

NEDP Observations & Questions

Aaron Moyer

1. The NEDP program has been in existence since 1975. Why did it take almost 40 years for VA to start adopting the program?!!

One would think that a great program would have been well accepted a LONG time ago!

2. What incentives or inducements, if any, has Virginia and TJACE received in return for its acceptance and promotion of the NEDP?

If CASAS or the Federal Government has provided significant funding for this program in VA, that alone should be cause for concern. Why would inducements be necessary if the NEDP offers clear advantages over the GED?!

3. CASAS only assumed responsibility for administering the NEDP in 2006. Isn't anyone concerned that the heavy promotion of the NEDP may only be because CASAS is attempting to gain more "market share" in the adult education arena – as opposed to the NEDP truly being a good alternative to the well-established GED program?!!

A period of heavy promotion for a new product is typical. The provider wants to recuperate its investment costs – no matter how good the product is!

4. Ms. Erno has reported that the initial start-up costs for this program are being covered by existing funding. What cost, if any, will there be in the future to Greene County for its participation in this program; and when?

My concern is that the NEDP will appear to be a "free" alternative now; but cost Greene taxpayers in the future – either for the shared

costs of additional TJACE personnel, and/or new training/certification of all NEDP employees.

5. Dr. Whitmarsh highlighted at the March meeting that there has been a significant drop-off in GED participation; and she felt this indicated the new version of the test was too demanding for some people and they needed another option. Given that the more difficult 2014 GED requirements were announced in May, 2013, which was over six months before they were implemented, is it any surprise that people might have accelerated their effort to get a GED in 2013 in order to make it easier on themselves? That could easily explain why there was a drop-off in GED participation in 2014 – as opposed to this being a clear indication that people could no longer pass the new GED requirements.

A detailed analysis of the participation in the GED program should determine whether or not there was an increase in GED participation in the second half of 2013; and a corresponding decrease in 2014 participation. Regardless, my research found that the developer of the GED routinely gives the tests to recently graduated high school students – in order to determine if their scores fall within the expected range. In 2012, the developer found that these people's scores had risen significantly in recent years, which indicated that the old (2002 version) GED tests no longer accurately reflected the competencies of currently graduating high school students. Otherwise, people getting a GED would not remain on par with people getting a regular high school diploma.

If the NEDP is easier for people to obtain than a GED, how meaningful will it be as an indicator of a “superior job applicant”? Among other things, a GED typically indicates that a person was willing to put forth the effort required to take remedial classes in order to pass the GED tests. That commitment really is an indicator of a more qualified job applicant. I don't believe someone applying their

time to get an NEDP “at their own pace” will be viewed the same way by employers.

6. The stated cost for individuals to participate in the NEDP is \$500. Who pays this; and at what point in the NEDP process are the fees collected?

For NEDP participants in Prince William Co., it appears there is a \$200 up-front “evaluation fee”; a \$300 fee to begin the “assessment process”; and then \$100 for each of the actual tests. Thus, someone would have to lay out \$500 before they really begin the process. I question whether people at this socioeconomic level will have those kinds of available funds! If they don’t, then I think it will be likely that local taxpayers will later be asked to “help” fund this program; which will be an added disincentive for people to stick with the NEDP after they begin. If they have nothing invested, human nature guarantees that they will have less commitment!

7. Isn’t anyone concerned about the NEDP’s claim that it requires “100% mastery of seventy competencies”? To me, this is either a huge overstatement of the NEDP’s requirements; or an indication of the low standards being set by the NEDP.

What does “100% mastery” really mean?! What is the definition of “mastery”? Given what I believe to be a typical definition, few people show 100% mastery of anything!

8. If a business is looking at hiring one of two people, both of whom have been in the workforce for a number of years, does anyone believe that one person having an NEDP diploma is going to give them an advantage over another person who has better references from their prior jobs – considering that the NEDP does nothing more than restate that the person has obtained certain knowledge from their life experiences?

Before employers fully comprehend the requirements for an NEDP “graduate”, they may well think this means the person possesses more knowledge than someone without that diploma. However, I believe employers will come to view the NED as being of little value. They will give much more consideration to someone’s actual work experience and their prior employers’ opinions of them. I believe this stands in contrast to the traditional GED, where this truly indicates a smarter person; and/or their willingness to sit through the required classes and learn new information. Either would truly reflect the greater worth of one job applicant over another one.

Another consideration is how a secondary education institution will view the NEDP “graduate”. Will one of these believe a person completing the NEDP is ready to take classes toward a degreed program? If not, then some NEDP participants may have to expend more time and/or money to prepare for their further education, should they ever decide to pursue this.

9. Will there be any identifiable difference between a “regular” diploma issued by William Monroe High School and one issued to individuals who meet the requirements of the NEDP? If not, isn’t anyone concerned about the possible incentive the NEDP will give at-risk Greene County students to NOT remain in school to get their “regular” diploma?

If a current student thinks high school is a waste of their time, but knows they can get the very same diploma “at their own pace”, “working mostly at home”, a few years down the road; why would they want to stay in school? They might as well go get a job now, make some money, and play video games in their spare time. Then, they can easily get their diploma through the NEDP.

(This discussion includes content which was included from my original research. However, due to the time constraint of 3 minutes allowed for public comment, some of these facts were omitted from my School Board presentation.)