Frequently Asked Questions: High School Equivalency Diploma Path within Alternative Education Programs

1. Why are students enrolled in alternative education programs now eligible for a High School Equivalency Diploma?

In 2022, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky amended KRS 158.143 regarding student eligibility for a High School Equivalency Diploma.

2. Which high school equivalency exams are accepted in Kentucky?

In Kentucky, high school equivalency exams are overseen by Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE). Currently, KYAE supports the administration of the GED series of examinations.

3. What is a passing score on the GED exam?

The GED test has a passing score of 145 for each subject. It is important to note, however, that the Council on Postsecondary Education considers a student to be academically ready for postsecondary education with a score of 165 in English, 165 in Reading, 165 in Math (Reasoning), and 175 in Math (College Algebra).

4. What are the requirements for participation in the High School Equivalency Diploma path?

To be eligible to participate in the High School Equivalency Diploma path, the student must be at least seventeen years of age, be enrolled in a district-operated alternative education program and not be on track to graduate as defined by the local board of education policy.

5. What other students are eligible for participation?

Pursuant to KRS 158.143(1), a state agency child, as defined in KRS 158.135(1), who is at least seventeen years of age shall be eligible to seek attainment of a High School Equivalency Diploma.

6. What determines if a student is sufficiently "off track" to qualify?

Pursuant to KRS 158.143(4), each local board of education must adopt a policy that defines what is not on track to graduate for the purposes of pursuing a High School Equivalency Diploma. Districts may wish to utilize standardized tools, such as the Early Warning Tool, to inform their local decision making.

7. Will students be counted as graduates for the district?

No. Students who earn a High School Equivalency Diploma are not considered graduates of the system and will count against the district's cohort graduation rate.

8. What should districts document in Infinite Campus for students who complete a High School Equivalency Diploma before the end of the school year?

After passing a High School Equivalency exam, students must be withdrawn using a W26 withdrawal code in Infinite Campus.

9. Who prepares students to take the exams?

The school district is responsible for preparing students to take the High School Equivalency exam. Kentucky and federal law both prohibit KYAE from funding the preparation of a minor for a high school equivalency exam.

10. Who pays for the high school equivalency preparation and related exams?

Either the district or the student must pay for a high school equivalency preparation and related exams. Pursuant to KRS 158.146, no state or federal funds for adult education and literacy, including but not limited to funds appropriated under KRS 151B.409 or 20 U.S.C. secs. 9201 et seq., shall be used to pay for a high school student enrolled in an AEP operated or contracted by a school district leading to a certificate of completion or a High School Equivalency Diploma.

11. Who administers the GED Ready test?

The GED Ready Test can be scheduled directly by the student through their GED account.

12. If students pass the GED Ready tests, do they still take the GED?

Yes. The GED Ready test is a diagnostic test used to determine whether a student is prepared to take the full GED.

13. What is needed for students to take the GED?

Once a district has determined that a student is prepared to take the GED, the DPP must complete the process described by KYAE. Upon confirmation from KYAE, the student may schedule their test through their GED account.

14. How do High School Equivalency Diplomas impact graduation rates?

Students who take and pass a high school equivalency exam are considered non-completers. They will count against a school's graduation rate. Students are eligible to receive a free public education in Kentucky until age 21, so a student could exit the system through the high school equivalency path and then choose to return to the system to earn a traditional high school diploma.

15. What are the attendance requirements for participating students? Do they still attend daily?

Students are subject to compulsory attendance until after they have passed a high school equivalency exam and have been withdrawn from the system. Once a student passes the exam, they are exempted from compulsory attendance requirements. If a student does not pass the exam, they will continue to be subject to compulsory attendance laws until they pass the exam.

16. When can a student take a high school equivalency exam during the school year?

Local districts must create policies to govern their oversight of the High School Equivalency Diploma path. There is no timeline dictated in the law; however districts may wish to consider the impact of this pathway on the district's dropout rate (discussed in question 18).

17. Do students have to be seventeen years old to take a high school equivalency exam or to participate in high school equivalency preparation courses?

Yes. The student must be at least seventeen years of age, be enrolled in a district-operated alternative education program, and not be on track to graduate as defined by local board of education policy to be allowed to participate in the high school equivalency path within an alternative education program.

18. Will students who participate be counted as a dropout in the district's dropout rate?

Students who earn a High School Equivalency Diploma program are considered non-completers and will negatively impact the district's graduation rate. The student will impact the district's dropout rate if they fail to re-enroll or pass the GED prior to October 1st of the school year following their withdrawal, which is coded as W26 in Infinite Campus. If the student does pass, then they must have a completed data on the graduation tab in IC by entering diploma date as the date student passed the GED and diploma type selection of Adult GED.

19. How do High School Equivalency Diplomas impact the Postsecondary Readiness Indicator?

Students that withdraw with a W26 (Completed GED program/ obtained GED Certificate) will be included with all graduates and 12th grade students that are extracted from Infinite Campus for

Postsecondary Readiness calculations. If a student does not meet the CPE benchmarks on the GED, they will negatively impact the *Postsecondary Readiness Indicator* score. If a student does meet the CPE benchmarks, they will count positively toward *Postsecondary Readiness* if documentation of an official GED score report is provided to the Office of Assessment and Accountability through the data review process.

20. Does GED provide accommodations for students with disabilities?

Test accommodations are considered on a case-by-case basis and may include extra testing time, extra breaks, or a separate testing room. For more information about GED's testing accommodations, please visit: Accommodations - GED

21. Do Students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) continue to receive special education and related services once they enter the High School Equivalency Diploma path?

Yes. Students with IEPs continue to receive educational and related services outlined in their IEPs.

22. Does the achievement of a High School Equivalency Diploma credential satisfy the local education agency's (LEA's) obligation to make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to students with disabilities?

No. The achievement of a GED credential does not alleviate the LEA's obligation to provide FAPE to students with IEPs. In Kentucky, all LEAs are required to provide FAPE to students with a disability until the age of 21, unless they graduate with a regular high school diploma. A student with disabilities may obtain a GED but may return to complete the graduation requirements for a diploma.

23. Should the High School Equivalency Diploma path be indicated on a student's Individual Learning Plan Addendum (ILPA)?

Yes. If a student is on the **High School Equivalency Diploma** path it should be discussed during the ILPA development and reflected in the student's ILPA.