

The New High School Equivalency (HSE) Exam in New York State

An overview of the changes

Hello, and welcome to an overview of the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC[™] test) the new high school equivalency (HSE) exam in New York State.

HSE Exam Overview

- ▶ History
- ▶ Transition
- ▶ Improving the HSE Exam
- ▶ Introduction to the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™ test)
- ▶ TASC™ test content
- ▶ Resources

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This presentation provides an overview of HSE in New York State (NYS). We will start with a brief look at the history of HSE and the transition to the new 2014 HSE exam.

Next, there will be a review of the outcomes for HSE diploma recipients and the need to improve the HSE exam.

This will be followed by an introduction of the TASC™ test, and a preview of its content. Some resources useful for TASC™ test preparation will be suggested.

HSE Exam History

- ▶ Partnership with Pearson VUE
- ▶ Competition

In 2011, the GED Testing Service®, a subsidiary of the non-profit American Council on Education (ACE), announced the formation of a public/private partnership with the publishing and test producing company, Pearson VUE.

The change to a public/private partnership likely encouraged other test vendors to enter the HSE examination market.

HSE Exam History

- ▶ New 2014 GED® exam
- ▶ Increased cost
- ▶ Computer-based test
- ▶ Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

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While the issuance of high school diplomas has always been the purview of the states, historically the GED® served as a national HSE exam and was the only national exam available for attainment of an HSE diploma from the 1940s through 2013.

When the public/private partnership of the GED Testing Service® and Pearson announced that the new 2014 GED® exam would be offered only in a computer-based format, and at an increased price, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) had concerns:

- Cost Increase: NYS tax payers bear the cost of each exam administered.
- Technical Capacity: Some testing centers are not equipped to accommodate computer-based testing.
- Common Core State Standards: The GED® planned to immediately align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The New HSE Exam

- ▶ 2014–2016: CTB/McGraw-Hill TASC™ test
 - Paper-based format
 - Computer-based format
 - Lower cost

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In 2012, to better meet the needs of NYS residents through increased access at a lower cost, NYSED conducted an RFP and through this competitive procurement chose the TASC™ test. NYS entered into a contract with CTB to use the TASC™ test for NYS's HSE exam from 2014 through 2016. CTB developed the TASC™ test as an HSE exam for national use. The TASC™ test is available in both paper-based and computer-based formats and at a lower cost than the GED®.

HSE –The Need to Make Improvements

Compared to traditional high school graduates, HSE diploma recipients:

- ▶ Have lower hourly wages
- ▶ Work fewer hours
- ▶ Have a higher turnover rate (Boesel, Alsalam, and Smith, 1998)
- ▶ Have a higher probability of living in poverty (Georges, 2001)
- ▶ Are seen as “Not good enough” by employers (Sanchez, 2012)

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While HSE diploma recipients have significantly better employment and earnings outcomes than people without any form of a high school diploma, there are significant gaps when compared to recipients of a traditional high school diploma.

With or without post-secondary education or training, when compared to regular high school diploma recipients, HSE diploma recipients, on average, earn lower hourly wages and work fewer hours. They also have a higher job turnover rate and have a higher probability of living in poverty.

Sanchez reported in 2012 that a HSE diploma is seen by employers and college admissions officers as “not good enough” for college and career readiness. With the introduction of a new HSE exam there is the opportunity to close the outcome gap when HSE diploma recipients are compared to traditional high school graduates and to improve outcomes for HSE diploma recipients.

HSE –The Need to Improve: Earnings

- ▶ \$4,300 less per year
- ▶ Very low wages
 - Less than \$5,000 per year

(Song and Hsu, 2008)

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There have always been benefits to obtaining an HSE diploma.

HSE diploma recipients do earn more than people without any form of a high school diploma, and do have generally better employment and socioeconomic outcomes. However, when compared to recipients of a traditional high school diploma, HSE diploma recipients do not fare as well.

Let's take a closer look at the earnings gap for HSE diploma recipients compared to holders of traditional high school diplomas. According to Song and Hsu, on average, HSE diploma recipients earn about \$4,300 per year less than high school graduates.

HSE diploma recipients have a higher probability of being on the lower end of income distribution, defined by earning less than \$5,000 per year. Also, HSE diploma recipients have a lower probability of earning higher incomes of between \$30,000 and \$60,000 per year.

Clearly, the receipt of a stronger, more respected HSE diploma will yield greater benefits in both employment and earnings.

HSE –The Need to Improve

- ▶ Higher standards
- ▶ Additional knowledge and abilities
- ▶ Better prepared

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The content of the national TASC™ test follows the trend for higher standards and achievement in education. The TASC™ test is based on the CCSS. As HSE candidates prepare for the more rigorous TASC™ test they will accumulate more of the knowledge and skills that are valued in the labor market, and employers should begin to place greater value on the new HSE diploma. The new HSE diploma will signal to employers and post-secondary education admission officers that HSE diploma holders are better prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful.

HSE Exam

- ▶ Earning a “High School Equivalency Diploma”
- ▶ TASC™ test– CTB/McGraw–Hill
- ▶ 2014 GED®– ACE/Pearson
- ▶ HiSET® (“High School Equivalency Test®”) Educational Testing Service

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For too long people erroneously said they were “getting a GED®.” The GED® is not a diploma. It is a test that when passed, leads to a High School Equivalency diploma. We need to change the phrase to “earning an HSE diploma.”

There are now three competing HSE exams available nationally. In addition to the GED® from ACE/Pearson and the TASC™ test from CTB/McGraw-Hill, the Educational Testing Service is offering the “High School Equivalency Test®” known as HiSET®.

In New York, the TASC™ test has been approved for administration.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content

- ▶ Common Core State Standards
- ▶ Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
- ▶ Social Studies national frameworks

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The TASC™ test is a newly developed national exam designed to measure the CCSS and other national standards. Examinees will be required to exhibit knowledge in the content areas at a level equivalent to that of recent high school graduates.

The TASC™ test measures the CCSS for both English Language Arts and Mathematics. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) inform the content of the Science Subtest, and the Social Studies Subtest is based on various Social Studies national frameworks.

More information will be shared about the NGSS and Social Studies frameworks later in this presentation.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content

- ▶ Five Subtests
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Studies

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Similar to the 2002-2013 “old” GED® test, the TASC™ test has five subtests: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content

- ▶ Paper and computer–based tests
- ▶ Nine hours
- ▶ Field–tested nationally
- ▶ Norm referenced to comparable scores of recent high school graduates
- ▶ Testing accommodations

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The TASC™ test is available as a paper-and-pencil test, and as a computer-based test at some testing centers. Including breaks between subtests, the TASC™ test takes about nine hours to complete and is usually administered in one or two days.

The TASC™ test is a national test and has been field-tested nationally, including in New York State. Each subtest is norm referenced. That means that no set percentage of correct answers is needed to pass. Instead, similar to the traditional way passing scores for the 2002–2013 GED® have been determined, passing is based on comparable scores of the majority of recent high school graduates.

All five subtests must be taken the first time an examinee takes the TASC™ test.

In New York State, the TASC™ test is available in Spanish. There are also Braille, large print, and audio versions. Information about how to apply for special testing accommodations is available at the CTB TASC™ test web site.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content: Reading Subtest

- ▶ 75 minutes
- ▶ 50 multiple-choice items
- ▶ 70% informational reading
- ▶ 30% literary reading

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Let us now take a look at the characteristics of each of the five subtests.

For the Reading Subtest of the TASC™ test, examinees are allowed 75 minutes to answer 50 multiple-choice questions. The CCSS call for a greater emphasis on informational, non-fiction material and less emphasis on fictional, literary reading. This shift is in response to the recognition that both college and career readiness are founded on the ability to read to learn. The TASC™ test Reading Subtest conforms to this expectation with 70% informational-reading passages and 30% literary-reading passages.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content: Reading Subtest

- ▶ Six texts
 - Informational reading
- ▶ Analytic reading
 - Higher level
- ▶ Language acquisition and use
 - Vocabulary
 - Interpretation of figurative language
 - Literary devices

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The TASC™ test Reading Subtest is comprised of six texts representing a variety of genres, with emphasis on historical, scientific, and informational reading, and works of literary fiction and nonfiction. The reading texts require close, analytic reading at a higher level than previous GED® Reading Subtests. The associated test items focus on examinees' use of evidence to support their analyses, claims, conclusions, or inferences about the reading passages.

Ten to fifteen percent of the points determining the Reading score are derived from items that assess language acquisition and use. Vocabulary items assess the use of word analysis skills, the use of reading closely, and the use of a variety of resources and analytic skills to determine meanings in context and interpret the author's usage of figurative language and literary devices.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Writing Subtest

- ▶ Two Parts (multiple-choice and essay)
 - 105 Minutes
- ▶ Composite score
 - Must pass both parts
- ▶ Measures:
 - Reading complex text
 - Interpreting
 - Using context clues
 - Supporting ideas with evidence from the text
 - Editing

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The TASC™ test English Language Arts Writing Subtest has two parts, a multiple-choice language usage and an essay. Examinees are allotted 105 minutes to complete both parts. The score for the Writing Subtest is a composite of the two parts. However, examinees are required to pass both the multiple-choice section and the essay to pass the Writing Subtest.

The TASC™ test Writing Subtest measures the CCSS. Examinees are expected to read and interpret complex text and anchor their written interpretations in the text. They demonstrate their command of the conventions of standard English, as are included in CCSS L.11-12.1 and CCSS L.11-12.2. Information from reading passages should be used to support ideas in writing. This is similar to the expectations for document-based questions, or DBQs. Examinees should have the skills and know the rules necessary for editing their writing.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Writing Subtest

Part 1: Language Usage

- ▶ 50 multiple-choice items
- ▶ Editing and revising

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The Language Usage part of the TASC™ test Writing Subtest consists of 50 multiple-choice items. The examinees are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of language by performing tasks such as editing and revising. The CCSS require and the TASC™ test measures the examinees' ability to correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. A number of Language and Writing Standards are assessed.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Writing Subtest

Part 2– Essay: ELA– Writing

- ▶ Two types
 - Informative/Explanatory Essay *OR*
 - Argument/Opinion Essay

- ▶ Evidence –based

- ▶ Source texts: 600–800 words

- ▶ Scored on a 0 to 4 scale

- ▶ Scoring rubrics (Both types)

http://www.ctbassessments.com/pdfs/TASC_ScoringRubrics.pdf

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For the essay portion of the TASC™ test Writing Subtest, examinees are asked to write one essay. The essay assigned is one of two types and examinees must be prepared for both types.

For examinees, there is no choice of which essay they must write; either an Informative/Explanatory essay OR an Argument/Opinion essay is assigned. Regardless of the type of essay assigned, the examinees' writing must be evidence- or document-based. Source texts of between 600 and 800 words are provided. The essays must include information examinees glean from these source texts to support their claims.

Scoring of the essay is holistic on a zero-to-four scale. Each of the two types of essay has a detailed scoring rubric. Review of these rubrics may be useful to both HSE instructors and HSE examinees. The rubrics may be found on the CTB TASC™ test web site or by utilizing the hyperlink on this slide.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Math Subtest

- ▶ 105 minutes
- ▶ 52 Items
 - 40 multiple-choice items
 - 12 gridded-response items

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For the Math Subtest of the TASC™ test, examinees will be given 105 minutes to complete a total of 52 questions. Forty of the math items will be multiple-choice and 12 of the items will be gridded-response. A gridded-response item is basically a fill-in-the-blank question with a bubble grid provided on the answer sheet where numeric answers are to be filled in. Gridded-response answers may include fractions or decimals.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Math Subtest

- ▶ Shift to more algebra
- ▶ Calculator section
- ▶ Non-calculator section

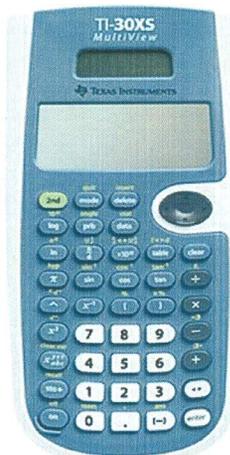
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There is a marked increase in both the content level and the rigor of the Mathematics Subtest when compared to the past GED® Math Subtests. In New York State, as in the rest of the country, there has been a movement to more comprehensive math standards. The past GED® Math Subtest was arithmetic based, with little algebra. That is not the case for the TASC™ test which emphasizes algebra.

The items on the Math Subtest assess examinees' abilities to solve routine and non-routine mathematics problems using the application of conceptual and procedural knowledge. The Math Subtest is broken into two parts: a calculator section and a non-calculator section.

HSE Exam-Calculator

- ▶ Scientific Calculator
- ▶ Texas Instruments TI-30XS
- ▶ Supplied for Paper-Based Tests
- ▶ Virtual for Computer-Based Tests
- ▶ [Calculator Guide](#)



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Examinees will not be allowed to use their own calculators. The Texas Instruments TI-30XS calculator will be provided for all examinees taking the test. For people taking the computer-based exam, a virtual version of this same calculator is available on the screen. The TI-30XS is a scientific calculator and has more functions than the simpler four-function calculators used in past HSE Exams. This calculator does not have any graphing functionality and it is not programmable.

This calculator will also be used for the Science Subtest. The calculator guide, as well as a variety of learning resources for the TI-30XS Multi-view Scientific Calculator, can be found on the Texas Instruments website, which may be reached by clicking on the hyperlink on this slide, or by web searching "TI 30XS." The calculator guide contains a number of activities that may be useful to those who wish to become more familiar with the functioning of the TI-30XS.

Examinees are strongly encouraged to use the available resources to learn to use the calculator prior to testing.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content: Math Subtest

- ▶ 15% – Number and Quantity
- ▶ 25% – Algebra
- ▶ 25% – Functions
- ▶ 25% – Geometry
- ▶ 10% – Statistics and Probability

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The Math Subtest has five Conceptual Categories as delineated by the CCSS for Mathematics.

Approximately 15% of the items will assess Standards in the Conceptual Category of Number and Quantity. The Number and Quantity Conceptual Category includes topics such as fractional exponents and multiplying complex imaginary numbers. Twenty-five percent of the items will assess Algebra, and another 25% will be based on Functions, which may be considered a branch of algebra. Another 25% of the questions will be founded in Geometry, and the final 10% of the Math Subtest will cover Statistics and Probability.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Math Subtest

- ▶ Mathematics Reference Sheet
- ▶ <http://www.tasctest.com/assets/mathrefsheet.pdf>

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The TASC™ test includes a Mathematics Reference Sheet. Formulas for volume, coordinate geometry, special algebraic factoring, compounded interest, trigonometric identities, circle geometry, and probability, as well as the quadratic formula and others are included on the TASC™ test Mathematics Reference Sheet. A review of this two-page listing of formulas is useful for both HSE instructors and exam candidates. It can be found by clicking on the hyperlink on this slide.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Science Subtest

- ▶ 85 minutes
- ▶ 47 multiple-choice items
- ▶ Calculator may be used
- ▶ No formula sheet

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The TASC™ test Science Subtest consists of 47 multiple-choice questions to be completed in 85 minutes. In a change from previous HSE exams, use of the provided calculator will be permitted for the entire Science Subtest.

Unlike Math, there is no formula sheet for Science. Some formulas will be included with the individual test items.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content: Science Subtest

- ▶ Increased Content Knowledge
- ▶ 20% – Physical Science
- ▶ 40% – Life Science
- ▶ 40% – Earth and Space Science

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In the 2002-2013 GED®, the Science Subtest was largely literacy based. Most of the knowledge required to answer the questions was found in the stimuli or the reading passages that accompanied the items. Examinees were expected to have an understanding of basic scientific principles and vocabulary, but very little specific content knowledge was required.

The TASC™ test Science Subtest assesses conceptual knowledge of core ideas in Physical Science, Life Science, and Earth and Space Sciences. Forty percent of the items address Life Science, another 40% are on Earth and Space Science, and the remaining 20% of the items measure Physical Science.

Three dimensions- practices, cross-cutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas combine to form each standard. The cross-cutting concepts bridge disciplinary boundaries. The Engineering Standards within NGSS represent this disciplinary boundary bridge.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content: Science Subtest

<http://www.nextgenscience.org>



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The content of the TASC™ test Science Subtest is based on the NGSS at the high school level.

The NGSS, finalized in 2013, are K–12 Science standards that are rich in content and practice. They are arranged in a coherent manner across disciplines and grades to provide all students an internationally benchmarked science education. The NGSS are based on the *Framework for K–12 Science Education* produced by the National Research Council, which include the science topics and content that have been identified as the science that all kindergarten through twelfth grade students should know.

The NGSS website can be reached by clicking on the hyperlink found on this slide, or by web searching “NGSS.”

The Standards are performance based and arranged by Topic or by Disciplinary Core Idea. Navigation of the NGSS web site is facilitated by a search function.

HSE Exam– TASC™ test Content: Social Studies Subtest

- ▶ 75 minutes
- ▶ 47 multiple-choice items
- ▶ Increased content knowledge

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The TASC™ test Social Studies Subtest includes 47 multiple-choice items to be completed in 75 minutes. Like the 2002 -2013 GED®, many of the TASC™ test Social Studies items include a stimulus such as a reading passage, a map, or a political cartoon. However, similar to the TASC™ test Science Subtest, there are increased content knowledge expectations. The information necessary to answer the questions will not be supplied solely by the stimuli.

HSE Exam–TASC™ test Content: Social Studies Subtest

- ▶ 25% – U.S. History
- ▶ 25% – Civics and Government
- ▶ 20% – Economics
- ▶ 15% – Geography
- ▶ 15% – World History

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The content breakdown for the TASC™ test Social Studies Subtest follows: Approximately half of the test items are in the categories of United States history or government. Twenty percent of the items assess examinees' knowledge of economics. Fifteen percent of the questions are on world history and another 15% are on geography.

CTB created the TASC™ test Social Studies framework through the analysis of standards and key concepts emphasized by the following national organizations and resources:

- National Center for History in the School
- National Standards for History
- Center for Civic Education
- National Standards for Civics and Government
- Council for Economic Education-Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics
- National Council for Social Studies
- National Council for Geographic Education

CTB also analyzed several state frameworks to inform the creation of the TASC™ test Social Studies framework. More information on these standards can be found by visiting the CTB TASC™ test web site.

HSE Exam– Summary

- ▶ Increased content knowledge expectations
- ▶ Measure CCSS in ELA and Math
- ▶ Higher reading complexity
- ▶ More algebra-based mathematics
- ▶ Content specificity – Science and Social Studies
- ▶ A more valuable HSE diploma

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The new national HSE exam, the TASC™ test, represents the most recent chapter in the evolution of the HSE exam. The content of the TASC™ test is improved in several ways.

The TASC™ test measures the CCSS in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

The reading is more informational and at a higher level.

The math has been advanced from largely arithmetic based to more algebra based, in response to national trends in high school Mathematics Standards.

Expectations for specific content knowledge have increased for both Science and Social Studies.

While the increased content expectations will require greater commitment from both examinees and instructors, the new HSE requirements will expand opportunities for the recipients of an HSE diploma.

HSE Exam– Resources

TASC™ test Web site

www.ctb.com/TASC

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

<http://www.nextgenscience.org>

Home | Common Core State Standards Initiative

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

New York State Common Core Learning Standards

www.engageny.org

TASC™ test Sample Test

<http://www.tasctest.com/sample-questions.html>

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES)

<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/hse/>

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More information about the TASC™ test can be found on the TASC™ test web site. The Science Standards on which the TASC™ test is based may be explored at the NGSS web site. Also listed are web sites for ELA and Math national and state standards.

Probably the best starting point for either HSE instructors or candidates to begin preparation for the TASC™ test is to visit the web site containing the official TASC™ test Sample Test. Similar to the actual TASC™ test, the Sample Test is broken into five Subtests and features items indicative of the rigor and scope of the TASC™ test. Also available at the TASC™ test web site is information about the TASC™ test Readiness Test which may be useful both to gauge a person's preparedness to take the TASC™ test and to inform the HSE examinee about the TASC™ test.

While examinees taking the TASC™ test for the first time are required to complete all five subtests, passing scores from previous GED® tests will count toward passing the TASC™ test until 2016. If one or more of the five subject area Subtests of the TASC™ test are not passed, those parts may be retaken after 60 days. In most cases, the TASC™ test may be taken three times in one calendar year.

For more information, visit NYSED's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services web site. A printable brochure on HSE in NYS can also be found there.

I encourage you to explore these web sites, attend professional development seminars, and dig deep into the new content knowledge expectations in all subjects. Thank you for listening.