



NEWS RELEASE

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HISPANIC CHAMBER AND GED TESTING SERVICE LAUNCH INITIATIVE TO INCREASE NUMBER OF ADULTS WHO EARN GED CERTIFICATES AND ENTER COLLEGE PROGRAMS

**GED & CONNECT TO EXPAND JOB AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULT
LEARNERS, RALLY LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS**

SAN ANTONIO — Today the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and GED Testing Service announced and launched *GED & Connect*, a new initiative to build San Antonio's workforce and provide expanded opportunities for better jobs, education and wages for those without a high school diploma. Specifically, the goals are to increase the number of adults in Bexar County who earn a GED® certificate by 20% within a year, and increase by 15% the number of GED grads who enter local college education and training programs.

The timing and opportunity couldn't be better for *GED & Connect* as Texas leads the country in job creation, while at the same time one in five adults in the state and Bexar County lacks a high school diploma. The initiative features a text messaging campaign to raise visibility of the benefits of furthering their education and encouragement to take action.

"The Hispanic Chamber commends GED Testing Service on this important initiative," said Ramiro A. Cavazos, President and CEO of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. "There is a huge education and skills gap in our community and this is a great step in the right direction towards strengthening San Antonio's workforce."

While the Hispanic Chamber and GED Testing Service are leading the initiative, the goal is to rally employers, community-based organizations, faith communities, local social service agencies and local elected officials to spread the word about the initiative.

"Palo Alto College is thrilled to be a partner for the San Antonio GED & Connect campaign to support our city's workforce, just as we've championed for underserved students since 1985," said Dr. Mike Flores, president of Palo Alto College. "As the first opportunity for higher education in south San Antonio, our faculty and staff understand the value and necessity of supporting students who want to complete and continue their education in our thriving community."

Local employers Walmart, Taco Bell and KFC are helping increase the number of GED graduates in San Antonio with *GEDWorks*™. This program provides everything an employee needs to study for and earn a GED credential for free. Walmart also extends this benefit to include family members of employees.

“So many adults without a diploma don’t know the resources and opportunities that are around them to take that big step towards earning a GED certificate,” said Rafael Diaz, National Director of Community and Corporate Partnerships for GED Testing Service. “This initiative utilizes a text messaging campaign to provide information and encouragement, but we need the support of local business, faith and community leaders to raise the visibility of the campaign and encourage adults to take action. This is a critical problem that hits harder in Latino and African-American communities. San Antonio has been selected for this initiative because of the infrastructure of educational support and tremendous community leadership who recognize and actively work towards upskilling, educating and empowering all community members.”

With each passing year more and more area residents are taking and passing the GED test, thus far, making 2017 the strongest year yet. *GED & Connect* will accelerate the number of local adults who earn credentials and enter postsecondary programs. Since the launch of the new GED program in January 2014, GED grads are experiencing better job satisfaction and better college outcomes. Specifically, a higher percentage of GED graduates are entering college programs and are more likely to do well in credit-bearing courses and enroll from semester to semester.

For more information or to download resources about *GED & Connect* visit:
<https://www.gedtesting.com/educators/connect>

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About the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1929, America’s first Hispanic Chamber and San Antonio’s only Five-Star accredited organization by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce continues to be the leader in business assistance, connecting its members to needed resources, providing procurement, marketing and networking opportunities, advocating for legislation affecting small businesses and corporations in the San Antonio metropolitan area, and better training to develop the skills of our local workforce. The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is San Antonio’s largest independent business organization with more than 1,300 members.

About the GED Program and 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 of U.S. colleges and employers. The goal of the GED program that launched in January 2014 is to better prepare adult learners for today’s jobs and for entry into career and college training programs. The GED test has one score level that is used to certify high school equivalency. It also utilizes higher score levels ([College Ready and College Ready + Credit](#)) to certify readiness for career and college programs, and may even lead to students bypassing college placement exams or earning college credit by GED examination. GED Testing Service is responsible for the GED program and is a joint venture of American Council on Education and Pearson.