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# ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DATA

## CALENDAR YEAR 2024

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*March 15, 2025*

## 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 GED Analytics made available by GED Testing Service.

Data from this report covers Calendar Year 2024, which spans from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024.

## 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 2024**

| Exam  | Test Takers | Completers | Passers | IL Pass Rate | National Pass Rate |
|-------|-------------|------------|---------|--------------|--------------------|
| GED   | 12,295      | 7,387      | 5,458   | 74%          | 74%                |
| HiSET | 543         | 226        | 179     | 79%          | N/A                |
| Total | 13,992      | 7,613      | 5,637   | 74%          | N/A                |

**Table 2: Illinois GED Performance, Calendar Year 2018-2024 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%                       |
| 2024 | 12,295      | 7,387      | 5,458   | 74%          | 74%                       |

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 of Illinois High School Diploma, 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 State of Illinois High School Diploma.

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 ICCB 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 2024**

| Age   | GED    | HiSET | Total  |
|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| 16    | 120    | 5     | 125    |
| 17    | 889    | 76    | 965    |
| 18    | 1,342  | 100   | 1,443  |
| 19    | 930    | 31    | 961    |
| 20-24 | 2,811  | 84    | 2,895  |
| 25-29 | 1,730  | 63    | 1,793  |
| 30-34 | 1,418  | 66    | 1,484  |
| 35-39 | 1,035  | 39    | 1,074  |
| 40-49 | 1,442  | 51    | 1,493  |
| 50-59 | 513    | 21    | 534    |
| 60+   | 111    | 7     | 118    |
| Total | 12,342 | 543   | 12,885 |

### **Illinois Test Takers by Gender**

Demographic data on gender 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 4: Illinois Test Takers by Gender, Calendar Year 2024**

| <b>Gender</b> | <b>GED</b>    | <b>HiSET</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Female        | 6,115         | 283          | 6,398         |
| Male          | 5,149         | 207          | 5,356         |
| Declined      | 1,078         | 53           | 1,131         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>12,342</b> | <b>543</b>   | <b>12,885</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.

**Table 5: Illinois Test Takers by Race/Ethnicity, Calendar Year 2024**

| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>               | <b>GED</b>    | <b>HiSET</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| American Indian                     | 106           | 11           | 117           |
| Asian                               | 285           | 8            | 293           |
| Black or African American           | 2,530         | 189          | 2,719         |
| Hispanic or Latino*                 | 4,030         | 7            | 4,037         |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 21            | 1            | 22            |
| White                               | 3,653         | 138          | 3,791         |
| Other                               |               | 27           | 27            |
| Prefer Not to Respond               |               | 110          | 110           |
| Unknown                             | 212           | 49           | 261           |
| Null/Not Provided                   | 1,505         | 3            | 1,508         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>12,342</b> | <b>543</b>   | <b>12,885</b> |

## **Transcript-Based Alternative Method of Credentialing**

The Transcript-Based Alternative Methods of Credentialing (AMOC) was introduced in 2019 as a flexible and equitable approach to recognize academic achievement for individuals who may not have completed a traditional education pathway. This method allows for the evaluation of previously earned coursework, as reflected on an official transcript, to determine if the individual meets the necessary requirements for a diploma or other credential.

### **Requirements for completion**

Candidates who choose this pathway are eligible for State of Illinois High School Diploma after completion of at least 18 credits (equivalent to a year-long high school course) at a state-recognized and accredited public or private high school, a state-recognized and accredited postsecondary institution or adult education program, or a foreign institution of higher education.

In addition, candidates are required to complete their U.S. and Illinois State Constitution requirement and any NRS approved reading exam at a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level. Candidates who are lacking one or more of the 18 total credits may fill their credit gaps in one of three ways. Candidates may complete coursework through an ICCB-funded adult education provider. Coursework may be completed in class or using i-Pathways curricula. Candidates may complete coursework through a recognized and accredited two- or four-year college or university. The course title and description must be specific to the credit gap the candidate needs to fill. Candidates may complete no more than two subject areas of the GED® or HiSET® exam. A passing score on one subject area of a high school equivalency exam shall be considered equivalent to one year of high school credit in a relevant subject area.

### **Transcript Reviews**

Transcript reviews for this pathway are completed by the Regional Office of Education for the candidate's county of residence and the Cook County HSE Records Office for all Cook County residents. The cost of the initial transcript review is \$20.

**Table 6 Alternative Method of Credentialing, Calendar Year 2023-2024**

| <b>AMOC</b> | <b>FY 2023</b> | <b>FY2024</b> |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| Enrolled    | 25             | 89            |
| Achieved    | 25             | 82            |