names for each state are hyperlinked to that state’s website for HSE.

STATE	GED®	HiSET	TASC	OTHER
ALABAMA	GED®			
ALASKA	GED®			
ARIZONA	GED®			
ARKANSAS	GED®			
CALIFORNIA	GED®	HiSET	TASC	CHSPE
COLORADO	GED®			
CONNECTICUT	GED®			CT-NEDP
DELAWARE	GED®			
FLORIDA	GED®			
GEORGIA	GED®			
HAWAII	GED®			HCBCSD
IDAHO	GED®			
ILLINOIS	GED®			

STATE	GED®	HiSET	TASC	OTHER
INDIANA			TASC	
IOWA		HiSET		
KANSAS	GED®			
KENTUCKY	GED®			
LOUISIANA		HiSET		
MAINE		HiSET		
MARYLAND	GED®			MD-NEDP
MASSACHUSETTS		HiSET		
MICHIGAN	GED®			
MINNESOTA	GED®			
MISSISSIPPI	GED®			
MISSOURI		HiSET		
MONTANA		HiSET		
NEBRASKA	GED®			
NEVADA	GED®	HiSET	TASC	
NEW HAMPSHIRE		HiSET		
NEW JERSEY	GED®	HiSET	TASC	
NEW MEXICO	GED®			
NEW YORK			TASC	NY-NEDP
NORTH CAROLINA	GED®			
NORTH DAKOTA	GED®			
OHIO	GED®			
OKLAHOMA	GED®			
OREGON	GED®			
PENNSYLVANIA	GED®			
RHODE ISLAND	GED®			RI-NEDP

STATE	GED®	HiSET	TASC	OTHER
SOUTH CAROLINA	GED®			
SOUTH DAKOTA	GED®			
TENNESSEE	GED®	HiSET		
TEXAS	GED®			
UTAH	GED®			
VERMONT	GED®			VT-ADP
VIRGINIA	GED®			VA-NEDP
WASHINGTON	GED®			WA-NEDP
WEST VIRGINIA			TASC	
WISCONSIN	GED®			WI-HSED
WYOMING	GED®	HiSET	TASC	
WASHINGTON DC	GED®			DC-NEDP

Workforce System Implications for the HSE Matrix

The matrix included above provides a snapshot of state-endorsed HSE options being used in each state. The tests are hyperlinked directly to the state website that manages the specific test. Workforce system personnel and stakeholders at all levels could use this tool as a quick reference to their state's HSE processes. In addition, if workforce system staff serve clients who reside, work, or attend school in bordering states, the matrix would be helpful to understand HSE processes in the neighboring states.

Need-To-Know Checklist for the HSE Matrix

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

✓ **What HSE options are available in your state and bordering states?**

Rationale: Understanding the HSE options that are available in your state is important for establishing policy for or providing guidance to clients regarding their HSE options, content, and test center logistics. Understanding HSE options available in neighboring states supports the concept of regional economies (common industry sectors and employment that cross state borders) as promoted under WIOA. In places where there is more than one testing option workforce staff

would benefit from understanding the nuances and reputation of the different tests to help their clients make informed decisions about which test to pursue.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

✓ ***What HSE options are available in your state and bordering states?***

Rationale: Same as above.

F. ACCOMMODATIONS ON THE GED® TEST, HISET, AND TASC

Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities – In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended in 2008, the three most widely used HSE examinations—GED® test, HiSET, and TASC—provide test taking accommodations for individuals with disabilities. These accommodations typically involve test taking modifications, accessible test formats, and allowable resources. As noted below, the processes for requesting and obtaining permission for accommodations vary with each test provider. In addition, testing accommodations for incarcerated individuals are often necessary due to their lack of Internet or computer access and are described below.

Accommodations for Spanish Speaking Individuals – All three HSE tests—GED® exam, HiSET, and TASC—offer a Spanish language version of their test. It should be noted that individual states have varying policies and guidelines regarding their support and value of a high school equivalency earned in Spanish. For example, some states (e.g., Minnesota) allow the Spanish GED® test to be offered to examinees, but they do not allow their funded adult education providers to provide Spanish GED® instructional or preparatory services.

F1. GED® Accommodations

For Persons with Disabilities

Main web link: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/accommodations-for-disability>

The GED® Testing Service provides accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodations. GED® test accommodations may include things such as a separate testing room, extra testing time, or extra breaks. Accommodations do not include testing on a paper-pencil format.

Test accommodations are individualized and considered on a case-by-case basis. Students requesting an accommodation must establish a [registration account](#) with the GED® Testing Service, complete a request form, and provide [medical documentation](#) to support their request. Accommodation request forms are available for a specific set of disabilities and reasons that include:

[“Intellectual Disabilities” \(ID\)](#)

[“Learning and Other Cognitive Disabilities” \(LCD\)](#)

[“Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder” \(ADHD\)](#)

[“Psychological and Psychiatric Disorders” \(EPP\)](#)

[“Physical Disorders and Chronic Health Conditions” \(PCH\)](#)

[“Request for Testing Accommodations Appeal”](#)

[“Request for Extension”](#)

[“Transfer from PBT to CBT Request”](#)

The GED® Testing Service recommends that additional supporting documentation is included with the request. Examples include:

- School records that show participation in special education services
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) description
- Transcripts from middle school or high school
- Other records that show a history of academic difficulties due to a disability

For English Language Learners

The GED® test is available in Spanish and French. Scores from the Spanish-language and French-language versions of the GED® tests may be combined with scores from any English-language version of the GED® test. However, individual states have the option to decide whether to combine scores. Also, the GED® Testing Service has established a website that allows students to sign up, schedule, and check their scores in English or Spanish using [MyGED™](#) at GED.com.

F2. HiSET Accommodations

For Persons with Disabilities

Main web link: <http://hiset.ets.org/take/disabilities/>

Accommodations are available for test takers with diagnosed disabilities that include, but are not limited to:

- Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- Psychological or psychiatric disorders
- Learning and other cognitive disabilities
- Physical disorders/chronic health disabilities
- Intellectual disabilities
- Hearing and visual impairment

Many different types of accommodations are available for both the HiSET computer-based test and the HiSET paper-pencil test. Examples of accommodations include extended time, separate testing room, recorded audio, large print, screen magnification, talking calculator, scribe or keyboard entry aide, additional break time, and sign language interpreters.

Test takers requesting any accommodations must use the [HiSET Testing Accommodations Request Form](#) and [register](#) by mail through ETS Disability Services and have their accommodations approved before their test can be scheduled. Test takers requesting accommodations cannot schedule an appointment through their HiSET account. They must contact ETS Disability Services to schedule an appointment. HiSET has established specific criteria for documenting disabilities that require test accommodations. Those policies and instructions are available on a separate HiSET [policy webpage](#).

For English Language Learners

The HiSET is available in Spanish. Also, general information about the HiSET is available on the [HiSET Bulletin](#) webpage.

F3. TASC Accommodations

Main web link: <http://www.tasctest.com/special-needs-accommodations.html>

Accommodations and other test taking supports are available for TASC test takers. The following three supports or accommodations are available:

Special Testing Accommodations: Special testing accommodations, such as extra time, are intended to account for the effects of a person's disability. Special accommodations are only approved for examinees with appropriate documentation diagnosing their disability or disorder and supporting the need for specified accommodations. The examinee must submit a completed TASC Test Special Testing [Accommodations Request Form](#) to CTB/McGraw-Hill in advance of the scheduled test date.

Allowable Resources: Tools, procedures, and materials that an examinee may use to support test taking include items such as earplugs, magnifying glasses, or seat cushions. No formal approval is required for the use of allowable resources. In some cases a notification form must be filled out and provided to the testing center prior to testing so that the testing center can prepare to support the request.

Alternate Formats: TASC test is available in English and Spanish in alternate formats including Braille and large print editions. To receive alternate formats, the examinee must provide prior notification to the testing center.

Workforce System Implications for GED® Test, HiSET, and TASC Accommodations

Each of the three most popular HSE exams includes processes for accommodating clients as required by law. All workforce system personnel should be familiar with the availability of accommodations for HSE in order to provide clients with opportunities for success and be advocates for their clients' needs. Understanding the accommodations available through the GED® test, HiSET, and TASC, could be attained through professional development opportunities that focus on HSE accommodations and typically available through the state adult education agency. Two workforce related resources for information and/or professional development on accommodations are the [Jobs Accommodation Network](#), sponsored by USDOL, and the [National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability](#).

Need-To-Know Checklist for GED®, HiSET, and TASC Accommodations

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***What accommodations are available for the HSE test(s) used in your state?***
- ✓ ***Are the HSE tests in your state available in languages other than English?***
- ✓ ***Under what circumstances would clients benefit from achieving HSE in a language other than English?***

Rationale: Understanding the available accommodations for all test takers including individuals with disabilities and for individuals who speak languages other than English is helpful for directing client guidance and referral services. Also, it would be helpful to know how successful clients are that receive HSE accommodations.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***What accommodations are available for the HSE test(s) used in your state and area?***
- ✓ ***Are the HSE tests in your local area available in languages other than English?***
- ✓ ***What are the pros and cons of providing an HSE option in a language other than English?***
- ✓ ***What levels of success do clients with disabilities have on the HSE tests used in your area?***

Rationale: Same as above.

G. HSE TESTING IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS

Studies have shown that about two-thirds of prison inmates across the nation do not have high school diplomas upon entry into a correctional institution. Most state-operated prisons in the U.S. offer high school equivalency instruction for inmates and HSE testing occurs on site.

The benefits of obtaining an HSE prior to release have been documented in various recidivism studies. In a 2003 study, [The Effect of Earning a GED® on Recidivism Rates](#), inmates who earned their GED® diploma while incarcerated returned to custody within three years at a significantly lower rate than offenders who did not earn a GED® diploma while incarcerated. The relationship between GED® attainment and return-to-custody is particularly strong among offenders who were under age 21 at release.

For states that use the GED® test for high school equivalency, most of their correctional institutions are now offering the GED® test on computers. Within some institutions, however, a waiver has been granted through the GED® Testing Service to continue to use the 2002 paper-pencil GED® test while those institutions upgrade their computer infrastructure. Although these waivers are being phased out, correctional institutions may continue to negotiate with the GED® Testing Service for permission to use the 2002 GED® test.

Computers are required in order to take the GED® test in correctional settings, but access to the Internet is not required. The actual GED® test and [practice test](#) are downloadable to computers and laptops in correctional settings. Also, there is an offline version of the GED® test tutorial that was designed for use in these circumstances. More specific information about the use of the GED® exam in corrections and links to related GED® resources are available online at: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/2014corrections>

The TASC and the HiSET websites do not provide specific information about the use of their tests at correctional settings. However, both tests may be used at state-approved testing centers which typically include jails and prisons. All states that are using the TASC or the HiSET are currently offering the test at their correctional facilities that have been state-approved for test administration.

Workforce System Implications for HSE in Correctional Settings

Research shows that a large percentage of individuals entering jails and prisons do not have an HSE credential and that if obtained while incarcerated, these individuals have a greater likelihood of success once released. The workforce system routinely serves clients upon release from incarceration and often partners with prisons and jails on reentry programming. It would be important for workforce system personnel to understand the HSE options provided in correctional settings and to advocate for HSE programming in these settings.

Need-To-Know Checklist for HSE in Correctional Settings

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

✓ ***What HSE test(s) and preparation opportunities exist in your states' correctional institutions?***

Rationale: States vary in the ways in which HSE exams are administered within correctional settings. States also vary in the way they are served through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

✓ ***How are these tests delivered in these settings?***

Rationale: Understanding how your state's prison system or local county/city jails administer HSE exams and which HSE options they offer is helpful for workforce system staff that collaborate or partner with correctional systems.

✓ ***Are there opportunities to partner with state correctional institutions authorities on HSE programming?***

Rationale: Most state correctional institutions operate HSE programs and would benefit from collaborations and discussions with workforce system staff regarding reentry issues and opportunities for inmates.

✓ ***What are the benefits of obtaining HSE while incarcerated?***

Rationale: Knowing the benefits of obtaining HSE while incarcerated is important when determining the scope of collaborative services with correctional partners.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

✓ ***What HSE test(s) and preparation opportunities exist in the correctional institutions in your local area?***

Rationale: States vary in the ways in which HSE exams are administered within correctional settings. States also vary in the way they are served through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

✓ ***How are these tests delivered in these settings?***

Rationale: Understanding how your state's prison system or local county/city jails administer HSE exams and which HSE options they offer is helpful for workforce system staff that collaborate or partner with correctional systems.

✓ ***Are there opportunities to partner with local correctional institutions on HSE programming?***

Rationale: Most state correctional institutions operate HSE programs and would benefit from collaborations and discussions with workforce system staff regarding reentry issues and opportunities for inmates.

✓ ***What are the benefits of obtaining HSE while incarcerated?***

Rationale: Knowing the benefits of obtaining HSE while incarcerated is important when determining the scope of collaborative services with correctional partners.

H. ADULT LEARNING

As explained in *Adult Learning Theory and Principles*, andragogy (adult learning) is a theory that holds a set of assumptions about **how adults learn**. Andragogy emphasizes the value of the process of learning. It uses approaches to learning that are problem-based and collaborative rather than didactic. It also emphasizes more equality between the teacher and learner. The following resources are links to academic materials that explain theories of adult learning and practical applications of these theories in educational and workplace settings.

Understanding the concepts of andragogy would be valuable for individuals within the workforce system and other stakeholders who direct or deliver educational experiences, including GED® and high school equivalency instruction.

H1. Andragogy Theory and Principles

Main web link: <https://sites.google.com/a/nau.edu/educationallearningtheories/adult-learning-theory-andragogy-by-barbara-miroballi>

This resource highlights the work of [Malcom Knowles](#), considered the father of andragogy. It identifies five characteristics of adult learners: self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn. Four principles of adult learning instruction are also discussed:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.

The resource features a short video that discusses the concepts above and a graphic depiction of the characteristics of adult learners is provided.

H2. Toolkit for Adult Learning Theory and Principles

Main web link: <http://www.qotfc.edu.au/resource/?page=65375>

This resource was designed as a toolkit for occupational therapists who are responsible for directing the education of adults of all ages. It draws upon the work of Malcolm Knowles and utilizes six principles of adult learning:

1. Adults are internally motivated and self-directed
2. Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences
3. Adults are goal oriented
4. Adults are relevancy oriented
5. Adults are practical
6. Adult learners like to be respected

For each principle, suggestions are provided as to how the educator or instructor may use the principle to develop a more effective learning environment and outcome.

H3. Adult Learning Styles

Main web link: <http://adulthood.about.com/od/applyingwhatyoulearn/tp/Learning-Styles.htm>

This resource provides information and inventories about several different concepts and theories regarding the learning styles of adults. It includes learning style theories such as multiple intelligences, peak learning times, learning modes (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), and workplace learning styles. The website includes multiple resource links to learning style inventories as well as resources for adult students returning to school.

H4. Workplace Training and Education

Main web link: <http://tribehr.com/blog/workplace-training-and-education-how-adults-learn>

This resource is a 2014 blog post prepared by [Workplace Tribes HR](#). The article describes key understandings that workforce system personnel or business trainers should know in order to more effectively provide education and training to incumbent workers. The four-part [Kolb learning cycle](#) for adult learners is featured – concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualism, and active experimentation. Also, adult learning styles are discussed and recommendations for business or employer training and education actions are provided.

H5. Adult Learner Motivation

Main web link: <http://elearningindustry.com/17-tips-to-motivate-adult-learners>

This resource describes 17 tips for motivating adult learners. Each tip or suggestion is discussed and a short video on adult motivation is included. Also, other adult learning resources are linked within this resource.

H6. Adult Learning Slide Presentations

Main web link: <http://www.slideshare.net/carterfsmith/how-do-adults-learn>

The [SlideShare](#) website includes over 25 PowerPoint presentations on the topic of how adults learn. These slide presentations may be downloaded and shared.

Workforce System Implications for Adult Learning Theory

Understanding basic concepts of how adults learn is important for workforce system personnel who provide services to adult clients, especially those who may not have a high school diploma and are in need of secondary education basic skills. For example, if clients are being referred to HSE preparation providers, knowing which providers embrace and model best practices with regard to adult learning theory is important for client success. Concepts and skills related to adult learning theory could be an important professional development component for workforce system personnel and stakeholders.

Need-To-Know Checklist for Adult Learning Theory

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***What is “andragogy” and how does adult learning differ from the learning styles and patterns of children?***

Rationale: Understanding that adults learn differently from children is helpful for referring clients to adult-appropriate learning resources including HSE preparation.

- ✓ ***How does or should an understanding of adult learning theory impact workforce system client services in this state?***

Rationale: Workforce system services should provide or refer clients to educational programming that is adult-appropriate.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***What is “andragogy” and how does adult learning differ from the learning styles and patterns of children?***

Rationale: Understanding that adults learn differently from children is helpful for referring clients to adult-appropriate learning resources including HSE preparation.

- ✓ ***How does or should an understanding of adult learning theory impact workforce system client services in my program or local area?***

Rationale: Workforce system services should provide or refer clients to educational programming that is adult-appropriate.

- ✓ ***How can I integrate adult learning theory into my programming?***

Rationale: For workforce system personnel that deliver HSE programming, professional development on the topic of adult learning theory could strengthen the instructional delivery content and process.

I. HSE AND FEDERAL STUDENT AID ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive [federal student aid](#) to attend qualifying postsecondary education or training institutions, an applicant must document that they have attained a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. In April 2014, the USED Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education developed a guidance letter (DCL ID: GEN-14-06) to clarify which high school equivalency tests would qualify as a recognized HSE exam for purposes of federal student aid eligibility. This letter may be viewed on the Internet at: <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1406.html>

In summary, the letter validates the eligibility of individuals who have earned a GED® diploma or any HSE exam that the issuing state has "officially recognized." In addition to the GED® test, the HiSET and TASC are cited as examples of HSE exams that have recently received official state endorsements. Further, the letter provides updated guidance on how applicants for federal student aid should answer the high school completion status question on the federal student aid [application form](#) (Question 26). The letter also provides a link to a [directory of state directors](#) of adult education and suggests that if a person is not sure if a particular HSE exam is officially approved by a state, they should contact the adult education agency located in that state.

Workforce System Implications for HSE and Student Aid

Workforce system personnel often serve clients that are seeking or being referred to postsecondary education or training. Most prospective students need financial assistance to enter and to persist in postsecondary programs and most seek federal student aid as one source. Providing clients with information about how to access student aid and the criteria for eligibility is an important client service. Understanding how HSE is viewed under federal student aid guidelines is one piece of this important information.

Need-To-Know Checklist for HSE and Student Aid

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***How are the HSE tests used in your state viewed under federal student aid eligibility guidelines?***

Rationale: Understanding that state level endorsement of a particular HSE exam is the necessary criteria for meeting federal student aid eligibility.

- ✓ ***What documentation is needed to prove a client's HSE attainment?***

Rationale: Knowing the state-endorsed HSE credential format is necessary to determine credential legitimacy.

- ✓ ***What guidance is available at the national level to verify that the HSE credentials in your state are acceptable for federal student aid?***

Rationale: Being cognizant of the federal [guidance letter](#) regarding student aid HSE is important to verify federal student aid eligibility.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***How are the HSE tests used in this state viewed under federal student aid eligibility guidelines?***

Rationale: Understanding that state level endorsement of a particular HSE exam is the necessary criteria for meeting federal student aid eligibility.

- ✓ ***What documentation is needed to prove a client's HSE attainment?***

Rationale: Knowing the state-endorsed HSE credential format is necessary to determine credential legitimacy.

- ✓ ***What guidance is available at the national level to verify that the HSE credentials in your state are acceptable for federal student aid?***

Rationale: Being cognizant of the federal [guidance letter](#) regarding student aid HSE is important to verify federal student aid eligibility.

J. WIOA REFERENCES TO HSE

In July 2014, Congress reauthorized the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) by replacing it with a new act, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The new act consolidates job training programs that existed under WIA into a single funding stream. It also amends the Wagner-Peyser Act, reauthorizes adult education and literacy programs, and reauthorizes programs under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The various job programs under WIOA are authorized for six years. WIOA includes two references to college and career readiness standards and several references to high school equivalency. The information below summarizes the content of the HSE references.

Main WIOA Law web link

Summary: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d113:HR00803:@@@D&summ2=m&>

Full Text: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c113:6:./temp/~c113l2UFlk>

1. Performance Measures

Under Title I, Sec. 116 – Performance Accountability System, participants obtaining a high school diploma or HSE may be counted as meeting the performance criterion if they have either retained their employment or are enrolled in a postsecondary credential program within one year of exiting the program.

Specifically, Sec. 116 (b)(2)(A)(iii) states: *“For purposes of clause (i)(IV), clause 14, or clause (ii)(III) with respect to clause 15 (i)(IV), program participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent shall be included in the percentage counted as meeting the criterion under such clause only if such participants, in addition to obtaining such diploma or its recognized equivalent, have obtained or retained employment or are in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.”*

2. Use of Funds for Youth Investment Activities

Under Title I, Sec. 129 – Use of Funds for Youth Workforce Investment Activities, funds may be used for eligible youth participants in programs that lead to a high school diploma or HSE.

Specifically, Sec. 129 (c)(1)(C)(i) states: *“Funds allocated to a local area for eligible youth under section 128(b) shall be used to carry out, for eligible youth, programs that provide activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential.”*

Also under Title I, Sec. 129 – Use of Funds for Youth Workforce Investment Activities, funds may be used for eligible youth participants in program components leading to a high school diploma or HSE that feature activities including tutoring, study skills training, academic instruction, and dropout prevention or recovery.

Specifically, Sec. 129 (c)(2)(A) states: *“Funds allocated to a local area for eligible youth under section 128(b) shall be used to carry out, for eligible youth, programs that support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants. The programs described in paragraph (1) shall provide elements consisting of tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.”*

3. Job Corps Definitions

Under Title I, Sub. C – Job Corps, Sec. 142 – Definitions, the definition of the term "graduate" includes a participant who has received a high school diploma or HSE or has completed the requirements of a career and technical education and training program as a result of Job Corps participation.

Specifically, Sec. 142 (5) states: *“The term ‘graduate’ means an individual who has voluntarily applied for, been selected for, and enrolled in the Job Corps program and who, as a result of participation in the Job Corps program, has received a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent, or completed the requirements of a career and technical education and training program that prepares individuals for employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or entrance into postsecondary education or training.”*

4. High-Performing Job Corps Centers

Under Title I, Sec. 147 (b) – High-Performing Job Corps Centers, programs may be considered high-performing if they have met the national goals or targets for the rate of high school diploma or HSE attainment. This criteria, among others established under previous law, is applicable until such time when new WIOA performance measures are in place and outcomes are being reported. The new WIOA outcomes, which include HSE attainment, will be used at that time for determining high-performing Job Corps centers.

Specifically, Sec. 147 (b)(3) TRANSITION states: *If any of the program years described in paragraph (2)(B) precedes the implementation of the establishment of expected levels of performance under section 159(c) and the application of the primary indicators of performance for eligible youth described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii), an entity shall be considered an operator of a high-performing center during that period if the Job Corps center operated by the entity – (A) meets the requirements of paragraph (2)(B) with respect to such preceding program years using the performance of the Job Corps center regarding the national goals or targets established by the Office of the Job Corps under the previous performance accountability system for— (iv) the rate of attainment of secondary school diplomas or their recognized equivalent.”*

5. Job Corps Management Information

Under Title I, Sec. 159 – Management Information, the Secretary of the Department of Labor must collect and report to Congress certain information from Job Corps centers including the number of graduates who received a State recognized equivalent of a secondary school diploma.

Specifically, Sec. 159 (d)(1) states: *“The Secretary shall also collect, and submit in the report described in sub17 section (c)(4), information on the performance of each Job Corps center, and the Job Corps program, regarding—(G) the number of graduates who received a State recognized equivalent of a secondary school diploma.”*

6. YouthBuild Grants

Under Title I, Sec. 171 (c) – YouthBuild Grants, eligible education activities include tutoring, study skills training, and school dropout prevention and recovery activities that are designed to lead to the attainment of a high school diploma or HSE.

Specifically, Sec. 171 (c)(1) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES – *An entity that receives a grant under this subsection shall use the funds made available through the grant to carry out a YouthBuild program, which may include the following activities: (A) Education and workforce investment activities including—(III) secondary education services and activities, including tutoring,*

study skills training, and school dropout prevention and recovery activities, designed to lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including recognized certificates of attendance or similar documents for individuals with disabilities).”

7. YouthBuild Participant Eligibility

Under Title I, Sec. 171 (e)(1) – YouthBuild Eligible Participants, an eligibility exemption exists for individuals who do not meet the income or educational need requirements. That exemption includes individuals who may have attained a high school diploma or HSE but are assessed to be deficient in high school level basic skills. Additionally, the number of exempted individuals must not comprise more than one-quarter of the program participant total.

Specifically, Sec. 171 (e)(1)(B) states: *“EXCEPTION FOR INDIVIDUALS NOT MEETING INCOME OR EDUCATIONAL NEED REQUIREMENTS.—Not more than 25 percent of the participants in such program may be individuals who do not meet the requirements of clause (ii) or (iii) of subparagraph (A), but who—(i) are basic skills deficient, despite attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including recognized certificates of attendance or similar documents for individuals with disabilities).”*

8. Adult Education and Literacy Definitions

Under Title II, Sec. 203 (1) – Adult Education Definitions, the definition of “Adult Education” includes, among other criteria, instruction and services leading to the attainment of a high school diploma or HSE.

Specifically, Sec. 203 (1) states: *“The term ‘adult education’ means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual’s ability to—(A) read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; (B) transition to postsecondary education and training; and (C) obtain employment.”*

Under Title II, Sec. 203 (4) – Definition of Eligible Individuals in Adult Education, the term "eligible individual" includes, among other criteria, an individual who does not have a high school diploma or HSE.

Specifically, Sec. 203 (4)(C) states, *“The term ‘eligible individual’ means an individual—who (i) is basic skills deficient; (ii) does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education.”*

Under Title II, Sec. 203 (6)(B)(i)(I) – Definition of an Adult Education English Language Acquisition Program, the term term ‘English language acquisition program’ means, among other criteria, a program of instruction that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent. This provision allows for English as a Second Language programming to be delivered contextually using high school diploma or HSE content.

Specifically, Sec. 203 (6)(B)(i)(I) states: *The term ‘English language acquisition program’ means a program of instruction—(B) that leads to—(i)(I) attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.”*

Under Title II, Sec. 211 (d)(1) – Adult Education Qualifying Adult, the term "qualifying adult" means, among other criteria, an individual who does not have a high school diploma or HSE.

Specifically, Sec. 211 (d)(1) states: *“QUALIFYING ADULT—For the purpose of sub-section (c)(2), the term ‘qualifying adult’ means an adult who—(1) does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.”*

Under Title II, Sec. 225 (e)(1) – Definition of a “Correctional Institution”. Although the following definition does not include a reference to HSE, correctional institutions typically provide HSE instruction through AEFLA and are defined as stated below.

Specifically, Sec. 225 (e)(1) states: *Correctional institution.--The term “correctional institution” means any (A) prison; (B) jail; (C) reformatory; (D) work farm; (E) detention center; or (F) halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.*

Workforce System Implications for HSE References in WIOA

Many workforce system services are authorized and funded annually through the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The act includes multiple references to HSE and consistently links a regular high school diploma with “a recognized equivalency.” It is important for workforce system personnel and stakeholders to know how equivalency is used in WIOA and specifically under which section mandates.

Need-To-Know Checklist for HSE References in WIOA

For **State Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ **What mandates/references exist under WIOA for HSE with regard to:**
 - **Common performance measures**
 - **Use of funds for Youth Investment activities**
 - **Job Corps programs**
 - **YouthBuild programs**
 - **Adult education definitions**

Rationale: Knowing how HSE is referenced under the five topic areas (noted above) in WIOA provides an understanding of the context and importance of HSE within those topic areas. In all references, HSE is cited as an acceptable alternative to a regular high school diploma.

- ✓ **Have there been significant changes under WIOA with regard to the mandates referencing HSE?**

Rationale: In previous workforce law, the Workforce Investment Act, HSE was also linked directly with every reference to a regular high school diploma. No new concepts regarding HSE were introduced in WIOA. However, since the updating of the GED® test in 2014, many states have changed or added new HSE options to their state-endorsed HSE credential.

For **Local Level** Workforce System Staff and Stakeholders

- ✓ ***What mandates exist under the new WIOA for HSE with regard to:***
 - ***Common performance measures***
 - ***Use of funds for Youth Investment activities***
 - ***Job Corps programs***
 - ***YouthBuild programs***
 - ***Adult education definitions***

Rationale: Knowing how HSE is referenced under the five topic areas (noted above) in WIOA provides an understanding of the context and importance of HSE within those topic areas. This is especially true for local workforce system personnel that regularly conduct activities within the program areas noted above. In all references, HSE is cited as an acceptable alternative to a regular high school diploma.

- ✓ ***Have there been significant changes under WIOA with regard to the mandates referencing HSE?***

Rationale: In previous workforce law, the Workforce Investment Act, HSE was also linked directly with every reference to a regular high school diploma. No new concepts regarding HSE were introduced in WIOA. However, since the updating of the GED® test in 2014, many states have changed or added new HSE options to their state-endorsed HSE credential.