

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY
TO THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
James Monroe Building
Jefferson Conference Rooms B & C
Richmond, Virginia

SPECIALLY CALLED MEETING MINUTES

June 12, 2015

Committee Members

Mr. Rodney D. Caulkins
Dr. Marcia Gail Derrick – Vice Chair
The Honorable Mark L. Keam (Absent)
The Honorable Kaye Kory
Ms. Annette Loschert
Ms. Betsy Mathias
Mr. Maurice G. Oliver
Ms. Katharine Parrish
Dr. Troilen Seward
Ms. Linda K. Seyer
Mr. E. Denton Sisk – Chair
Dr. Susan M. Clair (Ex-Officio)

DOE/OAEL Staff

Dr. B. Sue Mansfield
Dr. C. Michael Nusbaum
Mr. Thomas T. Suh
Ms. Denise A. Throckmorton (Recording)

Other Participants

Dr. Diane Foucar-Szocki
Dr. Amy Dimarco-Thek

Other Guests

Mr. George P. Bailey
Mr. Brian Smith, GED Testing Service®
Ms. Elise Cleva, Legislative Assistant to
Del. Kory

CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman E. Denton Sisk called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

Opening Remarks and Introductions

- Chairman Sisk welcomed all present.
- Dr. Clair introduced Dr. Sue Mansfield, the Office of Adult Education and Literacy's new Specialist for High School Equivalency.
- Dr. Clair briefed the committee on changes to the high school equivalency (HSE) review process. Dr. Clair explained that the Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy (ACAEL) would not be approving a high school equivalency test. Instead, it would be asked to review and provide input on HSE Guidelines that were developed by

the HSE Guidelines Committee. The guidelines will be presented to the Board of Education (Board) for first review at its July 23 meeting.

Public Comment

- Chairman Sisk called for public comments. No public comments were received.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS

- Dr. Sue Mansfield gave an overview of the JMU HSE evaluation process.
- Dr. Mansfield introduced Dr. Diane Foucar-Szocki, Professor, Learning, Technology and Leadership Education, and Dr. Amy Dimarco-Thelk, Director of Assessment and Evaluation, of James Madison University (JMU).
- Dr. Diane Foucar-Szocki and Dr. Amy Dimarco-Thelk gave a presentation to the ACAEL based on their Virginia High School Equivalency Exam Review Process: Evaluation Report 2015.

Dr. Foucar-Szocki discussed the nature and results of the report, asking the ACAEL to keep in mind that the survey results in the report were the opinions received from the 16 High School Equivalency Review Committee (HSERC) members based on the presentations from the three vendors: GED Testing Service[®] (GEDTS[®])-GED[®] Test, Educational Testing Service (ETS[®])-HiSET[®] Exam, and CTB/McGraw Hill-TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion[™]).

- Dr. Dimarco-Thelk presented and discussed the results of the vendor impression surveys. She discussed the final results for each of the three vendor surveys and shared that all of the vendors adequately answered the question of the capacity to manage state-level HSE testing.
- Dr. Foucar-Szocki discussed conclusions on test quality and reported that states that have adopted optional tests were pleased with the tests, noting that each test has its merits and its imperfections. She stated she had spoken with some states that have all three HSE tests. Ms. Seyer asked if there was data from states using multiple tests showing that test takers are gravitating to a specific test versus another based on the belief that a particular test is easier. Dr. Foucar-Szocki stated there were no data to support that that has been happening.
- Dr. Foucar-Szocki stated there are seven states nationwide that offer all three HSE tests. She stated that attention to neighboring states is noteworthy with regard to students who have taken either the TASC or the HiSET[®] coming into Virginia.
- Dr. Sue Mansfield gave an overview of the HSE review process and discussed the work of the HSE Guideline Committee. Dr. Mansfield identified the following individuals as

HSE Guideline Review Committee members: Dr. Anita H. Prince, Director of Academic Programs, Virginia Department of Corrections; Mr. James André, Coordinator of Adult Coaching and Transitions, Workforce Development Services, Virginia Community College System (VCCS); and Ms. Virginia Bolte, Senior Director of Program Development, Workforce Development, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys.

Dr. Mansfield stated that the HSE Guidelines were developed based on the findings in the JMU report. The guidelines focused on four primary issues: the quality of the HSE test, the accessibility of the HSE test, the administration of the HSE test, and vendor quality.

Dr. Mansfield explained that the guidelines would go before the Board for first review at the Board's July 23 meeting. The guidelines will go before the Board again for final review at its September 10 meeting.

Dr. Mansfield stated that if the guidelines are approved by the Board, the vendors will be contacted shortly thereafter with an offer to apply to be an approved HSE vendor in Virginia, using the guidelines as the criteria that will guide the development of their applications. Dr. Clair stated that an independent evaluation committee will compare the vendor applications against the guidelines. There was committee discussion on the timeline required to institute new exams. It was stated that official approval of vendors meeting the guidelines would likely occur in January 2016. Ms. Mathias asked if multiple tests would be available by July 2016. Dr. Clair stated that it is possible that the state could have more than one test available by then, but OAEL would need to prepare an action plan to give programs enough time to adjust to the changes. Ms. Mathias suggested that OAEL share this process and timeline with the field.

- Dr. Clair asked that questions be presented for discussion as the guidelines are reviewed. She stated that when the guidelines are approved by the Virginia Board of Education, all vendors that believe they can meet the guidelines may apply.
- Dr. Foucar-Szocki shared that in states that have all three tests, the local areas (individual counties) are not all doing the exact same thing or offering the same tests as the objective is to provide the localities options to address their particular needs.
- Delegate Kory raised her concern about those in the jails who do not have the opportunity to test. Dr. Mansfield shared that in 30 to 40 days, GED[®] 2014 paper-based testing will be available in city and regional jails that are not yet ready for computer-based testing. Ms. Parrish asked if this is a permanent solution in the jails. Mr. Brian Smith, State Relationship Manager with GEDTS[®], shared that GEDTS[®] plans to have this option available for as long as it is needed.
- Dr. Mansfield reviewed the guidelines for each of the four primary issues identified.
 - 1) Quality of the HSE Test:
 - Alignment - There was committee discussion on the alignment of the HSE exams with regard to College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education.

(CCRS). Dr. Dimarco-Thek stated that we have requested vendors to align; however, we do not know for sure as we do not see the vendor's test item(s). She suggested that a "blueprint" be submitted with the guidelines.

Delegate Kory stated she felt HSE exams need to align and correlate with the SOL standards.

Dr. Seward suggested that we insert that the vendor must have an independent evaluator show that alignment was conducted. The committee concurred.

- Official Practice Tests (OPT) – The committee discussed having three forms of the practice test and the validity of each. Mr. Smith of GEDTS[®] stated that the paper-based tests are correlated to the computer-based versions.
- Under Item 2 of the OPT section of the guidelines, it was agreed to strike "be valid and reliable," from the statement.

2) Accessibility of HSE Test:

- Registration Process – The committee discussed the idea of having a vendor-accessible online chat system available for test takers trying to register for the exam, e-mail support, and telephone support.
- Testing – Group discussion concerning age of testers and enrollment status. Dr. Nusbaum shared the objective was to find a way that the Commonwealth has oversight to stop 16-17 years olds from taking a test. Dr. Mansfield stated that registration will be looked at again and Item 4 will be rewritten for clarity.
- Scoring of Tests/Access to Scores – Dr. Foucar-Szocki questioned Item 1 indicating scoring must be electronic; however, there are human reviews to the extended written response sections of the tests. Dr. Mansfield indicated that they would clarify Item 1.

3) Administration of the HSE Test:

- Training: Teachers, Staff, Administrators – Dr. Foucar-Szocki questioned Item 2, using the term "all" in what we are looking for in light of the statement. Group discussion and Dr. Mansfield agreed to the word "all" to "relevant" on Item 2.
- Transcripts/Certificates – Group discussion regarding data retention and in other multiple test states, centralized credentialing, data agreements with vendor(s), and Restricted Use Data Agreement (RUDA) to ensure the privacy of data. Dr. Mansfield will remove the word "all" and insert the word "and" between current and historical on Item 6.

4) Vendor Quality:

- Technical Assistance – Group discussion on expectations for service availability and response time. Item 1-Dr. Mansfield will add "24 hour" in front of "technical assistance..." and replace "on an "as needed" basis" with "or identify designated personnel to be available."
Item 2-Dr. Mansfield will add "within 30 minutes" for response time.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTION

- Chairman E. Denton Sisk lead the discussions on the JMU report and findings.
- Discussion on vendor agreements and performance issues. Mr. Suh stated that if we are not entering into contracts with the vendors, we need to explain the expectation and have some level of accountability. Ms. Parrish agreed there should be some accountability.
- Dr. Nusbaum shared that 51 percent of state test takers are GED[®] Options program students. He stated his concern that vendor competition may have an effect on testing centers and the increase cost to the localities.
- Chairman Sisk called for additional questions or comments regarding the HSE Guidelines and proposed amendments. He called for a motion to approve the HSE Guidelines with the proposed amendments. Dr. Seward moved to accept the guidelines as amended, and Ms. Parrish seconded. Chairman Sisk called for a voice vote asking those in favor to say, "aye" and those opposed to say "no." He stated, "The ayes have it, and the motion is passed" as there were no opposing votes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISCUSSION

- Chairman Sisk thanked Ms. Loschert, Ms. Mathias, and Dr. Seward for their service to the committee as this would be their last meeting.
- Chairman Sisk announced the next regular meeting of the Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy to the Virginia Board of Education will be Thursday, October 8, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

- Chairman Sisk called for a motion for adjournment. Dr. Seward moved to adjourn, and Mr. Caulkins seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- The Advisory Committee on Adult Education and Literacy meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.