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TITLE 200 – BOARD OF EDUCATION

CHAPTER 20 – COUNCIL ON SECONDARY AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

SUBCHAPTER 10 - ACADEMIC STANDARDS, PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

PART 4 – Regulations Governing the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program

4.1 Preamble

- A. The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program is composed of approved high school equivalency tests, which are administered throughout the state by testing centers authorized by the Rhode Island Department of Education. The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma is issued to those eligible individuals who successfully pass all components of the high school equivalency test.
- B. The testing program operates in accordance with the policies and procedures of the high school equivalency test publisher guidelines, and the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education's requirements.
- C. The Commissioner designates a state administrator who has the responsibilities of providing leadership for the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program, maintaining the program's integrity and ensuring conformity to the high school equivalency test publisher's policies and procedures and in accordance with the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program Regulations requirements. The validity of the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma is based upon the proper administration and supervision of the high school equivalency test program.
- D. These regulations shall take effect upon promulgation.

4.2 Policy and Authority

- A. The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program enables Rhode Island adults and out-of-school youth to gain personal satisfaction, career opportunities and increased academic possibilities by earning a high school equivalency diploma from the State of Rhode Island.
- B. The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education ("the Council") regards the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma as being of the same status as a traditional high school diploma. These regulations are promulgated pursuant to their authority in R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-60-4(a)(13).

4.3 Applications

Application for the Rhode Island High School Equivalency Program must be made on the official state application at any of the test centers in the state. Applications for computer-based testing must be made online in accordance with the test publisher's directions.

4.4 Eligibility for testing

- A. To be eligible for high school equivalency testing a person must be a Rhode Island resident or a member of the Armed forces stationed in Rhode Island when application is made, and one of the following conditions must be met:
1. Candidate is at least eighteen years of age and not enrolled in secondary school; or
 2. Candidate is sixteen or seventeen years of age and has an approved Alternative Learning Plan on file pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1 and which provides that the student is pursuing a high school equivalency diploma; or
 3. Candidate is sixteen or seventeen years of age and has been home schooled. A home schooled candidate aged 16 or 17 must provide:
 - a. A letter from the parent or guardian that the home schooling has been discontinued; and,
 - b. A signed Alternative Learning Plan from the student's resident district superintendent stating that the student has permission to attend the adult education program to pursue their high school equivalency diploma.
 4. Candidate is sixteen or seventeen years of age and is detained in a juvenile facility or is incarcerated.

4.5 Verification of eligibility for testing

- A. All candidates must present sufficient documentation to verify eligibility for testing. Such documentation will verify age, personal identification and Rhode Island residency. Minimal documentation must include:
1. A certified copy of his/her birth certificate or other appropriate document (e.g. passport, valid driver's license) that clearly establishes age, and;
 2. Positive valid identification which includes the applicant's signature and a photograph, (e.g. valid driver's license, Alien Registration Receipt Card); and,

3. Appropriate verification of Rhode Island residency, preferably with a photograph, (e.g. valid Rhode Island driver's license) or in the absence of photo identification, at least two items verifying residency e.g. utility bill, voter registration card, tax bill.

4.6 Testing

- A. The high school equivalency tests will be administered at the authorized Rhode Island test centers or at other sites in accordance with the test center's contract.
- B. The Chief Examiner at the respective test center will schedule testing.
- C. The test centers will maintain an appropriate number of English and Spanish editions of the high school equivalency tests as needed and the appropriate numbers of the Braille, Large Print, and Audio Cassette editions of the test where available and as needed. The test taker may request all reasonable accommodations through the test center or the high school equivalency test publisher.
- D. The tests shall be administered only in accordance with instructions and procedures promulgated by the high school equivalency test publisher and the Rhode Island Department of Education ("RIDE").

4.7 Fee schedule

- A. A fee schedule shall be established with the approval of the Council upon the recommendation of the Commissioner for services related to the high school equivalency program.
- B. High school equivalency test publishers will establish the base cost for tests and RIDE will establish administrative fees.
- C. RIDE will assume the testing costs and fees associated with the high school equivalency test for individuals with limited income who can prove a financial hardship, who are ineligible for subsidies from other state agencies or departments, and who have received at least a minimum passing score on the high school equivalency practice test, or pertinent section of the test (in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-63-18). Candidates who seek relief from testing fees must present evidence of financial hardship to the testing center chief examiner which includes, but is not limited to, the following documentation: SNAP food assistance, Child Care Assistance, RIte Care/RIte Share health coverage, or RI Works cash assistance.

4.8 Retesting

- A. A candidate must retake any test in which a minimum standard passing score for that test was not attained, regardless of total score.

- B. Retesting is allowed at any time on condition that different forms of the tests within the battery administered are used in retesting.
- C. Individuals who have earned a high school equivalency credential or earned scores sufficient to qualify for such a credential but who need to earn higher test scores to meet an admission requirement for postsecondary education or training, or to meet employment requirements, may retest.
- D. Such individuals must meet the eligibility requirements of §§ 4.4 and 4.5 of this Part, must submit an application and pay the regular fee.
- E. Retesting shall be conducted only in accordance with instructions and procedures promulgated by the high school equivalency test publisher.
- F. The Chief Examiner at the respective test center will schedule retesting. Retesting registration for computer based testing must be made online.

4.9 Issuance of diploma

The Rhode Island High School Equivalency Diploma will be issued by RIDE when the eligible high school equivalency-testing candidate attains the minimum standard passing score, according to the test publisher and the state administrator reviews and approves the applications.

4.10 Revocation of credentials

- A. The state administrator shall have the authority to revoke an Equivalency Diploma when reliable evidence exists that the candidate misrepresented or provided false information on the application; or otherwise fraudulently verified his/her eligibility to test.
- B. A holder of an Equivalency Diploma may appeal its revocation by the state administrator to the Commissioner who, after providing notice to the interested parties of the time and place of hearing, shall examine the evidence and decide whether good cause exists for the revocation of the Equivalency Diploma.
- C. Any decision of the revocation by the Commissioner shall be subject to an appeal to and review by the Council, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 16-39.
- D. During the revocation process and any appeal, no credentials shall be re-issued to the individual.