

Online "GED Certificates" Not Worth the Paper They're Printed On

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Press Release from the GED Testing Service®, March 22, 2012: Consumers are being deceived by fraudulent online "schools" offering high school credentials that have little or no value. GED Testing Service® has filed a lawsuit to stop this abuse and protect those seeking to further their education.



"With the filing of this lawsuit, GED Testing Service® has taken action to help protect adults who wish to improve their lives by earning a high school equivalency credential," said Randy Trask, president of GED Testing Service®. "In these tough economic times, competition for jobs is intense and a high school credential is typically the minimum educational requirement for employment. It is reprehensible that fraudulent websites are taking advantage of those who are seeking a credential that will help them be better positioned to find jobs and support their families."

This lawsuit is not the first or only step GED Testing Service® has taken to protect consumers from these scams. Over the last few years, GED Testing Service® has issued alerts, provided information to states' attorneys general about fraudulent "test" providers, and shared information nationwide.

"Along with our efforts to educate those at risk of being scammed and with this lawsuit, we are asking the federal court to take action to protect well-intentioned adults," added Trask.

On February 14, 2012, in Federal District Court for the Southern District of New York, the law suit was filed jointly by GED Testing Service® and the American Council on Education, which originated the GED® test in 1942. The complaint alleges that a network of websites in connection with Senford High School and Sunshine High School are engaging in deceptive and misleading business practices to defraud consumers under state and federal law.

Through this action, GED Testing Service® seeks to shut down the network of allegedly fraudulent websites and order these businesses to cease their illegal practices. GED Testing Service® expects that court action will put other online programs on alert to alter their false advertising practices and misuse of the GED® trademark.

These programs advertise widely on popular search engines and falsely promise a quick way to obtain an "alternative" high school credential, using the GED® trademark to lend credibility to their scams.

The GED® test must be taken in-person at an official GED® testing center. Those individuals successfully passing the complete battery are issued a credential directly by the state. If the credential is not issued by the state, it is not associated with the GED® testing program and is unlikely to provide any benefit to those seeking better jobs or admission to college.

Unfortunately, the activity in this case is not an isolated incident. Similarly misleading websites purport to offer a GED® credential – a fact that Denise Richardson knows all too well. "When the college admissions officer told me that my diploma wasn't valid, I was extremely disappointed and angry," said Richardson. After taking and passing the real GED® test at an official GED® testing center, Richardson has this advice for potential GED® test-takers: "I was fortunate to have the support from my local adult education center. Everyone should use this new online resource from GED Testing Service® to find official testing centers and to report suspicious websites. The only way to prevent possible fraud in the future is to educate people about this problem."

To find an official GED® testing center or to report a suspicious website, visit www.GEDtestingservice.com/fraud (www).

Additional resources

Video short – The GED® test is not online:
www.GEDtestingservice.com/notonline (www)

How to find an official GED® testing center
www.GEDtest.org/locator (www)

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