




TO: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Principals of Public, Nonpublic, and Religious Schools
Leaders of Charter Schools

FROM: Kevin G. Smith 

SUBJECT: High School Equivalency Diplomas during COVID-19

DATE: June 3, 2020

On May 4, 2020, the New York State Board of Regents adopted [proposed amendments to Sections 52.21, 60.6, 61.19, 80-1.2, 80-3.7, 100.1, 100.2, 100.4, 100.5, 100.6, 100.7, 100.19 and 151-1.3 and addition of Section 80-5.27 to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to Addressing the COVID-19 Crisis.](#)

A comprehensive Question and Answer document, [Regents Examination and Graduation Requirements Questions Related to COVID-19 Closure](#), provides additional guidance. Changes regarding High School Equivalency (HSE) diplomas can be found under: *Post-graduation or exiting high school*, pages 12-13.

Information specific to obtaining an HSE diploma during COVID-19 closure period:

- **Under current regulations, when a student(s) takes and passes a Regents exam but does not earn a High School diploma and then wants to obtain a High School Equivalency diploma, they are exempt from the corresponding subject sub-test of the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). Given the changes that would exempt students from Regents exams, how will student(s) who are deemed to be exempt from one or more Regents exams but later seek their High School equivalency diploma be addressed?**

The Department will treat such students in the same way as any other student. Those students who produce a transcript showing that they were exempt from one or more Regents exams, will also be exempt from that section (sub-test) of the TASC.

The requirement that all students must take and pass at least one subject sub-test of the TASC, regardless of the number of Regents exams they are given credit for, will be waived during the time period of the COVID-19 emergency for students who meet age eligibility requirements. To apply to use Regents credit toward an HSE diploma, please use the [R Application](#). Applicants under the age of 19 must also submit an [age eligibility form](#).

- **Are students in AHSEP (Alternative High School Equivalency Program) programs eligible for Regents exam exemptions?**

Students who previously earned diploma credit for a course that culminated in a Regents exam, but have not yet passed the Regents exam, and are currently (2019-2020 school year) enrolled in and passing associated content in an AHSEP program, are eligible for the Regents exam exemptions, which can then be applied to the Regents-TASC pathway to an HSE diploma.

- **Will students who were planning to take TASC sub-tests - all of which were canceled when TASC test centers were required to close due to COVID-19 - be provided with any exemptions from TASC testing?**

Students planning to take a TASC sub-test(s) when all TASC test centers were closed and no testing was permitted and who meet the following criteria, will be exempt from taking previously required corresponding TASC subject sub-tests:

- Enrolled in an approved Alternative High School Equivalency Preparation Program (AHSEP) or an approved Adult Education Preparation Program (AEPP) during the relevant time period; and,
- Previously took and passed a combination of at least three Regents examinations and/or applicable TASC or GED subject sub-tests; and,
- For the remaining two sub-tests, the student achieves a passing grade in the corresponding approved high school equivalency classes with standards-based curriculum and applicable assessments.

If you have any questions about the guidance related to HSE diplomas, please contact the HSE Office at HSE@nysed.gov.