



NJDOE News

**For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:
Richard Vespucci
Kathryn Forsyth, Director
609-292-1126**

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State Board of Education Aligns GED Passing Scores to National Standards

The State Board of Education today approved establishment of new passing scores for New Jersey students who take the General Educational Development (GED) exams.

Beginning April 1, 2005, GED test takers in New Jersey must attain passing scores that match the national standards: A total passing score of 2250, a minimum average score of 450, and no single test score below 410 on any of the five tests that make up the exam.

Under New Jersey's old regulations, test takers had to have a minimum total score of 2250, but the state had also established specific minimum scores for each test: 410 for social studies, science and English language reading; 420 for English language writing; and 450 in mathematics.

While the content of the GED exam is standardized throughout the United States, New Jersey was the only state to require specified minimum passing scores on the various tests above the national passing standards.

New Jersey's GED passing rate is the second-lowest in the nation. In 2002, only 4,304 (52.2 percent) of the state's 8,752 test takers passed the exam.

"The change approved today eliminates a set of overly prescriptive passing standards that was shutting out opportunities for too many people," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "By adjusting our scores to the national standards, we are creating opportunities for many more New Jerseyans to turn their lives around by earning a GED diploma."

State Board of Education President Dr. Arnold Hyndman agreed with Commissioner Librera, noting that the change meets goals set in the State Board's Strategic Plan for Improvement in Public Education to find more effective ways to serve the needs of an adult population.

"We are committed to creating multiple and diverse paths for students to succeed," Dr. Hyndman said. "For many citizens, passing the GED becomes the first step to improved employment and further educational opportunities. We feel that the changes we are making now create a stronger program without sacrificing quality."

"High standards in tests are positive when they are grounded in research and related to some scientific process," Dr. Librera said. "There is no research-based evidence to support the current New Jersey minimum passing score for the GED."

The Commissioner noted that since GED program is nationally developed and administered, GED tests are not directly linked to New Jersey's academic standards but are rather the result of sampling performance of graduating high school seniors from throughout the nation, including New Jersey.