



GED TEST CHANGES AND ATTAINMENT

Overview of 2014 GED test changes and attainment in Washington State

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief will lay out the significant changes made to the GED test in 2014, examine the impact of the changes on Washingtonians, and make recommendations to achieve the State's two educational attainment goals:

- a) By 2023, all adults in Washington, ages 25-44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- b) By 2023, at least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, will have a postsecondary credential.

According to the 2010 census, over half a million adults in Washington do not have a high school credential. One pathway to this credential is the GED test.

In January 2014, the GED Testing Service significantly redesigned the test to incorporate the Common Core State Standards—which Washington and most other states have adopted—and the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education. The redesign of the test was intended to better assess the depth of critical thinking and problem solving skills that employers and colleges are seeking.

Coinciding with the changes to the GED test, the number of test takers, completers, and passers plummeted.

- Test participation decreased by 62.8 percent. In 2013, over 22,000 Washingtonians took the test compared to fewer than 9,000 in 2014.
- The test completion rate decreased by 33.7 percent. In 2013, over 18,000 test candidates completed all four subject areas of the test compared to just over 4,000 in 2014.
- In 2013, over 15,000 completers passed the test compared to just over 3,000 in 2014.
- From 2008 to 2013, more than 4 percent of Washington's target population (adults without a high school credential) took the test compared to 1.5 percent in 2014.

Possible reasons for the decline in GED test participation, completion, and passing are:

- The price of the test increased from \$75 to \$120.
- Test takers need computer skills in order to take the test because the paper-and-pencil option has been eliminated.
- The test is more difficult now that it is aligned to Common Core State Standards and CCR Standards for Adult Education.
- Test preparation teachers needed more time to implement new test curriculum content and materials.

- Potential test takers had difficulty scheduling a test appointment because test centers had a limited number of seats or computers.
- More adults without a high school credential may have used, or been encouraged to pursue, alternative pathways to earn a high school credential.

HISTORY OF THE TEST

In 1942, the United States Armed Forces Institute created the GED test as a means to allow soldiers returning from World War II to continue their education and complete an alternative high school credential. The American Council on Education (ACE), a national higher education association representing presidents of accredited degree-granting institutions, began administering the GED test years later through the GED Testing Service (GEDTS). At that time, the test had gained popularity with the civilian population.¹ By 1959, more civilians than veterans were taking and passing the test in pursuit of achieving educational, vocational, and personal goals.

As the required skills in the labor market evolved and demand for higher education changed, so did the features of the GED test. ACE and GEDTS updated the test in 1978, 1988, and 2002.² In 2009, ACE developed a joint public-private partnership with Pearson VUE, the largest globally recognized private education corporation, which evolved to become the new GED Testing Service. Together, they developed a new version of the GED test in 2014 in order to align with the Common Core State Standards and the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards for Adult Education³. The intention was to ensure adults passing the exam demonstrate the critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills to remain competitive in the economy's workforce. There was also evidence that passing the GED test was not perceived as equivalent to earning a diploma. In 2012, the Census Bureau estimated that high school diploma holders earned roughly \$1600 more per month than those with a GED certificate.⁴

CHANGES TO THE TEST

In 2014, the GED Testing Service made a number of notable changes to the GED test. First, test questions changed from multiple choice to constructed-response questions in order to measure complex thinking and depth of knowledge in the four subject area tests:

1. Reasoning through language arts (RLA)
2. Mathematical reasoning (math)
3. Science

4. Social studies

Second, adaptive computer-based testing replaced the pen-and-paper test. Therefore, GED candidates must now have functional keyboarding skills in order to complete the test. Third, the price of the exam increased by varying amounts across states. In Washington, the price doubled from \$75 per test to \$150 in 2013, and then dropped to \$120 in 2014. The price of the test varies by state. Subsidies from the state, local community groups, and other organizations within a state may affect the base price, which is \$120 for computer delivery.⁵

Lastly, the overall content level of the exam changed to align with the critical thinking skills correlated with college and career readiness.⁶ According to GED Testing Service, the new content aligns better with the Common Core State Standards used in high schools.⁷ See Appendix A, “Comparison of the 2002 GED Test Series to the 2014 GED Test Series,” for a list of the changes that occurred in 2014.

ABOUT THE DATA

Methodology

The report presents available summary data from the GED Testing Service’s annual statistical reports, years 2008-2013. The GED Testing Service has not published state or national data for years 2014 and 2015. Therefore, this report analyzes 2014 and 2015 state summary data from Washington’s State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and preliminary 2014 national summary data published by the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE).⁸

Definitions of terms

The definitions of the terms used in this report follow the conventions used in the GED Testing Service’s annual statistical reports.⁹

adult

For the purposes of this report, an adult is someone aged 16 and older who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law.

completion rate

Calculated by dividing the number of GED test completers by the number of GED test candidates, then multiplying that number by 100.

GED test

A high school equivalency assessment consisting of four subject areas. It provides an opportunity for adults who did not complete a formal high school program to earn their state’s high school-level equivalency credential, diploma, or certificate.

GED test candidates

Adults who have tested in at least one of the four GED subject areas, regardless of whether they met the passing standard. The number of candidates serves as the denominator for calculating the completion rate. In this report, the terms *candidates* and *test takers* are used interchangeably with *GED test candidates*.

GED test completers

Candidates who have tested in all four subject areas, regardless of whether they met the passing standard. Candidates are considered completers in a given year only if they finished testing in all four subject areas by December 31 of that year—even if they began testing in a previous year. The number of completers serves as the numerator for calculating the completion rate and the denominator for calculating the pass rate. In this report, the term “completers” is used interchangeably with “GED test completers.”

GED test passers

Completers who have met the state’s passing standard. The number of passers serves as the numerator for calculating the pass rate. In this report, the term “passers” is used interchangeably with “GED test passers.”

pass rate

Calculated by dividing the number of GED test passers by the number of GED test completers, then multiplying that number by 100.

subject area

The GED test includes four subject areas that assess skills and knowledge in reasoning through language arts (RLA), mathematical reasoning (math), science, and social studies.

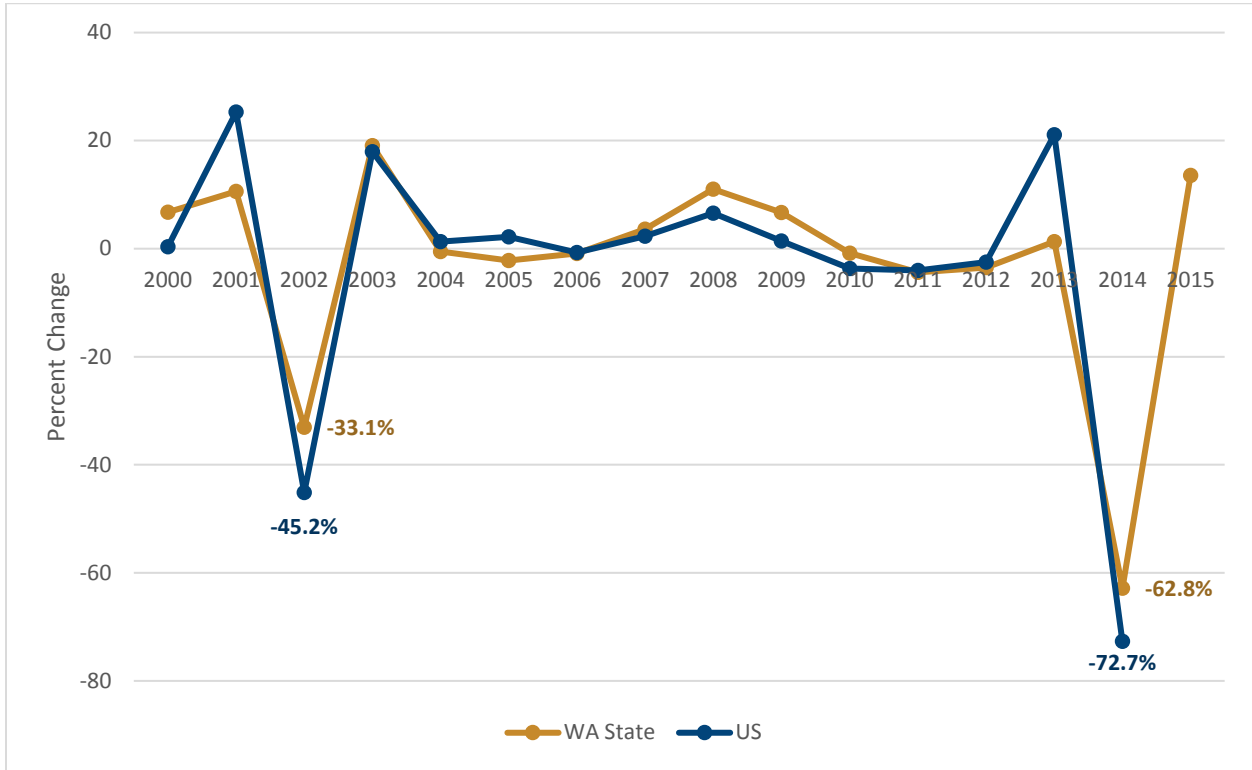
target population

The target population consists of all adults (as defined above) who lack a traditional high school credential, further training, or degrees.

TEST CHANGES COINCIDE WITH DECLINE IN PARTICIPATION

The number of GED test candidates typically increases in the year before a major change to the GED test then sharply decreases in the first year of a new test series.¹⁰ This is true nationally and in Washington. Figure 1 shows the percentage changes in the number of test candidates over time, beginning with the year 2000 (two years before the 2002 test series began), and ending with 2015 (one year after the 2014 test series began). Washington follows a similar pattern to the US. However, the state did not experience the same degree of increased participation in the years directly preceding a new test series.

Figure 1. Percentage Change in Number of GED Test Takers in Washington Compared to US, 2000-2015

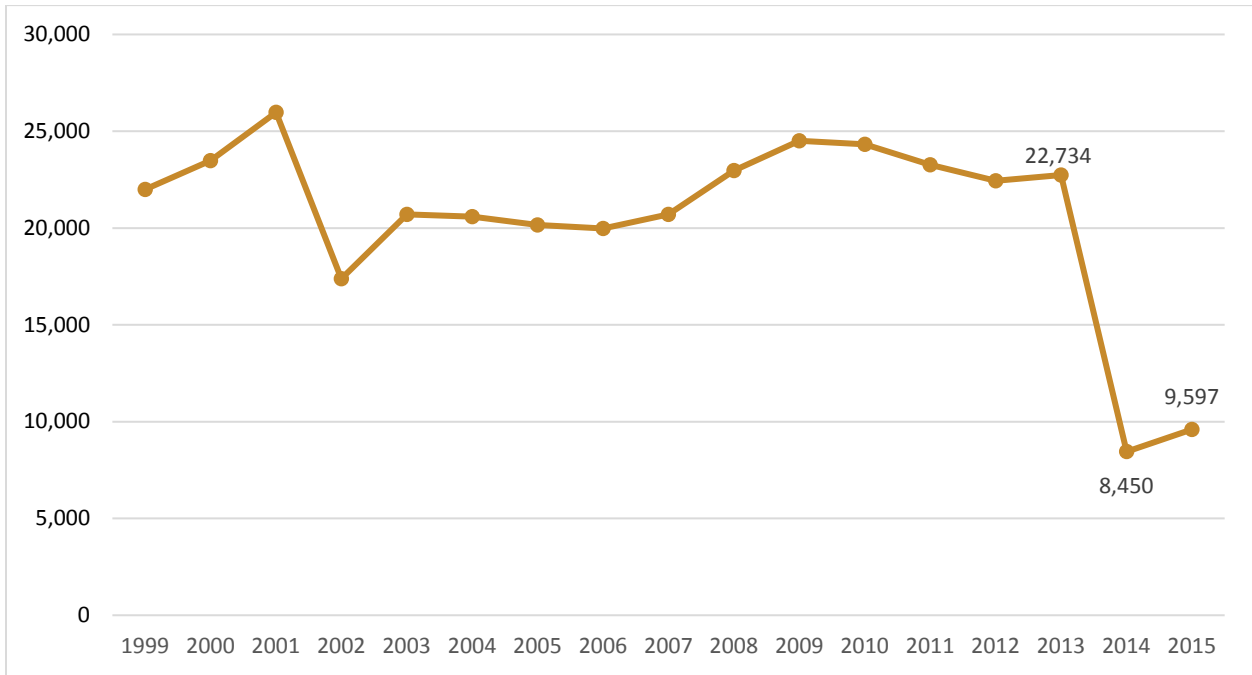


Note: The national data for 2014 do not include all test takers, only those who completed an entire test battery (all four subject areas). Therefore, the percentage change for the U.S. shown here is most likely inflated.

Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from GED Testing Service (years 2000-2013), State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) (state data for years 2014-2015), and National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE) (national data for year 2014). The line graph was created using the data in Appendix C, Table 1.

In Washington, GED test participation decreased dramatically in 2014. In 2013, the year before the GED test changed, there were 22,734 test takers in Washington; in 2014, there were only 8,450. Although a drop was expected as in prior test revision years, the drop was greater than the one that occurred in 2002. In 2002, participation fell by 33.1 percent; in 2014, it fell by 62.8 percent. The number of candidates remained low in 2015; there were 9,597. Figure 2 shows the number of test takers in Washington over time.

Figure 2. Number of GED Test Takers in Washington, 1999-2015

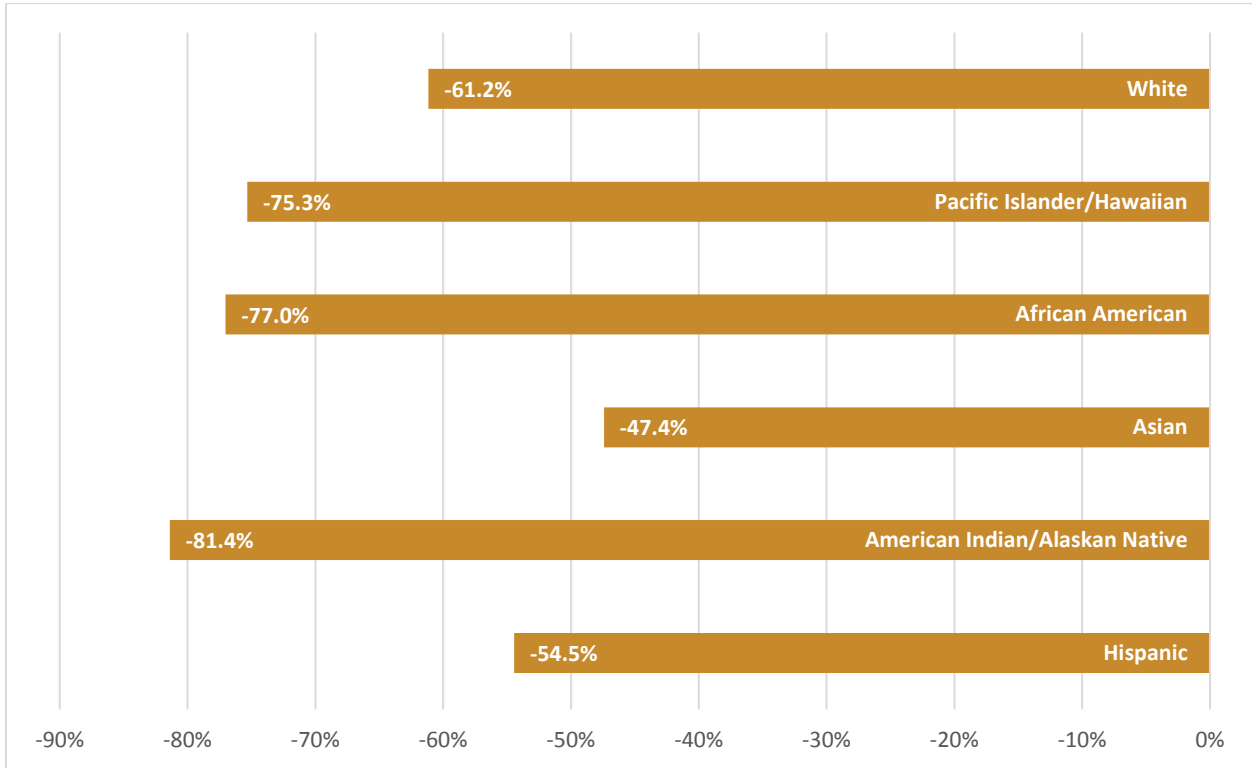


Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from GED Testing Service (years 1999-2013) and SBCTC (years 2014-2015). The line graph was created using the data in Appendix C, Table 2.

Participation by demographic group

The change in the GED test corresponded with a drop in participation for all demographic groups; however, it disproportionately affected American Indians/Alaskan Natives, African Americans, and Pacific Islanders/Hawaiians compared to other racial/ethnic groups. See Figure 3.

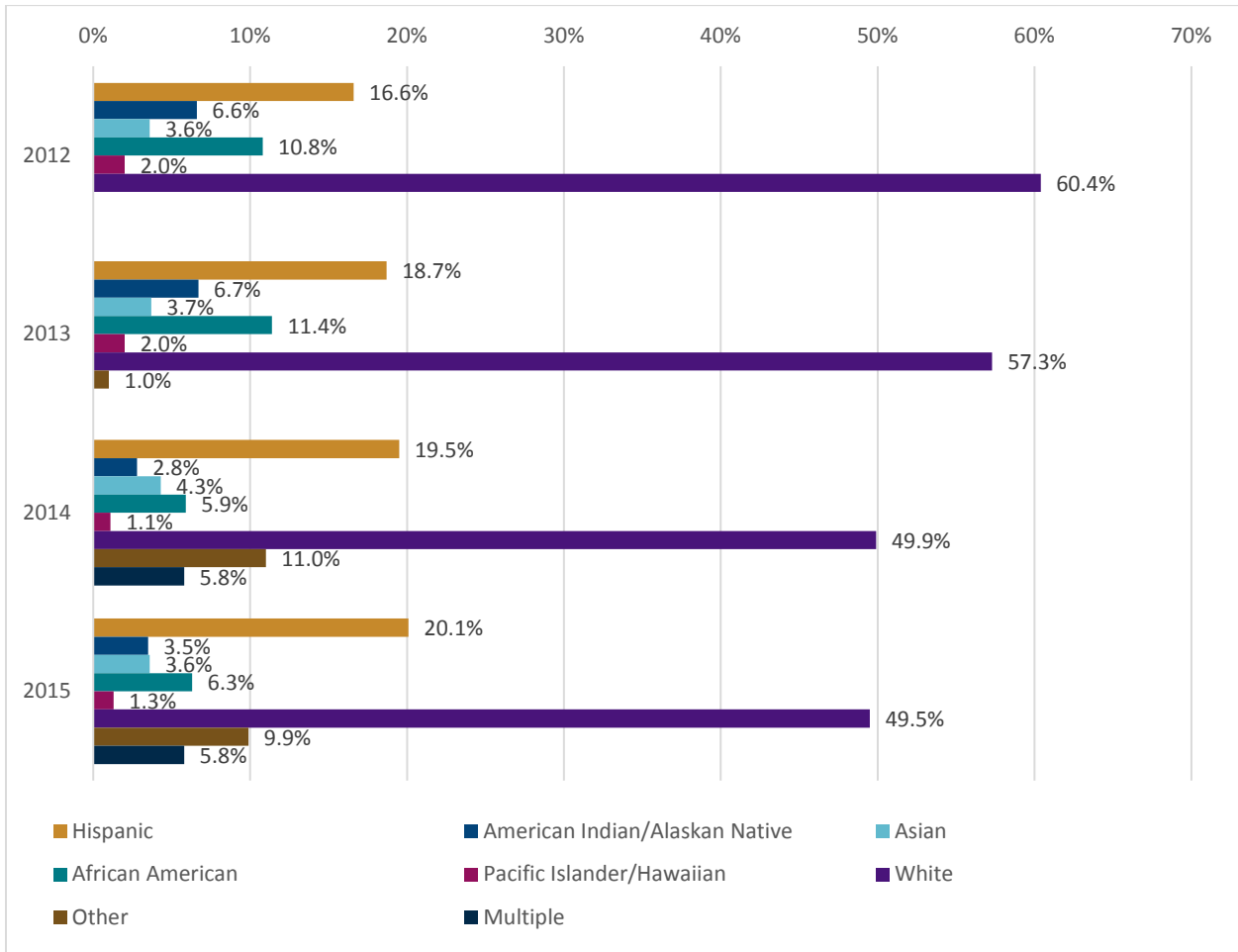
Figure 3. Percentage Change in GED Test Participation from 2013 to 2014 by Race/Ethnicity in Washington



Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from SBCTC. The bar chart was created using the data in Appendix C, Table 4.

At the same time, the racial/ethnic distribution of GED test takers has changed over the last few years. In 2014, there was a significant increase in test takers reporting as multiple or other races, which may account for some of the decline in participation of American Indians/Alaskan Natives, African Americans, and Pacific Islanders/Hawaiians. The portion of Hispanic test takers has increased slightly, which may be due to a statewide shift in the ethnic makeup of the state. Figure 4 shows the change in racial/ethnic distribution of test takers from 2012 to 2015.

Figure 4. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of GED Test Takers in Washington, 2012-2015



Note: Test takers who did not report race/ethnicity are not included in the percentages.

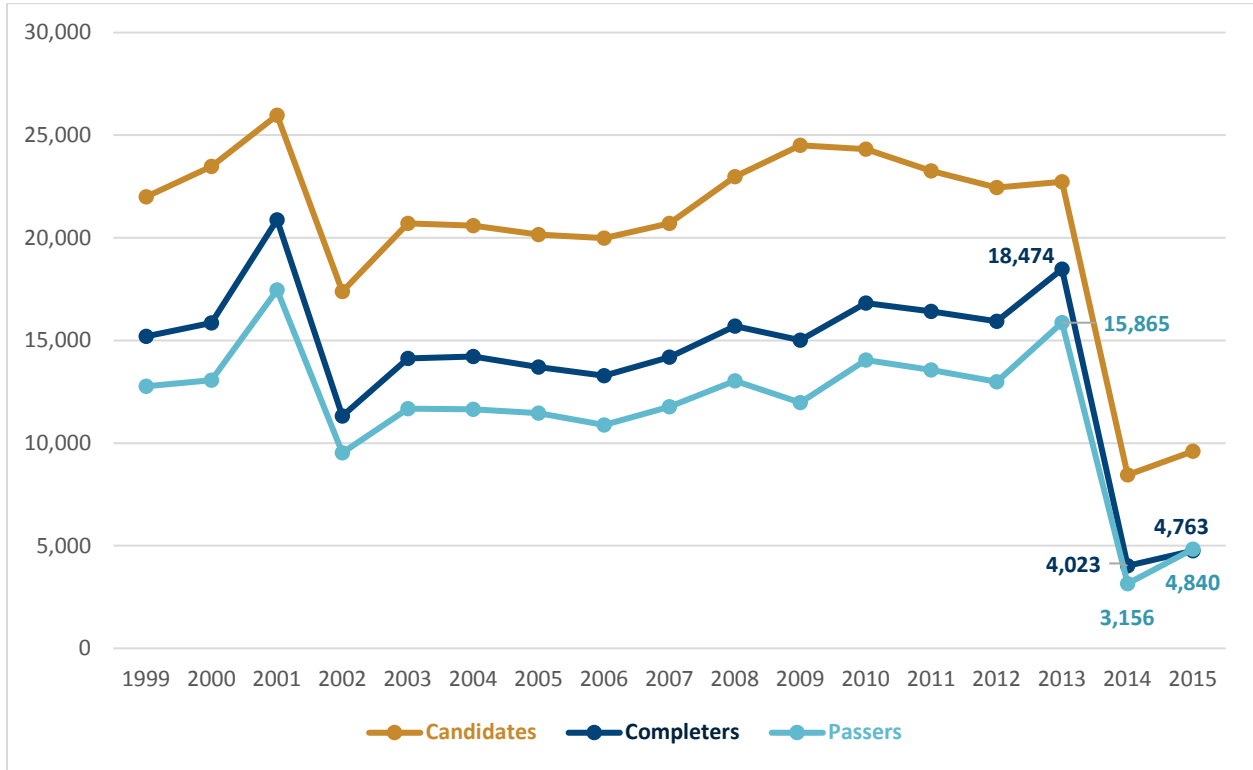
Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from SBCTC. The bar chart was created using the data in Appendix C, Table 3.

The change in the test also negatively affected the participation of older test takers more than younger adults, and females slightly more than males. Interestingly, the changes in participation of the public and prison population were virtually the same.

TEST CHANGES LED TO DECLINE OF COMPLETERS, PASSERS

Just as the number of GED test candidates in Washington declined dramatically in 2014, so did the number of test completers and test passers. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Number GED Test Candidates, Completers, and Passers in Washington, 1999-2015

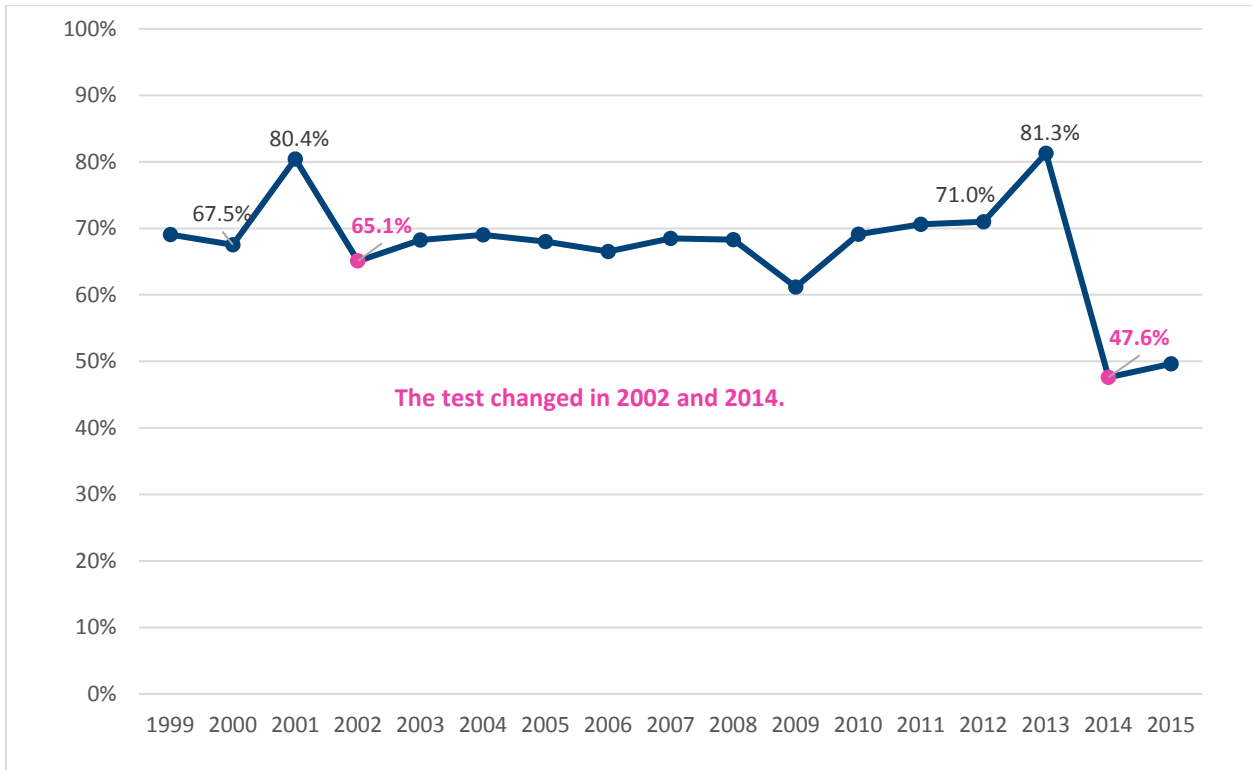


Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from GED Testing Service (years 1999-2013) and SBCTC (years 2014-2015). The line graph was created using the data in Appendix C, Table 2.

Completion rates

In the 15 years before the latest GED test change, Washington’s completion rate hovered around 68 percent except in the years immediately preceding a test change, when the completion rate spiked to just over 80 percent (though there was a drop in 2009 that was unrelated to a major change in the test). In 2014, the completion rate decreased from 81.3 percent to 47.6 percent, a difference of 33.7 percentage points. The completion rate also dropped in 2002, another test change year, but by only 15.3 percentage points. See Figure 6 for the GED completion rates over time.

Figure 6. GED Test Completion Rates in Washington, 1999-2015



Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from GED Testing Service (years 1999-2013) and SBCTC (years 2014-2015). The bar chart was created using the data in Table 2 in Appendix C.

Completion rates by demographic group

Similarly, completion rates decreased for all demographic groups in 2014. The rate decreased by 23-39 percentage points for all racial/ethnic groups. However, the drop was greatest for Pacific Islanders/Hawaiians and Hispanics. Completion rates also declined for all age groups by 29-37 percentage points, though the 35-44 and 45-59 age groups experienced the greatest declines. Males and females had similar completion rates, though the drop was slightly greater for females. In 2014, completion rates declined for both the public and the prison population, but more so for the prison population. In 2015, completion rates improved slightly for most groups. See Tables 4-7 in Appendix C for more information.

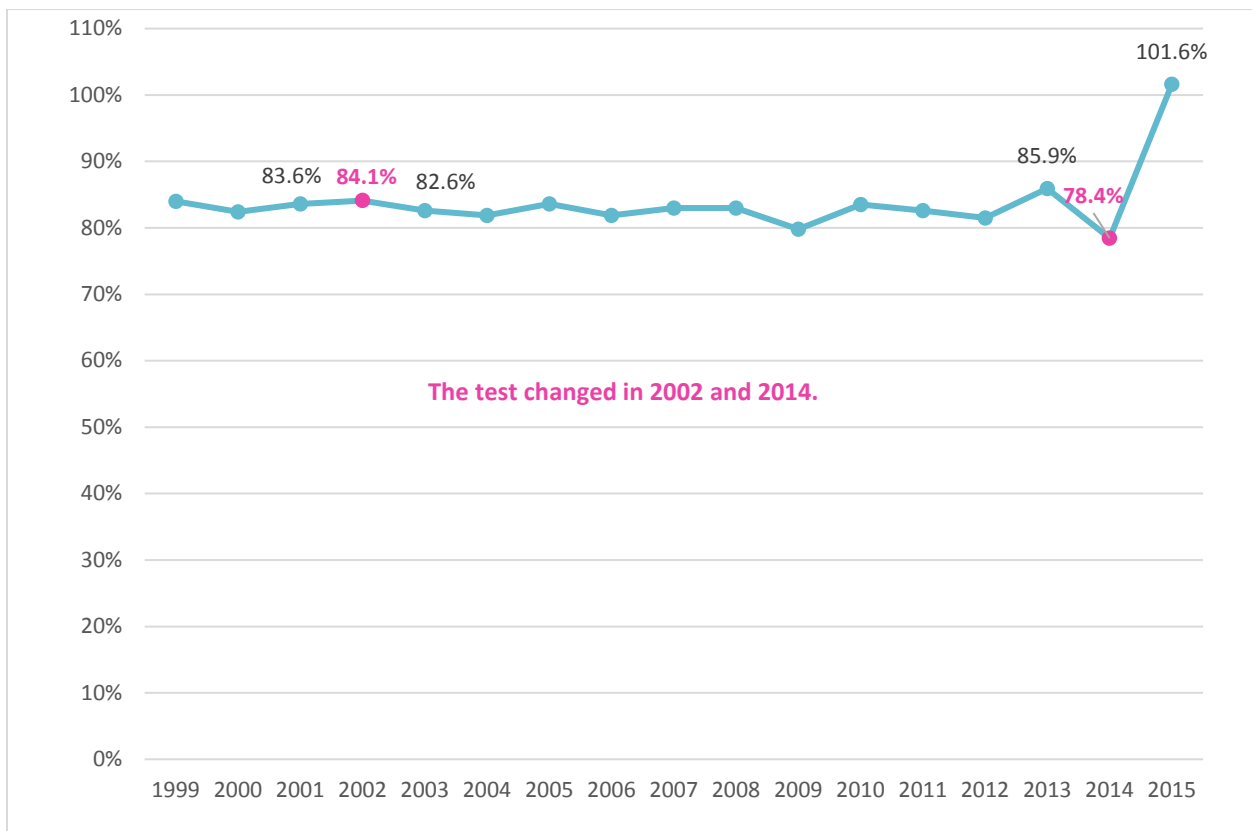
Pass rates

Analyzing the change in pass rates from 2013 to 2015 is problematic because of a change that the GED Testing Service made to the passing score two years after the 2014 test series was implemented. In January 2016, the passing score was lowered from 150 to 145. Due to this modification, some students who did not originally pass the test in 2014 were retroactively passed and counted as passers in 2015, which elevated the 2015 pass rate to slightly above 100 percent. This method of counting passers most likely

affected the 2014 pass rate as well, making it lower than if the retroactive passers had been counted within that year.

Even without taking that into account, the pass rate did not decrease as dramatically as the completion rate in 2014. For the 15 years prior to the 2014 GED test change, Washington's pass rate hovered around 83 percent even during the 2002 test change (though there was a drop in 2009 that was unrelated to a major change in the test). In 2014, the pass rate decreased from 85.9 percent to 78.4 percent, a difference of 7.5 percentage points. If the retroactive passers had been counted in 2014 instead of 2015, the pass rate would most likely have been closer to the typical average. See Figure 7 for the GED test pass rates over time.

Figure 7. GED Test Pass Rates in Washington, 1999-2015



Sources: WSAC staff analysis of data from GED Testing Service (years 1999-2013) and SBCTC (years 2014-2015). The bar chart was created using the data in Appendix C, Table 2.

REASONS FOR THE DECLINE

It remains unclear why the numbers of GED test takers, completers, and passers in Washington fell so drastically in 2014 and have failed to bounce back compared to

other years when the test changed. Below, we explore possible reasons why the 2014 test change caused such dramatic drops.

Price increase

The price of the GED test may be a barrier to participation. It doubled in 2013, increasing from \$75 to \$150 dollars, as Washington prepared to transition to the 2014 version of the test. The price decreased slightly in 2014 to \$120. However, this may remain a financial barrier, especially for low-income adults. When the GED Testing Service publishes 2014 and 2015 data, it will be possible to study how price may have affected test participation by comparing Washington to states that offered the test at a lower price through subsidies or other state funding.

Test format

Test takers need computer skills in order to take the GED test because the paper-and-pencil option has been eliminated. The requirement of computer skills may have a disproportionately negative impact on test participation, completion, and passing of older and low-income adults.

Test difficulty

In the national news media, many have suggested that the updated GED test is too difficult and is testing the wrong skills for the primarily workforce-focused credential.¹¹ At issue is the fact that the majority of GED test takers in 2014 would most likely have been unfamiliar with Common Core curriculum since the standards were not rolled out to Washington state teachers until the 2012-13 school year.¹²

Test implementation issues

Another possible reason that GED test completion and pass rates decreased in 2014 is that GED preparation teachers needed more time to implement new test curriculum content and materials. SBCTC received the following feedback from teachers about the new test implementation:

- a) Teachers were not accustomed to the new style of questions, especially the writing prompts.
- b) Teachers were unaware of the new content that the tests required.
- c) Practice tests and curricula were not immediately available when the switch to the new test occurred.
- d) The changes to instruction and preparation for the 2002 GED test were far less dramatic than that needed for the 2014 GED test.
- e) The software programs that are commonly used in prisons for test preparation were not updated until 2015, the year after the test changed.

Pearson VUE, a corporate leader in for-profit publishing and testing, has introduced over fifteen new vendors and publishers to offer an assortment of online curriculum materials and test-preparation courses for purchase through the GED Testing Services website.¹³ Publishers are still reviewing materials. The wide array of GED test-preparation materials being offered raises a concern for the quality of professional training GED instructors receive. While these tools have been designed to align GED test preparation to the Common Core State Standards, a phase-in period is necessary to implement curricular guides and practice tests.¹⁴

GED instructors need time to:

- Familiarize themselves with the new curriculum, rigor, and style of test questions.
- Discover what materials work for different test taking populations.

ACE and Pearson VUE's implementation of the new GED test failed to accommodate for the time needed to create testing materials and train GED instructors.

Test administration issues

One of the reasons that GED test participation remained low in Washington in 2015, a year after the test changed, could be due to issues with test administration. According to SBCTC, some adults could not get appointments to take the test because sites had limited testing times and available space.

When the test was paper-based, the test centers had "walk-in" appointments and only needed a staff member to monitor the test taker. All the seats in that test session were reserved for GED test takers. After the change to computer-based tests, the test centers advertised their appointments on the internet, and scheduled most appointments electronically. Fewer appointments are available for potential GED candidates because test centers administer other computer-based tests at the same time, such as college placement tests or other Pearson VUE tests. This lowers the number of computers available for GED test takers.

Enrollment in alternative pathways

The drop in the number of GED test takers could also be due to increased enrollments in alternative pathway programs. In Washington, there are at least six programs for adults age 16 and above to get a high school diploma from a high school, technical high school, community college, or technical college.^a However, data from most of these programs are not currently available, so it is not known if enrollment and completion

^a See Appendix B: "Alternative Pathways to High School Completion."

numbers have increased as GED numbers have decreased.^b While there are no new alternatives available to test takers, credential-seekers may have been encouraged to pursue an alternative to the GED after the test's changes were implemented.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Prior to the most recent GED test changes, Washington was considered a low-need state with a high percentage of test candidates.¹⁵ In 2008, Washington was one of only five states testing more than 4 percent of its target population while most states were testing at less than or equal to 2 percent. The state continued this trend through 2013. After the GED test changed in 2014, Washington tested only 1.5 percent of its total target population. This decline in test participation will consequently affect the state's two educational attainment goals:

- a) By 2023, all adults in Washington, ages 25-44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- b) By 2023, at least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, will have a postsecondary credential.

In order to better evaluate the GED test and the state's policy options for improving educational attainment in this area, the state should research the following questions:

- Did the price of the GED test affect test participation?
If the current price of \$120 is found to be a barrier to test participation, the state could provide a subsidy to cover the cost, or part of the cost, of the GED test.
- Do other states have better implementation models for the new GED test series?
If so, the state could use these models to prioritize implementation of GED test curriculum and teacher preparation.^{c,16}
- Do testing centers need to increase their capacity for GED test candidates?
Would longer hours, more flexible scheduling, and more computer stations increase test participation?

^b Anecdotally, the OSPI Open Doors 1418 Youth Reengagement program has been marketed heavily and is growing quickly.

^c This is also a recommendation made by NCSDAE: "students will have difficulty passing if instructional programs provide the same level of instruction that was provided over the last 10 years. Thus, program efforts to update both instructional materials and teacher preparation are a priority."

- Did enrollments and the credentials earned in alternative pathways increase inversely to the decline in GED test takers?
If not, these programs could be expanded in order to serve a large number of the state's target population who are not taking the GED test. Alternative pathways can offer more services than the computerized GED test. These include personal guidance and giving credit for prior learning.

Washington will need to research these issues to determine the best means of increasing the attainment of the high school credential and meeting the state's ambitious goal of ensuring that all adults in Washington, ages 25-44, will have a high school diploma or equivalent by 2023.

CONTACT THE AUTHORS

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APPENDIX A

Comparison of 2002 GED test series to 2014 GED test series

	2002 GED Test Series (2002-2013)	2014 GED Test Series (2014-Present)
Purpose	To provide evidence of candidates' high school-level academic knowledge and skills. ¹⁷	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide evidence of candidates' high school-level academic knowledge and skills. 2. To provide evidence of candidates' readiness to enter workforce training programs or postsecondary education. 3. To provide information about candidates' strengths and weaknesses in academic areas.^{18 19}
Content Standards	Based on high school curriculum standards ²⁰	Based on career- and college-ready content standards, including the Common Core State Standards. ²¹ Increased content difficulty: ²² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attention to analytical capability. • Higher level math questions included. • Essay required.
Measurement	Used Bloom's Taxonomy of learning objectives ²³	Uses the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) model developed by Dr. Norman L. Webb. ²⁴
Mode of Delivery	Pencil-and-paper or computer	Computer—requires computers, approved desks and/or dividers, electronic signature pad, and digital cameras.
Subject Tests ²⁵	Five subjects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language Arts: Writing 2. Language Arts: Reading 3. Social Studies 4. Science 5. Mathematics 	Four subjects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA) 2. Social studies 3. Science 4. Mathematical reasoning

	2002 GED Test Series (2002-2013)	2014 GED Test Series (2014-Present)
Question Types ²⁶	Multiple choice Alternate format items (grid) Essay	Multiple choice "Technology-enhanced" items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill-in-the-blank • Drop-down • Hot spot • Drag-and-drop Short answer Extended response (evidence-based writing)
Performance Levels	Below Passing Passing Standard	Four performance levels: ²⁷ Level 1—Below Passing (100-144) Level 2—Pass/High School Equivalency (145-164; originally set at 150) Level 3—GED College Ready (165-174; originally set at 170) Level 4—GED College Ready + Credit (175-200)
Scoring	410 minimum on each subject test and 450 average across all five subject tests	145 on each module and 580 on the entire test battery (all four parts combined)
Cost	\$75 \$150 (cost went up in 2013)	\$120

APPENDIX B

Alternative pathways to high school completion

Currently, the Washington State High School Diploma is offered to students through several different avenues. Students can earn a diploma through a high school or college. Find more information on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website²⁸ and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) website.²⁹

Diploma Awarded by High School or Technical High School

Dropout recovery programs

These high school programs generally serve students aged 16-21 who have dropped out of school or will not graduate by the age of 21. They are designed to help students get reengaged and caught up in credits so they can graduate with their class peers. These programs each have their own unique name, for example Fresh Start, CEO, Bright Futures, etc. Students earn a high school diploma from their high school.

Technical high school programs

These programs are for students who are at least 16 and under 21 years of age and who may have dropped out or been suspended from their high school. Programs are offered at high schools located on specific technical college campuses.³⁰ Students can obtain a referral from their high school or ask their high school to sign a release form so they can attend a technical high school. Students earn a high school diploma awarded by the technical high school.

OSPI Open Doors 1418 Youth Reengagement Programs

Commonly referred to as "Open Doors,"³¹ these programs offer academic instruction and additional services to students aged 16-21 who have dropped out of school or will not graduate by the age of 21. Students earn a high school diploma from their high school.

Diploma Awarded by Community or Technical College

High school completion programs

These programs generally serve adult students who want to earn their high school diploma as opposed to a GED credential. Students can take both high school and college level courses to complete their requirements. Students earn a high school diploma from the community or technical college.

HS 21+ programs

HS 21+ is for adult learners (21 and older) who do not have a high school equivalency certificate or high school diploma. In light of new federal financial aid rules, HS 21+

expands the high school completion options currently offered by community and technical colleges with a comprehensive, competency-based approach tailored to adult learning styles. Students earn a high school diploma from the community or technical college.

Associate Degree option

This option allows students earning an associate degree from a community or technical college to receive a high school diploma, upon written request, even if they have not otherwise met the high school graduation requirements. Students earn a high school diploma from the community or technical college.

APPENDIX C

Data Tables

Table 1. Number of GED Test Candidates and Percentage Change Over Time in Washington and the US, 1999-2015

	Washington		US	
	Candidates	Percent Change	Candidates	Percent Change
1999	21,996		808,365	
2000	23,485	6.8	811,200	0.4
2001	25,972	10.6	1,016,240	25.3
2002	17,385	-33.1	557,364	-45.2
2003	20,704	19.1	657,239	17.9
2004	20,596	-0.5	665,927	1.3
2005	20,153	-2.2	680,874	2.2
2006	19,979	-0.9	676,020	-0.7
2007	20,705	3.6	691,899	2.3
2008	22,976	11.0	737,233	6.6
2009	24,510	6.7	747,809	1.4
2010	24,324	-0.8	720,294	-3.7
2011	23,262	-4.4	691,296	-4.0
2012	22,442	-3.5	674,051	-2.5
2013	22,734	1.3	816,213	21.1
2014	8,450	-62.8	223,000	-72.7
2015	9,597	13.6		

Note: The national data for 2014 do not include all test takers, only those who completed an entire test battery (all four subject areas), so the percentage change for the U.S. shown here is most likely slightly inflated. National data for 2015 are not yet available.

Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from GED Testing Service (years 2000-2013), State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) (state data for years 2014-2015), and National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE) (national data for year 2014).

Table 2. Target Population and GED Test Candidates Who Tested, Completed, and Passed in Washington, 1999-2015

	Target Population	Tested		Completed*			Passed		
		Candidates	Percent of Target Population	Completers	Completion Rate	Percent of Target Population	Passers	Pass Rate	Percent of Target Population
1999	583,563	21,996	3.8%	15,197	69.1%	2.6%	12,764	84.0%	2.2%
2000	583,563	23,485	4.0%	15,861	67.5%	2.7%	13,064	82.4%	2.2%
2001	583,563	25,972	4.5%	20,882	80.4%	3.6%	17,457	83.6%	3.0%
2002	569,705	17,385	3.1%	11,317	65.1%	2.0%	9,522	84.1%	1.7%
2003	569,705	20,704	3.6%	14,131	68.3%	2.5%	11,670	82.6%	2.0%
2004	569,705	20,596	3.6%	14,218	69.0%	2.5%	11,651	81.9%	2.0%
2005	569,705	20,153	3.5%	13,704	68.0%	2.4%	11,453	83.6%	2.0%
2006	569,705	19,979	3.5%	13,282	66.5%	2.3%	10,877	81.9%	1.9%
2007	569,705	20,705	3.6%	14,190	68.5%	2.5%	11,771	83.0%	2.1%
2008	569,705	22,976	4.0%	15,692	68.3%	2.8%	13,032	83.0%	2.3%
2009	569,705	24,510	4.3%	15,007	61.2%	2.6%	11,980	79.8%	2.1%
2010	569,705	24,324	4.3%	16,817	69.1%	3.0%	14,047	83.5%	2.5%
2011	569,705	23,262	4.1%	16,417	70.6%	2.9%	13,561	82.6%	2.4%
2012	569,705	22,442	3.9%	15,938	71.0%	2.8%	12,987	81.5%	2.3%

GED test changes and attainment

	Target Population	Tested		Completed*			Passed		
		Candidates	Percent of Target Population	Completers	Completion Rate	Percent of Target Population	Passers	Pass Rate	Percent of Target Population
2013	569,705	22,734	4.0%	18,474	81.3%	3.2%	15,865	85.9%	2.8%
2014	569,705	8,450	1.5%	4,023	47.6%	0.7%	3,156	78.4%	0.6%
2015	569,705	9,597	1.7%	4,763	49.6%	0.8%	4,840	101.6%	0.8%

*Test takers who completed testing in all subject areas in a year may have begun testing in a previous year. A candidate is considered a completer in a year only if he or she finished testing in all subject areas by December 31 of that year.

Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from GED Testing Service (years 1999-2013) and State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) (years 2014-2015).

Table 3. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of GED Test Candidates in Washington, 2012-2015

Year	Tested	Number Reporting Ethnicity	Hispanic	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	African American	Pacific Islander/Hawaiian	White	Other	Multiple
2012	23,400	19,878	16.60%	6.60%	3.60%	10.80%	2%	60.40%	0.00%	0.00%
2013	24,152	18,938	18.70%	6.70%	3.70%	11.40%	2%	57.30%	1.00%	0.00%
2014	8,450	8,450	19.50%	2.80%	4.30%	5.90%	1.10%	49.90%	11%	5.80%
2015	9,597	9,597	20.10%	3.50%	3.60%	6.30%	1.30%	49.50%	9.90%	5.80%

Note: The 2012 and 2013 numbers differ from those in the GED Testing Service data. This is due to some test takers being counted more than once if they 1) tested in more than one Washington testing center, 2) tested in Washington then moved to another state, or 3) tested at a border site (tested in one state, but were credentialed in another).

Source: State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

Table 4. GED Test Candidates Who Tested, Completed, and Passed by Race/Ethnicity in Washington, 2012-2015

	Year	Tested	Percent Change	Completed	Completion Rate	Passed	Pass Rate
Hispanic	2012	3,303		2,194	66.4%	1,660	75.7%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2012	1,316		788	59.9%	664	84.3%
Asian	2012	707		467	66.1%	392	83.9%
African American	2012	2,143		1,242	58.0%	989	79.6%
Pacific Islander/Hawaiian	2012	393		236	60.1%	191	80.9%
White	2012	12,002		8,839	73.6%	8,103	91.7%
Other	2012	14		7	50.0%	4	57.1%
Multiple	2012	0		0		0	
Hispanic	2013	3,550	7.5%	2,665	75.1%	2,459	92.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2013	1,278	-2.9%	905	70.8%	842	93.0%
Asian	2013	698	-1.3%	539	77.2%	498	92.4%
African American	2013	2,167	1.1%	1,374	63.4%	1,290	93.9%
Pacific Islander/Hawaiian	2013	381	-3.1%	279	73.2%	268	96.1%
White	2013	10,852	-9.6%	8,931	82.3%	8,751	98.0%
Other	2013	12	-14.3%	8	66.7%	7	87.5%

GED test changes and attainment

	Year	Tested	Percent Change	Completed	Completion Rate	Passed	Pass Rate
Multiple	2013	0		0		0	
Hispanic	2014	1,617	-54.5%	601	37.2%	413	68.7%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2014	238	-81.4%	88	37.0%	63	71.6%
Asian	2014	367	-47.4%	198	54.0%	188	94.9%
African American	2014	498	-77.0%	143	28.7%	78	54.5%
Pacific Islander/Hawaiian	2014	94	-75.3%	32	34.0%	26	81.3%
White	2014	4,215	-61.2%	2,300	54.6%	1,860	80.9%
Other	2014	931	7658.3%	411	44.1%	326	79.3%
Multiple	2014	490		250	51.0%	202	80.8%
Hispanic	2015	1,925	19.0%	799	41.5%	787	98.5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2015	339	42.4%	141	41.6%	148	105.0%
Asian	2015	350	-4.6%	173	49.4%	184	106.4%
African American	2015	603	21.1%	218	36.2%	216	99.1%
Pacific Islander/Hawaiian	2015	124	31.9%	49	39.5%	45	91.8%
White	2015	4,746	12.6%	2,623	55.3%	2,671	101.8%
Other	2015	949	1.9%	447	47.1%	464	103.8%

GED test changes and attainment

	Year	Tested	Percent Change	Completed	Completion Rate	Passed	Pass Rate
Multiple	2015	561	14.5%	313	55.8%	325	103.8%

Note: The 2012 and 2013 numbers differ from those in the GED Testing Service data. This is due to some test takers being counted more than once if they 1) tested in more than one Washington testing center, 2) tested in Washington then moved to another state, or 3) tested at a border site (tested in one state, but were credentialed in another).

Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

Table 5. GED Test Candidates Who Tested, Completed, and Passed by Age Category in Washington, 2012-2015

	Year	Tested	Percent Change	Completed	Completion Rate	Passed	Pass Rate
Under 19	2012	3,700		3,099	83.8%	2,528	81.6%
19-34	2012	15,979		11,827	74.0%	9,547	80.7%
35-44	2012	2,299		1,450	63.1%	1,078	74.3%
45-59	2012	1,320		742	56.2%	546	73.6%
60+	2012	84		51	60.7%	38	74.5%
Under 19	2013	3,640	-1.6%	3,104	85.3%	3,017	97.2%
19-34	2013	16,136	1.0%	12,312	76.3%	11,946	97.0%
35-44	2013	2,699	17.4%	1,952	72.3%	1,749	89.6%
45-59	2013	1,549	17.3%	1,055	68.1%	896	84.9%
60+	2013	113	34.5%	82	72.6%	65	79.3%
Under 19	2014	1,644	-54.8%	927	56.4%	805	86.8%
19-34	2014	5,699	-64.7%	2,720	47.7%	2,128	78.2%
35-44	2014	725	-73.1%	256	35.3%	157	61.3%
45-59	2014	359	-76.8%	111	30.9%	61	55.0%
60+	2014	23	-79.6%	9	39.1%	5	55.6%
Under 19	2015	1,909	16.1%	1,066	55.8%	1,122	105.3%

GED test changes and attainment

	Year	Tested	Percent Change	Completed	Completion Rate	Passed	Pass Rate
19-34	2015	6,510	14.2%	3,247	49.9%	3,321	102.3%
35-44	2015	814	12.3%	310	38.1%	284	91.6%
45-59	2015	339	-5.6%	127	37.5%	104	81.9%
60+	2015	25	8.7%	13	52.0%	9	69.2%

Note: The 2012 and 2013 numbers differ from those in the GED Testing Service data. This is due to some test takers being counted more than once if they 1) tested in more than one Washington testing center, 2) tested in Washington then moved to another state, or 3) tested at a border site (tested in one state, but were credentialed in another).

Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

Table 6. GED Test Candidates Who Tested, Completed, and Passed by Gender in Washington, 2012-2015

	Year	Tested	Percent Change	Completed	Completion Rate	Passed	Pass Rate
Male	2012	13,025		8,860	68.0%	7,977	90.0%
Female	2012	10,026		6,860	68.4%	5,573	81.2%
Male	2013	12,703	-2.5%	9,627	75.8%	9,481	98.5%
Female	2013	11,185	11.6%	8,692	77.7%	8,019	92.3%
Male	2014	4,782	-62.4%	2,360	49.4%	1,934	81.9%
Female	2014	3,438	-69.3%	1,579	45.9%	1,159	73.4%
Male	2015	5,477	14.5%	2,815	51.4%	2,902	103.1%
Female	2015	3,909	13.7%	1,839	47.0%	1,837	99.9%

Note: The 2012 and 2013 numbers differ from those in the GED Testing Service data. This is due to some test takers being counted more than once if they 1) tested in more than one Washington testing center, 2) tested in Washington then moved to another state, or 3) tested at a border site (tested in one state, but were credentialed in another).

Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

Table 7. GED Test Candidates Who Tested, Completed, and Passed by Public/Prisoner Status in Washington, 2012-2015

	Year	Tested	Percent Change	Completed	Completion Rate	Passed	Pass Rate
Public	2012	20,902		14,626	70.0%	12,407	84.8%
Prisoner	2012	2,498		1,327	53.1%	1,330	100.2%
Public	2013	20,984	0.4%	16,570	79.0%	15,507	93.6%
Prisoner	2013	3,168	26.8%	1,938	61.2%	2,166	111.8%
Public	2014	7,345	-65.0%	3,752	51.1%	2,925	78.0%
Prisoner	2014	1,105	-65.1%	271	24.5%	231	85.2%
Public	2015	8,484	15.5%	4,369	51.5%	4,428	101.4%
Prisoner	2015	1,113	0.7%	394	35.4%	412	104.6%

Note: The 2012 and 2013 numbers differ from those in the GED Testing Service data. This is due to some test takers being counted more than once if they 1) tested in more than one Washington testing center, 2) tested in Washington then moved to another state, or 3) tested at a border site (tested in one state, but were credentialed in another).

Source: WSAC staff analysis of data from State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

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