THE GED IN CONNECTICUT: A LOOK AT THE DATA

THE GED IN TRANSITION

The old GED exam is changing. Starting next year, the traditional pen-and-paper test will give way to a new, computer-based system. The transition raises some important issues: the new exam is more expensive, testing facilities need to be upgraded, and test-takers need to be made aware of the new format. CAHS is monitoring these changes, and working with other organizations and state officials to ensure that the new GED test improves on the old.

As we move to the new system, this is an opportunity to look at where Connecticut stands in terms of adult education.

CONNECTICUT INVESTS IN ADULT EDUCATION

Connecticut leads the US in state resources allocated per adult without a High School Degree or GED. We invest a considerable amount of money in adult education, as it stands now.

Connecticut is ranked first in adult education spending, nation wide. But, what are the returns of this investment? We enroll a lot of students in our adult education system.

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1 All data from the Population Reference Bureau for the Working Families Project and Complete College America.
Connecticut is ranked 7th in adult education enrollment in the country; we are working with a considerable amount of students in pursuit of their GEDs. As a result, the percentage of adults without a High School diploma or GED is well below the national average:

These figures, however, are not as impressive as the look. Connecticut is ranked 15th nationwide for adults 25 to 54 with a GED or High School diploma; 16th for adults 18 to 64. With all the investment and all the enrollments, the current adult education system is not reaching everyone. The breakdown by groups shows who:

Connecticut ranks 6th in the nation for educational attainment for non-Hispanic whites. On the other hand we rank 16th for Hispanics, 25th for African-Americans and 23rd for minorities, on aggregate. We are barely above average with groups other than non-Hispanic whites. This is a reflection of Connecticut’s vast wealth and income disparities (Connecticut ranks 49th on income gap between the top and bottom quintile of working families), and of the achievement gap in our education system, in part one of the consequences of inequality.

As Connecticut embarks on a new GED, we need to make sure our investment in adult education is going where it is needed.