

## **The December to January Transition to the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC)**

During the month of December the New York State Education Department conducted regional professional development programs for test center coordinators and examiners regarding the transition from the GED® to CTB/McGraw Hill's Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). The training for test center personnel augments the training and webinars provided to the field by SED and by the vendor, including an introductory webinar presented by CTB on September 3, 6, and 9; test administration webinars on October 7 and 10; and the accommodations webinar on November 15.

Information and webinars may be accessed on two websites:

- The SED website, <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/ged/> includes general information about the TASC and as well as webinars and PowerPoint presentations containing overview and test administration information.
- The TASC website, <http://www.tasctest.com/> includes information describing how the test will evolve over the course of the three-year contract, test structure (including sample questions), procedures related to accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and frequently asked questions.

It is important to note that the TASC has been developed for implementation on a national basis. In addition to New York State, the instrument has to date been adopted by Wyoming, Indiana, and Nevada. In addition, each state may make specific program revisions (such as New York State "grandfathering" passing scores achieved by examinees on the GED®). Therefore, a separate *TASC Administration in NYS* manual has been developed. SED officials have indicated that the new Person-developed GED® will not be administered in New York State since, pursuant to §317 of Education Law, examinees may not be charged a fee for such testing.

Certain aspects of New York State's requirements and procedures related to the High School Equivalency (HSE) program will not be changed, such as:

- Examinees will not be charged a fee for test administration.
- The High School Equivalency Diploma will not be changed. It will continue to be annotated if testing was done in a language other than English (i.e., Spanish), but will not be annotated if testing was administered with accommodations.
- Examinees may test/retest up to three times in a calendar year, beginning January 1, with 60 days or more between test administrations.
- The NYSED "Walk-Up Window" will remain in place.

Aspects of the HSE program that have changed include:

- There are certain changes in nomenclature. For example, chief examiners and candidates are now respectively called *test coordinators* and *examinees*. SED encourages that local programs complete appropriate revisions, such as revising GED Prep to HSE Prep.
- The French and ESL editions of tests are discontinued.
- Although TASC tests will primarily be administered in a paper-pencil format, 14 sites will also administer computer-based tests. (A webinar regarding computer-based administration is scheduled for January 7.)
- Within five days of administration, test materials should be sent to CTB in Indianapolis – not to NYSED.
- Pens, which were permitted for GED® essay questions, are not permitted on the TASC. Only #2 pencils are permitted.
- Calculator use is a standard operating procedure for all examinees on math part 2 and science tests, and on math part 1 when approved as an accommodation. Only Texas Instrument TI 30xs calculators are permissible. Examinees may not bring their own calculators – the

calculators will be provided under the three-way contract. However, this requirement should be noted in ordering supplies for HSE preparation programs.

- Testing accommodations and the application/approval procedures for test accommodations are established and implemented by CTB/McGraw Hill.

At the December 16 meeting of the Board of Regents, Deputy Commissioner Kevin Smith reported that, as anticipated, during the first nine months of 2013 there has been a surge amounting to an increase of almost 23 percent in GED® examination administrations; and since July, there has been a 42 percent increase in testing compared to the previous year. Despite extensive outreach by SED and test centers, many examinees who achieved partial success on the GED® examination may be unaware of the January transition to the TASC. These individuals faced the prospect of “losing their successfully completed sub-test scores” and having to re-take and pass all five sub-scores on the TASC in order to qualify for their High School Equivalency diploma. Therefore, the Board of Regents took the following emergency action to amend section 100.7 of regulations to be effective January 1, 2014 and “to better ensure a seamless transition to the new exam”:

- Examinees who achieved passing score (410 or above) on 1, 2, 3, or 4 on any GED® sub-test(s) administered from 2002 to 2013 for the English version of the examination (and from 2003 to 2013 for the Spanish version of the examination) will be carried forward, and credited, as a passing score on the corresponding TASC sub-test(s). This provision will remain in effect for two years, ending December 31, 2016. (Note: at the SED training provided to test center coordinators and examiners, it was indicated that regardless of any sub-test(s) being credited, SED will require that all examinees complete the entire TASC battery during initial administration.) During a discussion led by Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch, board members continued discussion of the timeframe for which the “grandfathering” provision would be available, and signaled a willingness to further extend this provision to 2017, in order to coincide with the timeframe for common core-aligned Regents examinations.
- Examinees who achieved a passing score on all five GED® sub-tests, but did not achieve the required composite score of 2250, will be eligible to receive an HSE diploma by passing any of the TASC sub-tests.

After unanimously approving the above emergency action, board members continued to discuss the capacity of test centers and preparation programs to adequately prepare examinees for the TASC examination. Deputy Commissioner Smith indicated that additional support is needed, especially in connection with the TASC math sub-test. For this reason, the State Education Department will request a \$5 million appropriation from the state legislature for professional development and materials.

Some aspects of the new TASC-based HSE program have not yet been determined or finalized, such as the composite and individual test scores that must be achieved in order to be awarded a High School Equivalency Diploma. Also, the TASC Readiness Assessment (to replace the Official GED Practice Test) will not be available until the end of February.

Questions regarding the TASC testing program should be directed to NYSED as follows:

- For general questions, contact Patricia Mooney at [pmooney@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:pmooney@mail.nysed.gov).
- For questions regarding computer-based administration, contact Robert Purga at [rpurga@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:rpurga@mail.nysed.gov).
- For questions regarding contracts, contact Kimberly Malcolm at [kmalcolm@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:kmalcolm@mail.nysed.gov).
- For questions regarding the State Alternative Education Steering Committee, contact James Viola at [JViola@saanys.org](mailto:JViola@saanys.org).