

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DPI 4/17/2023

LRB Number	23-1749/1	Introduction Number	AB-0138	Estimate Type	Original
Description issuing a declaration of equivalency of high school graduation or a general educational development certificate					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

Under current law, the state superintendent of public instruction issues high school equivalency diplomas (HSED) and general education development (GED) certificates to individuals who have completed the requirements for an HSED or GED. This bill draft requires that, upon determining an applicant is eligible and has paid any required fee, the state superintendent immediately issue an HSED or GED to the applicant by posting the HSED or GED, in a manner that maintains confidentiality, to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website.

The department's GED/HSED credentialing system was developed many years ago. This system had not been developed beyond the paper-based system of credential records and manual payment processes for transcripts until recently, due to lack of financial/staff resources. DPI has already made changes that make it easier for individuals to make payments to obtain their GED/HSED credentials (i.e., ePayment options).

Additionally, DPI has begun the process of digitizing paper records as part of building a GED/HSED database, which is a necessary step in developing an online portal through which individuals could access their own HSED/GED credential. Potentially, DPI could build an online HSED/GED lookup tool that could be used by employers and institutions of higher education to verify an individual's GED/HSED credential, which could function much like the educator licensing online lookup tool (a public facing portal that allows individuals to look up an individual's current licensing status).

DPI was allocated funding from the Governor's discretionary Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to support the work of digitizing paper records, the primary costs of which is paying limited term employees (LTEs) to do the work. DPI staff are currently mapping out the work necessary to move from the initial stage of digitizing records to developing an online portal to access credentials and potentially a credential look up function. Because DPI is still in the early stages of this work, an estimate for the costs of building and maintaining an online portal is not yet available. The fiscal estimate for this bill draft is therefore indeterminate, as shared with the legislative office requesting the estimate.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications