September 3, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents
   High School Principals
   Community College Presidents
   Adult Education Directors
   GED Chief Examiners

FROM: Joseph B. Morton
      State Superintendent of Education

Joan Y. Davis
Interim Chancellor, Postsecondary Education

RE: High School Dropouts Enrolling in Adult Education Programs and/or
    Taking the GED Test

During the recent Legislative Session, Senate Bill 334 was passed and put into law, thereby
changing the age for high school dropouts to 17. Also included within the law (Act 2009-564)
is a requirement that prior to leaving school, a student must attend an Exit Interview during
which the student will be informed of the ramifications of dropping out and informed of
available training and employment opportunity programs. The official implementation date for
this new law was August 1, 2009.

Since August 1, 2009, there have been some conflicting practices occurring that we would
like to clarify through the following implementation guidelines regarding enrollment in an Adult
Education Program funded by the Department of Postsecondary Education and/or
registration for the GED Test:

1. A public school student aged 16 who dropped out of school prior to August 1, 2009, may
   attend an Adult Education Program if the student has presented to program officials a
   Certificate of Exemption signed by his/her local superintendent (see Attachment A). If the
   student has not obtained the Certificate, the student should be allowed a grace period of
ten business days to obtain and present the document. To register for the GED Test, the
   student must provide a notarized Certificate of Exemption.

2. Public school students dropping out of school on or after August 1, 2009, must meet the
   age requirement of 17 years or above and must have participated in an Exit Interview
   (see Attachment B) with their high school administration. Should the Exit Interview
   conclude with the student's and parent's or legal guardian's decision to drop out, the Exit
   Interview should be notarized and referral made to an Adult Education Program. To
   register for the GED Test, the student must provide the notarized Exit Interview form.
3. Public school students who are over the age of 17 and have been classified as "no shows" or who have failed to return to school for the 2009-2010 school year will be contacted by their school system to determine their status. If dropout is their chosen option, an Exit Interview will be scheduled. Should a student and his/her parent or legal guardian refuse to attend the conference, the refusal will be documented on the Exit Interview form. Refusal to attend the Exit Interview will not bar a student from enrolling in an Adult Education Program. To register for the GED Test, this student must provide a notarized letter from his/her parent or legal guardian stating the student has refused to attend the Exit Interview, dropped out of the school, and has permission to be administered the GED Test.

4. Students requesting enrollment in an Adult Education Program who have dropped out of private school, church school, or private tutor programs must present to the local Adult Education Program director a notarized letter from his/her parent or legal guardian naming the school, providing the drop out date, and stating the student has dropped out of school and has permission to enroll in an Adult Education Program. To register for the GED Test, this student must provide a notarized letter from his/her parent or legal guardian stating the student has dropped out of the school and has permission to be administered the GED Test.

Please share these guidelines with those you deem appropriate with the understanding that our primary goal is for all students to graduate from high school. In the event this does not occur, we want to ensure there is a seamless transition from high school to an appropriate Adult Education Program that will assist the student in earning his/her GED credential.

Thank you in advance for your attention and cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Joe Macaluso, Interim Director, Adult Education and GED Testing Programs, at 334-293-4561 or by e-mail at macaluso@dpe.edu.

JBM:JYD:LAK

Attachments

cc: State Board of Education Members
Dr. Eddie R. Johnson
Dr. Thomas R. Bice
Ms. Susan Y. Price
Dr. Sue Adams
Adult Education and GED Testing Staffs

FY09-2232
CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION

All persons between the ages of seven and 17 years of age are required by State Law to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed by the State Board of Education. All students must attend school or must be instructed privately unless the student holds a Certificate of Exemption. In accordance with State Law, a student in the following categories may obtain a Certificate of Exemption from the superintendent of his/her local education agency.

Indicate the reason for the Certificate of Exemption request:

_____ A person whose physical or mental condition prevents attendance or makes attendance advisable. Such physical or mental incapacities must be certified by the county health officer or a licensed, practicing physician.

_____ A person 17 years of age or older.

_____ A person who has completed the course of study in the public schools of Alabama.

_____ A student who lives more than two miles from a public school where lack of transportation would require that the student walk to school.

_____ A person who is legally and regularly employed under the provisions of Child Labor Laws and who holds a permit to work under the terms of Child Labor Laws.

_____ A student who withdrew from school at age 16 during the 2008-2009 school year.

Any student not holding a Certificate of Exemption shall be required to attend public school.

Name of Student: ____________________________________________________________

Name of School and School System: __________________________________________

_____ Certificate of Exemption Approved

_____ Certificate of Exemption Denied

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Superintendent                       Date

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature                   Date

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Student Signature                         Date
Student Exit Interview

School System: ___________________________________________ Date: __________________

School: ________________________________________________

Student Name: __________________________________________

First                        Middle                        Last

Student Grade: ____________________ Date of Birth: ________________ Student ID Number: _______________________

Participants of the Student Exit Interview:

__ Discussed the student's reason(s) for dropping out of school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failed AHSGE</th>
<th>Relationship With Fellow Students</th>
<th>Student-Staff Relations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Difficulties/Credit Loss</td>
<td>Dislike of School Experience</td>
<td>Language Difficulty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Problems</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Entered Military Service</td>
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<td>Physical Illness</td>
<td>Needed at Home</td>
<td>Attendance Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>Parental Influence</td>
<td>Other</td>
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__ Discussed intervention strategies previously provided by school faculty/staff. (Describe strategies below.)

__ Provided information regarding the negative impacts of not receiving a high school diploma, which seriously affects future employment and earning potential.

__ Explained other negative consequences such as losing his/her driver's license.

__ Discussed other options and opportunities provided through school programs or classes. (Describe options below.)

__ Provided information for other available community programs. (Identify below.)

__ Explained other possible educational opportunities for students such as private school, church school, private tutor, or community college.

Explanations of intervention strategies, other options provided, and available community programs.

__________________________

GED/Community College information was provided to student. __ Yes __ No

Will student take the GED? __ Yes __ No __ Uncertain

If yes, where does he/she plan to attend?

__________________________

I acknowledge that I have been advised of the importance of staying in school and staying in school to receive my high school diploma.

Student Signature: __________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Name: ____________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________

Telephone: ________________________________________________

Interview Participants:

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<tr>
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For a student who failed to return to school or did not officially withdraw, describe attempts to contact the student and his/her parent or guardian.

__________________________

Principal Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________ Date: ________________

I acknowledge that an exit interview was conducted and the student and the student's parent or legal guardian have been advised that withdrawal from school shall likely reduce the student's future earning potential and increase the student's likelihood of being unemployed in the future.