



TO: P-12 Education Committee
ACCES Committee

FROM: Angelica Infante-Green *A. Infante - Green*
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SUBJECT: Proposal for a new Pathway to a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma

DATE: September 8, 2017

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Margellen Eis*

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Does the Board of Regents support a pathway to a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma that would allow individuals to utilize passing high school Regents examination scores in place of TASC™ subtests?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Review of policy.

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the Board of Regents P-12 Education and ACCES Committees at its September 2017 meeting.

Procedural History

Currently, in New York State (NYS), there are three pathways toward earning a HSE diploma:

- TASC™ testing (Test Assessing Secondary Completion)
- Approved 24-College-Credit Program
- National External Diploma Program (NEDP)

(see Attachment 1 for more detailed explanation)

Various constituents have raised concerns that the current pathways to a NYS HSE diploma adopted by the Board of Regents to date are limited in scope and do not avail individuals who have passed required Regents examinations the ability to utilize those credits towards earning a high school equivalency diploma after they have exited secondary school.

Background Information

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has discussed the feasibility of offering individuals pursuing a HSE diploma the option of being able to utilize passing Regents examination scores in core subjects in place of corresponding TASC™ subtests. These conversations have been influenced by factors including the following:

- The long-standing practice that passing HSE examination scores from a given GED® test or TASC™ test series can be used indefinitely while that series is still being administered.
- The practice of “grandfathering” implemented by NYSED, which permits the use of passing scores from the 2002 GED® series, in conjunction with new TASC™ scores, to determine eligibility to earn a HSE diploma.
- The use of passing scores on certain Regents examinations as a requirement for high school graduation.
- The policy of allowing school-aged students to use any Regents examination score toward high school graduation purposes, regardless of the age of the score.

Currently, the process of meeting high school graduation requirements is an “all-or-nothing” proposition. Students who do not earn 22 credits and pass 4 to 8 assessments (Regents examinations, Department-approved alternatives or pathway examinations) are unable to earn a high school diploma, and get no credit of value for the classes and examinations they may have passed. Those who leave secondary school prior to acquiring a high school diploma often do not reengage in any educational program until 21 years of age or older. While it is anticipated that post-compulsory aged youth (17-21) would be most likely to be positively impacted by this pathway, it would be an incentive and advantage also to those older adults seeking their HSE diploma.

The purpose of allowing students to utilize passing Regents examination scores as a portable credit would be to encourage engagement in educational programs, improve and increase high school completion rates, and work toward a strategy to better connect students to Adult Education programming with the goal of achieving a HSE diploma.

Table 1 below illustrates the total number of students in NYS who passed the Integrated Algebra Regents Examination in 2010-11 and 2011-12 cumulatively, (44,755 students) yet did not receive a Regents or local diploma through the 2015-16 school year.

Table 1.

Students who passed One Math Regents Examination without earning Diploma¹

Passed Integrated Algebra Regents in 2010-11 or 2011-12	
Graduated between 2010-11 and 2015-16	Did not receive a Regents or local diploma between 2010-11 and 2015-16
351,661	44,755

¹ Students who passed Integrated Algebra Regents in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years and did not receive a diploma through the 2015-16 school year.

Table 2 illustrates the number of students who started grade 9 in 2011 and 2012, passed Regents examinations, and did not receive a Regents, Advanced Regents, or Local diploma by the expected time of graduation in 2015 or 2016.

Table 2. ^{1, 2}

Students who passed Regents Examinations without earning Diploma¹

Regents Examinations Passed	Students who did not earn a diploma
0	31,321
1	9,159
2	6,721
3	6,066
4	6,370
TOTAL	59,637

¹ Regents examinations are ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Credit was given for 1 exam in each area. Passing grade is 65.

² 2011 and 2012 cohorts were used; data are as of 8/28/17.

The Fourth Pathway: Mixed Regents Examination and High School Equivalency Testing

This option would allow students who have passed any Regents high school examination in Mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA), Social Studies or Science, the opportunity to use passing scores in place of the corresponding TASC™ subtests.

Regents Exam	Recommendation
Any Mathematics Regents Examination	Receive credit for TASC mathematics.
ELA Regents Examination	Acceptable for <u>both</u> TASC Reading and Writing subtests
Any Regents Social Studies Examination	Receive credit for TASC Social Studies
Any Regents Science Examination	Receive credit for TASC Science

Given that Regents examinations are valid measures of the knowledge, skills and abilities required for high school graduation; valid passing Regents scores should count for the associated TASC subtest.

Condition:

- Students will not be allowed to utilize HSE credit for previously passed Regents examinations until they have exited from high school and met all applicable requirements in section 100.7 of the Commissioner's regulations including:
 - (ii) shall be at least 17 years of age, and: (a) has not attended a regular, full-time high school program of instruction within the preceding 12 months or other requirements such as has been accepted into the U.S. Armed Forces.
 - (iii) shall be at least 16 years of age and has reached maximum compulsory school attendance age and met other requirements such as is enrolled in an alternative high school equivalency preparation program in accordance with subdivision (h) of this section.

A full copy of section 100.7 of the Commissioner's regulations is attached.

The four pathways to an HSE diploma will provide equitable access points and a diverse means by which New Yorkers can earn HSE credentials. The ability to use passing Regents examination scores toward earning an HSE diploma will expand the opportunity for high-school students at risk of dropping out as well as students with disabilities to stay engaged with their education and offer an incentive for meeting graduation requirements to those whose circumstances may not allow for completion of high school.

Recommendation

With support of the Board of Regents, Department staff will develop proposed regulations.

There are currently three pathways to a High School Equivalency diploma in New York State.

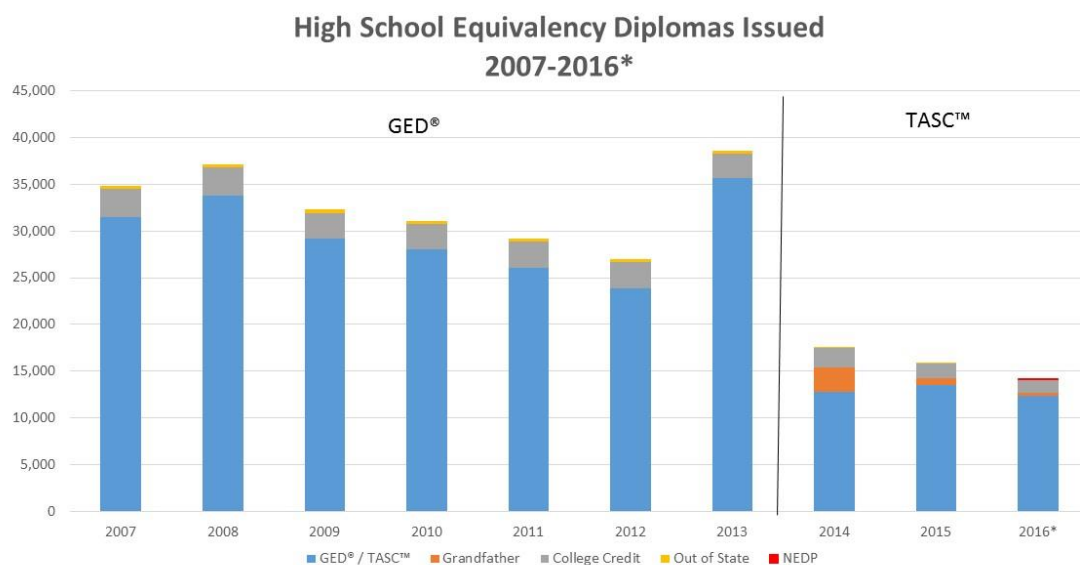
High School Equivalency Exam

Taking and passing the New York State HSE exam is the primary pathway for adults and out-of-school youth to obtain an HSE diploma. Last year, through 2017, over 16,000 New Yorkers passed the TASC™ test and were issued their NYS HSE diplomas (approximately 94% were in English, and 6% were in Spanish.)

New York State also allows eligible residents who lived outside of NYS and who passed GED® subtests prior to 2014, and TASC™ test subtests since 2014, to apply those passing scores to earn a NYS HSE Diploma. This practice is referred to as “Out-of-State” testers. In 2016 there were 31 Out-of-State HSE diploma recipients.

Figure 1 shows the number of diplomas issued via the three pathways since 2007.

Figure 1.



The number of High School Equivalency diplomas earned has declined as the number of P-12 graduates increases.
 *Data are as of 12/7/2016

24 College Credits

The HSE diploma earned through college credit has been available in accordance with CR 100.7 since the 1960’s. The last regulatory change regarding this program became effective in September 2004, when language was added to CR 100.7 to ensure that college credits were from an approved institution and followed the prescribed course

and credit distribution. In 2016, 1,417 New Yorkers received HSE diplomas by successfully completing the 24 college credit hour requirements.

National External Diploma Program

The authorization of the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) as a local HSE diploma was first adopted at the November 1984 Regents meeting, which added Section 100.8 as part of a new Part 100. The regulation allowed boards of education to award a local HSE diploma based upon experimental programs approved by the Commissioner, and became effective September 1, 1985.

The regulations were amended again in 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 to continue to allow school districts to issue local diplomas. In May 2016, an amendment was made to CR 100.7 and CR 100.8 to discontinue the NEDP as a local diploma and establish it as the third pathway to a state-issued HSE diploma. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) began the issuance of these diplomas on September 1, 2016. Since its inception, 175 individuals have received their NYS HSE diplomas as a result of meeting the NEDP requirements.