



High School Equivalency Updates

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HSE Testing in Massachusetts

High School Equivalency (HSE) Team

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Calendar Year 2025 by the Numbers in Massachusetts

- ▶ Over 19,000 HiSET subtests completed
- ▶ Nearly 8,000 GED subtests completed
- ▶ 7,872 unique test takers
 - ▶ Average age of 29
- ▶ 3,287 credentials awarded
- ▶ 74% of test takers who completed all exams earned a credentials



Policy Overview and Updates

Testing Options

HiSET

- ▶ Computer-based in a test center
- ▶ Paper-based in a test center

GED

- ▶ Computer-based in a test center
- ▶ Paper-based or online proctored (“at-home”) **only as disability accommodations**



Online Proctored Testing

- ▶ As of July 10, 2026, Massachusetts only offers online proctored GED testing as a disability accommodation.
 - ▶ All requests must go through [GED Accommodations](#) and not the state office.
 - ▶ Note that a disability could include situations like being on bedrest during pregnancy, managing a diagnosed anxiety disorder, or recovering from a surgery or injury.
- ▶ There are no online proctored HiSET testing options.

Retesting Policies

▶ HiSET Retests

- ▶ A candidate may take each subtest **up to three times** per calendar year.
- ▶ Attempts reset on January 1 of each year.

▶ GED Retests

- ▶ A candidate may take each subtest an **unlimited** number of times per calendar year.
- ▶ After **three failed attempts**, they must **wait 60 days** between subsequent attempts.
- ▶ The policy resets on January 1 of each year, so everyone starts the year with three attempts without a wait period.

Free Testing Policy

Massachusetts pays for the first attempt plus two retests per subtest per lifetime for both GED and HiSET.

GED Codes (same for all subtests)

1st attempt: MAFREEGED1

2nd attempt: MARETAKE

3rd attempt: MAFREEGED1

HiSET Codes (same for all attempts)

LA - Reading: MAHISETREADING

LA - Writing: MAHISETWRITING

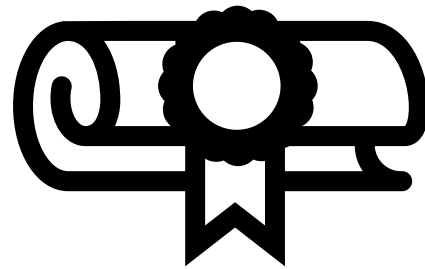
Social Studies: MAHISETSOCIALSTUDIES

Science: MAHISETSCIENCE

Mathematics: MAHISETMATH

DiplomaSender and TotalTranscript

- ▶ All credentials are issued through [DiplomaSender](#).
- ▶ Test takers can combine GED and HiSET scores to complete a credential.
 - ▶ Scores should be automatically merged into one account in DiplomaSender. If they aren't, email the HSE office, and we'll request a manual merge.
- ▶ Candidates must earn passing scores for both vendors
 - ▶ GED: Minimum score of 145 for each subtest
 - ▶ HiSET: Minimum score of 8 for each subtest (including a 2 for the essay on LA Writing) **and** an average score of 9



Total Transcript Example

	Student A	Student B	Student C
GED Reasoning	145	145	145
GED Science	145	145	145
HiSET Social Studies	9	10	9
HiSET Math	8	8	9
Average HiSET Score	8.5	9	9
Result	FAIL	PASS	PASS

Student A FAILED. They earned passing scores on the HiSET Social Studies (9) and HiSET Math (8) subtests, but the HiSET scores DID NOT average 9.

Student B PASSED. They earned passing scores on the HiSET Social Studies (10) and HiSET Math (8) subtests, and the HiSET scores averaged 9.

Student C PASSED. They earned passing scores on the HiSET Social Studies (9) and HiSET Math (9) subtests, and the HiSET scores averaged 9.

Other Policies to Remember

- ▶ Spanish and English Testing
 - ▶ Spanish and English tests can be combined toward one credential.
 - ▶ All credentials are printed in English, regardless of the language(s) of the exams.
- ▶ 16 and 17-Year-Olds
 - ▶ 16 and 17-year-olds can only schedule tests after the HSE offices approves a letter of withdrawal from their former high school (or a letter of non-attendance if they were homeschooled).
 - ▶ For details on requirements for the withdrawal letter and the approval process, see <https://www.doe.mass.edu/hse/under18.html>.

Other Policies to Remember

▶ Sunsetting Scores

- ▶ Any tests taken on or after January 1, 2014 are valid and can be applied toward a credential.
- ▶ Any complete credentials, regardless of when they were earned, are valid.
- ▶ Incomplete tests from prior to January 1, 2014 are no longer valid. If test takers have some passing scores from prior to 2014 but do not have a full credential, they need to start over.

EXAMPLES:

- ▶ Lucia passed 2 HiSET tests in 2016. These tests are valid, and she only needs to pass the other subtests.
- ▶ Jonathan passed all GED tests in 1975. He has a valid credential.
- ▶ Marcus passed 3 GED tests in 2002. These tests are no longer valid, and he must restart his tests.

Case Study Discussion

It's January of 2027, and you are an HSE Math teacher. Brian is a student you have been working with since September of 2026. He is a young father who talks about wanting to be a good example for his kids by getting his credential and starting classes at Roxbury Community College in the fall. Brian is an active participant in class, attending every session and advocating for his learning needs.

Brian passed his HiSET Reading, Writing, Science, and Social Studies tests on the first try, but Math has been his sticking point. On his first HiSET Math attempt in November of 2026, he got a 6. He tried again in December of 2026 and got a 7. He took a HiSET practice test last week, and his score indicated that he was not yet test ready. He was visibly frustrated after the practice test, and he told you he was tired of studying. He has never taken a GED practice or official test.

Brian approaches you and asks for help scheduling a HiSET Math retest as soon as possible. He says that he has three more attempts this year, since it's a new year, and he might as well start trying.

What do you do? How do you support Brian? What should you and Brian be considering?

Accommodations

Disability Accommodations

- ▶ Some accommodations are available without approval, such as mobility or medical devices, medications, seat cushions, and earplugs. For full lists, see the [HiSET Test Accommodations](#) website and the [Pearson VUE Comfort Aid List](#).
- ▶ Other accommodations need to be approved by GED® or PSI.
- ▶ A candidate only needs to be approved for accommodations once, and then they apply to all subtests.



Differences in Vendor Disability Accommodations

	GED®	HiSET®
Required Documentation	Requirements vary based on the disability. See all requirements on GED's website .	Letter from a medical authority or learning institution describing the disability or limitation and the accommodation being requested OR Letter from an educator describing the student's needs
Submission Instructions	Submit requests through the student's GED® account by clicking the notifications button and then clicking "Do you need modified testing (accommodations) for your test?"	Submit requests using the HiSET Test Accommodations Request Form .
Notes	Test takers can self-schedule exams that don't require extra test center coordination (e.g. extra time). Test takers must schedule exams with more complex accommodations (e.g. private rooms or readers/scribes) through GED®. NEW: Online proctored testing is available as an accommodation.	Test takers must schedule all exams through PSI Accommodations.

English Language Learner Accommodations

- ▶ We also offer extra time and/or private room accommodations for candidates for English language learners who are testing in English.
- ▶ Requests must go through PSI or GED.



Differences in Vendor ELL Accommodations

	GED®	HiSET®
Accommodations Available	Additional time (1.25x)	Additional time (1.5x) Private room
Required Documentation	1) A letter from an adult education program or from an organization such as their employer or religious organization: •On the organization's letterhead •Certifying that English is not their primary language •Stating that they will benefit from the accommodations, and •Signed and dated by someone at the organization	1) A letter from an adult education program or from an organization such as their employer or religious organization: •On the organization's letterhead •Certifying that English is not their primary language •Stating that they will benefit from the accommodations, and •Signed and dated by someone at the organization 2) A personal letter from the student requesting the accommodation(s)
Submission Instructions	Submit the letter through the student's GED® account by clicking the notifications button and then clicking "Do you need modified testing (accommodations) for your test?"	Submit both letters using the HiSET Test Accommodations Request Form .
Notes	Test takers can schedule their own exams without going through Pearson VUE or test centers.	Test takers must schedule exams through PSI Accommodations.

Full Group Discussion

Have you supported students in getting HSE test accommodations before? How do you help them navigate the process?



HiSET vs GED

HiSET vs. GED - A Few Differences

HiSET

- ▶ 5 subtests: Reading, Writing, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics
- ▶ Computer-based and paper-based
- ▶ Scaled subtest score ranging from 0-20
 - To pass: 8+ on each subtest AND an average of 9+ across all subtests
 - Writing requires at least 2 points to come from the essay
 - If scores are combined with GED scores for a TotalTranscript, they must still average 9+
 - College and Career Ready: 15+

GED

- ▶ 4 subtests: Reasoning Through Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics
- ▶ Computer-based (except by accommodation)
- ▶ Scaled module score ranging from 100-200
 - To pass: 145+ on each module
 - College Ready: 165 - 174
 - College Ready plus Credit: 175+

HiSET vs. GED - RLA

HiSET

- ▶ 2 exams: Reading and Writing
- ▶ Writing:
 - 61 questions
 - 120 minutes
 - Multiple-choice: 22% Organization of Ideas, 43% Language Facility, 35% Writing Conventions
 - Essay in response to a pair of texts
- ▶ Reading:
 - 50 questions
 - 65 minutes
 - 60% informational texts, 40% literary texts
 - 400-to-600-word texts

GED

- ▶ 1 exam: Reasoning Through Language Arts
- ▶ 51 questions
- ▶ 150 minutes (including a 10-minute break)
- ▶ Multiple-choice, technology enhanced, and 45-minute extended response essay
 - Tech enhanced include drag-and-drop and drop-down items
- ▶ 75% informational texts, 25% literature
 - Nonfiction texts can be drawn from science and social studies topics
 - Many stimuli are from U.S. founding documents and the “Great American Conversation.”
- ▶ 400-to-800-word texts

HiSET vs. GED - Mathematics

HiSET

- ▶ 55 questions
- ▶ 90 minutes
- ▶ 19% Numbers and Operations on Numbers, 18% Measurement/Geometry, 18% Data Analysis/Probability/Statistics, 45% Algebraic Concepts
- ▶ Multiple-choice only
- ▶ Formula Sheet Provided
 - Some formulas not provided (distance, Pythagorean theorem, quadratic formula)
- ▶ TI-30XS calculator the entire test

GED

- ▶ 46 questions
- ▶ 115 minutes
- ▶ 55% Algebraic Problem Solving, 45% Quantitative Problem Solving
- ▶ Multiple-choice and technology enhanced
 - Tech enhanced include drag-and-drop, hot spot, and fill in the blank
- ▶ Formula sheet and calculator reference sheet provided
- ▶ 5 questions no calculator; TI-30XS the remainder of the test

Tip: GED has a [free TI-30XS calculator tutorial](#). Regardless of the test a student plans to take, this is a great tool to use to help students learn how to navigate the calculator. Their [calculator reference sheet](#) is also a good resource.

HiSET vs. GED - Science

HiSET

- ▶ 60 questions
- ▶ 80 minutes
- ▶ 49% Life Science, 28% Physical Science, 23% Earth Science
- ▶ Multiple-choice only
- ▶ Most passages relate to scientific investigations and their results.
 - Test takers should be familiar with the scientific method, good experimental design, interpreting data, and drawing valid conclusions.
- ▶ No calculator

GED

- ▶ 35 questions
- ▶ 90 minutes
- ▶ 40% Life Science, 40% Physical Science, 20% Earth and Space Science
 - 30% reading and writing in science, 40% science concepts, 30% mathematical reasoning in science
- ▶ Multiple-choice and technology enhanced
 - Tech enhanced include drag-and-drop, hot spot, and fill in the blank
- ▶ ~50% of test items are discrete, and ~50% of items are presented with one stimulus for multiple items (ex: one passage with three related questions).
- ▶ TI-30XS calculator

HiSET vs. GED - Social Studies

HiSET

- ▶ 60 questions
- ▶ 70 minutes
- ▶ 35% History, 35% Civics/Government, 20% Economics, 10% Geography
- ▶ Multiple-choice only
- ▶ Stimuli could include primary documents, posters, cartoons, timelines, maps, graphs, tables, charts, and reading passages.
- ▶ No calculator

GED

- ▶ 35 questions
- ▶ 70 minutes
- ▶ 50% Civics/Government, 20% U.S. History, 15% Economics, 15% Geography and the World
 - 33% reading and writing in social studies, 33% social studies concepts, 33% mathematical reasoning in social studies
- ▶ Multiple-choice and technology enhanced
 - Tech enhanced include drag-and-drop, hot spot, and fill in the blank
- ▶ ~50% of test items are discrete, and ~50% of items are presented with one stimulus for multiple items (ex: one passage with three related questions).
- ▶ TI-30XS calculator

HiSET vs. GED - Big Picture

- ▶ For detailed breakdowns of the HiSET subtests, see the [HiSET Test at a Glance](#).
- ▶ For detailed breakdowns of the GED subtests, see [GED's educator resources](#).

Both tests are aligned to the same College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. Both tests lead to the same High School Equivalency credential.

Breakout Discussion

How do you support students in selecting the right test for them?



Questions?



Thank you!

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