Alternate Pathways to a TN High School Equivalency Diploma
What is a High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma?

- Official TN secondary school credential
- Allows entry into postsecondary, training, jobs, promotions
- ~430,000 working-age Tennesseans without HS diploma or equivalent
- TDLWD oversees HSE preparation programs and diplomas
- Currently, HiSET® exam is only option
Lois M. DeBerry Alternative Diploma Act

• TCA 4-3-1422. Lois M. DeBerry Alternative Diploma Act -- Assessments that lead to high school equivalency credential.

• (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Lois M. DeBerry Alternative Diploma Act."

• (b) The department of labor and workforce development is authorized to make recommendations relative to assessments that lead to the award of a high school equivalency credential. The state board shall review the recommendations of the department. Any recommendation approved by the state board of education shall be considered a high school equivalency assessment and the successful completion of such assessment shall lead to the award of a high school equivalency credential. The department, as needed, may consult with or request assistance from other state agencies in performing its duties under this section.
Why do AE Students Seek a HSE Diploma?

Tennesseans’ Reported Reasons for Taking the HiSET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tech</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year %</th>
<th>Get a Job</th>
<th>Postsecondary &amp; Work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HSE Leads to In-Demand Jobs

- 120 TN occupations with high employer demand
  - 12 require no formal educational credential
  - 63 require HS diploma or equivalent
  - 11 require some college or non-degree credential
  - 6 require associate's degree
  - 25 require bachelor's degree
  - 3 require master’s degree or higher

- 90% require HS or higher
- 38% require higher than a HS diploma

Source: TN Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report 2022
HSE Leads to Higher Wages

Median Earnings:

- $17.29 = Jobs not requiring HS diploma
- $19.33 = Jobs requiring HS diploma
- $19.29 = Jobs requiring some college or non-degree credential
- $23.47 = Jobs requiring associate’s degree
- $31.71 = Jobs requiring bachelor’s degree

Source: TN Academic Supply for Occupational Demand Report 2022

- 16.7% = increase in earnings 6 months after earning HSE
- 32.3% = increase in earnings 12 months after earning HSE

Source: TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development Adult Education Impact Analysis
HSE & Labor Force Participation

- Participation rate correlates strongly with education attainment
  - 50% = No HS diploma
  - 67% = HS diploma
  - 75% = Postsecondary credential less than bachelor’s
  - 84% = Bachelor’s degree or higher

*Source: TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development and Bureau of Labor Statistics*
How is Current Diploma Pathway a Problem?

• Only option currently approved for diploma is HiSET® exam
  – 5-subject, multiple-choice (plus a written essay), time-limited, standardized test, just like the GED®

• Passing the HiSET can be a barrier for students

• High-stakes, timed, standardized tests are difficult

• Research shows that high-stakes testing increases stress and lowers test performance

• Students are eager to have other options

• Other states have created alternate pathways
HiSET Outcomes

- GED and HiSET were redesigned and aligned with Common Core in 2014

Average Yearly HSE Diplomas Earned in TN

- 2007-2013: 8,900
- 2014-2020: 4,800
The Current Pathway is Narrow

- We can broaden the workforce pipeline by creating alternate pathways for attaining a HSE diploma.
Broaden the Workforce Pipeline

HiSET

No Diploma

Custom
- Math
- Reading
- Writing
- Science
- Social Studies

Training

College

Job
Complete ONE of the following:

- Pass the HiSET exam (all 5 subjects)
- Attain a TCAT diploma or program certificate

Or, demonstrate math, reading, writing, science, and social studies competencies by completing the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATH</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
<th>SOCIAL STUDIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete ONE:</td>
<td>Complete ONE:</td>
<td>Complete ONE:</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Attain a score of 8 or higher on HiSET math exam</td>
<td>□ Attain a score of 8 or higher on HiSET reading exam</td>
<td>□ Attain a score of 8 or higher on HiSET writing exam AND a score of 2 or higher on HiSET essay</td>
<td>□ Attain a score of 8 or higher on HiSET science exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Attain level 4 or higher on TABE math test</td>
<td>□ Attain level 4 or higher on TABE reading test</td>
<td>□ Attain level 4 or higher on TABE language test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Attain level 4 (silver) or higher on ACT WorkKeys “Applied Math” AND “Graphic Literacy”</td>
<td>□ Attain level 4 (silver) or higher on ACT WorkKeys “Workplace Documents”</td>
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Adult Education
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