

GED and Adult Education: Working Together for a Better Future

**State Directors of Adult Education
Annual Meeting
Washington, DC
February 3, 2010**

Today's Agenda



- The Current Landscape
- Bring it On: GED Criticism
- We Feel Each Other's Pain
- We Also “Hear” You: Your Concerns
- Revisiting Our Strategy
- Engaging Stakeholders & Partners

The Current Landscape

Environmental Factors



- Economy uncertainty (lingering downturn)
- Globalization of the labor market
- Need for postsecondary training—
correlating with employer demand for
higher skill levels
- Changing composition of the U.S. Labor
Force

We've Made the National Agenda



“...this country needs and values the talents of every American. That is why we will provide the support necessary for you to complete college and meet a new goal: by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.”

President Barack Obama

- Opens up a space where strategy meets opportunity to transform adult education, its potential to impact workforce development initiatives, and global competitiveness.
- Recognizes that a country must ensure baseline literacy and numeracy skills for all of its citizens.

Bring it On: GED Criticism

- Is there economic value in the GED?
- Does the mere presence of GED as an option “encourage” high school students to drop out?
- Is the test really equivalent to the traditionally-earned high school diploma?
- Are GED holders ready for postsecondary educational opportunities?

“Where’s the Beef?” (Economic Value)

- Historically, the GED credential was viewed as a gateway to opportunity.
- GED credential opens the door to career opportunities...but does not keep the door open for advancement opportunities.



The top reasons why individuals drop out:

- “Was absent too many times”
- “Did not like school”
- “Was bored”
- “Wasn’t happy in school”
- “Poor study habits”

- Results are far more important than a debate about traditional versus non-traditional paths to attaining credentials.
- Does the land of opportunity not believe in granting second chances?
- In the end, we all want the same thing: guaranteed levels of skill and education so that individuals can compete.

- **43 percent** of 2003 GED credential holders enrolled in postsecondary education by fall 2009.
- Most GED credential recipients (69.7 percent) enrolled in a postsecondary institution **within the first three years** after taking the GED test.
- **Two-year colleges** were the institutions of choice (77.8 percent).

Source: *Crossing the Bridge GED Credentials and Postsecondary Education Outcomes, Year 1, 2009.*

From the first to second semester:

- The **retention rate** for GED credential recipients was **50.4 percent**;
- The **transfer rate** was **24.6 percent**; and
- The **dropout rate** (after the first semester) was **32.6 percent**.

Source: *Crossing the Bridge GED Credentials and Postsecondary Education Outcomes, Year 1, 2009.*

- Overall, **graduation rate** for the cohort studied was **11.8 percent**.

Source: *Crossing the Bridge GED Credentials and Postsecondary Education Outcomes, Year 1, 2009.*

We Feel Each Other's "Pain"

Our Reality: Reach

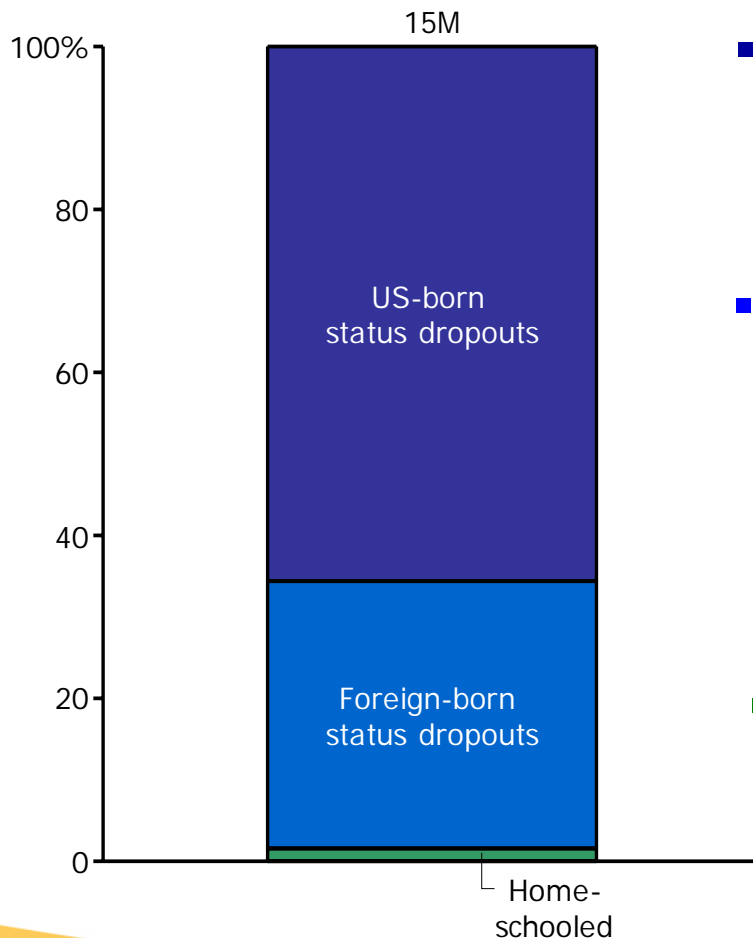


- Today more than 36 million Americans lack a high school credential.
- Every year, 1.3 million U.S. students drop out of high school.
- 10.5 million of these Americans are age 18-34.
- We serve only 778,000 test takers and there are only 493,000 credential recipients each year.

Our Reality: GED Target Adult Population



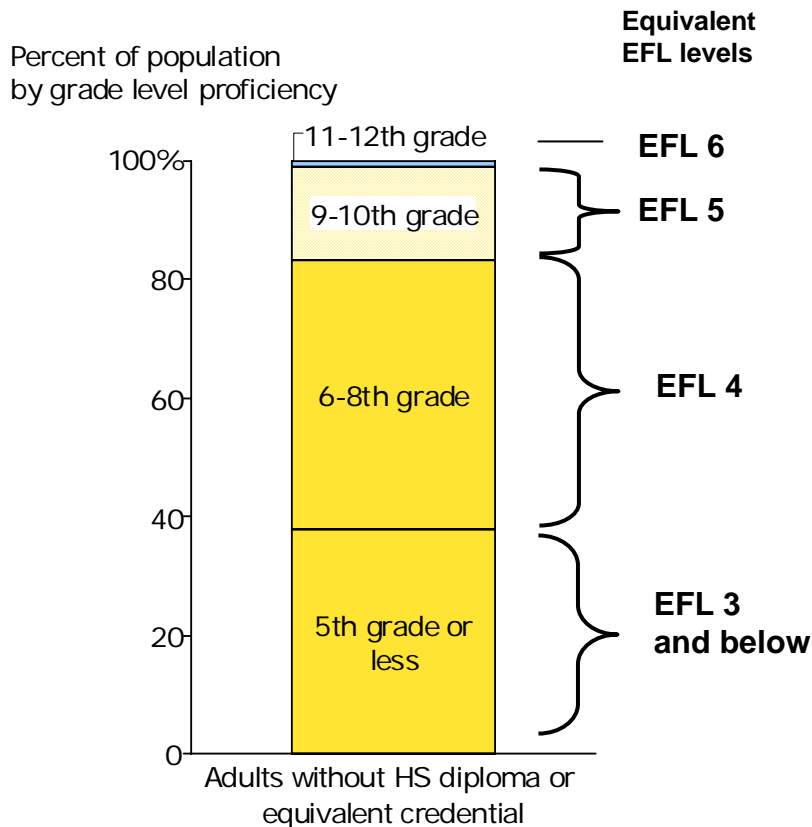
Potential GED candidate population



- **US-born adults without a high school diploma or equivalent (~10M)**
 - Includes adults between the ages of 18-44 who have not attained a high school or equivalent credential
- **Foreign-born adults without a high school diploma or equivalent (~5M)**
 - Includes immigrants between the ages of 18-44 who have not received a high school or equivalent credential, regardless of whether or not they were naturalized as citizens or participated in the US school system
- **Homeschooled (~0.24M)**
 - Includes homeschoolers between the ages of ~16-18 (equivalent of grades 11-12)

Our Reality: Proficiency Levels

The Population's Proficiency



- Less than 2% of the pool (11th to 12th grade) are close to the college-ready threshold
- Another ~15% of the pool (9th to 10th grade) could reach college-readiness level by investing significant time and having access to current accelerated learning programs
- For the remainder, achieving a 12th grade level of proficiency will be a more significant lift

- A pipeline that may not be ready for primetime
- Access that is constrained (shrinking budgets, maxed facilities, and testing capacity issues)
- More and better tools and systems are needed to support the diverse needs of adult learners
- A more integrated approach is needed — “pathways to college and careers”—with support services and smoother handoffs that serves adults learners wherever they are in the process

- A test that signals preparedness for college and career opportunities
- An integrated approach in which testing is an important but *transitional* step to college or career opportunities.
- Diagnostics and additional tools—to place candidates to produce the best outcomes
- Use of alternative delivery platforms to ease capacity issues
- Recognition that all of these things will take TIME to address effectively.

We Also “Hear” You

- What increased rigor of any new test may mean
- Access—in many jurisdictions, the current delivery system is strained at the seams.
- Today your world is based around paper
How do we prepare adult learners for a computer-based world?
- “More is needed” but how can that be supported given the resources likely to be available?
- Turning on a dime is hard—you need transition time—and as much as we can give you.

What We at GEDTS Want You to Know



- We are committed to working with you and leveraging what you are already doing.
- We understand that there can be many ways to address the system's robustness
- We will strive to maintain open communication and dialogue with you

Revisiting Our Strategy

2009: A Year of Mixed Messages



- In March, we reaffirmed to you the launch of the 2012 test series and the changes it would entail.
- In June, we renamed this the Fifth Edition.
- In October, we announced that the 5th Edition was off the table.
- You were left wondering...what happened?

The Shift We Experienced

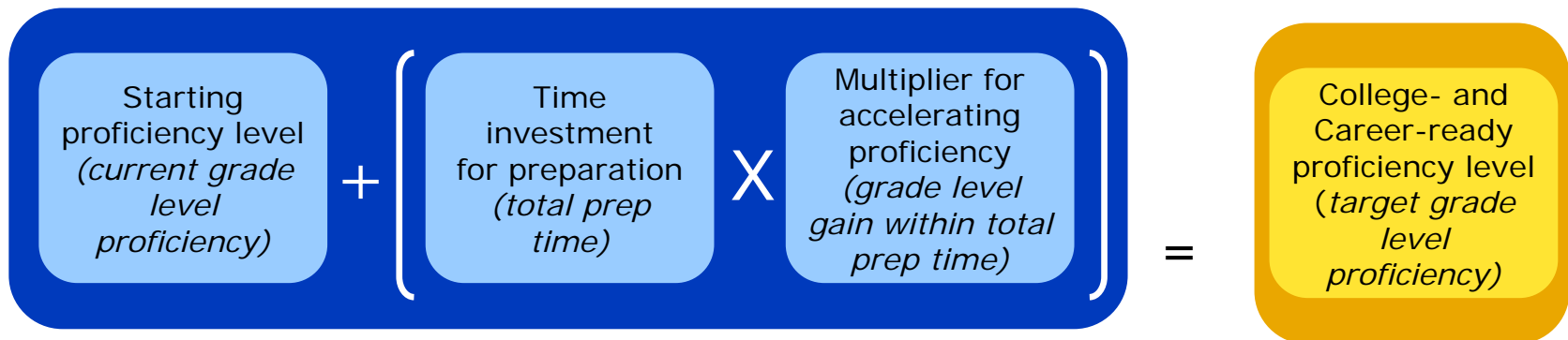


- We realized that the 5th Edition wasn't far-reaching enough.
- Acknowledgment that there was a significant proficiency gap.
- We needed a bigger, bolder vision...and to focus on creating a program, rather than just an updated test.

Addressing the proficiency gap

Projected proficiency

Target proficiency



What About the 5th Edition GED Test?



- The 5th Edition was based on content currently taught in high schools
- The GED Initiative must be aligned with Common Core national Standards (ELA, math), + other career- and college-ready standards (Science, Social Studies)
 - **Achieve** will help with “gap analysis”
 - Identify new test and curriculum development targets
 - Add these new targets to existing 5th Edition content to build the new test

Where We're Headed...



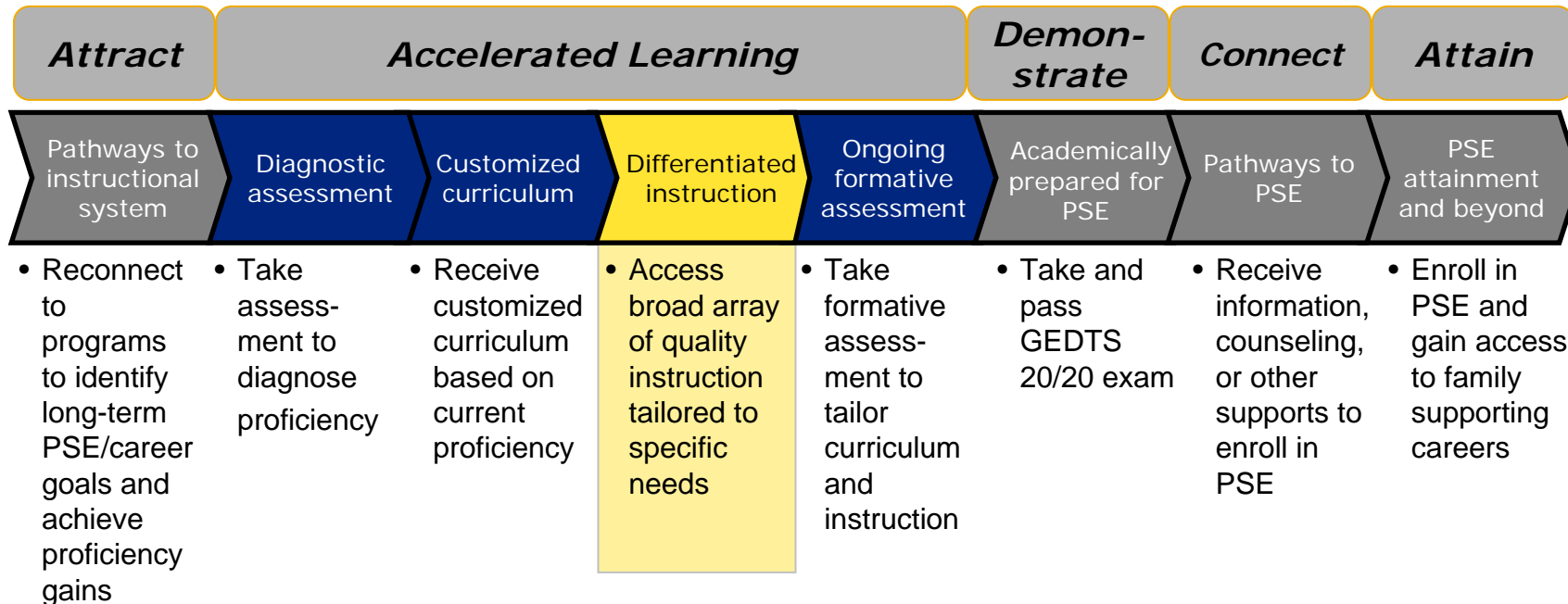
- The GED Initiative is a comprehensive, multi-year initiative intended to increase our ability to reach and to serve more individuals who could earn the GED credential
- Three key components:
 - Development of a GED test:
 - aligned with the common core national standards
 - Certifies high school equivalency and also college- and career-readiness
 - Development of multi-platform, broadly accessible academic preparation program
 - Connections and transition services to postsecondary education (PSE) and career opportunities

GED Initiative (20/20)



Our goal is to facilitate pathways to achieve college/career-readiness and increase postsecondary attainment

Pathways for adults to college/career-readiness, PSE success, and beyond



- The 2002 Series will remain in the market for the next 3-5 years
- Based on input from the field we are going to make the incremental changes that are needed

Examples:

- Essay Prompt Refresh – underway for 2011 administrations
 - Large Print reformatting – underway for 2011 administrations
 - Replacement of Audiocassette with alternate media – still investigating
 - Separate lease of Mathematics and/or Writing tests – still investigating
- Improving access and delivery systems through Computer Based Testing

What Is Ahead: 2010 & Beyond



- Transition to next generation GED
 - No new test series on January 1, 2012, **but** test development activities continue
- Starting in 2010
 - Alignment studies with common core national standards
 - CBT pilot involving 11 states to determine whether paper and CBT scores are equivalent
 - Feasibility studies (national registration system and online data collection)
 - Pilot accelerated learning tools in different settings

What Is Ahead: 2010 & Beyond



- Best estimates for full rollout: Three to Five Years
- All of the elements involved will require time to:
 - Plan
 - Develop
 - Test
 - Evaluate
 - Implement

CBT Pilot Overview

Three Phases

- Phase 1: Comparability Study (2010)
 - Phase 2: Expansion of CBT in study jurisdictions (2010/2011)
 - Phase 3: Expansion of CBT in additional jurisdictions (2011-14)
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- Phase 1 pilot leverages the existing network of Pearson VUE test sites (primarily at professional testing centers and community colleges) and the current scoring sites and process

Engaging Stakeholders & Partners

- New thinking about what is taught
- New thinking about how curriculum is delivered
- The role of additional assessments to measure/benchmark progress
- Potential for new relationships both inside and outside the adult education community

Areas of Focus that NCSDAE has Already Identified

Program Design

- Who are the key partners that you need to involve in the planning process to clearly define the role of Adult Education in the broader system? How do you do that?
- Based on your available funding, how can you phase in your career pathways framework?

Curriculum & Instruction

- Who can research the postsecondary curriculum available on the National College Transition Network website <http://www.collegetransition.org/> ?

Source: *Adult Education: Supporting the President's Workforce and American Graduation Initiatives, Volume 1, November 2009, NCSDAE*

You are Already Thinking Ahead



Assessment & Credentialing

- What assessment tools will you use to determine appropriate student placement into the appropriate level and help adult learners develop career pathway plans?
- What assessment tools will you use to help students measure their progress?
- What assessments (including assessments of work and postsecondary readiness) will you use to determine completion of certificate levels and career pathways?

Follow Up & Support Services

- How can you develop a counseling component to help adult students develop career pathway plans and provide ongoing support?
- How will you market your pathways system to other agencies? To adult education practitioners? To adult students?

Source: *Adult Education: Supporting the President's Workforce and American Graduation Initiatives, Volume 1, November 2009, NCSDAE*

The Challenge Ahead



- Leveraging the convergence of purpose, intent and strategy.
- Optimizing a rich set of opportunities for partnering, collaborating, and innovating.
- Transforming the fundamental structure, delivery, pathways and outcomes of adult education