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State Board of Education awards contracts for high school equivalency assessments

AUSTIN – The State Board of Education (SBOE) voted today to award contracts to three separate companies to provide high school equivalency assessments. The high school equivalency assessment serves as the basis for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to issue the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency.

The three companies – Data Recognition Corporation, Educational Testing Service and GED Testing Service – responded to a Request for Proposals (RFP) the SBOE issued during its September 2015 meeting. The vote by the State Board marks a shift from the use of a single testing provider to three.

“Members of the board looked at several issues, including the costs of each test battery and whether they are offered online or by paper and pencil, and determined that students should get a say in which assessment they take,” said SBOE Chair Donna Bahorich.

Approximately 53,000 individuals take high school equivalency exams in Texas each year. Currently, the assessments are administered in computer-based form at testing centers across the state, as well as in correctional facilities that may administer the test on paper or by computer.

The test providers must make available reasonable accommodations that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirement at no additional charge to the test taker.

Submitted proposals were reviewed by an eight-member evaluation team that consisted of TEA staff and reviewers outside the agency who have expertise in the area. Each company presented its qualifications to the SBOE and answered questions from board members during its Committee of the Full Board meeting on Jan. 27.

The Texas Education Code authorizes the SBOE to provide for the administration of high school equivalency examinations. The SBOE has given the TEA the authority to administer the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency. TEA is the only agency in Texas that is authorized to issue a certificate of high school equivalency.

