

February 12, 2014

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 13-27
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER ACADEMIC MANAGERS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: GRACE A. KILBANE
National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Continued Guidance on Transitioning to New High School Equivalency (HSE) Testing

1. Purpose. To provide a history of Job Corps' transition from the 2002 GED to HSE tests. Specific guidance is contained herein on all levels of the system and actions required to ensure that every student graduates with a high school diploma or its equivalent.
2. Background. The 2002 GED was retired January of this year, and states and unincorporated territories of the United States adopted one or more of the following tests of high school equivalency: 2014 GED, and/or High School Equivalency Test (HiSET); and/or Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC). To facilitate Job Corps' transition to new HSE testing, the Office of Job Corps took the following actions:

Policy

- In June 2013, changes to Job Corps' Program Requirements Handbook were released. The changes included requirements for conducting on-center testing and new model-based performance goals for High School Diploma (HSD) and HSE programs.

Communications

- From August 2012 through December 2013, Program Instruction Notices informed the Job Corps community about changes in state HSE testing.
- Beginning September 13, 2013, weekly e-mail communications (eBlasts) went to Points of Contact (POCs) at the regional, operator and center levels. eBlasts communicate real-time information such as Office of Job Corps updates, state HSE testing information, test publisher information, and professional development opportunities.

Professional Development

- An HSE Web site was established on the Job Corps Community Web page to provide up-to-date information about HSE implementation, and to provide access to HSE eBlasts, archived Job Corps Webinars on HSE test preparation, Information Notices, and other resources.
- In December 2013, a detailed list of state-sponsored professional development opportunities was disseminated to HSE POCs through a report entitled *The National Review of State Directors of Adult Education on High School Equivalency (HSE) Summative Report*. The information was gathered through a Job Corps-sponsored survey of State Directors of Adult Education conducted August through October 2013. The report also included information on each state's non-test options for earning a high school diploma or equivalency in the interest of expanding both HSE and HSD options within Job Corps.

Webinars

- In May 2013, the three HSE test publishers used Webinars to inform the Job Corps community about the features of each test, and student and staff resources.
- A Webinar in October 2013 addressed completing center plans for transitioning to the new HSE (tests) and documenting start-up funding.
- In November 2013, a two-part Webinar was presented on preparing students for writing tasks included in all three HSE exams. A "Writing Guide" was disseminated during the webinar and via an eBlast.
- A December 2013 Webinar was presented on teaching test- and content-related vocabulary for all three HSE exams. A "Vocabulary Guide" was disseminated during the Webinar and via an eBlast.

Start-Up Funding and Planning

- Funds totaling \$3.1 million were placed on center contracts to finance instructional materials, equipment and staff training to prepare students for the new HSE tests. Funds may be expended through May 31, 2014.

Planning

- Centers received November 2013, an *HSE Planning & Expenditures Workbook* to use for planning implementation of the new HSE tests. The workbook provides the specific actions centers should take to transition to an HSE program, and it asks centers to document expenditures of start-up funding.

3. Action. All centers will:

- a. Follow the suggested steps for implementation as specified in the *HSE Planning & Expenditures Workbook*, and review and use resources associated with action items. Planning steps must be documented in the workbook even if no expenditure is associated with the action item.

- b. Implement the writing and vocabulary strategies presented in the HSE Writing and Vocabulary Webinars and as detailed in the accompanying guides.
- c. Complete the *HSE Planning & Expenditures Workbook* and upload it to the “Shared Documents/HSE Planning and Expenditures Workbook” by May 15, 2014. Centers may begin purchasing resources and materials once the Regional and National offices approve their workbooks.
- d. Complete the “Date Received” column when resources arrive at the center. (Regional and National offices will collect this information between November 2013 to June 2014 to confirm expenditure of funds).
- e. Work with the Job Corps Data Center to ensure the proper operating systems are in place as technology and other online curricular resources are selected.

All HSE POCs will:

- a. Continue to monitor his or her state’s Web site and test publishers’ Web sites for resources and professional development opportunities to support teacher and student preparation.
- b. Read and disseminate all HSE communications including, but not limited to, weekly eBlasts and information found on the HSE Web site.

Regional Offices will:

- a. Track the expenditure of funds transferred to the centers to purchase instructional materials, equipment and related staff training, and review and approve centers’ workbooks once they are uploaded.
- b. Monitor centers’ implementation of the new tests, teacher knowledge and instruction of new content and students’ preparedness to pass the exams.

Addressees should ensure this Program Instruction Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Questions should be addressed to John Chowning at (202) 693-3102, chowning.john@dol.gov, or Lynne Fry at (202) 693-3101, fry.lynne@dol.gov.