



Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminister Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 6a
May 14, 2015

May 14, 2015

TO: Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

FROM: Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner 

RE: **Proposed Changes to the Regulations of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Governing the R.I. High School Equivalency Program - Feedback from public review and comment**

The Regulations of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education Governing the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program were promulgated pursuant to authority conferred under Rhode Island General Law 16-100-3(a) to comply with 2014 - S 2182 Substitute A, amended section 16-63-18, requiring the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education to consider several factors in determining which high school equivalency tests would be recognized by the state. Such factors would include cost, the recognition of the test by other states, and other criteria. The statute also requires the Council to adopt, and provide funding for, a rule or regulation assumption of fees associated with the high school equivalency test for individuals with limited income and who can prove a financial hardship.

The proposed revisions reflect feedback (attached) gathered during the March 2 - April 17, 2015, public comment period and from public testimony presented at the public hearing held on April 14, 2015.

Summary of changes to High School Equivalency Program Regulations

Section #	Summary of Comments	Change to document or section	Suggested change to language or rationale for no change
2.1	Add "Follow the test publishers' guidelines for applying.	NO CHANGE to 2.1	Current version includes this language in first sentence of this section
3.0	Add 3.d. under Eligibility to Test (3.0): "Candidate is sixteen (16) or (17) years of age and is incarcerated."	CHANGE 3.0	Add 3 (d) Candidate is aged 16 or 17 and is detained in juvenile facility or is incarcerated. Addition of "detained in juvenile facility" language is due to fact that some adolescents are not incarcerated but are detained in a juvenile facility that is separate from prison.
4.0	(a) and (b) Omit the words "Rhode Island" (c) Add the words "Rhode Island Identification Card" in Identifying a person's residence	CHANGE 3.0 (a) and (b) NO CHANGE to 3.0 (c)	(a) and (b) Deleted the words "Rhode Island". Any valid license is acceptable evidence for age and identity. (c) This is not an exhaustive list but an example. Residency cards or other forms of identification are acceptable.
	Recommendation to allow out-of-state residents to test in RI to allow other states' residents the choice in tests and to help the RI centers generate income – 2 comments	NO CHANGE	RI confers diplomas to Rhode Island residents only
5.3	Change the word other in "other accommodations" to "...all reasonable accommodations" – 2 comments	CHANGE to 5.3	The language was changed from "other accommodations" to "all reasonable accommodations" to ensure that any reasonable accommodations would be provided by test center.
6.0	In favor of offering a waiver of fees for the practice test which would demonstrate readiness or guide people to seek instruction to improve their academic skills – several comments	NO CHANGE	The cost for practice tests is minimal and the limited funds available for waivers are better used to pay for the much higher cost of the full test.
6.3	In favor of requiring the passing score on the practice test before obtaining a waiver of fees – several comments	NO CHANGE	
6.3	Deleting the word "may" in "...which may include, but is	CHANGE	Deleted "may" and used "includes" clarifies this

Summary of changes to High School Equivalency Program Regulations

	not limited to..." – 2 comments		section that any one of these or other such documentation will be sufficient.
Additional Funding Required	In favor of seeking additional funds to meet the mandate of providing fee waivers – multiple comments	NO CHANGE	While the funds may come from adult education resources that would go to adult education programming, paying for high school equivalency exams is a effective way to support adults in reaching their educational and/or employment goal.
	Against using RIDE funds which are intended to provide adult education instructional services to pay for testing waivers – multiple comments	""	""
	Requesting that Test Centers should be supported with RIDE funds – multiple comments	""	""
Additional Funding Required	Funds from LEAs should follow 16 and 17-year-old K-12 students who attend adult education programs and those funds should be used to pay for testing	""	""
RFP Process	In favor of RI adopting only one HSE test, not several tests - multiple comments	NO CHANGE	Addressed by RFP and legislation
	In favor of RI adopting another test besides the GED test	NO CHANGE	Addressed by RFP and legislation
	In favor of RI adopting multiple HSE tests: GED, HiSET, and TASC – two comments	NO CHANGE	Addressed by RFP and legislation
	In favor of a paper and pencil version – several comments	NO CHANGE	Addressed by RFP
	In favor of a paper-based test in Spanish	NO CHANGE	Addressed by RFP
	In favor of allowing past test results to be added to future test results ("past partial scores")	NO CHANGE	Determined by test vendor
Other	Test results need to be accurately recorded in CALIS, AE database – two comments about CALIS	NO CHANGE	Not a regulatory item

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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 8XXX~~, 20135)

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RHODE ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAM

(~~April~~ XXX 20135)

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70 **RHODE ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PROGRAM**

71
72 **REGULATIONS**

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74
75 The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program is composed of ~~the General Educational~~
76 ~~Development (GED®)~~ approved high school equivalency tests, which are administered
77 throughout the state by testing centers authorized by the ~~Board~~ Rhode Island Department of
78 Education. The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma is issued to those eligible
79 individuals who successfully ~~complete~~ pass all components of the GED® high school
80 equivalency test.

81
82 ~~The GED testing program is a joint effort of the GED Testing Service of the American Council~~
83 ~~on Education and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education through~~
84 ~~a contractual relationship.~~ The testing program operates in accordance with the policies and
85 procedures of the ~~GED Testing Service, as presented in the GED® Testing Policies and~~
86 ~~Procedures Manual~~ high school equivalency test publisher guidelines, and the ~~Department of~~
87 Council on Elementary and Secondary Education's requirements.

88
89 The Commissioner designates a ~~S~~state ~~GED A~~administrator who has the responsibilities of
90 providing leadership for the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program, maintaining the
91 program's integrity and ensuring conformity to ~~both the GED Testing Service high school~~
92 ~~equivalency test publisher's~~ policies and procedures and in accordance with the Rhode Island
93 High School Equivalency Program Regulations requirements. The validity of the Rhode Island
94 High School Equivalency Diploma is based upon the proper administration and supervision of
95 the GED high school equivalency testing program.

96
97 **1. POLICY**

98
99 1.1 The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program enables Rhode Island adults and
100 out-of-school youth to gain personal satisfaction, career opportunities and increased
101 academic possibilities by earning a high school equivalency diploma from the State of
102 Rhode Island.

103
104 1.2 The ~~Board of Education~~Council on Elementary and Secondary Education regards the
105 Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma as being of the same status as a
106 ~~regular traditional~~ high school diploma.

107
108 **2. APPLICATIONS**

109
110 2.1 Application for the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program must be made on
111 the official state application at any of the ~~GED~~ test centers in the state. ~~Applications~~
112 ~~are available at any of the test centers.~~ Applications for computer-based testing must
113 be made online in accordance with the test publisher's directions ~~at the GED Testing~~
114 ~~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~~ Is at least eighteen (18) years of age and not enrolled in secondary school; or,
- ~~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,~~
- ~~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,~~
- ~~b) Candidate~~ 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,
- ~~c) Candidate~~ Is sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) years of age and has been home schooled. 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

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161 | superintendent stating that the student has permission to attend the adult
162 | education program to pursue their high school equivalency diploma.

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164 | **4. VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR TESTING**
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166 | All candidates must present sufficient documentation to verify eligibility for testing.
167 | Such documentation will verify age, personal identification and Rhode Island residency.
168 | Minimal documentation must include:

- 169 | a) A certified copy of his/her birth certificate or other appropriate document (e.g.
170 | passport, valid Rhode Island driver's license) that clearly establishes age, **AND**;
171 |
172 | b) Positive valid identification which includes the applicant's signature and a
173 | photograph, (e.g. valid Rhode Island driver's license, Alien Registration Receipt
174 | Card), **AND**;
175 |
176 | c) Appropriate verification of Rhode Island residency, preferably with a photograph,
177 | (e.g. valid Rhode Island driver's license) or, in the absence of photo identification, at
178 | least two items verifying residency e.g. utility bill, voter registration card, tax bill.
179 |

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182 | **5. TESTING**
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184 | 5.1 The GED-high school equivalency tests will be administered at the authorized Rhode
185 | Island test centers or at other sites in accordance with the test center's contract ~~with~~
186 | ~~GED-Testing Service~~.

187 |
188 | 5.2 The Chief Examiner at the respective test center will schedule testing.
189 |

190 | 5.3 The test centers will maintain an appropriate number of English and Spanish editions
191 | of the GED-high school equivalency tests as needed. ~~The Department of Education~~
192 | ~~will also maintain~~ and the appropriate numbers of the Braille, Large Print and Audio
193 | Cassette editions of the GED-test where available and as needed. The test taker may
194 | request other accommodations through the test center or the high school equivalency
195 | test publisher.
196 |

197 | 5.4 The ~~GED~~-tests shall be administered only in accordance with instructions and
198 | procedures promulgated by the ~~GED-Testing Service~~ high school equivalency test
199 | publisher and the RI Department of Education.
200 |

201 | **6. FEE SCHEDULE**
202 |

203 | 6.1 A fee schedule shall be established with the approval of the Board Council on
204 | Elementary and Secondary Education upon the recommendation of the Commissioner
205 | for services related to the high school equivalency program.
206 |

207 ~~6.2 GED Testing Service High school equivalency test publishers will establish the base~~
208 ~~cost for computer based tests and the RI Department of Education will establish~~
209 ~~administrative fees.~~

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210 ~~6.3 The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will~~
211 ~~assume the testing costs and fees associated with the high school equivalency test for~~
212 ~~individuals with limited income who can prove a financial hardship, who are~~
213 ~~ineligible for subsidies from other state agencies or departments, and who have~~
214 ~~received at least a minimum passing score on the high school equivalency practice~~
215 ~~test, or pertinent section of the test (in accordance with RIGL 16-63-18). Candidates~~
216 ~~who seek relief from testing fees must present evidence of financial hardship to the~~
217 ~~testing center chief examiner which may include, but is not limited to, the following~~
218 ~~documentation: SNAP food assistance, Child Care Assistance, RIte Care/RIte Share~~
219 ~~health coverage, or RI Works cash assistance.~~

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222 **7. RETESTING**

224 ~~7.1~~ A candidate must ~~retest~~ retake any test in which a minimum standard passing score
225 ~~for that test~~ was not attained, regardless of total score.

227 ~~7.1~~ ~~7.2~~ Retesting is allowed at any time on condition that different forms of the tests
228 within the battery administered are used in retesting.

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numbering

230 ~~7.2~~ ~~7.3~~ Individuals who have earned a high school equivalency credential or earned
231 scores sufficient to qualify for such a credential but who need to earn higher test scores to
232 meet an admission requirement for postsecondary education or training, or to meet
233 employment requirements, may retest.

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235 ~~7.3~~ ~~7.4~~ Such individuals must meet the eligibility requirements of 3.0 and 4.0 of these
236 regulations, must submit an application and pay the regular fee.

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numbering

238 ~~7.4~~ ~~7.5~~ Retesting shall be conducted only in accordance with instructions and
239 procedures promulgated by the ~~GED Testing Service high school equivalency test~~
240 ~~publisher.~~

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242 ~~7.5~~ ~~7.6~~ The Chief Examiner at the respective test center will schedule retesting.
243 Retesting registration for computer based testing must be made online.

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numbering

245 **8. STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS**

246 ~~8.1 Effective January 1, 2004, all candidates must successfully complete all tests within~~
247 ~~three years from the date that the applicant completed the first test on the battery.~~
248 ~~After three years, all incomplete or failed scores and fees become invalid. Candidate~~
249 ~~must then begin the process again.~~

252 ~~8.2 Effective January 1, 2014, the 2002 GED test series scores will be invalidated.~~

253 | ~~The new GED 2014 test scores will be valid during the period that the test series is in~~
254 | ~~use.~~

255 |
256 | ~~9.-~~ **8. ISSUANCE OF DIPLOMA**

257 |
258 | The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma will be issued by the Rhode Island
259 | Department of Elementary and Secondary Education when the eligible high school
260 | equivalency testing candidate attains the minimum standard passing score, according to
261 | ~~GED Testing Service the test publisher . For the 2002 Test Series, an average standard~~
262 | ~~score of 450 or above on the five tests within the GED test battery and no standard score~~
263 | ~~below 410, and a total standard score of 2250 or higher;~~ AND, the Sstate GED
264 | Aadministrator reviews and approves the applications.

265 |
266 | ~~10.9.~~ **REVOCATION OF CREDENTIALS**

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268 | ~~10.19.1~~ The Sstate GED Aadministrator shall have the authority to revoke an Equivalency
269 | Diploma when reliable evidence exists that the candidate misrepresented or provided
270 | false information on the application; or otherwise fraudulently verified his/her
271 | eligibility to test. A holder of an Equivalency Diploma may appeal its revocation by
272 | the Sstate GED Aadministrator to the Commissioner who, after providing notice to
273 | the interested parties of the time and place of hearing, shall examine the evidence and
274 | decide whether good cause exists for the revocation of the Equivalency Diploma.
275 | Any decision of the revocation by the Commissioner shall be subject to an appeal to
276 | and review by the ~~Board of~~Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, in
277 | accordance with Title16, Chapter 39 of the General Law.

278 |
279 | ~~10.2~~ ~~9.2~~ During the revocation process and any appeal, no credentials shall be re-issued to the
280 | individual.

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282 | These regulations shall take effect upon promulgation.

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