

Big Changes Coming to GED Tests

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

For those who didn't receive a high school diploma, GED testing can offer another stab at academics. The General Education Development tests are a series of five subject tests that, when passed, are the equivalent of earning a high school diploma. They can be taken by anyone above 16-years-old and as often as needed. For more than 70 years these tests have helped folks rediscover education on their own terms. But come January the tests will undergo some of the biggest changes in seven decades, and could become more challenging to pass.

Adelia Myrick is the adult basic education coordinator at Kodiak College and said this is the last semester people can complete a GED under the current series.

"All the information we have is that we have is that the GED test starting in 2014 is going to be completely different and more challenging, longer and more expensive."

She said the college has been given information from the GED testing service periodically, but the official practice tests are supposed to come out in November.

"We've seen sample questions but they keep giving us disclaimers that these are subject to change and are still under development."

In general, Myrick said the practice questions they've seen have definitely suggested the tests will require higher levels of critical thinking and analysis, as well as more in depth writing skills.

She said the changes span from a national push to make the United States more competitive as a work force.

"The GED testing service is a private company, but they've taken those indications that we're looking at how competitive we are nationally, and they're saying, well, we have to lead the way. We can't wait for someone to just make us do this. So they're looking at providing a test that will show that someone is ready for regular college rather than needing any developmental or predatory skills ahead of time."

She said it's definitely an exciting goal, but she is worried about whether or not it will prevent some folks from actually pursuing the tests.

"I'm all for improving the level of education but I do worry a little bit about closing some doors for some people. Philosophically I suppose I'm in favor of it, but on a real level I think it might be a little hard for some people. I'm just really encouraging people to get in and get it done now."

She said classes to help study for the GEDs start up on September 9. Anyone interested in registering for the free curriculum can contact her at the college. Taking the GEDs costs about \$20.