

# GED Opportunities for Idaho Students

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# Research Mission

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- To find an education solution for Idaho students who disappear from the education system without a high school diploma
- To understand
  - how our schools track students
  - reasons why one leaves high school
  - the way the GED program operates in Idaho

# How Schools Track Students

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- All students, at the end of every year, receive an exit code for tracking purposes (e.g. transfer, home-school, medical-leave), from the district where they were last enrolled.
- If the district anticipates the student will be leaving the district, they usually expect to receive some kind of notice about what happened to that student, such as a request for educational records from another school in the state to which the student has moved.
- If they don't have that record (e.g., not all states have agreements with all other states to exchange educational records), the student remains in their cohort and will appear, at the time of graduation, as a non-graduate.

# How Schools Track Students

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- Non-graduate numbers show the district does not know, at the time of a student's cohort graduation date, the final educational outcome of a student.
- Data on these exit codes update multiple times a year as students re-enroll and dis-enroll in schools and adult learning programs.
- If a student never returns to school, there is no further tracking as there is no method to follow them.

# Why Students Leave High School

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- Exit Code Examples
  - Transfer to another school
  - Transfer out of country
  - Transfer to home schooling
  - Transfer to Adult Education
  - Medical leave/Permanent incapacitation
  - Expelled
  - Migrants

# Why Students Leave High School

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- Exit Codes of the unknown
  - Unknown
    - No known reason for having left school
    - Has not reappeared in the school system since last reported
  - Confirmed Dropout
    - District is directly informed that the student is disenrolling
    - Remains "dropout" until they re-enroll

# Why Students Leave High School

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## Idaho State Totals by Year

|                    | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Confirmed Dropouts | 474     | 559     | 602     | 819     | 943     |
| Unknown            | 1150    | 853     | 940     | 929     | 1235    |

*Source: State Department of Education*

# How the GED Functions in Idaho

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- To take the test one must...
  - be 18 years old
  - have parent or guardian signature if under 18
  - be an Idaho resident
  - not be enrolled in a high school
  - not have a high school diploma
- Consists of 4 separate tests
  - Social Studies (75 minutes)
  - Science (95 minutes)
  - Mathematics (120 minutes)
  - Reasoning through Language Arts (155 minutes)



# How the GED Functions in Idaho

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- Can be taken at one of 30 testing sites throughout Idaho
- Cost is \$30 per exam or \$120 for all 4
- Minimum score of 145 required to pass each section. Total passing score is 580 or higher.
- Test-takers who score in the GED College Ready + Credit level (175-200) demonstrate some of the skills that are taught in college-level courses and may be eligible for up to 3 credits in Math, 3 credits in Science, 3 credits in Social Studies, and 1 credit in English.
- Adult Learning Centers in Idaho colleges offer free GED assessments, learning materials and practice tests.

# How the GED Functions in Idaho

GED State Totals by Year

|                                  | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Testers                          | 1,023   | 2,841   | 3,361   | 3,582   | 3,629   |
| Passers                          | 369     | 1,215   | 2,064   | 1,975   | 2,128   |
| Pass Rate<br>(out of completers) | 68%     | 76%     | 90%     | 86%     | 88%     |
| Average Overall Score            | 158     | 158     | 156     | 156     | 156     |
| Testers Scoring 175+             | 25      | 61      | 103     | 99      | 128     |
| GED 175+ Percentage              | 7%      | 5%      | 5%      | 5%      | 6%      |

Source: CTE

# Conclusions

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- There is no standard or requirement for colleges in Idaho to give College Ready credits when a student earns over 175 on any of the 4 GED tests.
- It costs less to pay for the 4 GED tests than it does to keep a student in high school for a year.
- By incentivizing the GED, Idaho can reduce the number of students that disappear from the education system.

# Solutions

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- Future Legislation
  - Incentivize the GED by offering to pay for all 4 GED tests when a student can pass a practice test.
  - Require the colleges of Idaho to award college credits to those who score over 175 on the GED tests.
  - Require community colleges to track exiting students until they are 21 years of age and follow up with them once a year.