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GED® 21st CENTURY INITIATIVE

Helping more adults become career- and college-ready. This article was reprinted from the official GED® Testing Center web site: www.gedcbt.org

Background

The GED 21st Century Initiative will transform the GED test into a comprehensive program that will prepare more adult learners for postsecondary education, training, and careers. The program's structure includes three major components:

- Nationally accessible preparation programs designed to prepare more adults more quickly to perform on the new GED exam;
- A GED assessment system based on 21st century skill requirements including alignment with emerging Common Core state standards and certifying not just high school equivalence but also college- and career-readiness;
- A transition network that supports and links adults with postsecondary education, training and career opportunities -- providing them a chance to earn a sustainable living wage.

The Initiative will contribute to the nation's vital goal to build a globally competitive workforce by ensuring more adults, who previously dropped out of high school, become college- and career-ready through this new GED program. Learn more about how the program will evolve in the [Framework of the GED 21st Century Initiative](#) (PDF).

ACE and Pearson Collaborate to Transform GED Test, Aligned with Common Core State Standards, Based on GED 21st Century Initiative

Enhanced GED Testing Program Will Validate Career- and College-Readiness

Washington, DC (March 15, 2011)—The American Council on Education (ACE) and Pearson today announced the creation of a ground-breaking new business that will drive the future direction, design, and delivery of the GED® testing program. Building on the goals of the GED 21st Century Initiative, the two partners will combine their collective expertise and resources to develop a new GED Test aligned with Common Core State Standards that will assure colleges, universities and prospective employers that adults who have passed the GED Tests are prepared to compete and succeed in a global economy.

The GED Test is used by all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, U.S. insular areas, Canadian provinces and territories, the U.S. military, and federal correctional institutions for the purpose of awarding a high school graduation equivalency credential. Nearly 800,000 GED Tests are taken each year, and in 2009, more than 470,000 individuals were awarded their high school credential.

The new business, modeled to represent a public-private partnership, will retain the GED Testing Service name. The new GED Testing Service will build on its past experience in adult and continuing education by harnessing the considerable resources of Pearson, the world's largest education and testing company, with the nearly 70-year history of ACE to expand access to the GED Test, ensure its quality and integrity, and adapt the GED Test to 21st century testing practices. The three primary components of the GED 21st Century Initiative will include:

- A new, more rigorous GED Test aligned with Common Core State Standards designed to ensure career- and college-readiness;
- A national test preparation program featuring an expanding array of innovative and personalized learning resources; and,
- A transition network that connects GED test-takers to career and postsecondary educational opportunities.

"This bold, far-sighted and innovative partnership will provide a new, fresh approach toward solving an old and pernicious problem—the incredible waste of human talent represented by the millions of Americans who lack a high-school diploma," said ACE President Molly Corbett Broad. "Collaborating with a global leader in education and testing to launch a new GED Testing Service will allow us to achieve the goals of ACE's college-ready GED initiative in the fastest and most efficient manner possible."

The resources provided through this partnership will dramatically extend access to the GED credential for American adults and ensure the future quality of the GED Test. This partnership will also enable ACE to focus our efforts on learning pathways and policies that support adult learners."

"More than 39 million adult Americans lack high school credentials and that number continues to grow at an alarming rate. Earning \$7,000 less each year than those with high school credentials, these adults and their families will endure a lifetime of hardship. The lost lifetime earnings for the drop-outs from the class of 2007 alone add up to a \$329 billion hole in the US economy," said Randy Trask, senior vice president at Pearson. "We recognize that the government and concerned foundations cannot address this problem alone, and we believe that creating this unique partnership is the first step in transforming our national efforts to give adults a second chance at earning their high school credential and pursuing further education or earning a sustaining wage."

"The rich heritage and knowledge from GED Testing Service and ACE combined with Pearson's resources and marketplace expertise in education is a powerful combination that is sure to benefit millions of test-takers," said GED Testing Service Executive Director and ACE Vice President Nicole Chestang. "We are confident this new partnership will greatly enhance our offerings. In the meantime, as the new GED Test is developed, current GED testing operations will continue, and states will receive full, unfettered access to services and test delivery."

The new GED Testing Service is to be based in Washington, D.C., with additional offices in Minneapolis, Minn. The new entity will be governed by a board of directors comprised of four executives from each of the two partner organizations and is expected to be fully operational within 30 days.

Additional resources include: About ACE, About Pearson, About GEDTS, Frequently Asked Questions, and Media Contacts for More Information.

About ACE: *Founded in 1918, ACE (www.acenet.edu) is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, representing more than 1,600 college and university presidents, and more than 200 related associations, nationwide. It provides leadership on key higher education issues and influences public policy through advocacy.*

About Pearson: *Pearson is the world's leading learning company, providing educational materials and services, business information through the Financial Times Group, and consumer publishing through the Penguin brand. Pearson serves learners of all ages around the globe, employing 36,000 people in more than 70 countries, and is listed on the London and New York stock exchanges.*

For more information, visit www.pearson.com.

About the current GED® Testing Service: *GED Testing Service (www.GEDtest.org) is a program of ACE which develops, delivers, and safeguards the GED Test, setting the policy for and ensuring compliance of test administration. GED testing is administered by each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the Canadian provinces and territories, the U.S. insular areas, U.S. military and federal correctional institutions. To date more than 18 million individuals have passed the GED Test and opened doors to opportunities in postsecondary training, education and careers.*

Computer-Based Testing (CBT)

Why CBT for the GED Testing Program?

GED Testing Service is committed to providing adult learners with more access. Thirty-nine million Americans don't have a high school diploma. The current GED testing program reaches just 2 percent of this population. Computer-based testing (CBT) provides these adults with increased and improved access to GED testing, and to the only nationally recognized high school equivalency credential.

CBT is the standard for many other assessments. It will become the standard for all key K-12 assessments in the future. Familiarity with technology is expected in almost every career path, regardless of the worker's age. It is time for the GED testing program to carefully add CBT to its traditional paper-based delivery system.

Meeting your information needs and the needs of test-takers is our priority. This web presence will share the most current information about GED Testing Service's CBT project. You can read background information and research, stories about CBT implementation, and ask your questions right here. As the **CBT Vision** states, this project requires open communication and partnership. We encourage you to visit this site frequently, share it with your colleagues, and stay up to date by subscribing to our eNewsletter, **The Community**.

CBT Vision

The CBT Project will increase access and opportunity for adult learners to pursue and attain the nationally recognized high school equivalency credential awarded by passing the GED Tests.

Modernizing the GED Test distribution channels to include a computer-based testing system requires a partnership between GED Testing Service, field representatives in GED testing and adult education, and experts in assessment technologies. The CBT Project is part of the GED 21st Century Initiative which will create a comprehensive GED program that prepares more adults for postsecondary education, training, and careers and the ability to earn a family-sustaining living wage. The initiative will contribute to the nation's vital goal to build a globally competitive workforce by ensuring more adults, who previously dropped out of high school, become college and career ready.

Members of the CBT Project team recognize the cultural and technological shift that the project requires. As such, team members are committed to three guiding principles in support of successful project implementation:

1. Open and honest communications among team members to facilitate understanding, constructive conversations and compromise when necessary.
2. A positive and collaborative perspective that identifies roadblocks and suggests solutions which all parties can support to resolve issues.
3. A dedication to putting the needs of the test-taker first in all decisions.

The CBT Project, GED 21st Century Initiative and all associated teams exist in order to help the 39 million Americans who need a second chance to enter postsecondary educational programs and to attain a sustainable living wage.

The questions below have been submitted by your colleagues in the educational and GED testing communities. If, after reading the information below, you would like additional information, [submit your questions online](#). Find out when new FAQs are posted by signing up to receive our free eNewsletter, [The Community](#).

GED® 21st CENTURY INITIATIVE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GED® 21ST CENTURY INITIATIVE

How closely aligned to the common core standards will the 2020 version be? Will the revised test still be introduced in 2012?

The good news is that there will be a new assessment well in advance of 2020. The next generation GED exam, and its complementary assessments, will be introduced as part of the GED 21st Century Initiative in 2014. No new edition of the GED Tests will be introduced in 2012. Please refer to the [memo here](#) distributed on October 7, 2009 regarding the national needs that altered plans to introduce the 2012 Series/5th Edition GED Tests. The new GED assessment system *will* be aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Will test scores expire? Will spelling be given more weight in the Essay scoring guide?

Test scores on the current 2002 Series GED Tests will expire when the next-generation exam is released sometime in 2014. (Updated 3-31-11)

Although it is much too early for guidelines for scoring of essays and other possible constructed response items on the new GED assessment to have been developed, it is highly unlikely that spelling will be evaluated in these types of items. Adults in the 21st Century generally have access to spelling tools, and so evaluation of responses to assessment items would likely take that fact into account. As the new GED assessment continues in development, GED Testing Service will share the expectations and scoring guidelines with the field. (Posted 10-30-10)

I have heard the new test will be on-line.

The next-generation GED assessment, to be launched sometime in 2014, will be administered through computer-based testing (CBT), although paper-based testing (PBT) will still be available under certain circumstances or as an accommodation. The computer-based version of the GED Tests will only be offered at Official GED Testing Centers. The test will not be administered via the Internet ("online testing") outside of those official centers. This is crucial for GED Administrators and examiners to understand in promoting security for test-takers who may fall victim to online diploma mills or frauds. It is important to note that until the next-generation test is launched, the 2002 Series GED Test will be administered in both PBT and CBT formats. (Updated 11-31-10)

When is the projected date?

This is a question we hear a lot. However, the new GED 21st Century Initiative is not a single event or product launch. It is a new way of thinking about the GED testing program. The GED 21st Century Initiative is our commitment to helping more adults become career- and college-ready by transforming the GED Test into a comprehensive program. By building a more robust assessment, complete with preparation tools and transitions to college and careers, GED Testing Service and ACE hope to increase the number of adults who can enter and succeed in college and the workforce. It's a long-term program and we need your support to do it! (Posted 10-30-10)

Since the GED 21st Century Initiative is focused on "helping more adults become career- and college-ready by transforming the GED Tests into a comprehensive program," is consideration being given to including a computer skills assessment as an additional component to obtaining the GED?

The new GED assessment will be aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); consequently and developed to certify high school equivalency as well as career- and college-readiness. Part of this development includes consulting with adult learning experts, employers and colleges to understand what is needed for life success and building a content framework based on these and other inputs. This means new thinking in test development philosophy, including consideration of including career-and college-readiness skills. (Posted 12-15-10)

To match the higher standard that the new test will be, has there been consideration of a new name for the test to distinguish it from the previous versions? Maybe CRE: College Readiness Exam.

Thank you for the suggestion! GED Testing Service has already started considering the branding implications that come with the broad vision of the GED 21st Century Initiative. The work on the new test's brand is likely to take a couple of years from start to finish. It will require market research and feedback from a variety of sources before a final decision is made. Work focused on this topic will commence soon and the field will be involved in the process, as with all the new initiatives. (Posted 2-2-11)

Do you have any more specific information about your National Preparation Program?

The first component of the GED 21st Century Initiative is focused on developing what we are calling "learning pathways" for adult learners to study and prepare for success on the GED Tests and beyond. The work to develop innovative accelerated learning practices has already begun with a pilot study in New York City's District 79. Read more about this pilot and the MetLife Foundation grant that made it possible. (Posted 3-31-11)

Will the National Preparation program be largely computer-based? Will students work independently or collaboratively? Will it be designed to work with students who have less than grade level 3 reading or writing skills?

The term "National Preparation Program" is actually shorthand that refers to a wide range of programs and materials that will be accessible to test-takers nationwide. Because the adult learners that approach GED preparation come from such a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills, and experiences, multiple approaches will be needed to help prepare candidates to take and succeed on the next-generation GED exam. These preparation resources will be guided by criteria and standards set by GED Testing Service and will take a variety of forms including print material, online courses, and even instructor-led courses that employ materials vetted by GED Testing Service. Learners may use the instructional materials independently or collaboratively. Academic competency needs of learners whose literacy and mathematics skills are at the elementary school level will be addressed, though it is likely that materials below the grade-3 level will not be available. (Posted 3-31-11)

What will be the role of instructors in this National Preparation Program?

Instructors will play a key role in preparing candidates to take the next-generation GED exam. Although materials will be available to help individuals engage in self-study to prepare themselves for the test, many test-takers will still want and need to participate in classroom-based, distance learning, or blended learning programs in which instructors will assist test-takers along their learning journey in both academic and motivational terms. (Posted 3-31-11)

Where can I go to read current research, etc. about accelerated learning? I would like to read about real-life examples.

The Learning Pathways group at the American Council on Education (ACE) is currently compiling a bibliography of accelerated learning research. This bibliography will be available in the future on the GED Testing Service web site. A link to the bibliography will appear in a future edition of *The Community*. (Posted 3-31-11)

Will there be more than one version of the GED in the new initiative. For example will there be an edition for those who want to go on a "college track" and one for those who need basic skills for entry level jobs?

The next-generation GED exam will be based on 21st century skills and knowledge, including the Common Core State Standards. As expressed in the GED 21st Century Initiative, the goal is to help more adults become both career- and college-ready. Part of that goal requires the next-generation GED exam to evaluate readiness for multiple postsecondary options such as those adults who want to earn a credential for a job requirement and those adults who wish to earn a college degree. The details about how the GED assessment will evaluate these skill levels, and if there will be multiple assessments or assessment parts, are still being discussed and developed. (Posted 3-31-11)

When will the new PBT be released and/ or will it be announced in *The Community* newsletter first?

The next-generation GED assessment system will be released sometime in 2014. The next-generation GED exam will be delivered primarily through computer-based testing; paper-based testing will be available only for accommodations or special circumstances. This was announced in early March as part of the announcement of the new GED Testing Service, LLC—a joint venture between ACE and Pearson to realize the goals of the GED 21st Century Initiative more quickly and more effectively than any one organization could have accomplished on its own. (Posted 3-31-11)

Is there a conference or training opportunity for the new assessment?

GED Testing Service will be working with nonprofit, governmental, and local programs to ensure there are professional development opportunities available for adult education professionals in advance of the release of the next-generation GED exam. GED Administrators will also receive up-to-date information at the annual summer conference. The next-generation GED exam will be delivered primarily through computer-based testing; paper-based testing will be available only for accommodations or special circumstances. (Posted 3-31-11)

If you would like additional information, [submit your questions online](#). Find out when new FAQs are posted by signing up to receive our free eNewsletter, *The Community*.

When CBT PHASE 2 Comes To You

Adding CBT to the GED testing program in all jurisdictions will take 3-4 years. GED Testing Service has divided jurisdictions into cohorts with similar qualities. This staged approach to implementation will ensure jurisdictions have the full resources available from GED Testing Service and Pearson VUE. It will also support a smooth and successful addition of CBT. Additionally, a phased approach provides jurisdictions with the opportunity to share experiences with other testing professionals going through the same process.

Each cohort is expected to go through a 4-6 month process where **local planning** will precede implementation. GED Testing Services estimates CBT PHASE 2 will be completed by the end of 2013.

CBT PHASE 2 List of Cohorts

See the [List of Cohorts](#) for more specific information about CBT PHASE 2 implementation in your jurisdiction.

MAY 2011 ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Date	Topic	Time	PD Hours
Monday, May 2	Power Point in the Classroom	1-5 p.m.	4
Tuesday, May 3	Health Literacy	9a.m-1 p.m	4
Wed. May 4	Cognitive Abilities	3-5 p.m.	2
Friday, May 6	Lone Ranger (for ABE/ASE teachers with a few ESL students)	1-5 p.m.	4
Saturday, May 7	CASAS (need to pre-register by May 2)	9a.m. -3:30 p.m.	6
Monday, May 9	Metacognitive Skills	5-9 p.m.	4
Tuesday, May 10	Advanced ACES (for ACES staff)	9-11 a.m.	
Tuesday, May 10	Reading Strategies	1-3 p.m.	2
Thursday, May 12	Metacognitive Skills	1-5 p.m.	4
Thursday, May 12	Thinkfinity online resources	6-8 p.m.	2
Wed. May 18	Employability Skills	8 a.m.-12	4
Wed. May 18	Math Starters	2-4 p.m.	2
Thursday, May 19	How Do You Mix Your Soup?	9a.m.-1p.m	4
Thursday, May 19	Advanced ACES (for ACES staff)	2-4 p.m.	
Thursday, May 19	Reading Strategies	6-8 p.m.	2
Friday, May 20	Lone Ranger	5-9 p.m.	4
Tuesday, May 31	Math Starters	9-11 a.m.	2

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