



“An Alternate Route to Education Success”

## The Alabama Alternate Adult High School Diploma Option

Always striving to improve education, the Alabama Department of Education (SDE) is offering a program designed to provide students who are unable to pass the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE), another option. The State Board of Education and SDE believe the Alabama Alternate Adult High School Diploma Option will serve to decrease the number of potential dropouts and increase the number of high school graduates.

Research indicates as many as 10% of Alabama's senior students who complete the prescribed credits for graduation may not demonstrate the skills and abilities needed to pass the AHSGE. Supporting data show that these same students, estimated at approximately 4,600 annually, are likely candidates to drop out of school and not graduate. With that in mind, the SDE is offering an alternative. On July 11, 2000, the State Board of Education adopted the Alabama Alternate Adult High School Diploma (AAAHSD), an alternate route that offers students an opportunity to graduate with their peers and to help further their respective educational and career opportunities. The AAAHSD, which is issued by local school boards, is not intended to replace the high standards set for graduation requirements and the AHSGE.

This brochure is designed to answer frequently asked questions about this new diploma.



### WHAT IS THE ALABAMA ALTERNATE ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA?

- It is an alternate route to graduation in which a diploma is issued for a small percentage of students who pass the required course credits and take and pass the Test of General Educational Development (GED Test).
- With this diploma, graduates can continue their education at the post-secondary level, join the military, or go directly to work. However, the diploma may not be accepted by all colleges, trade schools, businesses, or all branches of the military.
- The National College Athletic Association (NCAA) will also honor the diploma for eligibility purposes with respect to athletic scholarships at the Division I-A level.

### HOW DO STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR THE ALABAMA ALTERNATE ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OPTION?

- Students must be at least 16 years old and a high school senior.
- Students must have failed at least one subject-area test of the AHSGE after taking the test in the fall of their senior year.
- Students must receive passing grades on core course work in English, mathematics, science, and social studies and in elective courses to be eligible for this diploma.
- Written permission from a parent or legal guardian is required for students to pursue the AAAHSD.
- Students must continue to work toward completion of all 4 x 4 and elective course requirements and continue to take the AHSGE during their senior year in high school.
- Students must attend classes the entire school year.

### HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- Students must attend AHSGE remediation classes and GED preparatory classes in addition to their regular class load.
- Eligible students who pass the GED Test and complete all course requirements can graduate with the AAAHSD. Those not satisfying both conditions are ineligible to participate.
- Students receiving the AAAHSD will be allowed to participate in their school's graduation ceremony.
- Students must continue to take the AHSGE during regularly scheduled administrations and attempt to pass it.
- Students who succeed in passing the AHSGE and successfully complete all course requirements, even though they may have already passed the GED Test, will be awarded the *Alabama High School Diploma*.

### CAN STUDENTS PURSUING THE ALABAMA OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA (AOD) PURSUE THE AAAHSD?

- Students with a disability under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) who are working toward the AOD may pursue the AAAHSD. SDE waivers will be granted to transfer AOD course credits toward the AAAHSD.

### WHAT WILL KEEP SENIORS (THOSE THAT HAVE EARNED THEIR CREDITS) WHO PASS THE GED TEST FROM IMMEDIATELY DROPPING OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL AND GOING ON TO HIGHER EDUCATION/JOB TRAINING?

- *Alabama Administrative Code* rules require that no student may receive the AAAHSD before the regularly scheduled graduation of his/her class.
- Students who fail to complete the required coursework for graduation may receive the High School Equivalency Certificate (GED Certificate), but not before their class has graduated.
- High school students are not eligible to take the GED unless they are pursuing the AAAHSD option.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS WHO WISH TO TAKE THE GED TEST?

- Students will be tested at Official GED Test Centers. The centers are located geographically throughout the state. Where practical, GED Examiners may administer the test at the school.
- Students will take the GED Test, which measures knowledge in the five subject areas of writing, social studies, science, interpreting literature and arts, and mathematics.
- Prior to taking the actual GED Test, students should demonstrate their readiness by achieving a standard score of not less than forty (40) on each of the five parts of the Official GED Practice Test.
- In addition to attending AHSGE remediation classes and required GED preparatory classes, students should prepare for the GED Test by participating in other preparation activities such as GED on TV (Alabama Public Television).
- Students must pass the GED Test by achieving a minimum standard score of forty (40) on each of the five subjects and an average standard score of forty-five (45) on the 1988 version of the test.
- Students with documented specific learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, or physical or emotional disabilities may be eligible for special testing accommodations.
- Students are not permitted to take the GED Test more than three times during the calendar year.
- Beginning January 1, 2002, students must pass the 2002 version of the GED Test by achieving the minimum standard scores required by the American Council on Education's GED Testing Service.

### WHAT IS REQUIRED OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS?

- Principals will provide written notification to the parent/guardian of a student who has not passed the fall administration of the AHSGE in his/her senior year.
- The parent/guardian will be fully apprised of each diploma's potential value to students in terms of getting a job, entering postsecondary education, or joining the military.
- The letter will also include the contact information of the student's guidance counselor, who will schedule counseling and provide more detailed information regarding the program.

- Schools will provide preparatory/remediation classes that increase the amount and quality of direct instructional time with extended learning time opportunities.
- Throughout the school year, students will regularly receive academic and career counseling with records being maintained in accordance with existing local board of education policies and procedures.
- Principals must officially notify GED Examiners when students are ready to take the GED Test.

### WHAT IS THE PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S ROLE?

- The SDE has developed a parent notification letter and a parent signature letter. The parent/guardian signature is required for student participation.
- Letters may be sent/mailed to the parent/guardian as soon as results from the September AHSGE are returned. It is estimated that this will be in mid- to late-October.
- Parents/guardians will be required to sign and return the letter to the student's principal by the required deadline stated in the letter.
- Each eligible student and his/her parent/guardian should receive an individual guidance counseling session so they will understand the AAAHSD Option.
- A parent/guardian wishing to improve his/her literacy or parenting skills will be referred to an adult education and family literacy program.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PRE-GED CLASSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SINCE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WORK WITH IN-SCHOOL STUDENTS?

- The local education agency (LEA) is responsible for pre-GED classes. High Hopes and At-Risk funds may be used to cover the cost.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COST OF TAKING THE GED TEST?

- There are no costs to the student or the parent/guardian. The SDE has been approved for a grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to cover first-year costs of workbooks, APT videotapes, and fees.

### WHEN WILL STUDENTS RECEIVE THE ALABAMA ALTERNATE ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA AND WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

- Students successfully completing the alternate diploma program will be awarded the AAAHSD during their school's graduation ceremony. The AAAHSD will look similar to the regular Alabama High School Diploma.
- No diploma or certificate will be awarded until the graduation ceremony.
- Graduation activities and procedures for awarding diplomas will be integrated and identical, with no distinction/differentiation made in regard to the way the diplomas are awarded or presented.

### WHAT PROVISIONS ARE MADE FOR STUDENTS WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE COURSE REQUIREMENTS BUT DO NOT PASS THE GED TEST OR THE AHSGE BY THE END OF THE SENIOR YEAR?

- Principals are responsible for providing written notification to exited students who have not passed the AHSGE or the GED Test.
- Students no longer attending school will be offered the continued opportunity to take and pass the AHSGE during regularly scheduled administrations of the AHSGE or the GED Test.
- Exited students who eventually pass the AHSGE or the GED Test ultimately receive either an *Alabama High School Diploma* or an AAAHSD, respectively.
- If an exited student should elect to return to school for remediation, the school is responsible for providing it until the student reaches 21 years of age. It is a local decision, however, as to how this remediation will take place.
- Exited students, at least 16 years of age, may also receive remedial instruction from local adult education programs.

### WHERE CAN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALABAMA ALTERNATE ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA BE OBTAINED?

- First, contact the guidance department at each student's respective school.
- If additional information is needed, contact the State Department of Education's GED Testing Program at (334) 242-8181 or 1-800-392-8086.
- Information may also be obtained by accessing the SDE website at [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu).

