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# ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DATA

## CALENDAR YEAR 2023

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*March 15, 2024*

## 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 2023, which spans from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

## 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 2023**

Exam	Test Takers	Completers	Passers	IL Pass Rate	National Pass Rate
GED	11,933	7,403	5,470	74%	75%
HiSET	1,590	240	165	69%	N/A
Total	13,523	7,643	5,635	74%	N/A

**Table 2: Illinois GED Performance, Calendar Year 2017-2022 Comparison**

Year	Test Takers	Completers	Passers	IL Pass Rate	National Pass Rate (GED®)
2018	13,301	8,662	6,760	78%	80%
2019	12,473	7,865	6,045	77%	79%
2020	7,087	4,026	2,928	73%	75%
2021	11,229	6,237	4,613	74%	76%
2022	11,001	5,971	4,501	75%	75%
2023	13,523	7,643	5,635	74%	75%

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 were 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 2023**

Age	GED	HiSET	Total
16	162	3	165
17	1,065	70	1,135
18	1,443	105	1,548
19	1,067	29	1,096
20-24	2,642	80	2,722
25-29	1,599	58	1,657
30-34	1,426	56	1,482
35-39	1,062	36	1,098
40-49	1,490	56	1,546
50-59	439	20	459
60+	106	6	112
Total	12,501	519	13,020

### 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 2023**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>GED</b>	<b>HiSET</b>	<b>Total</b>
Female	6,013	278	6,291
Male	4,862	221	5,083
Declined	1,056	20	1,076
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,931</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>12,450</b>

***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®. 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 2023**

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>GED</b>	<b>HiSET</b>	<b>Total</b>
American Indian	115	6	121
Asian	255	6	261
Black or African American	2,188	178	2,366
Hispanic or Latino*	3,747	10	3,757
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	29	1	30
White	4,766	132	4,898
Other	0	38	38
Prefer Not to Respond	404	126	530
Unknown	0	19	19
Null/Not Provided	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,504</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>12,023</b>