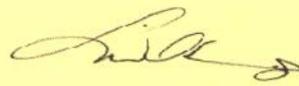


ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT APPROVAL



STATE BOARD MEETING DATE January 27, 2014

SUBJECT: Arizona High School Equivalency Exam

SUBMITTED BY: Karen Liersch

MANAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW:

The Arizona Department of Education is authorized under A.R.S. 15-232, 15-702 and R7-2-307 to issue an Arizona High School Equivalency Diploma to a candidate upon their successful completion of a State Board of Education-approved high school equivalency test. The ADE currently has an MOU with the GED Testing Service for use of the GED Test for this purpose.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The General Educational Development (GED) Test was developed in 1942 to measure the major outcomes and concepts generally associated with four years of high school education. The GED Test was initiated by the United States Armed Forces Institute and the original tests were administered only to military personnel so that returning World War II veterans could more easily pursue their educational, vocational and post-secondary goals. Since 1942, several new generations of the test have debuted over time in order to reflect the changes in skill and knowledge necessary for high school graduation. The GED subtests measure Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. To pass the GED test, successful candidates are required to achieve minimum scores on each subtest and an overall average total score. The GED Test's passing scores are based on a nationally representative, stratified random sample of high school students tested in the spring of their senior year. In Arizona, between 70,000 and 90,000 subtests are administered each year, and over 14,000 successful candidates pass all five subtests and are awarded an Arizona High School Equivalency Diploma. This equals 20% of Arizona's high school diplomas that are issued annually.

From 1942 through 2013, the GED Test has been the only test recognized and accepted in the United States as a measure by which adults could demonstrate the educational attainment equivalent to high school completion. All fifty states participate in the GED Testing program and each state jurisdiction issues to successful candidates some form of credential/diploma/certificate indicating educational achievement equivalent to high school education. Since its inception, the GED Testing Program has operated as a 3-way partnership between (1) the GED Testing Service, a not-for-profit division of the American Council on Education, (2) GED Jurisdictions (currently: all U.S. states and territories, all Canadian provinces and territories, all Mexican states, and U.S. military bases around the world), and (3) jurisdiction-approved local GED Testing Centers.

In 2011, the not-for-profit GED Testing Service became a for-profit business through its formation of an LLC with Pearson VUE. In response to this change, the Arizona Department of Education proposed revisions to ARS 15-232 and 15-702 to replace the term "general educational development test/diploma" with the more generic term: "high school equivalency test' approved by the State Board of Education".

These changes became law in September, 2013. Also in September, 2013, the State Board of Education approved the same language changes to R7-2-307.

Also during 2012 and 2013, a number of successful test developers and publishers indicated interest in, began market research of, or began test development of 'GED-equivalent' products. As a result, this month, for the first time, multiple high school equivalency tests are available for use by jurisdictions to award high school equivalency diplomas and certificates.

Therefore, in accordance with Arizona state procurement regulations, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has conducted a request for proposals (RFP) for computer-based high school equivalency test or tests to be used in awarding the Arizona High School Equivalency Diploma. Prior to the State Board meeting, the RFP process will be completed and the evaluation team will provide a recommendation. The State Board is requested to approve the selection of a High School Equivalency Test/s for use in Arizona.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: [] INFORMATION [X] ACTION/DESCRIBED BELOW:

Approve the selection of a High School Equivalency Exam which will be used as the basis for issuing Arizona High School Equivalency Diplomas.

ATTACHMENTS: YES [] NO [X]