

Among Those Completing High School Later, Employed Women with GED Diplomas Earn More Than Those with High School Diplomas

Men Experience Different Economic Outcomes

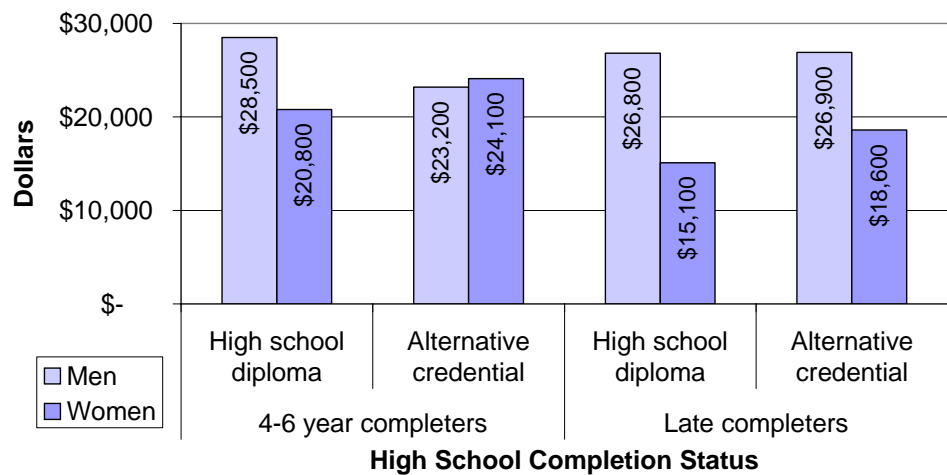
In October 2006, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published an Issue Brief titled *Economic Outcomes of High School Completers and Noncompleters 8 Years Later*. Buried in this short report are some notable findings concerning the differential impact of earning a GED diploma, rather than a regular high school diploma, on women and men.

Whether women who delayed completing high school waited four to six years or longer to do so, those who earned alternative credentials (primarily GED diplomas, but also including certificates of attendance) reported higher annual earnings than their counterparts who earned high school diplomas.

Other statistics from the NCES Issue Brief shed some light on this surprising difference. Of employed women who completed high school more than six years late, 69.9 percent of those with high school diplomas worked full-time, while 82.7 percent of their counterparts with alternative credentials had full-time jobs. As a result, the former cohort averaged 34.1 hours worked per week compared to 36.8 hours for the latter cohort.

Curiously, the same pattern does not occur for men in similar circumstances. When men delayed high school completion four to six years, those who earned alternative credentials reported an average of \$4,400 less in annual earnings than men who earned high school diplomas; but, when they delayed high school completion even longer, there was almost no difference between the reported earnings of those who received high school diplomas rather than alternative credentials.

Average Annual Earnings in 1999 of Spring 1988 Eighth-Grade Students, by High School Completion Status and Sex: 2000



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What other factors might explain why employed women with GED diplomas tend to earn more than their counterparts with high school diplomas? The possibilities probably include many factors that tend to generate greater motivation to work, such as financial necessity, family responsibilities, and personal ambition.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Economic Outcomes of High School Completers and Noncompleters 8 Years Later*, **Issue Brief**. Available online at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007019>.