

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release
Tuesday, October 8, 2013

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NEVADA CHOOSES NEW HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY TESTS

Carson City, Nevada – On Friday, October 4, 2013, the Nevada State Board of Education approved three new high school equivalency assessments that will be used throughout Nevada starting January 1, 2014. The new tests will provide the basis for awarding a Nevada Certificate of High School Equivalency by the Nevada Department of Education.

The Board voted to approve a new computer-based GED® test as well as two alternative assessments as Nevada's official High School Equivalency (HSE) tests. The two new alternative tests approved by the Board, the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET™) (designed by Educational Testing Services) and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) (from CTB/McGraw-Hill), will allow for either computer- or paper-based testing. The new GED® test will be offered only via computer, outside of correctional facilities. All three assessments cover the same content areas and allow test-takers to demonstrate proficiency in the academic skills expected by employers and postsecondary institutions. Nevada is the first state in the nation to approve multiple HSE assessments for use in awarding a state-issued Certificate of High School Equivalency.

"The State of Nevada is pleased to be at the forefront of providing options for students for high school equivalency in the United States," said Brad Deeds, State HSE Administrator. "We now have the opportunity to provide multiple safety nets and multiple pathways to the nearly 6,000 Nevadans who seek a state-issued Certificate of High School Equivalency each year to meet their education and work goals."

The Nevada Department of Education conducted a Request for Information (RFI) process in which vendors presented their tests for consideration to a review committee. State-approved test centers and their local governing authorities may select which test or tests they wish to offer starting in January 2014. Most test centers are located in school districts, colleges and community-based organizations and can now choose the assessment systems that best meet the needs of their local student populations. In order to ensure accessibility and affordability for all Nevada students, test centers must

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offer both a paper- and a computer-based HSE assessment. Therefore, test centers offering the GED® must also offer the TASC and/or the HiSET™ to ensure student access to a paper-based testing option.

Last year, over 4,000 Nevadans earned a state-issued Certificate of High School Equivalency, but Nevada still has nearly 300,000 adults without a high school diploma or its equivalent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, those who have a high school credential earn \$181 more per week than those without. Additionally, Americans with a high school credential have an unemployment rate of 8.3%, compared with 12.4% for high school dropouts.

“Multiple vendors will compete with one other to maintain a high standard and level of rigor, and it helps to keep the price affordable for Nevadans,” said Deeds. “Easier access to High School Equivalency testing can open the door for more people to pursue postsecondary education and training, and can boost the numbers of college degrees and technical certificates our state produces every year. Where better-educated adults and better-trained workers live, good jobs will follow.”

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