





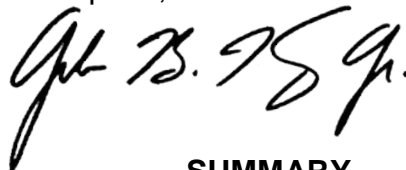
**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services  
(ACCES) Committee

**FROM:** Kevin G. Smith   
Ken Slentz 

**SUBJECT:** Update on Multiple Pathways to a High School  
Equivalency Diploma

**DATE:** April 9, 2012

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**



**SUMMARY**

**Issue for Discussion**

To update the Board on recent activities by the Department to consider and develop multiple pathways to a High School Equivalency Diploma.

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

For Information

**Proposed Handling**

This item will come before a joint meeting of the Regents P-12 Education Committee and the ACCES Committee at the April 2012 meeting.

**Procedural History**

In October 2011, the ACCES Committee was informed of developments to the GED<sup>®</sup> test which raise concerns regarding the State's reliance on the test as the primary pathway to a New York State High School Equivalency Diploma. In February 2012, the Committee discussed alternative pathways to a High School Equivalency Diploma.

## **Background Information**

With the release of a new GED® test in 2014, which is likely to be less accessible, due to potential increase in cost, the Regents ACCES Committee agreed that SED should explore multiple pathways to a High School Equivalency Diploma. At the February 2012 meeting, the ACCES Committee agreed that SED should work with other states and professional associations to develop these options and also recommended that SED issue a Request for Information (RFI) to see what products and programs may be available. These efforts are consistent with the Regents reform agenda that is looking at Common Core Learning Standards and how the new standards relate to Adult Education, the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential for special education, and work to expand Career and Technical Education.

SED has been working with other states and national adult education associations to identify assessments and programs other than the GED® test that may serve as an appropriate pathway to a High School Equivalency Diploma. For example, New York and Massachusetts co-chair a workgroup of adult educators from 21 states which is investigating alternative options to the GED® test. This workgroup has begun preliminary discussions with Race to the Top Common Core Assessment Consortia--both the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) to explore the possibility of adapting these tests for use with out-of-school youth and adults. This workgroup is also surveying and identifying options being developed in other states, including end of course examinations; development of new high school equivalency tests aligned to high school item banks; and turnkey vendor tests. This includes a new online high school equivalency test that is being developed by the State of Texas.

In addition, SED has been proactively working with professional adult education associations throughout New York State. These groups include the New York State Association of Continuing and Community Education (NYACCE) and three workgroups in New York City that formed because of concerns about the new GED® test being rolled out January 1, 2014.

These initiatives have been instrumental in preparing a RFI which will help us identify products that are either currently available or may become available which may provide alternative pathways to a High School Equivalency Diploma. SED has worked closely with both Missouri and Massachusetts to develop a draft RFI which is currently being reviewed internally. SED has involved key researchers and assessment experts in this effort including: Stephen Sireci, Professor of Education and Co-Chairperson of the Research and Evaluation Methods Program and Director of the Center for Educational Assessment in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; Dr. David Joost, Director of Adult Education Programs for the Houston Community College System whose doctoral dissertation was "Comparing the General Education Development (GED) Tests to the ACT COMPASS Placement Tests;" Michael Muenks, who heads assessment for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and Kristen Huff, Senior Fellow, New York Regents Research Fund.

Corollary to the development of the RFI and consistent with Board action in February, 2012, we have solidified efforts to engage SUNY and CUNY to determine if their college placement instrument(s) could be used to lead to a High School Equivalency Diploma. Eight community colleges in central southern New York, working in partnership with SED and SUNY central, have begun a pilot involving adult students enrolled in NYSED funded adult education programs. The objective is to share data in order to align scores. Historical data from the past five years will be mined from existing community college data. Nassau BOCES and Nassau Community College have also expressed interest in the pilot. The pilot will also evaluate the use of a series of TABE tests that are aligned with secondary education completion and the current GED test. Discussions with CUNY leadership and David Crook, University Dean for Institutional Research and Assessment at CUNY, have begun to conceptualize a research study that would equate the GED sub-scores of CUNY students who took both the current GED test and COMPASS between 2002 and present.

A number of states have expressed concern with the changes to the GED® test and are also planning on issuing Requests for Information and/or Requests for Proposals to explore alternative products or programs. The information contained in New York's draft RFI will be shared across states and used to inform multi-state processes. All results will be pooled, analyzed and disseminated through the national state directors of adult education association.

### **Recommendation**

The Board should direct staff to continue to explore and develop multiple pathways and provide them with periodic updates.