



ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DATA

CALENDAR YEAR 2021

June 27, 2023

Background

The Illinois Compiled Statutes School Code (105 ILCS 5/3-15.12) outlines minimum state requirements for high school equivalency (HSE) testing. This legislation provides the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) with the authority to establish guidelines for Illinois HSE testing including the selection of HSE exams and programs; the creation of policies and procedures for testing; the implementation of minimum passing standards for an HSE credential; and the implementation of state and local fees for exams, transcripts, and credentials.

The ICCB has approved two HSE exams for use in the State of Illinois: the General Education Development Test (GED®) published by GED Testing Service and the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET®) published by PSI Services LLC. Between 2016 and 2020, the ICCB also approved the use of the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™) published by Data Recognition Corporation.

In addition to passing one of the approved HSE exams, a candidate must also complete the high school level U.S. and Illinois State Constitution and Flag requirement to be eligible for an Illinois HSE Certificate. In 2021, the U.S. and Illinois State Constitution and Flag requirement (“Constitution Test”) was suspended and the requirement waived due to COVID-19. The waiver of the Constitution Test was retroactive and impacted all test takers who completed and passed a high school equivalency exam prior to December 31, 2021.

Data from this report was compiled using the Illinois High School Equivalency Database and the GED Analytics database made available by GED Testing Service.

Data from this report covers Calendar Year 2021, which spans from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

Glossary of Key Terms

Test takers: the number of individuals who have taken at least one subtest of a high school equivalency exam

Completers: the number of individuals who have taken all subtests of a single high school equivalency exam

Passers: the number of individuals who have taken and passed all subtests of a single high school equivalency exam

Pass rate: the percentage of completers who have passed all subtests of a single high school equivalency exam

Credential attainment: the number of individuals who have taken and passed all subtests of a single high school equivalency exam *and* the U.S. and Illinois State Constitution Test

Illinois High School Equivalency Performance

Table 1: Illinois HSE Performance, Calendar Year 2021

Exam	Test Takers	Completers	Passers	IL Pass Rate	National Pass Rate
GED	9,584	5,998	4,436	74%	76%
HiSET	1,645	239	177	74%	N/A
Total	11,229	6,237	4,613	74%	N/A

Table 2: Illinois HSE Performance, Calendar Year 2016-2021 Comparison

Year	Test Takers	Completers	Passers	IL Pass Rate	National Pass Rate (GED®)
2016	15,513	9,807	7,525	76.7%	80.0%
2017	14,778	9,363	7,139	76.2%	79.0%
2018	14,345	9,223	7,170	77.7%	80.0%
2019	13,441	8,440	6,470	76.7%	79.0%
2020	7,514	4,227	3,049	72.1%	75.0%
2021	11,229	6,237	4,613	73.9%	76.0%

Data on test takers, completers, passers, and pass rate was compiled using the Illinois High School Equivalency Database and GED Analytics. The national pass rate is not available for all individual exams. For total Illinois HSE performance, the GED® pass rate is used.

Credential attainment requires high school equivalency candidates to complete and pass both the full battery of a high school equivalency exam (GED® or HiSET®) *and* the U.S. and Illinois State Constitution and Flag requirement. The U.S. and Illinois State Constitution Test is a requirement of graduation for Illinois high school students mandated by the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-3). Therefore, the exam has historically been required of all Illinois high school equivalency candidates who wish to obtain the state-recognized high school equivalency credential.

In February of 2021, the ICCB suspended the administration of the U.S. and Illinois State Constitution Test due to COVID-19. Waivers of the requirement were applied to any test taker who completed *and passed* all sections of a high school equivalency exam prior to December 31, 2021. This waiver applied retroactively. Therefore, data on credential attainment is not provided within this report as all candidates who completed and passed a high school equivalency exam in full prior to December 31, 2021 are now eligible for an Illinois High School Equivalency Certificate.

The U.S. and Illinois State Constitution and Flag requirement will be reinstated in calendar year 2022 as an online module.

Illinois High School Equivalency Demographics

Illinois Test Takers by Age Range

The minimum age to take a high school equivalency exam without restriction in the State of Illinois is eighteen (18).

Seventeen (17) year old test takers may take a high school equivalency exam after providing proof of withdrawal from the last public or private school they attended, demonstrating they (1) are not currently enrolled in a high school setting and (2) are no longer required to be enrolled in a high school setting.

Sixteen (16) year old candidates are not allowed to take a high school equivalency exam unless enrolled in an Alternative Learning Opportunities Program or Regional Safe Schools Program (alternative high schools authorized by the Illinois State Board of Education) or the Lincoln’s Challenge Academy (alternative military high school sponsored by the Illinois National Guard).

Complete eligibility requirements for high school equivalency testing in Illinois are available on the Illinois Community College Board website.

Demographic data on age was compiled using the Illinois High School Equivalency Database, which receives reported data from both vendors. Due to reporting variations among vendors, data may vary from overall performance numbers.

Table 3: Illinois Test Takers by Age Range, Calendar Year 2021

Age	GED	HiSET	Total
16	38	1	39
17	671	78	749
18	1,101	73	1,174
19	800	34	834
20-24	2,227	91	2,318
25-29	1,478	76	1,554
30-34	1,335	68	1,403
35-39	917	33	951
40-49	1,059	51	1,110
50-59	306	36	342
60+	52	10	62
Total	9,984	551	10,535

Illinois Test Takers by Gender

Demographic data on gender was compiled using the Illinois High School Equivalency Database, which receives reported data from all three vendors. Due to reporting variations among vendors, data may vary from overall performance numbers.

Table 4: Illinois Test Takers by Gender, Calendar Year 2021

Gender	GED	HiSET	Total
Female	5,179	318	5,497
Male	3,812	250	4,062
Declined	588	1	589
Total	9,579	569	10,148

Illinois Test Takers by Race/Ethnicity

Demographic data on race/ethnicity was compiled using the Illinois High School Equivalency Database, which receives reported data from both vendors. Due to reporting variations among vendors, data may vary from overall performance numbers.

Demographic data for Hispanic and Latino test takers is collected in a different manner for the HiSET® exam than for the GED® exams. GED® intake questionnaires include Hispanic/Latino as a selection under the category “race”. The HiSET® intake questionnaire includes Hispanic/Latino as a secondary category under Ethnicity, meaning Hispanic and Latino test takers are likely to select “White” or “Other” as their primary racial demographic. This difference in data collection means Hispanic and Latino test takers may be underreported for the HiSET® exam.

The Illinois High School Equivalency Database does not currently capture a second data point for Ethnicity. This is planned for a future update; therefore, this report will be edited with updated data as it becomes available.

Table 5: Illinois Test Takers by Race/Ethnicity, Calendar Year 2021

Race/Ethnicity	GED	HiSET	Total
American Indian	100	7	107
Asian	224	13	237
Black or African American	1,582	204	1,786
Hispanic or Latino*	3,373	4	3,377
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	29	4	33
White	3,912	121	4,033
Other		47	47
Prefer Not to Respond	1,619	166	1,785
Unknown		2	2
Null/Not Provided	3,022	1	3,023
Total	13,861	569	14,430