

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES  
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION  
CHAPTER VII: ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

PART 1507  
HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY TESTING PROGRAM

Section

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**Section 1507.100 Definition of Terms**

"Candidate" means a resident of Illinois who has not completed a high school diploma or a State of Illinois High School Diploma.

"Competency-Based High School Graduation Requirements Pilot Program" means the program authorized by ISBE [110 ILCS 148/20].

"Homeschool Association" means an organization that provides high school curriculum for home schooled students and certifies completion of their program.

"Homeschooled Candidate" means a candidate who was taught at home and not in a public-school setting.

"i-Pathways" means an online instructional system providing high school equivalency preparation for candidates seeking to complete a State of Illinois High School Diploma.

"ICCB" means the Illinois Community College Board.

"ISBE" means the Illinois State Board of Education.

"Jurisdiction" means the service area for which an administrator or faculty have authority over a candidate.

"Residence" means the location and corresponding county for where a candidate lives.

"ROE" means Regional Office of Education.

"State of Illinois High School Diploma" means a high school diploma credential for candidates who have completed all necessary requirements through high school equivalency testing or Transcript-Based Alternative Methods of Credentialing as authorized by ICCB.

"Transcript-Based Alternative Methods of Credentialing" or "AMOC" means a high school equivalency pathway for candidates who have already completed a significant amount of high school or post-secondary education.

#### **Section 1507.110 Eligibility for Testing**

- a) Candidates are eligible for testing without restriction at 18 years of age.
- b) Candidates who are 17 years of age will be granted an age exception approval under the following conditions:
  - 1) A candidate previously enrolled in a public or private high school must provide a withdrawal letter from the candidate's former high school.
    - A) Withdrawal letters must:
      - i) Be on school letterhead.
      - ii) Be physically or digitally signed by a school official.
      - iii) Include the candidate's full name.

iv) Include the candidate's date of birth.

v) Include the formal withdrawal date or last date of attendance.

B) Transcripts are not acceptable as proof of withdrawal unless the transcript includes the elements required in the withdrawal letter.

2) If a withdrawal letter cannot be provided by the former high school, or the candidate was otherwise not enrolled in high school prior to the candidate's HSE test date, the candidate must provide documentation from the local school district or Regional Office of Education serving the candidate's area of residence indicating the candidate is not currently enrolled, or required to be enrolled, in a public or private high school in the candidate's local school district. The withdrawal letter must:

A) Be on organizational letterhead.

B) Be physically or digitally signed by staff of the local school district or Regional Office of Education.

C) Include the candidate's full name.

D) Include the candidate's date of birth.

E) Include the date the letter was provided.

F) Indicate the candidate is not currently enrolled nor required to be enrolled in a high school in their area of residence.

3) A homeschooled candidate must provide documentation either from the local school district or Regional Office of Education serving the candidate's area of residence indicating the candidate is not currently enrolled, or required to be enrolled, in a public or private high school in the candidate's local school district or from the relevant homeschooling association or program stating the candidate's program has been completed.

A) Documentation from the local school district or Regional Office of Education must:

i) Be on organizational letterhead.

- ii) Be physically or digitally signed by staff of the local school district or Regional Office of Education.
    - iii) Include the candidate's full name.
    - iv) Include the candidate's date of birth.
  - B) Documentation from the homeschooling association must:
    - i) Include the date the letter was written.
    - ii) Be physically or digitally signed from staff at the relevant homeschooling association or program responsible for the candidate's home schooling. Digital signatures must include a time-stamp.
    - iii) Include the candidate's full name.
    - iv) Include the candidate's date of birth.
- 4) A candidate is a student participating in a competency-based high school graduation requirements pilot program authorized by the Illinois State Board of Education. Documentation must be received directly from the program and must:
  - A) Be on school letterhead.
  - B) Be physically or digitally signed by a school official.
  - C) Include the candidate's full name.
  - D) Include the candidate's date of birth.
  - E) Include the testing vendor identification number.
  - F) Indicate the candidate is currently enrolled in the program and request the candidate be allowed to test.
- c) Candidates who are 16 years of age will be granted an age exception approval under the following conditions:

- 170 1) A candidate is currently enrolled in the Illinois National Guard's Lincoln's  
171 Challenge Academy. Documentation must be received directly from  
172 Lincoln's Challenge Academy and must:  
173
  - 174 A) Be on Lincoln's Challenge Academy letterhead.
  - 175 B) Include the candidate's full name.
  - 176 C) Include the candidate's date of birth.
  - 177 D) Include the testing vendor identification number.
- 178 2) A candidate is a student participating in a qualified alternative learning  
179 opportunities program or regional safe schools program authorized by the  
180 Illinois State Board of Education. Documentation must be received  
181 directly from the program and must:  
182
  - 183 A) Be on school letterhead.
  - 184 B) Be physically or digitally signed by a school official.
  - 185 C) Include the candidate's full name.
  - 186 D) Include the candidate's date of birth.
  - 187 E) Indicate the candidate is currently enrolled in the program and  
188 request the candidate be allowed to test.
- 189 3) A candidate has received a court order mandating testing as part of a  
190 court-ordered rehabilitation requirement. The court order should include  
191 the candidate's full name and clearly indicate the candidate must complete  
192 a high school equivalency exam. The ROE with jurisdiction over the  
193 candidate will coordinate with ICCB for approval. ICCB must approve  
194 clearance for testing.
- 195 d) Candidates are required to provide valid government-issued photo identification  
196 on all testing days and for all transcript reviews when using the Transcript-Based  
197 Alternative Method of Credentialing in Section 1507.200.
  - 198 1) Photo identification must display the candidate's full name, matching the  
199 name used for exam registration, address, date of birth, and photograph.  
200 The candidate will not be allowed to test without a valid government-

issued photo identification and will not be eligible for a refund for the cost of testing. ICCB will determine acceptable forms of photo identification.

- 2) Restricted identifications, including military ID, cannot be used during check-in for the online-proctored testing.
- 3) If the candidate's photo identification does not indicate a valid Illinois address, the candidate must provide additional documentation to prove residency as specified by ICCB.

#### **Section 1507.120 Issuance of the State of Illinois High School Diploma and Transcripts**

- a) Transcripts and diplomas will be issued by Regional Offices of Education for candidates within their jurisdiction and the ICCB for candidates in Cook County.
- b) Transcripts and diplomas for individuals incarcerated within the Illinois Department of Corrections will be issued by the ICCB.
- c) The Regional Offices of Education and the ICCB will charge a fee for the issuance of transcripts and diplomas as determined by ICCB.
- d) Honorary State of Illinois High School Diplomas may be issued by a Regional Office of Education upon approval from ICCB.
- e) Release of Education Records for Deceased Candidates.
  - 1) Records for a deceased candidate may be requested by the closest living next of kin. A written request must be provided with both of the following notarized documents:
    - A) Birth certificate or other official documentation showing the requestor's relation to the deceased.
    - B) Death certificate of former candidate.
  - 2) Records for a deceased candidate may be requested by the executor of the estate or holder of power of attorney for the deceased. A written request must be provided with a notarized copy of documentation verifying the individual's status as executor or holding power of attorney.
  - 3) ICCB may deny the request in whole or in part after evaluation of the request.

4) ICCB may request additional information before a decision is made.

f) When a candidate requires a copy of their transcript or diploma as an official government record, such as to send to a foreign country, ICCB will provide the candidate a notarized copy of their State of Illinois High School Diploma and transcript for apostille by the Secretary of State. The record must be signed by the ICCB High School Equivalency State Administrator.

g) ICCB will determine official transcript and diploma paper to be used for candidates.

h) The Regional Offices of Education and the ICCB will purchase transcript and diploma paper in a manner and fee determined by ICCB.

### **Section 1507.130 Fee Waivers for Hardship**

a) *Regional Offices of Education and the Illinois Community College Board shall waive any required fees, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/3-15.12, for an applicant who meets all of the following criteria.*

1) *The applicant qualifies as a homeless person, child, or youth as defined in the Education for Homeless Children Act [105 ILCS 45].*

2) *The applicant has not attained 25 years of age as of the date of the scheduled test.*

3) *The applicant can verify his or her status as a homeless person, child, or youth. A homeless services provider that is qualified to verify an individual's housing status, as determined by the Illinois Community College Board, and that has knowledge of the applicant's housing status may verify the applicant's status.*

4) *The applicant has completed a high school equivalency preparation course through an Illinois Community College Board-approved provider.*

5) *The applicant is taking an HSE test at an official testing center operated by a regional superintendent of schools or the Cook County High School Equivalency Office. [105 ILCS 5/3-15.12]*

b) *ROEs and the ICCB have discretion to waive any required fees for an applicant for hardship in addition to the requirements above. [105 ILCS 5/3-15.12]*

### **Section 1507.140 Maintenance of Records**

- a) State of Illinois High School Diploma records completed by candidates after December 31, 2013, are the records of the ROE for the county of the candidate's residence at the time of completion. Records will be maintained by the ROE.
- b) State of Illinois High School Diploma records completed by candidates before January 1, 2014, are the records of the ROE for the county where testing was completed. Records will be maintained by the ICCB through a statewide system.
- c) State of Illinois High School Diploma records completed in Cook County are the records of the ICCB. Records will be maintained by the ICCB through a statewide system.
- d) State of Illinois High School Diploma records completed through the Illinois Department of Corrections' facilities are the records of the ICCB. Records will be maintained by the ICCB through a statewide system.
- e) ROEs may request that the ICCB review backup records, when available, to assist in locating candidates' records.
- f) ICCB will approve access to technology systems utilized in relation to high school equivalency testing and the provision of transcripts and diplomas. Access will only be granted to ICCB staff performing high school equivalency duties at ICCB, ICCB funded adult education programs, Regional Offices of Education, and the Illinois Department of Corrections. Access will be limited to the candidates in the user's jurisdiction.

#### **Section 1507.150 Approval of Testing Vendors**

The ICCB will approve high school equivalency testing vendors. Determination for approval will be based on the ability of the vendor to align with State education requirements and viability of secure testing strategies.

#### **Section 1507.160 Approval of Testing Fees**

- a) The ICCB will approve fees charged by testing vendors for high school equivalency testing.
- b) The ICCB will approve fees charged by testing centers for high school equivalency testing.
- c) The ICCB will approve fees charged for the purchase of transcripts and diplomas.



- d) ICCB will maintain a program to offset the cost of testing for candidates subject to availability of funds.

#### **Section 1507.170 Approval of Testing Centers**

- a) ICCB will approve high school equivalency testing centers. Testing centers must submit an application to ICCB for approval. Once approved by ICCB, they must apply for approval from approved testing vendors. Final approval is granted by ICCB.
- b) Determination for approval will be based on the need in the area and the ability to meet testing vendor requirements.

#### **Section 1507.200 Transcript-Based Alternative Methods of Credentialing**

The transcript-based alternative methods of credentialing option is a high school equivalency pathway meant to provide an alternative route to high school equivalency completion for candidates who have already completed a significant amount of high school or post-secondary education.

#### **Section 1507.210 Eligible Candidates**

An individual is eligible to apply to complete their State of Illinois High School Diploma through the transcript-based alternative method of credentialing program if the individual meets all of the following conditions:

- a) Attended 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.
- b) Meets one of the following requirements:
  - 1) Is 18.5 years of age or older and the individual high school graduating class must be, at minimum, in the third quarter of their senior year.
  - 2) 17-year-olds are only eligible if the individual's high school graduating class has graduated, and the individual presents a withdrawal letter as specified in Section 1507.102.
- c) Does not have a high school diploma nor a State of Illinois High School Diploma and is not currently enrolled in secondary school.

- d) Is a resident of the State of Illinois for at least 30 days prior to the initial transcript evaluation.
- e) Has completed at least 75% (13 credits) of the minimum graduation requirements as outlined in this Part.

#### **Section 1507.220 Eligible Schools**

- a) Eligible schools for transcript review include:
  - 1) A state-recognized public or private high school.
  - 2) A state-recognized and accredited postsecondary institution.
  - 3) The American School (Lansing IL).
  - 4) The Illinois Virtual School recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education.
  - 5) Foreign institutions of higher education.
- b) Home school programs are not eligible for transcript review.

#### **Section 1507.230 Credit Requirements**

- a) Candidates must provide documentation demonstrating completion of at least 17 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. Credits must include:
  - 1) At least four years of language arts.
  - 2) At least three years of mathematics, which must include one year of algebra and one year of geometry.
  - 3) At least three years of social studies, which must include at least one year on the history of the United States.
  - 4) At least two years of science.
  - 5) At least one year of elective coursework, chosen from art, music, foreign language, consumer education, or vocational education.

- 6) At least one semester of health.
- 7) Additional credits required to meet the 17-credit minimum may be filled with elective coursework in any subject area.
- b) Completion of the U.S. and Illinois State Constitution requirement.
- c) Completion of any national reporting system reading assessment at a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level.

#### **Section 1507.240 Filling Credit Gaps**

- a) Candidates may fill credit gaps through:
  - 1) ICCB-funded Adult Education programs. The course title and description must be specific to the credit gap the candidate needs to fill. An adult education course which grants three units of instruction shall be considered equivalent to one year of high school credit in a relevant subject area.
  - 2) Post-secondary credit 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. A post-secondary course which grants three semester credits shall be considered equivalent to one year of high school credit in a relevant subject area.
  - 3) i-Pathways curriculum. The course title and description must be specific to the credit gap the candidate needs to fill. The candidate must utilize the system under the supervision of an ICCB-funded Adult Education program or a Regional Office of Education.
  - 4) High school equivalency exam section. Candidates may complete no more than two subject areas of any high school equivalency exam approved by ICCB. 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.
    - A) Candidates may use passing scores from GED® examinations taken in Illinois prior to 2014.
    - B) Candidates may use passing scores from TASC™ examinations taken in Illinois between 2016-2020.

C) All high school equivalency scores must be accessed through, and verified by, the Regional Office of Education in which the test score was certified.

b) ROEs will not accept records of high school equivalency test scores brought in by candidates.

**Section 1507.250 Transcript Reviews**

a) Transcript reviews are completed by the Regional Office of Education for the candidate's county of residence and the ICCB for all Cook County residents.

b) The Regional Offices of Education and the ICCB will charge a fee for the initial transcript review as determined by ICCB.

c) ICCB may be consulted for a second opinion on a transcript review. The reviewer must provide a copy of the candidate's transcripts and a copy of their initial review.

d) Candidates must seek the transcript review at the ROE for their county of residence.

e) Candidates must provide official transcripts from any source utilized to fill credit gaps. No unsealed transcript provided by the candidate will be accepted.