

## Florida Department of Education

### GED Exit Option Model 2004-2005 Frequently Asked Questions

#### ***Background***

*1. What is the GED Exit Option Model?*

The GED Exit Option Model is a graduation strategy that permits currently enrolled high school students who are at risk of not graduating with their cohort group to earn a standard diploma through an alternate graduation route. It is not designed to be a vehicle for early exit. Students participating in this strategy may not graduate before their cohort group, defined as the group with whom they entered kindergarten.

*2. What are the requirements for successful completion of the GED Exit Option Model?*

In addition to passing both sections of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), students graduating via the GED Exit Option Model must pass the GED Tests in order to receive a standard diploma.

*3. Is a student who participates in the GED Exit Option Model exempted from earning the number of credits required for a standard high school diploma?*

Yes. Students enrolled in the GED Exit Option Model strategy are exempted from the requirement to earn a specific number of credits and the requirement to achieve a minimum 2.0 grade point average. However, these students are required to pass both sections of the FCAT in order to receive a standard diploma. The transcripts of students who participate in this strategy will indicate an alternative graduation route and will reflect only the actual number of credits earned.

#### ***Eligibility and Enrollment***

*4. How are students selected to participate in the GED Exit Option Model?*

Selection procedures for participation in the GED Exit Option Model must ensure that students who enroll are those who will not graduate with their cohort group due to credit deficiency or low grade point average and who are otherwise capable of meeting graduation requirements. To be eligible to participate in this strategy, students must

- be at least 16 years of age and currently enrolled in a PK-12 public school program
- be enrolled in courses that meet high school graduation requirements
- be overage for grade and/or in jeopardy of not graduating with their cohort group due to credit deficiency and low grade point average
- demonstrate a reading level of seventh grade or higher at the time of selection, and ninth grade or higher at the time of testing.

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Please note that many districts that implement the GED Exit Option Model add additional requirements or criteria to those required by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Florida Department of Education.

5. *Must an eligible student who wishes to use GED Exit Option Model be enrolled in a dropout prevention program?*

No. Any student currently enrolled in a PK-12 program who meets the eligibility criteria requirements as defined in Question #4, including students enrolled in special programs such as exceptional student education, dropout prevention, teenage parent programs, educational programs for students in Department of Juvenile Justice facilities, and English for Speakers of Other Languages is eligible to utilize this strategy. However, the appropriate selection of students is critical to ensuring their success and the success of the model. The decision to allow a student receiving exceptional education services to participate in this strategy must be approved by the student's individual education plan (IEP) team.

6. *May students be placed in the GED Exit Option Model without their knowledge?*

No. Participation in the GED Exit Option Model is voluntary and requires both pre-counseling and parental consent.

7. *Must a student enrolled in the GED Exit Option Model be enrolled in courses for credit?*

Yes. Students participating in the GED Exit Option Model must be enrolled in courses that meet high school graduation requirements. Grades and credits earned must be entered in the student's record. This includes credits earned through computer-assisted instruction. If students are enrolled in level 1 (Intensive Math or Intensive English) courses, a written assessment of that student's need must be included in the student's individual educational plan (IEP) or in a student academic improvement plan (AIP) in order for that student to earn credit, pursuant to section 1003.43(7)(d), Florida Statutes.

#### ***Diploma and Graduation Issues***

8. *What type of diploma is awarded to a student who participates in the GED Exit Option Model and passes both sections of the FCAT and completes the GED Tests and any additional district-required options?*

The student must be awarded a standard high school diploma. If the student passes only the GED Tests, then he or she should be awarded a State of Florida diploma.

9. *May a student who is overage for grade and classified as a ninth grader take the Grade 10 FCAT?*

No. It is imperative that school districts revise their student progression plans to allow students participating in the GED Exit Option Model to be promoted to the 10 grade for the purpose of

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taking the Grade 10 FCAT. Students enrolled in the GED Exit Option Model as ninth graders who take the Grade 10 FCAT invalidate the grading system. In order to be able to take the Grade 10 FCAT, the student must be reported as a 10th grade student in the DOE student database in the semester in which he or she takes the Grade 10 FCAT.

*10. What is the difference between a standard high school diploma earned through the GED Exit Option Model and the adult standard diploma?*

Students who are awarded the adult standard diploma must meet all minimum graduation requirements prescribed for the standard diploma, including minimum grade point average and credits earned. Students participating in the GED Exit Option Model must pass both sections of the FCAT but are exempt from the requirements for minimum grade point average and credits earned.

*11. May students in a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facility participate in the GED Exit Option Model?*

Yes. However, if the DJJ educational program offering GED Preparation does not meet the guidelines outlined in the *2003 GED Exit Option Model Procedure Manual* or if the student served are anticipated to graduate sooner than his or her cohort group, then the student is not eligible to participate in the GED Exit Option Model.

*12. What withdrawal codes are used for students who complete the GED Exit Option Model?*

If the student completes the GED Exit Option Model by passing both sections of the FCAT and the GED Tests, then he or she should be assigned the W10 withdrawal code. If the student passes only the GED Tests, then he or she should be assigned the WGD withdrawal code.

### ***Annual School Report***

*13. What is the Annual School Report for the GED Exit Option Model and where is it obtained?*

The Annual School Report for the GED Exit Option Model is distributed as part of the district application. The data is collected via a scantron-type form developed by ACE, which owns the GED Tests, as part of its agreement with DOE to implement the GED Exit Option Model in Florida. The report provides a method to collect demographic information, descriptive and assessment data of program implementation, and other useful program activity information.

The Annual School Report must be distributed to each school site implementing the GED Exit Option Model. School staff must complete the forms and submit them to the district. Each Annual School Report will be included in the submission of the district's application to implement the GED Exit Option Model. It is important that schools note that these forms must not be faxed back in, completed in pen, or printed on non-white paper. Since this is a scantron-type form, the Department can send it in a .pdf file format electronically. Please contact Michael Lisle at (850) 245-0481 or via email at Michael.Lisle@fldoe.org to request an electronic form.

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14. *The Annual School Report for the GED Exit Option Model asks for a NCES code. Where do I find this?*

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) school codes are used to identify school sites at the national level. These codes are generated each year and forwarded to DOE. Once a district is approved by DOE to implement the GED Exit Option Model each year, the DOE sends the district an approval letter with the *List of Approved School Sites for Implementation of the GED Exit Option Model* included. On this list are the individual NCES school codes for implementing school sites within the district. New school sites will not have a NCES code. DOE will assign the code during the approval process.

15. *The second page on the Annual School Report for the GED Exit Option Model asks for demographic data. How should I complete this page if this is a new school site?*

If there is no data to input on this page, it may be left blank.

#### ***GED Exit Option Authorization Form***

16. *What is the GED Exit Option Authorization Form, and where is it obtained?*

The GED Exit Option Authorization Form is utilized to track students who participate in the GED Exit Option Model. Students taking the GED Tests must complete this form with their teacher and submit it to the chief examiner prior to testing. These forms are distributed to each district's GED Exit Option Model coordinator. DOE does not send authorization forms to individual school sites.

It is not necessary to submit a new form at any subsequent testing since the student's records are updated each time he or she takes the GED Tests.

#### ***General Questions***

17. *What happens if a student successfully completes the GED Tests prior to passing the FCAT?*

Once a student successfully completes the GED, he or she is considered a high school graduate. Districts and programs are encouraged not to allow students to enroll to take the GED Tests until their last semester in the GED Exit Option Model.

18. *What is the passing score on the GED Tests?*

Students must score a minimum of 410 on each of the subtests and must achieve a combined score of 2,250 on all of the GED Tests.

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#### *Student Considerations*

*19. What is the district's financial responsibility for GED testing fees for students participating in the GED Exit Option Model?*

This is a district decision. Many districts accept responsibility for GED testing fees, while some districts require students to be responsible for their own fees. Students and parents must be informed of this policy prior to participation in the GED Exit Option Model. Section 1003.52(3), Florida Statutes, provides that students in residential DJJ programs shall not be charged a testing fee for the GED Tests. In this instance, the responsibility for paying the testing fees rests with the entity that is receiving funding for providing instruction.

*20. Can a student with disabilities be exempted from taking the FCAT in the GED Exit Option Model program?*

No. The 2003 legislature enacted the Enhanced New Needed Opportunity for Better Life and Education for Students with Disabilities (ENNOBLES) Act. This legislation provided a waiver from the FCAT as a requirement for graduation of a standard high school for students with disabilities with specific eligibility requirements:

- Students who are currently seniors with IEPs
- Students who have met the minimum graduation requirement of 24 academic credit requirements with a cumulative 2.0 or better
- Students who have taken the FCAT at least once in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and not received a passing score
- Students for whom their IEP team determines that the FCAT cannot accurately measure the student's ability.

Because the second criterion says they have to have met 24 credits and students in the GED Exit Option Model have not, ENNOBLES does not apply for these students.