

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** SB 183a

**51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013**

**Tracking Number:** .190765.1

**Short Title:** Replace GED Terms with Equivalency Diploma

**Sponsor(s):** Senator Gay G. Kernan and Others

**Analyst:** Travis Dulany

**Date:** March 4, 2013

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**FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**

**AS AMENDED**

**The Senate Floor amendment corrects a drafting error to include a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma to the qualifications for certification.**

**Original Bill Summary:**

SB 183 amends several sections of current law to replace the terms “General Education Diploma,” “General Equivalency Diploma,” “General Educational Development Certificate,” and “GED” with the term “High School Equivalency Diploma.”

**Fiscal Impact:**

Senate Bill 183 makes no appropriation.

**Substantive Issues:**

According to the American Council on Education (ACE):

- “GED” is a registered trademark of ACE and may not be used or reproduced without written permission from the organization; and
- the test is administered by GED Testing Service, LLC under a license from ACE.

While the acronym “GED” refers specifically to a series of tests owned by ACE and administered by GED Testing Service, LLC, a commonplace assumption is that “GED” describes all high school equivalency tests. As noted by New York State Education Commissioner John King, “GED is synonymous with ‘alternative assessment for adult learners.’”

Although GED Testing Service, LLC is responsible for developing and administering the tests, it is not responsible for determining high school completion. Participants who successfully pass the battery of GED exams receive a GED credential, but it is up to the administering jurisdiction – state, correctional institution, military facility, or Veterans Affairs hospital – to determine the name of the credential.

According to the US Census Bureau, 63 percent of jurisdictions award a “Diploma,” while 31 percent award a “Certificate,” and 6.0 percent award something else.

**Technical Issues:**

Page 9, lines 4 and 5 should be amended to read, “holds a high school or high school equivalency diploma from an accredited institution.”

**Background:**

According to GED Testing Service, LLC:

- the GED test was first developed in 1942 and was primarily administered to US Armed Service members whose military service interrupted their ability to complete high school;
- the original series of GED tests reflected the needs of the industrial era;
- at the time in which the test was developed, 37 percent of test-takers indicated plans to seek additional education at the postsecondary level;
- the original series English test focused on correctness and effectiveness of expression, while the other portions – social studies, science, and literature – relied on the interpretation of reading material;
- the test was revised in 1978, and the changes, as quoted below, were characterized by a:
  - “shift in emphasis from science and social studies reading materials to a separate reading test; and
  - transition away from a recall of facts toward application of conceptual knowledge and evaluation of presented information”;
- the third series of the GED test, released in 1988, was based on the following recommendations from a panel of professionals and experts:
  - the addition of a direct writing sample;
  - increased emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
  - increased reflection of the diverse roles adults play in society;
  - greater emphasis on understanding the sources of societal change; and
  - an increase in contextual settings relevant to adults;
- in the 1988 series, the reason candidates took the test shifted, with over 65 percent saying they were taking the test in order to enroll in a postsecondary institution; and
- the fourth series, released in 2002, and also the current GED test, is based on content standards at the national and jurisdictional level, and will expire December 31, 2013.

**Committee Referrals:**

SEC/SPAC/HEC/HHGIC

**Related Bills:**

SB 263 *Bernalillo GED Educational Training*  
SB 381 *Adult Basic Education Fund & Tests*  
HB 321 *Adult Education Programs & GED Test*