Colorado High School Equivalency Newsletter

August 2025

What's New

What is this Newsletter?

Welcome to the Colorado High School Equivalency (HSE) Newsletter! My name is Alena Barczak and I'm the High School Equivalency Coordinator at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). This newsletter is a new initiative by which I hope to improve communication for HSE professionals in Colorado and start to foster a sense of community around HSE. It will go out quarterly, and topics will include any changes at the state level and updates from GED and HiSET.

Please feel free to forward this to any of your HSE colleagues who may not have received it; I am sure I've missed some people. To join this listserv, they can email HSE-Subscribe-Request@cdelist.cde.state.co.us. I will approve all requests that are sent there. Alternatively, if you do not want to be on this list, there will always be an Unsubscribe link at the bottom of these emails.

HSE Contact Update Form

This year I worked on collecting primary contacts for all our roughly 200 HSE programs. If that primary contact at your site changes, please use this HSE Contact Update Form to notify me. This form feeds into the master list I'm maintaining and will help me stay in the loop. While all HSE staff are encouraged to join this newsletter, I don't need all staff to be on my master list via the update form, just the primary contacts for each site.

News from Alena

Some of the HSE projects I've been working on for the last several months are:

- This past school year, I weeded out dozens of old programs that have closed or have stopped offering HSE classes; those sites have been removed from the GED and HiSET class finders on their websites. It's now much easier for the public to find (current) classes near them, so this felt like a huge accomplishment!
- I've been working with GED to remove the K12-only prep sites from their class finder by making those sites official Option programs. This has been slow-going but will further clean up the class finder and avoid confusing the public.
- The CDE HSE homepage receives on average 900 views per month. To help answer the most common questions I receive from the public, I've added a comparison chart

of GED and HiSET on that page that you all are welcome to reference if your potential students ask these questions as well.

- I will be presenting a session at the Colorado School Counselors Association (CSCA)'s annual conference in Keystone in October. My session is titled "Demystifying GED Options for Credit-Deficient Students" and will debunk common misconceptions around HSE for high school students. I can share the presentation with this group afterwards.

HSE Landscape

It's been a challenging year so far for federal, state, and local funding, and I would be remiss not to acknowledge that. I know many of your programs are funded by state or federal grants and may be facing difficult times. I've not been informed of any impacts to HSE here at CDE. I just want you to know I'm thinking of all your programs out there and appreciate how you continue to show up for HSE learners.

Community

I've heard from several programs that they would appreciate some regional collaborative events, whether in-person or virtual. This idea has been well-received by leadership but will require a bit of planning, given the state budget context. Collaborations will be on the forefront for me this year, and I'll keep you all updated with any progress!

Shout outs:

Welcome to some of our newest HSE test and prep sites!

- **Grand Mesa Youth Services Center in Grand Junction**: providing GED prep and testing for their youth residents
- **Cheyenne Mountain High School in Colorado Springs**: providing GED prep and testing for their students
- **Right on Learning in Thornton**: providing GED and HiSET testing for the north metro area

Publisher Updates

HiSET

- The HiSET age waiver has been updated with correct submission instructions at the bottom of the form.
- Moving forward, student demographic changes such as name corrections should be submitted to PSI via the regular PSI help form. Select "Demographics Update" as the area of need and attach supporting legal documentation.

GED

GED has not communicated any changes recently. I will be attending the GED Conference next week and will share out any important updates that I learn.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or needs you have around HSE programming or testing—whether that's issues with the publishers, connections I can help facilitate with other local programs around you, or policy questions. I look forward to supporting you in this important work!

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