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About HiSET

Educational Testing Service (ETS®) and Iowa Testing Programs (ITP) co-developed the HiSET® Program. The HiSET is an essential part of ETS’s mission to provide innovative and meaningful measurement solutions that improve teaching and learning, expand educational opportunities, and inform educational policy. Some individuals who seek a high school credential may lack the opportunity to experience a traditionally structured high school teaching and learning environment. The HiSET Program seeks to help these individuals identify, acquire, and demonstrate the knowledge and skills that they will need to succeed in postsecondary education and in the workplace.

About ETS

Founded as a non-profit in 1947, ETS advances quality and equity in education for people worldwide by creating assessments based on rigorous research. ETS serves individuals, educational institutions, and government agencies by providing customized solutions for teacher certification; English language learning; and elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education — as well as by conducting education research, analysis, and policy studies. ETS develops, administers, and scores more than 50 million tests annually — including the College Board® Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) exams, the GRE® General and Subject Tests, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and the TOEFL® and TOEIC® tests — in more than 180 countries, at over 9,000 locations worldwide.

About ITP

ITP is a non-profit research, development, and outreach unit in the College of Education at the University of Iowa. ITP’s mission is to pursue:

- research that improves the practice of educational measurement
- design and development of assessments for a variety of purposes and audiences including educators; federal, state, and local governments; and academic institutions
- outreach that delivers assessment results and supports the use of assessment information by local, state, national, and international audiences

Test Content

The HiSET measures knowledge and skills in five subject areas: Language Arts — Reading, Language Arts — Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
Overview

The HiSET Program has been in operation since January 2014. This report provides volume and test performance information for examinees who took the HiSET between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019. The intent of this report is to help HiSET examinees, score users, and policy makers understand HiSET scores and to encourage appropriate score interpretation and use.

The HiSET Tests

HiSET examinees test in five content areas: Reading (Language Arts — Reading), Writing (Language Arts — Writing), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The Test at a Glance documents — which are available for download on the HiSET Web site — provide descriptions of the specifications behind current HiSET forms. Each subject-area test produces a score on a 1 – 20 reporting scale. We used standard setting studies (Tannenbaum & Reese, 2014) to recommend the minimum test scores (i.e., cut scores) needed for examinees to be considered qualified enough to earn a high school equivalency certificate. The tests consist of multiple-choice items, except for a direct writing task associated with the Writing test. Table 1 displays the number of items and time limits associated with each test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Number of Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Language Arts — Reading</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts — Reading (Spanish)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts — Writing</td>
<td>50 + essay</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scoring the HiSET Tests

With the exception of the essay portion of the Writing test, HiSET item responses receive a score of either correct or incorrect; and the sum of the correct responses becomes the raw score. There is no penalty for answering incorrectly. Raw scores on the Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Social Studies tests are converted directly to scores on the 1 – 20 reporting scale. In Writing, the scaled score from the multiple-choice section is combined with the scaled score on the essay to produce the 1 – 20 reporting scale. We based the ratings of the essay scores in the Writing test on a 6-point rating scale that ranges from “little or no skill” to “proficient skill.”
Explanation of the Scaled Scores

Each of the five tests in the HiSET battery is scored on a scale of 1 – 20. In order to pass, an examinee must do all three of the following:

- achieve a score of at least 8* on each of the five individual tests
- score at least 2 out of 6 on the essay portion of the Writing test
- have a total combined score on all five tests of at least 45

* Minimum passing score is based on HiSET “pass” cut score requirements. Credential issuing agencies may set their own requirements. The pass rate data in this report is calculated based on the HiSET “pass” score requirement.

Samples Reported

The samples in this report sometimes refer to examinees who have taken individual tests; and sometimes the samples refer to examinees who have taken the full battery of tests. All samples unless otherwise noted are composed of both English and Spanish examinees. For battery tables, examinees should have taken all five tests in Spanish to be considered Spanish completers. Tables which include test-specific information are based on the sample of examinees that have attempted the specific test. These tables are broken into two types of samples: 1) a sample of examinees which details their first attempt to pass a specific test, and 2) a sample of examinees which encompasses all of their attempts to pass a specific test. The latter of the two includes multiple attempts by some examinees. Tables which include these samples are Tables 2, 3, 15, 16 and 24.

Tables which include information about the battery consist of only examinees that have completed all five individual HiSET tests — however, completers have not necessarily passed the battery or any individual test. Instead, a “completer” refers to an examinee that has completed the final test of their battery in 2019. This sample is broken into two subsamples for each individual test: 1) a subsample of first attempts, and 2) a subsample of best attempts (i.e., highest scores). Tables which include these samples are Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24. In 2019, there were 50,879 completers. For the purposes of assigning examinees to a state, a completer is considered completed only in the state in which he or she most recently tested. Tables based on “passers” include those completers who have passed the HiSET battery on a first attempt. These samples occur in Tables 4, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24.

For certain identifying questions, examinees had the option to expressly indicate that they did not wish to provide a response, or to simply refrain from responding at all. Response rates reported include those who expressly chose not to respond. The percentages for responses reported in the tables, including those who expressly chose not to respond, sum to 100 percent.

In addition to the data reported for 2019, trend data comparing 2018, 2017 and 2016 are also included in this report and summarized in Table 24, which includes number tested, percent completed, and percent passing for 2016 to 2019.

State testing policies can be found at the following website:

http://hiset.ets.org/requirements
The Standard Setting

Standard-setting studies (Tannenbaum & Reese, 2014) were conducted in 2014 to recommend minimum test scores (cut scores) needed to be considered qualified-enough to earn a high school equivalency certificate. These recommendations were shared with the HiSET Board along with other data to inform decisions about where to set the operational cut scores; these other sources of data included the correspondence between HiSET scores and scores on the GED and the ACT, and previous passing rates on the HiSET test. Based on a thoughtful and inclusive review and discussion, the recommended cut scores were lowered. Adjustments to recommended cut scores often occur to better align cut scores with their intended use (Geisinger & McCormick, 2010). This practice is consistent with the understanding that the process of setting standards is similar to forming a policy, where the goal is to establish a reasonable and appropriate decision-rule (Cizek & Bunch, 2007; Kane, 2001; Kane & Tannenbaum, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number Tested</td>
<td>Passing Rate</td>
<td>Number Tested</td>
<td>Passing Rate</td>
<td>Number Tested</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>AS</td>
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<td>143</td>
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<td>82.9</td>
<td>212</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GU</td>
<td>All Attempts</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<td>731</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>751</td>
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<td>941</td>
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<td>909</td>
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<td>Number</td>
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<td>215</td>
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<td>76.5</td>
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<td>OK</td>
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<td>79.8</td>
<td>2,219</td>
</tr>
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<td>All Attempts</td>
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<td>3,092</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>3,041</td>
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<td>79.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1,386</td>
</tr>
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<td>First Attempt</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>All Attempts</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
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<td>4,543</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>4,602</td>
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<td>753</td>
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<td>67,871</td>
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<td>69,336</td>
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*Passing rates were not reported when samples under 10.
<table>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
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<td>Passing Rate</td>
<td>Number Tested</td>
<td>Passing Rate</td>
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</table>

*Passing rates were not reported when samples under 10.
Out of the 85,030 examinees who tested, a total of 50,879 examinees had completed the full battery in 2019. The total completion rate was 59.8 percent.

### Table 3a. Number of Examinees Tested and Number of Batteries Completed in 2019

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<th>Completion (%)</th>
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*Completion rates were not reported when samples under 10.

**The number of total examinees (i.e., 85,030) is not equal to the sum of examinees for each state because 71 examinees took the tests in more than one state.
Table 3b. Number of Examinees Tested in Spanish and Number of Batteries Completed in Spanish in 2019

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*Examinees are only considered Spanish completers if all of the tests in their first battery were taken in Spanish.

**Completion rates were not reported when samples under 10.

***AS, GU, MH, MI, MP, and PW administered in Spanish but did not have any complete batteries in Spanish.

****The number of total examinees (i.e., 7,969) is not equal to the sum of examinees for each state because 2 examinees took the tests in more than one state.
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Table 4a. Batteries Completed and Passed in 2019

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*Passing rates were not reported when samples under 10.
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Table 4b. Batteries Completed in Spanish and Passed in Spanish in 2019

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*Examinees are only considered Spanish completers if all of the tests in their first or best battery were taken in Spanish.

**Passing rates were not reported when samples under 10.

***AS, GU, HI, ME, MH, MI, MP, and PW administered in Spanish but did not have any complete batteries in Spanish.
Examinees who reported being under age 16 were removed from the sample. The average age of the total group was 26.4 years. Examinees who were 16 to 18 years old accounted for 25.2 percent of all examinees; examinees who were 19 to 24 years old accounted for 31.5 percent of all examinees; examinees who were 25 to 34 years old accounted for 23.3 percent of all examinees; and examinees who were 35 years old or older accounted for 20.2 percent of the total group. For this table, actual ages are always rounded down to the nearest whole year (e.g., 24 years and 8 months is rounded down to 24 years).

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentage of Examinees by Age Group, by States, and Total

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*Summary statistics and percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
Of the 50,878 examinees who reported gender (i.e., female or male), 55.2 percent reported as male, and 44.8 percent reported as female.

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*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.*
Of the 50,277 examinees who self-reported background, 61.8 percent self-reported as non-Hispanic, 23.3 percent reported as Hispanic, and 14.9 percent indicated that they did not wish to report whether or not they were Hispanic.

### Table 7. Completers with Reported Hispanic Background

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<th>Hispanic (%)</th>
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*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
Of the 50,279 examinees who self-reported race, 53.4 percent reported as White, 16.4 percent reported as African American, and 15.7 percent expressly indicated that they did not wish to provide any racial classification. Examinees who indicated being Hispanic had the option of separately reporting a racial identification indicated in this table. The underlying survey question on which this table is based did not include a Hispanic category, which may have led Hispanic examinees to choose “Other” or to not respond — either by expressly indicating a desire not to choose a category or by not choosing any option whatsoever.

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*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
Only 58.8 percent (29,899) of all examinees reported their education level. Of the examinees reporting, the majority (91.1 percent) had some high school — that is, 9th through 12th grade — education.

<p>| Table 9. Completers with Reported Education Level by States and Total |
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*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
54.9 percent (27,924) of all the examinees reported their mother’s education level. The mothers of approximately 14.8 percent of reporting examinees had some high school education, 27.8 percent had a high school education, and more than 15.4 percent had at least some college education.

Table 10. Completers with Reported Mother’s Education Level by States and Total

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</table>

*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
54.6 percent (27,789) of all the examinees reported their father’s education level. The fathers of approximately 13.2 percent of reporting examinees had some high school education, 28.9 percent had a high school education, and more than 10.6 percent had at least some college education.

Table 11. Completers with Reported Father’s Education Level by States and Total

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Response Rate (%)</th>
<th>Grade School or Less (%)</th>
<th>Some High School (%)</th>
<th>High School (%)</th>
<th>Some College (%)</th>
<th>Associate’s Degree (%)</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree (%)</th>
<th>Some Graduate School or Higher (%)</th>
<th>Do Not Know (%)</th>
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<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>27.4</td>
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</table>

*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
62.5 percent (31,822) of all examinees reported their employment status. Of the examinees reporting, 19.2 percent were part-time, 24.6 percent were full-time, 31.9 percent were unemployed, and 24.3 percent were not in the labor force.

Table 12. Completers with Reported Employment Status by States and Total

<table>
<thead>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Response Rate (%)</th>
<th>Part-Time (%)</th>
<th>Full-Time (%)</th>
<th>Unemployed (%)</th>
<th>Not In Labor Force (%)</th>
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<td>22.2</td>
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*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
Examinees were asked to choose the one best reason from a provided list for taking the test. The list in the table below contains: Technical School (TECH), Two-Year College (2-Yr College), Four-Year College (4-Yr College), Get a Job, Keep Current Job, Role Model (RM), Satisfaction (SAT), Public Assist, Military (MIL), Early Release, Court Order, and Other. 55.2 percent (28,063) of all examinees reported their reasons for taking the test. For those who provided reasons, 46.8 percent of the examinees were taking the test to further their education, whether to enter a technical program, a two-year college, or a four-year college; 15.3 percent were taking the test to get a job; and 2.3 percent were taking the test to keep their current job.

Table 13. Completers with Reported Reasons for Taking the Test by States and Total

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<th>2-Yr College (%)</th>
<th>4-Yr College (%)</th>
<th>Get a Job (%)</th>
<th>Keep Current Job (%)</th>
<th>RM (%)</th>
<th>SAT (%)</th>
<th>Public Assist (%)</th>
<th>MIL (%)</th>
<th>Early Release (%)</th>
<th>Court Order (%)</th>
<th>Other (%)</th>
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*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.

2019 Annual Statistical Report on the HiSET® Exam
An examinee could choose multiple responses for this question simultaneously. 54.4 percent (27,680) of all examinees reported how they prepared for the test. Of the examinees reporting, the majority attended test preparation classes and/or were tutored (58.7 percent), followed by using an online or internet resource (29.6 percent), and buying a hard copy test preparation book (24.6 percent).

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*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
Across tests, there were more computer-based tests administered overall. Very few formats to provide additional accessibility were administered.

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*Summary statistics were not reported when samples under 10.
The average battery scores for the states ranged from 55.1 to 69.4 for first attempts and from 58.0 to 70.3 for best attempts. The average score for the entire population was around 60.0 for first attempts and 62.1 for best attempts.

Table 17. Summary Statistics for Examinees Completing all Five Tests (The Full Battery)

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*Summary statistics were not reported when samples under 10.*
The fields following table contain: Technical School (TECH), Two-Year College (2-Yr College), Four-Year College (4-Yr College), Get a Job, Keep Current Job, Role Model, Satisfaction (SAT), Public Assist, Military (MIL), Early Release, Court Order, and Other.

### Table 18. Passers with Reported Reason for Testing

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<th>4-Yr College (%)</th>
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<th>RM (%)</th>
<th>SAT (%)</th>
<th>Public Assist (%)</th>
<th>MIL (%)</th>
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*Summary statistics were not reported when samples under 10.
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− denotes no examinees in the category.
Male examinees tended to have slightly higher passing rates than female examinees did.

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Non-Hispanic examinees had higher passing rates than Hispanic examinees did.

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− denotes no examinees in the category.
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- denotes no examinees in the category.
Compared to 2018, overall, number tested decreased in 2019 and percent completed also decreased in 2019. Percent passing (first attempt) increased from 2018 (55.4 percent) to 2019 (57.1 percent).

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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</table>

− denotes no examinees in the category.

*Percentages were not reported when samples under 10.
Definitions of Key Terms

Alternate Formats — Various formats of the HiSET are available in addition to the standard print editions for examinees with physical, learning, or psychological disabilities. These formats include large print, audio cassette, and Braille editions. Although the audio cassette and Braille editions may be used by examinees with documented disabilities who were approved for test accommodations, the large print edition does not require additional documentation for use.

HiSET Completers — Examinees who have tested in all five content areas of the HiSET and completed the final test in their battery in 2019 regardless of whether they met the HiSET passing standard. The number of completers serves as the denominator for calculating the pass rate. An examinee must be a 2019 completer and must have met the minimum passing standard in order to be considered a HiSET passer (see definition).

HiSET Passers — Completers who have met the minimum passing standard for the HiSET. The number of examinees who met the passing standard serves as the numerator for calculating the pass rate. Some jurisdictions require examinees to fulfill additional requirements beyond passing the HiSET in order to receive a passing high-school completion test credential.

HiSET — A high school equivalency assessment consisting of five content areas. ETS and ITP designed and produced the HiSET according to psychometric standards and properties in order to provide an opportunity for adults who did not complete a formal high school program to certify their attainment of academic knowledge and skills and to earn their jurisdiction’s high school-level equivalency credential, diploma, or certificate.

HiSET Examinees — Examinees who have tested in at least one of the five content areas of the HiSET, regardless of whether they completed or met the HiSET passing standard.

Jurisdiction — Entity such as a U.S. state, U.S. Territory, or regional contractor that administers the HiSET.

Language Version — In addition to English, the HiSET is also offered in Spanish.

Minimum Passing Standard — Each of the five tests in the HiSET battery is scored on a scale of 1 – 20. In order to pass, an examinee must do all three of the following:

■ achieve a score of at least 8 on each of the five individual tests
■ score at least 2 out of 6 on the essay portion of the writing test
■ have a total combined score on all five tests of at least 45

Subject Area — The HiSET includes five content areas that assess skills and knowledge in the following high school academic subjects: Language Arts — Reading, Language Arts — Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
About ETS

At ETS, we advance quality and equity in education for people worldwide by creating assessments based on rigorous research. ETS serves individuals, educational institutions and government agencies by providing customized solutions for teacher certification, English language learning, and elementary, secondary and postsecondary education, and by conducting education research, analysis and policy studies. Founded as a nonprofit in 1947, ETS develops, administers and scores more than 50 million tests annually — including the TOEFL® and TOEIC® tests, the GRE® tests, the HISET® exam and The Praxis Series® assessments — in more than 180 countries, at over 9,000 locations worldwide.