



Mike Beebe  
*Governor*

Department  
Of Career Education

William L "Bill" Walker, Jr.  
*Director*

Three Capitol Mall



Little Rock, AR 72201



ace.arkansas.gov

## News Release

March 27, 2012

**For more information contact:**

Deborah Germany, Communications Director

Telephone: 501-682-5223

Fax: 501-682-5117

Cell: 501-749-7594

E-mail: Deborah.germany@arkansas.gov



### GED® Test in Arkansas Computer Based, Possible Fee in 2014

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas is one of only a few states that offers the General Educational Development (GED®) test at no cost to the student, but that may soon change, says Janice Hanlon, Arkansas's GED Administrator™.

The program is under the authority of the Arkansas Department of Career Education and serves Arkansans who are 16 years or older, not enrolled in or graduated from high school, and who meet other state requirements regarding residency and testing eligibility.

"The GED® test is undergoing a significant change in Arkansas and in the entire country," Hanlon said.

"Every few years, we begin a new testing series. We've been using the same test module since 2002, but in 2014 the test will be updated to reflect the common core educational standards required of today's high school graduates."

Those standards include problem solving, computer skills and more advanced math skills. When a student earns a GED® diploma, they are expected to have knowledge and skills equivalent to current-day graduating high school seniors.

In addition to the content itself, the test-taking method will change. The new test battery will be administered by computer, no longer by pencil and paper, beginning in January 2014.

The other big change coming at that time is the cost. Beginning in January 2014, the GED® test and diploma may no longer be free in Arkansas.

"Our adult education centers across the state will be equipped with the proper computer-based testing environment in order to comply with the new requirements, but that's not where the cost comes in," Hanlon said.

"The new test battery is being managed and produced by the GED Testing Service®, as in the past, but they have formed a new partnership with Pearson, a global leader in education and testing. The GED® program they're developing will not only reflect the common core standards, but also will indicate college and career readiness. "The new test will cost more money than Arkansas has traditionally been able to absorb, therefore, some of the test's costs may be borne by the student in the future," Hanlon said.

-more-

Exactly how much a GED® diploma will cost each student remains to be seen. Requests to the legislature for additional funding are planned, along with grant applications and seeking other sources of financial assistance for the program.

The GED Testing Service® sent representatives to Arkansas in March to conduct focus groups with current GED® students in Russellville, Ft. Smith, Conway and Little Rock. The purpose was to get feedback on the value of a GED® diploma and what students might be willing to pay for the preparation, testing and diploma in the future.

Focus groups were only conducted in Arkansas and Oregon, said Beth Barrett, product marketing specialist from the GED Testing Service®.

“We chose Arkansas and Oregon for our focus groups because we wanted to use states where we thought the administrators and students would be open for a discussion,” said Barrett.

“We frequently get anecdotal input from teachers and students all around the country, but we wanted to get more information in a controlled environment, specifically about the pay structure concepts we’re considering for the 2014 test.”

How those concepts will play out in Arkansas is still under development according to Hanlon.

“I sincerely doubt Arkansas will be able to bear the entire cost of the test starting in 2014,” Hanlon said.

“We want to let our current and prospective students know, and those who might have started and not completed their GED® credential, that there’s still time for them to complete it before the change.”

Until January 2014, preparation for the GED® and taking the test are free for Arkansans through the adult education centers around the state. And until 2014, the test will not be administered by computer. After that, changes are coming.

Contact information for Arkansas’s 51 adult education centers and about the GED® test can be found in the Adult Education section of the agency’s website, <http://ace.arkansas.gov>, or by calling 501-682-1980.

***The Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE) has the mission of providing leadership and contributing resources to serve the diverse and changing career educational needs of Arkansas youth, adults, and persons living with disabilities.***

– ## –