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FTC SHUTS DOWN OPERATORS OF FAKE ONLINE “HIGH SCHOOLS” GED TESTING SERVICE® HELPS PROTECT VULNERABLE CONSUMERS

WASHINGTON, DC — After an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), dozens of fraudulent websites offering fake high school diplomas have been shut down. The GED Testing Service® worked closely with the federal agency for more than two years and provided a substantial amount of evidence to support the outcome of the case.

Two separate diploma mills, Capitol Network Distance Learning Programs and Stepping Stonez Development, operated dozen of fake online high schools under "real-sounding" names like Capitol High School, Aberdeen Academy, West Madison Falls High School, Columbia Northern High School, and Heritage Western High School, to lure unsuspecting adult learners into paying hundreds of dollars for fake, unaccredited online high school diplomas. Under the terms of the settlements, the online diploma mill operators are banned from marketing or selling any academic degree or certification program.

GED Testing Service helped identify victims, gathered research and a full listing of fraudulent websites, and provided other legal resources to help the government with the investigation. In the FTC [press release](#), GED Testing Service was credited with providing invaluable information that led to this significant action.

“For six years, GED Testing Service has led the effort to identify, pursue, and ultimately shutdown diploma mills that have generated millions of dollars in sales in exchange for providing a diploma that is literally not worth the price of the paper on which it is printed,” said Randy Trask, President of GED Testing Service. “We are very grateful to the FTC for pursuing these particularly egregious offenders, and are heartened that they will no longer be able to prey on unsuspecting adults in need of a legitimate high school credential.”

This is the second FTC action against high school or high school equivalency diploma mills in which GED Testing Service provided material support. Our work to protect consumers has been ongoing since 2012 when we filed a lawsuit against a complex ring of online “high schools” peddling fake diplomas and GED® credentials. Click [here](#) for details on our previous work with the FTC and watch [this](#) NBC *Today Show* report about our previous lawsuit and warnings against online GED® credential scams.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of fraud by those pretending to sell GED tests or materials, click [here](#) to report the activity.

There is only one official GED® test that is recognized and used to award a GED® high school equivalency credential. The GED® test can only be taken in person at official GED® test centers, and is not offered online. Learn more about the official GED® test program [here](#).

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About GED Testing Service

The GED test has opened doors to better jobs and college programs for more than 20 million graduates since 1942. The GED test is accepted by virtually all U.S. colleges and employers. As the creator of the one official GED test, GED Testing Service has a responsibility to ensure that the program continues to be a reliable and valuable pathway to a better life for the millions of adults without a high school diploma. GED Testing Service is a joint venture between the American Council on Education and Pearson.