

Christie Administration Announces New Adult Education Alternative Assessments In Addition to the GED Test

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ - The Christie Administration today announced that the State Board of Education has approved new providers of the adult education assessment in New Jersey. Starting in January 2014, three vendors - Pearson VUE, Education Testing Service (ETS), and McGraw Hill - will all offer assessments leading to the state-issued high school diploma.

Each approved test has sections that must be passed in order to earn the diploma: writing, reading, math, science, and social studies. Applicants can retake the entire test or individual subtests.

Since 1959, the only adult education assessment available to receive a state-issued high school diploma in New Jersey has been the General Education Development (GED). That test was created under the auspices of the American Council on Education (ACE), a private nonprofit agency. In 2011, ACE announced the creation of the new GED Testing Service, a joint venture of ACE and the for-profit entity of Pearson, so it could align the new GED test with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and computerize the test.

Had the Department of Education remained with a sole provider, the price was expected to increase from an average cost of \$65 per test taker to \$195 (including test center fees), and the paper-based option would have been eliminated. Competition is expected to drive down average costs per test taker to \$112 (including fees) and enable paper-based testing to remain available through 2016.

Nationally and in New Jersey, public concern over the impact of the price increase on test takers led to the entry of other test vendors into the market. In August, the Department of Education conducted an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to consider new test vendors that could:

- Offer applicants several testing options at competitive prices;
- Ensure testing opportunities in all regions of the state;
- Continue a paper testing option for a transitional period; and
- Transition to the Common Core State Standards by 2016.

"I'm pleased that by opening the marketplace to new vendors, we have been able to keep costs down and expand the choices for those seeking an alternate route to the high school diploma," said Education Commissioner Chris Cerf. "We look forward to ongoing collaboration with the Department of Labor and New Jersey schools and businesses as we seek to accommodate the diverse educational needs of our citizens."

"For more than 50 years, the GED has served a useful purpose as the assessment that allows adults to receive a state-issued diploma," said Arcelio Aponte, President of the State Board of Education. "But as education improves, so do the opportunities and choices that we can provide to citizens of our state."

Starting in January, each authorized test center will be able to use any or all of three tests. To avoid incentivizing test centers to use just one test, the Department has set a uniform maximum fee of \$40 that test centers can charge above the vendor fee. Test centers can also charge a \$10 fee for subtests. ETS and McGraw Hill will offer both paper-based and computerized testing through 2016. Pearson VUE will offer computer based testing, with paper-based testing offered only as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Moving forward, the Department will continue to approve new assessment vendors as they emerge.

The Department currently authorizes 30 test centers (centers are listed below). Starting early in 2014, the Department will seek to authorize additional testing centers.

Additional details about adult education in New Jersey can be found online at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/adulted>.

County	Test Center	Address
Atlantic	Atlantic County One Stop	2 South Main St., Pleasantville
Bergen	Bergen County Technical School	11 Carol Court-Hackensack Ave., Hackensack

Burlington	Burlington County College	200 Campbell Drive, Suite 210, Willingboro
Burlington	NJ Youth Challenge Program	Fort Dix
Camden	Camden County College	P.O. Box 200 College Drive, Blackwood
Cape May	Cape May County Technical School	188 Crest Haven Road, Cape May Court House
Essex	Essex County One-Stop	50 South Clinton St, 4th Floor, East Orange
Essex	Affirmation Academy	303 Washington St., Newark
Essex	Essex County College	Express Center 303 University Avenue, Newark
Essex	La Casa de Don Pedro	39 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Newark
Gloucester	Gloucester County Community College	1492 Tanyard Road, Sewell
Hudson	Hudson County Schools of Technology	525 Montgomery St., Jersey City
Hunterdon	Raritan Valley Community College	Rte 28 & Lamington Road, Somerville
Mercer	Hamilton Township Adult School	90 Park Ave., Hamilton
Mercer	Mercer County Community College	James Kerney Campus, Suite 118, North Broad and Academy Streets, Trenton
Middlesex	New Brunswick Public Schools Adult Learning Center	268 Baldwin St., New Brunswick
Middlesex	Perth Amboy Adult School	178 Barracks St., Perth Amboy
Monmouth	Brookdale Community College - Lincroft	765 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft
Monmouth	Brookdale Community College - Long Branch	Long Branch Learning Center, 213 Broadway, Long Branch
Morris	Morris County School of Technology	400 East Main St., Denville
Ocean	Ocean County College	1 College Drive, Toms River
Passaic	Paterson Adult and Continuing Education Center	151 Ellison St., Paterson
Passaic	Passaic County Technical Institute	45 Reinhart Road, Wayne
Salem	Salem County Vocational/Technical School	Employment Prep Center , Woodstown
Statewide	NJ Department of Corrections	Whittlesey Road, Trenton
Statewide	Juvenile Justice Commission	Statewide
Statewide	NJ Department of Health & Human Services	Statewide
Sussex	Sussex County Community College	One College Hill, Newton
Union	Union County College	40 W Jersey St., Elizabeth
Warren	Warren County Technical School	Board of Education Building, 1500 Route 57 West, Washington