

**Assurances for Quality Control of
Maryland's High School Diploma by Examination
National External Diploma Program (NEDP)
and
*General Educational Development (GED)***

Purpose

To establish assurances for quality control that support the validity and reliability of the Maryland High School Diploma awarded by examination jointly awarded by the Maryland State Board of Education and the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.

Background

The National External Diploma Program (NEDP) is administered nationally by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), a highly regarded and recognized leader in adult assessment and accountability. CASAS is the sole source of both student materials and materials used for certification of NEDP practitioners. The GED is administered internationally by the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) of the American Council on Education (ACE). States contract with each national entity to receive the right to administer the assessments. Both have established national standards and procedures with which states must comply.

Assurances

The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation agrees to these assurances in order to ensure the high quality and integrity of the Maryland High School Diploma by complying with the following assurances. The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning will:

General Assurances

- Establish and maintain internal and external processes and procedures that comply with the national accrediting organizations for the GED and the EDP.
- Establish and maintain the necessary national, state, and local agreements necessary to ensure the integrity of the jointly awarded high school diploma.
- Ensure that all testing centers and local EDP sites adhere to all applicable NEDP and GEDTS policies and procedures as well as state laws and regulations governing GED testing and EDP.
- Collaborate with the Maryland State Board of Education in the development of any changes to state legislation or COMAR affecting a Maryland High School Diploma by Examination.

- Ensure that the programs operate in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations regarding privacy and educational records, including but not limited to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232(g) .

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- Maintain an accurate historical file of scores, transcripts and credentials for GED and EDP and make them available to MSDE as needed.
- Monitor and ensure the separation of GED instructional and testing programs.
- Monitor and ensure the separation of the adult education instructional and EDP assessment programs.
- Monitor each local GED testing center and local EDP assessment program at least annually and maintain monitoring reports.
- Ensure that the awarding of subcontracts and the selection of grantees maintains continuing compliance with NEDP and GED Testing Services requirements and maintain the integrity of the diploma.
- Acknowledge the State Board as appropriate in all media announcements, billboards, websites and other print and electronic media as it relates to its role with the GED and EDP programs.
- Submit an annual report to the Maryland State Board of Education regarding results of the NEDP and GED testing program, as well as any changes to the quality controls processes and procedures. The report shall include diplomas awarded, GED waiver requests granted, the results of any monitoring visits to GED testing or to EDP sites, professional development provided to state and local EDP staff, GED Chief Examiners, or state GED staff. The report shall also disclose any GED Test center irregularities, GED test compromises or the closing of a GED Testing Center when a violation of test security procedures occurs.

Assurances – GED Testing

- Oversee test administration to comply with the American Council on Education's (ACE) policies and procedures.
- Protect confidentiality of test scores and credentials.
- Provide prompt notification of test scores and results to candidates.
- Comply with ACE's requirements for administering tests, scoring, and notifications.
- Ensure GED Examiners, Chief Examiners, and state administrator meet national certification requirements and receive the professional development necessary to maintain certification.
- Update the State Board of Education on ACE policies and procedures related to test administration.
- Provide appropriate accommodations for eligible applicants with special needs.
- Provide adequate staff in the GED Office and Test Centers.

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Assurances – EDP

- Oversee EDP to comply with the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) policies and procedures.
- Ensure that CASAS is the sole source of both student materials and materials used for certification of NEDP practitioners.
- Maintain national certification of all local NEDP staff with annual professional development conducted by NEDP certified trainers.
- Ensure newly hired local NEDP staff are trained and evaluated according to NEDP standards by NEDP certified trainers.
- Ensure that local organizations receiving grant funds to provide NEDP services are required, as a condition of the grant, to meet certain NEDP standards and comply with certain assurances regarding their administration of the program.
- Ensure that all candidates continue to demonstrate 100% mastery of all NEDP competencies.
- Conduct multi-level review of mastery on every candidate work prior to awarding a diploma.

Secretary, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Thomas E. Perez

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6/23/09