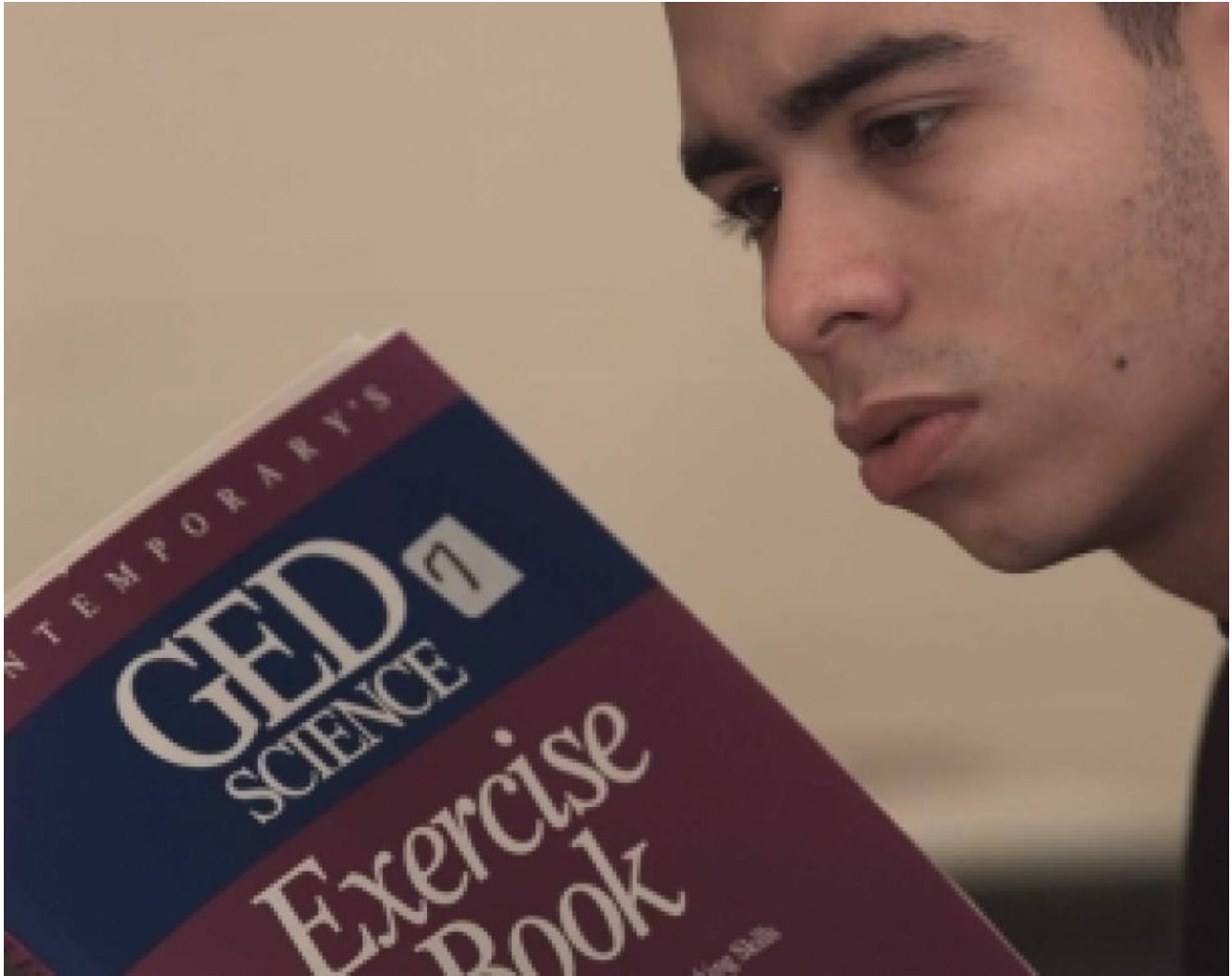


Bronx organizations mount push for GED candidates to take test before the end of the year

By Jennifer H. Cunningham



LUANNE M. FERRIS/DG

A student studies a GED prep book.

Bronx organizations that provide training and testing for the high school equivalency exam are urging people to complete it before 2014.

Next year, the state will switch to a new, harder GED exam, and the roughly 18,000 city residents aged 18 to 24 who have taken the test, or parts of it, but have not passed, will have their results nullified.

“There seems to be a very large need for this particular educational credential, and an even larger need for people to re-jumpstart their education,” said Andrew Rubinson, executive director of Grace Outreach, a South Bronx nonprofit that offers free GED training for women. “This is a very good entry point for thousands of people.”

The nonprofit is part of the GED Campaign to Finish — a partnership between city government, the City University of

New York, nonprofits and the state and city's education departments — to help at least 2,000 young people pass the GED exam before the year's end.

"In January 2014, the test changes. The test we know today goes away," said Paula Gavin, executive director of the Fund for Public Advocacy, which is spearheading the campaign. "Any scores you have will be lost."

About 40 percent of the 18,000 people who took part of the test, but didn't complete it, are Bronx residents, Gavin said.

"The Bronx is so critical," Gavin said. "We are focused on the Bronx, and trying to carry out awareness, engagement, preparation and counseling and testing."

There are about two dozen sites providing GED prep, counseling and testing - including several facilitated by the Department of Education.

"Our programs are ready to welcome students identified by the 2013 GED Campaign to Finish and support anyone interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to further their education," said Dorita Gibson, the DOE's deputy chancellor for equity and access at DOE.

Eastside House Inc. is also participating in the campaign, said William Blair, the non-profit's deputy director of education and workforce development.

"We believe education is the key to changing people's circumstances," Blair said. "For us, the GED is the first step to making that transition. It opens doors and creates another option for people who would be stuck without it."

For more information, visit www.GEDCompass.org or call 718-557-2525.

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