State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

Enclosure 7b
February 9, 2015

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TO: Members of the Rhode Island Council on K-12 Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner

RE: **Approval of the Proposed Changes to the Regulations of the Board of Education Regulations Governing the R.I. High School Equivalency Program, for the purpose of public review and comment**

The proposed changes to the *Regulations Governing the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program* are promulgated pursuant to authority conferred under Rhode Island General Law 16-100-3(a) and are revised from the 2013 Regulations Governing the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program pursuant to RIGL 16-63-18. Language in section 6.3 describes the waiver of testing fees for individuals with limited income and RIDE's responsibility for securing funding to pay for test costs associated with waivers.

The language in section 3 regarding the eligibility age of students to test is revised to reflect the Compulsory Attendance Legislation, R.I.G.L. 16-19-1. Additionally, all references to the GED test are replaced throughout the document with "high school equivalency test."

RECOMMENDATION: That, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves, for the purpose of public review and comment, the proposed changes to the Regulations of the Board of Education Governing the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program, as presented.

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Regulations of the ~~Board of~~ Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Governing the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program

(Effective ~~April 8~~XXX, 201~~3~~5)

RHODE ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAM

(~~April~~ XXX 201~~3~~5)

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RHODE ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAM

REGULATIONS

The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program is composed of ~~the General Educational Development (GED®)~~ approved high school equivalency tests, which are administered throughout the state by testing centers authorized by the ~~Board~~ Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma is issued to those eligible individuals who successfully ~~complete~~ pass all components of the ~~GED®~~ high school equivalency test.

~~The GED testing program is a joint effort of the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education through a contractual relationship.~~ The testing program operates in accordance with the policies and procedures of the ~~GED Testing Service, as presented in the GED® Testing Policies and Procedures Manual~~ high school equivalency test publisher guidelines, and the ~~Department of~~ Council on Elementary and Secondary Education's requirements.

The Commissioner designates a ~~S~~state ~~GED A~~administrator who has the responsibilities of providing leadership for the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program, maintaining the program's integrity and ensuring conformity to ~~both~~ the ~~GED Testing Service~~ high school equivalency test publisher's policies and procedures and in accordance with the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program Regulations requirements. The validity of the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma is based upon the proper administration and supervision of the ~~GED~~ high school equivalency test~~ing~~ program.

1. **POLICY**

1.1 The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program enables Rhode Island adults and out-of-school youth to gain personal satisfaction, career opportunities and increased academic possibilities by earning a high school equivalency diploma from the State of Rhode Island.

1.2 The ~~Board of Education~~Council on Elementary and Secondary Education regards the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma as being of the same status as a ~~regular~~ traditional high school diploma.

2. **APPLICATIONS**

2.1 Application for the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program must be made on the official state application at any of the ~~GED~~ test centers in the state. ~~Applications are available at any of the test centers.~~ Applications for computer-based testing must

be made online in accordance with the test publisher's directions ~~at the GED Testing Service website: www.gedtestingservice.com~~.

~~2.2 Individuals who have been tested at any authorized GED testing center or by the GED Testing Service and who meet the eligibility requirements may apply for the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma. Application must be made to the State GED Administrator. An official GED transcript must be forwarded to State GED Administrator.~~

3. ELIGIBILITY FOR TESTING

To be eligible for high school equivalency testing~~,~~ a person must be a Rhode Island resident or a member of the Armed forces stationed in Rhode Island when application is made.

In addition, one of the following conditions must be met:

a) Candidate ~~I~~is at least eighteen (18) years of age and not enrolled in secondary school; or

~~;~~

~~a)~~

~~b) Is seventeen (17) years of age, not enrolled in secondary school, and has received special permission from the Chief Examiner of the test center to which application is made. Such permission must be based upon appropriate documentation for example, an official letter of withdrawal from the last school attended, which is to be made part of the candidate's permanent file; or,~~

~~c) Is sixteen (16) years of age, not enrolled in secondary school and has received permission to test from the Commissioner or designee upon a showing of good cause supported by appropriate documentation, for example, an official letter of withdrawal from the last school attended, which is to be made part of the candidate's permanent file. In addition, a letter from the parent or guardian giving permission to test must be obtained prior to testing, and, if deemed appropriate, the Commissioner or designee will inform the principal of the secondary school last attended that the sixteen year old has applied to take the high school equivalency examination; or,~~

~~d)~~ b) Candidate ~~I~~is sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) years of age and has an approved Alternative Learning Plan on file pursuant to RIGL 16-19-1 and which provides that the student is pursuing a high school equivalency diploma; or~~,~~

~~e)~~

c) Candidate ~~I~~is sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) years of age and has been home schooled.

~~f)~~ A home schooled candidate aged 16 or 17 must provide: (1) a letter from the ~~local school district that he/she had been in an approved home school program and~~ parent or guardian that the home schooling has been discontinued; and (2) a ~~letter from the parent or guardian giving permission to test~~ signed Alternative Learning Plan from the student's resident district superintendent stating that the student has permission to attend the adult education program to pursue their high school equivalency diploma.

4. VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR TESTING

All candidates must present sufficient documentation to verify eligibility for testing. Such documentation will verify age, personal identification and Rhode Island residency. Minimal documentation must include:

a) A certified copy of his/her birth certificate or other appropriate document (e.g. passport, valid Rhode Island driver's license) that clearly establishes age, **AND;**

b) Positive valid identification which includes the applicant's signature and a photograph, (e.g. valid Rhode Island driver's license, Alien Registration Receipt Card), **AND;**

c) Appropriate verification of Rhode Island residency, preferably with a photograph, (e.g. valid Rhode Island driver's license) or, in the absence of photo identification, at least two items verifying residency e.g. utility bill, voter registration card, tax bill.

5. TESTING

5.1 The ~~GED~~ high school equivalency tests will be administered at the authorized Rhode Island test centers or at other sites in accordance with the test center's contract ~~with GED Testing Service~~.

5.2 The Chief Examiner at the respective test center will schedule testing.

5.3 The test centers will maintain an appropriate number of English and Spanish editions of the ~~GED~~ high school equivalency tests as needed~~. The Department of Education will also maintain~~ and the appropriate numbers of the Braille, Large Print and Audio Cassette editions of the ~~GED~~ test where available and as needed. The test taker may request other accommodations through the test center or the high school equivalency test publisher.

5.4 The ~~GED~~ tests shall be administered only in accordance with instructions and procedures promulgated by the ~~GED Testing Service~~ high school equivalency test publisher and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

6. FEE SCHEDULE

6.1 A fee schedule shall be established with the approval of the ~~Board~~ Council on Elementary and Secondary Education upon the recommendation of the Commissioner for services related to the high school equivalency program.

6.2 ~~GED Testing Service~~ High school equivalency test publishers will establish the base cost for ~~computer-based~~ tests and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will establish administrative fees.

~~6.1~~ 6.3 The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will assume the testing costs and fees associated with the high school equivalency test for individuals with limited income who can prove a financial hardship, who are ineligible for subsidies from other state agencies or departments, *and* who have received at least a minimum passing score on the high school equivalency practice test, or pertinent section of the test (in accordance with RIGL 16-63-18). Candidates who seek relief from testing fees must present evidence of financial hardship to the testing center chief examiner which may include, but is not limited to, the following documentation: SNAP food assistance, Child Care Assistance, RIte Care/RIte Share health coverage, or RI Works cash assistance.

7. RETESTING

7.1 A candidate must ~~retest~~ retake any test in which a minimum standard passing score for that test was not attained, regardless of total score.

~~7.1~~ 7.2 Retesting is allowed at any time on condition that different forms of the tests within the battery administered are used in retesting.

~~7.2~~ 7.3 Individuals who have earned a high school equivalency credential or earned scores sufficient to qualify for such a credential but who need to earn higher test scores to meet an admission requirement for postsecondary education or training, or to meet employment requirements, may retest.

~~7.3~~ 7.4 Such individuals must meet the eligibility requirements of 3.0 and 4.0 of these regulations, must submit an application and pay the regular fee.

~~7.4~~ 7.5 Retesting shall be conducted only in accordance with instructions and procedures promulgated by the ~~GED Testing Service~~ high school equivalency test publisher.

~~7.5~~ 7.6 The Chief Examiner at the respective test center will schedule retesting. Retesting registration for computer based testing must be made online.

~~8. STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS~~

~~8.1 Effective January 1, 2004, all candidates must successfully complete all tests within **three years** from the date that the applicant completed the first test on the battery. After **three years**, all incomplete or failed scores and fees become invalid. Candidate must then begin the process again.~~

~~8.2 Effective January 1, 2014, the 2002 GED test series scores will be invalidated. The new GED 2014 test scores will be valid during the period that the test series is in use.~~

~~9.~~ 8. **ISSUANCE OF DIPLOMA**

The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma will be issued by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education when the eligible high school equivalency testing candidate attains the minimum standard passing score, according to ~~GED Testing Service~~ the test publisher ~~. For the 2002 Test Series, an average standard score of 450 or above on the five tests within the GED test battery and no standard score below 410, and a total standard score of 2250 or higher;~~ AND, the ~~S~~state ~~GED A~~administrator reviews and approves the applications.

~~10.~~ 9. **REVOCATION OF CREDENTIALS**

~~10.1~~9.1 The ~~S~~state ~~GED A~~administrator shall have the authority to revoke an Equivalency Diploma when reliable evidence exists that the candidate misrepresented or provided false information on the application; or otherwise fraudulently verified his/her eligibility to test. A holder of an Equivalency Diploma may appeal its revocation by the ~~S~~state ~~GED A~~administrator to the Commissioner who, after providing notice to the interested parties of the time and place of hearing, shall examine the evidence and decide whether good cause exists for the revocation of the Equivalency Diploma. Any decision of the revocation by the Commissioner shall be subject to an appeal to and review by the ~~Board of~~Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Title16, Chapter 39 of the General Law.

~~10.2~~ 9.2 During the revocation process and any appeal, no credentials shall be re-issued to the individual.

These regulations shall take effect upon promulgation.