

Proposed CDE GED Test-Taker FAQs

General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS[®]) has made a recommendation to California to lower the passing score for the General Educational Development (GED[®]) test.

What is the state process for approving the recommendation?

California state law requires that the California State Board of Education (SBE) establish the score a pupil must achieve to earn their California High School Equivalency Certificate, which is equal to the standard of performance expected from high school graduates. Any proposed SBE action is subject to a number of pre-action procedures, including staff review and analysis, proper public notice, and an opportunity for public comment.

I read in a press release that the lower scores will go into effect immediately, is that true?

Some states are able to implement the recommendation immediately and have issued press releases that are applicable to test takers in their state. However, in California, *Education Code* Section 51420 requires that the SBE establish the score a pupil must achieve to earn their California High School Equivalency Certificate. In order for the SBE to establish a score they must follow a public hearing process.

Unless the GEDTS[®] recommendation is approved by the SBE, no change to the passing score will be made to achieve a California High School Equivalency Certificate. California is not alone in this situation as there are several other states that are not able to implement the change immediately.

When will the SBE be able to have a public hearing?

The next SBE meeting is scheduled for March 9 and 10, 2016. Every effort is being made to include this item on the SBE Agenda for that meeting.

What work must be done in advance of the SBE meeting?

By law, the score, determined by the SBE, must be equal to the standard of performance expected from high school graduates. CDE staff must review and analyze GED[®]'s data to ensure that California's particular legal standard is met by the reduced passing score recommended by GEDTS[®]. The CDE is currently working with GEDTS[®] to obtain empirical data in order to appropriately develop a recommendation to allow the SBE to make a fully informed decision.

Will the SBE also be considering GED[®]'s "College Ready" and "Plus Credit" classifications?

Each post-secondary institution is ultimately responsible for determining its own policy regarding remedial classwork and credits based on GED® test scores. The CDE is not reviewing these aspects of GED®'s program.

What is the proposed lower score?

GEDTS® proposes reducing the score required to pass the GED® by 5 points, from 150 to 145.

If the SBE approves the proposed lower score, how will that impact GED test takers who have achieved a score of 145 over the past two years?

Part of the GEDTS® recommendation to the SBE includes the retroactive grant of California High School Equivalency Certificates to persons who have achieved a score of 145 or higher on the 2014 version of the test, at any time since it was first released on January 1, 2014 in California.

If the SBE approves the proposed lower score, will test takers who are retroactively granted certificates be reimbursed for their expenses to continue testing?

GEDTS® has indicated to the CDE that they will not reimburse test takers for expenses incurred to continue to prepare for and retake the test, as GEDTS® allows two free retests.

Will persons who tested in California institutions, such as county jails and state prisons, also be included in this decision?

Many of California's institutions continued to use the 2002 GED® paper-based test under a Transitional Waiver Program in 2014 and part of 2015. Test takers administered the 2002 GED® paper-based tests are not included in the recommendation from GEDTS®.

Institutions discontinued the 2002 GED® paper-based tests in mid-2015. Test takers in institutions, which began administering the 2014 GED® computer-based tests, would be eligible if the SBE approves the GEDTS® recommendation.

Are the other high school equivalency tests effected by this proposed change?

No. California continues to provide three test options for persons interested in earning their California High School Equivalency Certificate. The tests are:

- The High School Equivalency Test (HiSET®), offered by Educational Testing Service (ETS)

- The Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™), offered by Data Recognition Corporation (DRC)
- The General Educational Development (GED®) test, offered by GED Testing Service (GEDTS®)

The GEDTS® recommendation only applies to the 2014 computer-based version of the test offered by GEDTS®. In the event that ETS or DRC find that it would be appropriate to modify their passing scores for the HiSET® or TASC™, respectively, they would be required to go through the same process to comply with California state law and substantiate their recommendations in a public hearing before the SBE.