



September 6, 2013

Ms. Connie Oswald  
Department of Administration, Purchasing Division  
2019 Washington Street East  
Charleston, WV 25305-0130

Subject: RFQ Number EDD398716—High School Equivalency Assignment Aligned to West Virginia's Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives

Dear Ms. Oswald,

On behalf of GED Testing Service LLC (GEDTS), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit a proposal to the State of West Virginia Department of Administration, Purchasing Division, on behalf of the West Virginia Department of Education, in response to request for quote (RFQ) number EDD398716 for a high school equivalency assignment aligned to West Virginia's next generation content standards and objectives, to be administered in both computer- and paper-based formats. After careful consideration of the RFQ requirement to provide paper-based testing, GEDTS respectfully declines to submit a proposal of services. This is an unfortunate situation for West Virginia adult learners who may not be able to take the nation's most trusted and widely administered high school equivalency test.

The GED® test, which has earned its excellent reputation in and beyond West Virginia, will continue to be available nationally in 2014, when the new series will be published as a computer-based test (CBT). While we regret that we are unable to fulfill your requirement for paper-based delivery of our assessment, we sincerely hope West Virginia will reconsider its requirement for paper-based testing and continue to grant your high school equivalency credential to those adults in West Virginia who choose to take, and successfully pass, the GED® test.

Since 1942, more than 19 million individuals have earned their second chance at a high school credential and received their passports to postsecondary education, better jobs, and family sustaining wages through the GED® test. In West Virginia alone, nearly 200,000 people have earned their high school credential with the program, and more than 1,000 GED® tests have been delivered to adults in the State already this year. Below, we have noted some of the key reasons that the GED® test represents the best choice for a high school equivalency assessment for West Virginia and your constituents.

**The GED® test is the only such test that is accepted by all jurisdictions across the U.S. and Canada as a basis for awarding a high school equivalency credential.**

Virtually all employers and colleges accept an equivalency credential awarded as a result of passing the GED® test. We believe it is of paramount importance to West Virginia that colleges and employers recognize and have confidence in the awarding of a high school equivalency credential based on the GED® test, which represents a national standard to colleges and employers. GED® test-takers throughout the country who pass the test enjoy the benefits of its national recognition and acceptance by colleges and employers.

Millions of adults without high school diplomas lack the skills and knowledge to succeed in the 21st century workplace. This impacts every community in America, and it is devastating to the adults who want to fulfill the American dream of a better life for themselves and their families. We need to give them a fighting chance. That is why GEDTS overhauled its testing program: to ensure that the credential would continue to be meaningful for the employers and institutions that recognize and accept it. Four million middle-skill jobs today go unfilled because our workforce is unprepared to take on these jobs; it is imperative that, as we prepare students to obtain their GED® credential, we also put them on a trajectory to obtaining these jobs, ones that will allow them to earn family-sustaining wages and meet their ambitions.

Over the last four years, we came to the realization that in order to better serve adult learners, we would need to dramatically evolve our program to keep pace with efforts underway nationally to better prepare students to be competitive in a global marketplace. With the goal of improving outcomes for our test-takers, we have invested tens of millions of dollars to create a transformational approach to helping students prepare for and achieve their credential—an investment that citizens of West Virginia would benefit from immediately. We are confident that the resulting credential will truly be a steppingstone towards helping adults achieve success in their college and career goals. Our vision and the resulting work were subjected to the scrutiny and guidance of stakeholders throughout the country in one of the most collaborative undertakings in our history.

**Our new GED® test, which will be available January 1, 2014, is the only available test that as of that date will be fully aligned with college and career readiness criteria, and aligned with the Office of Vocational Adult Education (OVAE) recommended standards.**

**The GED® exam would provide West Virginia test-takers with the only nationally recognized and accepted high school equivalency credential, which has been presented as an absolute requirement for the successful vendor.** We strongly feel that in order to be truly college and career ready, computer literacy is a must-have skill, which is why our new GED® test will only be available for delivery as a CBT. This is a key differentiator of the GED® test compared to the alternative options. We stand by our principle of providing the best outcome for adults needing an alternative credential to move into a better job or post-secondary education.

**The 2014 GED® program is designed to save money for the State.**

Improved tools will save costs in administration, test delivery, and data management. Specific savings for the state include the following:

- **Registration**—Completed online by the test-taker
- **Scheduling**—Completed online by the test-taker
- **Credentialing/Transcripts**—Can be provided by GEDTS at the State's option
- **Proctoring**—Provided at the test site by certified professionals
- **Reporting/Data Management**—Numerous tools provided as a standard feature
- **Scoring**—Included in the test fee
- **Accommodations**—Administration services provided by GEDTS

**The above services are provided at no additional cost to the test-taker or to the State of West Virginia.**

**The 2014 GED® program is designed with a learner-centric approach.**

At the heart of the new program is the 2014 GED® test—the only high school equivalency test that has been designed from the ground up and will be aligned to college and career readiness standards from the moment it launches in January 2014. The new test has been in development for over three years and has been informed by experts in measurement and testing as well as

employers, higher-ed institutions, and literacy organizations. Significantly, through the CBT format, students will be able to demonstrate basic computer proficiency skills now required by nearly all jobs; additionally, programs will be able to achieve the many benefits the CBT format offers and will be able to serve an increasing number of students.

A learner-centric system will produce better outcomes for students; it will also contribute to better outcomes for your state and local communities. With a single, comprehensive system, your state can save on its annual costs for GED® testing, scoring, proctoring, security, and data management. Reducing manual processes and the unmanageable costs associated with them means your state can run a more efficient adult education program. Adult education is widely recognized as a vital pipeline for building a skilled workforce and increasing a state's income tax base and business attractiveness.

The GED® 2014 program is designed to save the test-taker time, money, and energy.

The specific savings for the test-taker include the following:

- **Time to test**—With online registration and scheduling, a student can move forward any day, any time, and not wait for the center to be open the next morning.
- **Time to jobs and college**—With same-day scores, students know how they did and can apply for their desired jobs or training programs the same day.
- **Money**—The ability to register for one test at a time means that students can budget the cost of the test and preparation in pieces and build a realistic plan of success, rather than worrying about paying for everything up front.
- **Anxiety**—Studies have shown that the individualized system available through CBT has led to a more enjoyable experience for the student.
- **Days off Work**—When a student can register, schedule, and test on days and at times that work for them, they can make this process work around their schedule and not miss days at work that are crucial to their family budget.
- **Daycare Costs**—Many test-takers are single parents with little or no family nearby to help care for children. With online preparation tools like MyGED™ (Figure 1) and GED Ready, students can prepare for the 2014 GED test at home, in full sight of their children.

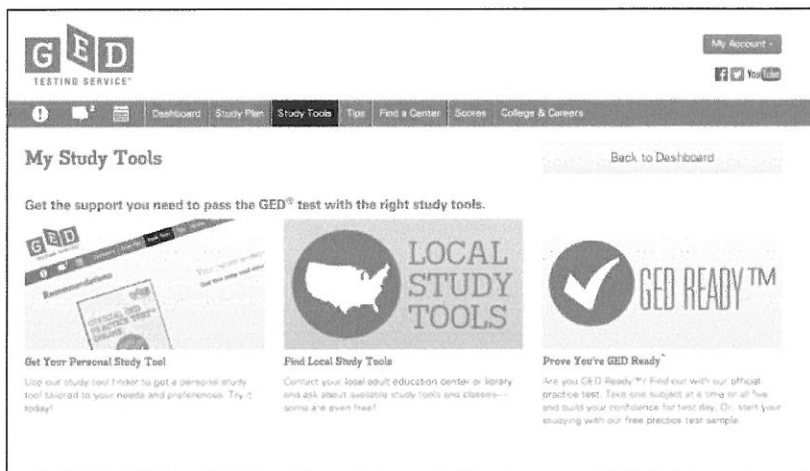


Figure 1. Students have the full breadth of study tools available all in one easy-to-use site.

When these cost savings are factored in, especially the ability to schedule the tests, pass the tests, and gain a credential that can lead to a job all within a week's time, our adults are financially ahead with the GEDTS CBT test. What may appear to be a "less expensive test" from a competitor may in fact keep an adult from gaining higher earnings sooner.



**The tools described above will all be available with the launch of the 2014 program**—and we're working on more. Later in 2014, we expect to launch an adult-educator portal with the intent to provide greater access to tools and resources geared specifically for those that prepare students for the GED® test; this portal will allow educators to connect seamlessly with their peers and students. We firmly believe that these enhancements to the GED® program will make the test more accessible to students and more valuable to employers and educational institutions. This program will result in meaningful outcomes for students, and our communities will be stronger because of it.

**The GED® 2014 program's efficiencies also benefit the State and West Virginia's communities.**

At GEDTS, we have delivered **over 200,000 tests to adults via CBT since January 2012**. Through our CBT offering, we are able to greatly reduce the state and local test centers' administrative costs through efficient online registration, test delivery, and score reporting. In addition, computer-based exams are inherently more secure and offer features that simply cannot be matched by paper-based exams.

GEDTS's comprehensive 2014 GED® program will help adults get good jobs, saving your state resources now and over time. It is important to recognize the results of having the 2014 GED program in your state, which will be felt by your communities in many ways:

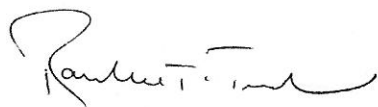
- More adults will get good jobs that pay a good wage, and be able to care for their families.
- More adults will be paying income taxes and contributing to your revenue base.
- More adults will encourage their children to stay in school.
- More adults will be able to get off food stamps and Medicaid.

Adult education is the pipeline to a larger skilled workforce and a more viable state economy. The assessment West Virginia chooses is not merely about a test; it is about the opportunities your citizens will have to earn a credential, get a job, and care for their families.

We at GEDTS want to continue to serve the citizens of West Virginia for decades to come. Should the State of West Virginia decide to reconsider the RFP's requirements for paper-based exams and/or pursue a CBT alternative, we would be happy to discuss ways in which the GED® test can remain an option for your adult learners.

If you have any questions about our program or our proposed alternative, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Randy Trask  
President  
GED Testing Service LLC  
Tel: 952-681-3730  
Email: [randy.trask@gedtestingservice.com](mailto:randy.trask@gedtestingservice.com)

Cc: James B. Phares, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools