

## **GED Option #2 Frequently Asked Questions & Answers**

### **GEDO #2 Described**

#### **1. What is GEDO #2?**

The GED Option #2 (GEDO #2) Program allows authorized school districts to use the GED test battery to measure proficiency in lieu of high school credit for students enrolled in an alternative education program. A student who passes the GED tests and completes the other requirements for graduation is entitled to the traditional high school diploma. Wisconsin received approval to offer this opportunity to local school districts as part of its waiver application to GED Testing Service.

#### **2. How is a school district authorized to offer GEDO #2?**

A school district seeking to offer GEDO #2 must apply to the Department of Public Instruction using PI-8201. In addition to submitting the narrative describing the district's proposed program, the district must also agree to specific assurances and programming requirements. See question 3, below, for the assurances.

#### **3. What is a school district required to do when it offers GEDO #2?**

The district must agree to offer the program consistent with the following assurances:

- a) Students served will be at least 17 years of age.
- b) Students will be at least one year behind their 9<sup>th</sup> grade class in credits earned.
- c) Students served should be able to demonstrate an ability to read at or above the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level.
- d) A formal meeting(s) will be held before a student is allowed to begin a GEDO #2 program. This meeting will include a discussion of the educational options available to the student; the academic, attendance and behavioral expectations of the student once in the program; and the anticipated goal of the program (traditional high school diploma). Educational options should also be discussed if a student completes academic preparation before they are eligible to take the final GED test. The student, his or her parent or guardian, the student's guidance counselor, principal, and at least one teacher (or their designees) must participate in the meeting(s).
- e) Students must volunteer for the program *after* participating in the meeting described in (d) above.
- f) A contract with the student, the student's parent/guardian(s), the school, and the GEDO #2 program coordinator outlining the hours of attendance, academic and behavioral expectations, and services to be provided by the school district will be signed.

- g) A student/teacher ratio of no more than 15:1 will be maintained in the GEDO #2 program.
- h) At least 15 hours of instruction are required each week. The student will be required to participate in at least 10 hours of math, science, social studies, language arts, or health instruction each week until his/her instructors certify that he or she is academically prepared to take the final GED test. At this point a larger portion of the student's 15 hours per week can be devoted to experiential training (e.g., vocational/technical education, art, music, foreign language, or work experience). All students must be *continuously enrolled and attending* the program until they are eligible to take the final GED test.
- i) Students with disabilities will not be excluded from the program, but must have a current IEP recommending participation in GEDO #2. The IEP must document any related aids and services necessary for successful completion of the program.
- j) Eighty percent (80%) or more of the students accepted for GEDO #2 must successfully complete the program and graduate with their class as a condition of program approval for the following year.
- k) Students participating in the GEDO #2 program will be required to meet the high school graduation requirements under §118.33, Stats. or district policy.
- l) Students who successfully complete GEDO #2 requirements will be entitled to a traditional high school diploma issued by their school district and to participate in the same graduation ceremony as other high school graduates.
- m) Program data required by GED Testing Service will be collected and submitted to the Department of Public Instruction each year.

**4. How is it possible to use the GED/HSED to measure proficiency in lieu of high school credits?**

Wisconsin law allows a school district to issue a high school diploma to a student who has attained the required credits, or if all of the following apply:

- a) the student is enrolled in an alternative education program, as defined in §115.28 (7)(e)1., and
- b) the school board determines that the pupil has demonstrated a level of proficiency in the subjects for which credit is required equivalent to that which he or she would have attained if he or she had satisfied the credit requirements. §118.33(1)(d), Stats.

The GED tests are a nationally normed, standards-based means of measuring high school competency. GED Testing Service has granted Wisconsin permission to use the GED test battery as a means to demonstrate proficiency provided that the program leads to a traditional high school diploma.

**5. What about the state academic standards?**

The GED tests and the Wisconsin health and civics tests align with the Wisconsin Academic Standards. Districts who submit civics and health curriculum for approval must meet the academic standards for civics outlined in chapter PI 5 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

**6. Why is the GEDO #2 program considered a viable option to graduate students from high school?**

The GED tests are a nationally normed, standards-based means of measuring high school competency. The tests are normed so that 40% of graduating seniors could not pass the tests. This program offers students with little hope of earning credits through the Carnegie unit method a means of demonstrating competency and earning a high school diploma.

**7. What about people who believe students should earn a diploma the “traditional way?”**

The GEDO #2 program is another opportunity or choice for students to demonstrate competency. While the diploma may look the same, the transcript which is a student’s passport to most post-high school plans will be significantly different (See questions 55 through 57 below).

**8. How are GED tests scores related to rank in class nationally?**

Grade point average cannot be determined from GED test scores. However, GED percentile ranks can be viewed as approximate class rank. GED percentile rankings represent the GED graduate's performance related to the performance on the GED Tests of a representative group of graduating high school seniors.

**GED Standard Score and Estimated Class Rank  
of Graduating High School Seniors**

GED Test Score	Estimated Class Rank
187-200	Top 1%
183-186	Top 2%
182	Top 3%
179-181	Top 4%
178	Top 5%
177	Top 6%
176	Top 7%
175	Top 8%
174	Top 9%
173	Top 10%
172	Top 11%
171	Top 13%
170	Top 16%
169	Top 19%
168	Top 20%
167	Top 22%
166	Top 23%
165	Top 27%
164	Top 31%
163	Top 34%
162	Top 37%

161	Top 39%
160	Top 40%
159	Top 42%
158	Top 46%
157	Top 51%
156	Top 54%
155	Top 57%
154	Top 60%
153	Top 62%
152	Top 66%
151	Top 70%
150	Top 73%
149	Top 75%
148	Top 79%
147	Top 82%
146	Top 83%
145	Top 85%

### **Student Selection**

**9. At what age may a student begin the GEDO #2 program?**

A student must be at least 17 years of age. It is further recommended that the 17 year old be in his or her senior year, since the student may not complete the program until the class the student entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade with graduates.

**10. May a district serve students who are 18 and over with the GEDO #2 program?**

Every person in Wisconsin has a right to a public education until the person graduates from high school or attains the age of 21 (22 if the student is a special education student). Districts may enroll and count students who are under 21 (22 for special education) for state aid purposes.

**11. What about students who are older than 20?**

The district has the discretion, under §118.14, Wis. Stats., to enroll pupils age 21 and older. The district may not count these students for enrollment and state aid purposes. Some districts have offered the GEDO #2 program to adults as a community learning opportunity and service.

**12. What about students who want to start in GEDO #2 at 16 years old?**

Students must be 17 to begin the program. Students who are age 16 could be scheduled into classes that would improve their basic skills in math, English, social studies, etc. or in career and technical education classes so that they are better prepared to begin when they are 17.

**13. How many credits constitute “at least one year behind their (9<sup>th</sup> grade) class in credits earned?”**

Three (3) credits.

**14. What is meant by “students served should be able to demonstrate an ability to read at or above the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level?”**

The GED tests are written at a 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Students who have a demonstrated ability to read at or above the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level will have little trouble reading the tests. Students with disabilities, who can, with accommodations, read at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, may also be served. While a program may serve students who read below the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, a significantly greater amount of time may need to be spent on literacy skills before the student may begin taking the GED tests.

A district may use any standardized test to screen for reading ability. Students with a documented score above the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level on the WKCE tests do not need to be re-tested.

**15. What attendance rate is required for student selection?**

Districts should choose students who will attend school and successfully complete the program. Districts may establish a minimum attendance rate for the semester prior to application to the program in order to ensure student success while in the program.

**16. May a district use a 6-week probation period in the GEDO #2 before “officially enrolling” students in order to prove attendance and behavior expectations can be met?**

No. Students selected for the program must begin the program and count towards the districts success rate from the date of the contract meeting. A district may, however, establish probationary or selection criteria prior to admission to the GEDO #2 program. The criteria might include requirements for attendance, academic performance and behavior for the semester or quarter prior to program application.

**17. May a district require a student to meet the majority of the district’s additional graduation requirements before officially enrolling the student in the GEDO #2 program?**

A district may use that requirement as a basis for student selection. A district may also require the student to complete the majority of additional graduation requirements prior to taking the first GED test or completing the last GED test.

**18. How are students selected for the program?**

A district establishes how students can apply and the selection criteria and process as part of the district’s application to the Department of Public Instruction. In addition to the specific criteria

discussed in question # 3, above, the district may establish an application and referral process that allows educational staff, students and parents to refer to the program. The district should have a screening team that reviews the applications and meets with the student to ensure student success. Districts that have a work component as part of their graduation requirements may require a student to secure employment or a community service position prior to admission to the program.

**19. Is there a student application process?**

The Department of Public Instruction has created a student application (PI 8202) that meets all of the necessary requirements for the application process as discussed in question 3, above. Districts may use that application, supplement it with additional questions and/or develop their own application form that incorporates the necessary requirements.

**20. How late in the year may students be admitted to the GEDO #2 program?**

The school district determines the last date of admission during a school year for admitting new GEDO #2 students. Consideration should be given to the testing center schedule (Will there be an opportunity for the student to pass at least one test?) and the student's commitment to return in the fall. A district may reasonably decide to accept applications for fall admission during the end of the spring semester. Students who apply in the spring and are accepted, but do not begin the program in the fall will not count against the district's 80% success rate.

**21. May English Language Learners (ELL) participate in the GEDO #2 program?**

Yes. The GED tests are available in English and Spanish. Students may chose to complete the GED tests in either language. Students who have a primary language other than English or Spanish will have to take the tests in English and it will be critical to assess the student's English skills to ascertain a 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.

**Formal Meetings and Contracts**

**22. Is a formal meeting required prior to the student starting the GEDO #2 program?**

Yes, a formal meeting is required before a student is allowed to begin a GEDO #2 program. This meeting must include:

- a. A discussion of the educational options available to the student.
- b. The academic, attendance and behavioral expectations of the student once enrolled in the program.
- c. The consequences or changes that will occur if the student fails to comply with the program.
- d. The anticipated goal of the program: a traditional high school diploma.

**23. Who should be involved in the meeting?**

The student, his or her parent or guardian, the student's guidance counselor, principal, and at least one teacher (or their designees) must participate in the meeting(s). While it is encouraged

that all parties be at the meeting together, occasionally it may be necessary for a guidance counselor or the principal to sign the contract at a later time.

**24. Is it possible to hold the contract meetings with a group of students and parents?**

A group informational meeting on the GEDO #2 program is possible, but the contract meetings should be individualized to the particular student's situation and needs and should not be held in a group setting

**Programming**

**25. What is meant by 15 hours a week of programming?**

A student enrolled in the GEDO #2 program must have 15 hours a week of educational services. In the beginning a minimum of 10 hours a week must be devoted to math, science, social studies, language arts, health and/or civics until the student is prepared to take the final test (has passed the first 3 of the 4 GED tests). During that time 5 or more hours a week may be devoted to applied learning such as work experience, vocational courses or electives.

Once the student has completed 3 of the 4 GED tests as well as the employability skills, career awareness, civics and health requirements, the student may spend the entire 15 hours a week on applied learning, vocational courses or electives provided that this programming is supervised by the school district.

**26. What do programs do with students that have passed the 4<sup>th</sup> test but still haven't completed other requirements (work hours, electives, etc.)?**

Every attempt should be made to avoid this situation. Students should not take the final test before they have completed all of the other requirements for the program. If this does occur, the student should not graduate or receive a diploma until the necessary requirements are completed.

**27. What should be done with GEDO #2 students who have special circumstances that impact attendance (i.e., maternity leave, medical problems)?**

Every attempt should be made to accommodate verified special circumstances consistent with the district's policy for these situations. Such accommodations may include alternative scheduling or excused period of absence from the program. Care should be taken to make sure the student realizes that the GEDO #2 program already represents a modified school day and that only truly specialized circumstances will be honored.

**28. May students be served outside of the GEDO #2 classroom or program (i.e., neutral site, home bound)?**

No, students must receive their primary education services within the GEDO #2 classroom or program. A student who is receiving neutral site services or homebound instruction is not eligible for the GEDO #2 program if their medical condition, behavior or expulsion status does

not permit the student to attend school. A student who cannot meet the minimal attendance and behavior requirements for the GEDO #2 is not likely to be able to meet the test security requirements.

## **Civics & Health**

### **29. How do students meet the Civics requirement?**

2015 Act 55 requires that all students take the 100 question civics test to graduate. Special education students are not required to pass the civics test to graduate. However for the GEDO #2 program, passing the 100 question civics test is required, even for students with disabilities.

If the student takes and passes the test at the high school, it must be documented on the student's high school transcript as passed. The student may also take the test at an official GED testing center.

### **30. How do students meet the health requirement?**

Three options exist for a student to meet the health requirement:

- a student may have completed a ½ credit of health in grades 7-12, or
- a student successfully completes an approved course in health, or
- a student passes the health test.

The approved health course must include at least 30 hours of instruction in mental and emotional, personal, family, community and environmental health.

### **31. How does a school obtain approval for the health course?**

To receive approval for the 30 hour course in either health or civics, send a letter or an email to Sherry Holly, GED/HSED Administrator, 125 S. Webster, Madison, WI 53707-7841 or sherry.holly@dpi.wi.us. With the letter or email, include a course description to show that requirements of PI 5.05 (1)(c)2 (listed above) are met. A copy of the table of contents for the textbook is also encouraged. A school should assume that the course is approved unless notified otherwise.

## **Testing**

### **32. Where do students take the GED health and civics tests?**

Students take the GED, health, and civics tests at an approved testing center. When school districts are approved to offer the GEDO #2 program, they are notified of the closest approved testing site and the name of the Chief Examiner. Wisconsin has 80 approved testing centers, listed on the DPI website: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/alternative-education/websitecontractmaster.pdf> with the exception of correctional and jail sites, all are available to approved GEDO #2 programs.



### **33. How do students begin testing at the test centers?**

The program coordinator for the GEDO #2 program in a school district should meet with the Chief Examiner from the testing center to determine the process that will work best for arranging orientation, test times, and the other necessary steps. The Chief Examiner controls these decisions and the school district is encouraged to work closely with that examiner and/or the examiner's designee to ensure a smooth testing opportunity for the student. Discussions about testing accommodations should be handled on a case by case basis and are discussed in greater detail below.

The teacher sets up and controls access (including the password) to each students' account on GED.com. When the student is ready to take the first test, the teacher should provide a completed PI 1783 to the testing center. The GEDO #2 program must complete all relevant portions of the form and the district's designated program coordinator must sign the form in place of the principal.

School districts are required to provide transportation to each testing session. After successful completion of the first test, a student who has the ability to get himself or herself to testing may do so on their own. No student or parent may be required to provide transportation to testing.

### **34. Do all GEDO #2 programs require all students to take all tests?**

Approved GEDO #2 programs will make this determination as part of their graduation policy. Some districts require that the students take and pass all of the tests. Some districts require students to pass tests only in the areas where the student is deficient in credits. For example, a student has adequate credits in math and science and must only take the language arts and social studies tests.

Districts that offer civics and health courses to their GEDO #2 students generally do not have the students take the civics or health tests.

### **35. Are there times when a student may finish testing early (i.e., before class graduates)?**

Under very rare circumstances the Chief Examiner may request an age waiver to allow a student to complete testing early. Generally these waivers fall into three categories:

- Significant family or medical reason
- Entry into the military
- Entry into post-secondary education or training
- Full time employment

The student should prepare a letter requesting the age-waiver. The student letter and supporting documentation from the high school are emailed to the Chief Examiner for further processing. See the attached policy memo on age waivers for greater detail.

## **Special Education Students**

### **36. Can special education students participate in the GEDO #2 program?**

Yes, students with disabilities who have a current IEP recommending participation in GEDO #2 program may be included. The IEP must document any related aids and services necessary for successful completion of the program. Participation of the primary instructor from the GEDO #2 program is strongly encouraged in any IEP meetings concerning GEDO #2 programming. Special education students must receive their primary services in the GEDO #2 classroom or program. See question 28 for additional detail.

### **37. Who provides the related aids and services to the special education student?**

Provision of the necessary supports and services should be designated in the IEP which is established in conjunction with the IEP committee. If the student is to be enrolled in the GEDO #2 program, the GEDO #2 instructor must participate in formation of the IEP.

## **Accommodations**

### **38. What is the GED Testing Service policy on accommodations for testing?**

Specific accommodations, or changes in standard GED test administration for those with documented disabilities, are provided to all candidates when documentation by a qualified professional clearly defines the disability, the resulting functional limitations and explains why those limitations necessitate reasonable accommodations when the candidate takes the GED tests. In no circumstance will a record of the accommodated test conditions be provided on the student's transcript or diploma.

### **39. Does the student's IEP dictate the testing accommodations?**

Generally, no, the GED Testing Service has a prescribed process for documenting and providing accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. The documentation associated with the student's IEP may make it easier to have accommodations approved, but a prescribed list of accommodations is associated with the standardized process of the GED tests. See questions 40 through 44 below.

### **40. Must a student have an IEP to receive accommodations?**

No, some students may have a documented disability that does not require an IEP and will qualify the student for accommodations.

#### **41. What types of accommodations are available?**

Accommodations based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are available for students with documented disabilities. The need for accommodations must be fully documented by a qualified professional. The most common accommodations are listed below:

- Extended Time: 25%, 50%, and 100%
- Stop-the-clock breaks
- Private room
- Paper test is available only for a documented disability that makes computer testing impossible. It is not available for comfort, convenience or a lack of computer skills.

For description of each of the available accommodations please refer to the GED Testing Service website on accommodations for greater detail:

<http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/computer-accommodations>

#### **42. Are there accommodations and test taking strategies that do not need approval?**

Yes, some accommodations do not require special approval and are available to all test takers.

- Highlighting
- Color Contrast
- Adjustable font

Students are encouraged to let the test center know, in advance, that they might need modifications or adjustments to their computer.

#### **43. How are testing accommodations requested?**

Testing accommodations are requested through GED Testing Service. Specific forms must be completed depending on the student's disability. Documentation is uploaded through the student's GED.com account. The documentation must be completed and signed by a professional diagnostician or advocate and supporting documentation must be included. More information is available here: <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/computer-accommodations>

GEDO #2 programs are encouraged to work with the disabilities specialists at the technical college.

#### **44. How are the testing accommodations provided?**

Testing accommodations are arranged by GED Testing Service with the local testing center. Once the accommodation is approved the teacher and the student must contact the call center (877/392-6433) to schedule the test.

## Extra Requirements

### **45. What additional graduation requirements do districts have, for the GEDO #2 program, other than the GED tests?**

Districts have a wide variety of additional requirements, a partial list includes:

- Presentation to parents, counselors and administrators
- Work hours
  - 15 hours of work experience per week
  - 10 hours of work experience per week
  - a specific total of work experience hours for the program (i.e., 650)
- Career portfolio (interest and aptitude inventory, applications, cover letter, resume, thank you note career research, etc.)
- Community service hours
- 1.5 credits of physical education
- State employability skills certificate
- Health and wellness project portfolio
- Work-based experience
- ½ credit of economics
- ½ credit of personal financial literacy
- ½ credit of computer science
- 30 hour community service learning project with a presentation to the school board
- Written budget
- Internet job search
- Job shadowing experience
- Career interview
- Career paper
- Complete at least one post-secondary entrance exam and application
- Read book (i.e., 7 Habits of Highly Effective People)
- 60 second self-advertisement
- Field trip to technical college or other post-secondary education institution or apprenticeship program
- Exploring career options and next steps
- Graduation project

## 80% Success Rate

### **46. What is meant by an 80% success rate?**

Eighty percent (80%) or more of the students accepted for GEDO #2 must successfully complete the program and graduate with the traditional high school diploma as a condition of program approval for the following year.

**47. What impact does a student have who enters the GEDO #2 program after his/her class has graduated have on the success rate?**

The student will help the success rate and will also help the district's graduation rate.

**48. Why have an 80% success rate for students who have already struggled?**

A measure of success for the program is required by GED Testing Service as a part of Wisconsin's permission to offer GED Testing to students under the age of compulsory school attendance. It is critical that students who volunteer for this program have every opportunity to graduate with their class.

**49. What if a district falls below the 80% success rate?**

In the first year, the department will work with the district to assess the cause of the problem. Student selection, instructional strategies, program policies are some of the areas that will be reviewed to determine where fine-tuning may help the program. Repeated failure to achieve an 80% success rate may result in the revocation of the district's ability to offer GEDO #2.

**50. What probationary actions can be taken to help struggling GEDO #2 students from dropping out or being removed from the program?**

A district should clearly establish a process for consequences, probation and program removal at the start of the program. This process is a required part of the contract discussion with the student and the student's parent/guardian (see question 22, above).

**51. Dismissing a student from the program will hurt our 80% success rate, should we "hold onto" the student?**

Because it is a privilege to be in the program, a student should not be retained in the program if it is not benefiting the student or other students. Sometimes it is more effective to dismiss a student who is unmotivated than it is to keep the student enrolled in GEDO #2. Students should always be offered an opportunity to return when circumstances will allow them to be successful.

**52. Who determines when a student is dismissed from the GEDO #2 program?**

In establishing the GEDO #2 program, a district should clearly establish lines of communication, discipline and the process for dismissing a student from the program. As part of that process, the district should document the consequences, probation and program removal criteria. The district must also identify the person who has the authority to make the final decision about program continuation for the student.

**53. May a student take more than a year to complete?**

Yes, a student may take as long as necessary to complete. If the student ultimately graduates with a high school diploma, the district should not worry about the time it takes the student to complete.

**Transcripts**

**54. What appears on the high school transcript?**

A district decides how the transcript will reflect the program. Most districts use terms such as: Math met by competency and list the test score. Most districts also avoid using the terms GED or HSED test on the transcript although nothing prohibits inclusion of the terms.

**55. May the tests be converted into credits?**

Yes, although conversion of the test scores is not necessary for the student to graduate under §118.33 (1)(d), Wis. Stats. See question 4, above.

**56. May a student still enter college after a GEDO #2 program?**

Yes, a student seeking post-secondary education should meet with the admissions personnel at the college of his or her choice. Students may need to take additional admissions tests and may need to start at a two-year or technical college before attending a four year UW campus.

**57. What about military eligibility?**

Military service is one of the reasons that transcripts should not explicitly state that the student has a GED or HSED score. Since the student has earned a traditional high school diploma through competencies, the terms GED or HSED may be confusing to the military and, as a result, may establish the student at a lower pay grade level.

The acceptance of the GED or HSED by the military fluctuates based on recruiting rules. Most require a high school diploma and a specific score on the ASFAB. GEDO #2 program students who are interested in military service should meet with the recruiters and gather as much information as possible before making a decision.

**Completion and Graduation**

**58. When can students finish testing?**

A GEDO #2 student may finish testing 3 weeks before the student's 9<sup>th</sup> grade class graduates.

**59. When can 18 year old students graduate in the GEDO #2 program?**

Generally, a student who enters the program after the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday may finish testing and graduate whenever the student is ready, provided that the student's 9<sup>th</sup> grade class has graduated

If the student turns 18 during his or her senior year, then the student may finish 3 weeks before the end of the school year.

**60. What do you do with students who finish quickly - - i.e., within 2 months?**

During the time between the student's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> GED test, the student should be working towards his or her post high school goals. The student may take elective courses at the high school, post-secondary courses and or beginning employment.

Students who have strong and definitive plans after graduation may write a letter requesting an age waiver (See Question 35 and the attached policy memo on age waivers). Waivers are possible for enrollment into college or training, enlistment in the military, full-time employment, and for family/medical reasons.

**61. If a student turns 18 during the first semester, may the student graduate early?**

The decision to allow the student to "graduate early" is dependent on school district policy. If this occurs during the student's senior year, an age waiver is needed.

**Additional Information:**

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Phone: 608/267-1062  
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**Websites:**

Accommodations forms from GED Testing Service:  
<https://www.gedtestingservice.com/testers/computer-accommodations>  
DPI Alternative Education: <https://dpi.wi.gov/alternative-education>  
GED Testing Service: <https://www.gedtestingservice.com>