

# Lit Scan

Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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## "If At First You Don't Succeed ..." Successes of Colorado GED Efforts Buck National Trends

In another recent issue of LitScan (v. 5, n. 2: *Colorado Sets National Standard for Success, 1999-2000*), preliminary data from the General Educational Development Testing Service was reported, indicating that individuals who take the GED tests in Colorado have the highest success rate in the nation: more than 99 percent of those who take the GED tests succeed in meeting score requirements.

Nationally, this success rate is just over 69 percent, making Coloradans who take the GED tests about 50 percent more likely to meet score requirements.

The final edition of ***Who Took the GED?: GED 2000 Statistical Report*** provides additional data that may help to explain this extraordinarily high level of success.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Colorado's GED success rate (over 99 percent) highest in nation.
- Colorado re-tests GED students successfully better than any other state.
- Between 1999 and 2000, percentages of students taking the GED tests, meeting scoring requirements, and receiving credentials rose for Colorado while falling for most states and the nation as a whole.
- Coloradans age 16 and over without high school diplomas were twice as likely to be tested or credentialed during 2000 as their counterparts nationwide.



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Successful Colorado GED students are dramatically more likely to be retaking the tests. (See Table 1.) Of the almost 10,000 Coloradans who took the GED tests in 2000, over 70 percent were being retested. Indeed, the number of Coloradans being retested that year was more than double the state’s number of first-time test-takers, making Colorado the only state in which those being retested outnumbered those being tested for the first time. By contrast, only 20 percent of Americans taking the GED tests that year were being retested.

**Table 1. GED Students Completing Test Battery & Meeting Score Requirements, Colorado and United States, 2000**

Statistic	Jurisdiction			
	Colorado		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Completed battery 2000	2,858	29.2%	576,855	80.3%
Retested in 2000	6,922	70.8%	141,304	19.7%
Total	9,780	100.0%	718,159	100.0%
Met score requirements	9,688	99.1%	497,674	69.3%

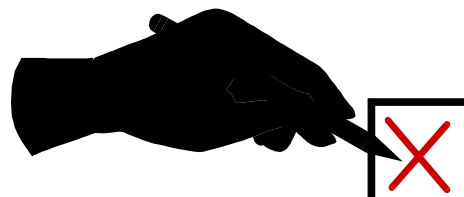
What do these statistics indicate about how GED efforts may be different in Colorado from the rest of the nation?

- At the very least, they suggest that Coloradans who pursue GED diplomas are more persistent than their counterparts nationwide.
- These statistics also suggest that the state’s GED testing centers and other agencies that promote GED efforts may be more diligent in encouraging initially unsuccessful test-takers to assess their weaknesses, focus their subsequent studies, and retake the tests successfully.

**Table 2. Numbers of Students Completing Test Battery, Meeting Score Requirements, & Issued Credentials, Colorado & United States, 1999-2001**

Statistic	Jurisdiction	
	Colorado	United States
Completed test battery		
1999	9,433	724,226
2000	9,780	718,159
Percent change	3.7%	-0.8%
Met score requirements		
1999	9,164	507,083
2000	9,688	497,674
Percent change	5.7%	-1.9%
Credentials issued		
1999	9,359	516,570
2000	9,875	500,520
Percent change	5.5%	-3.1%

The success of such strategies is obvious when examining key GED statistics for Colorado and the nation for 1999 and 2000. (See Table 2.) While the numbers of U.S. residents completing the test battery, meeting score requirements, and receiving credentials dropped one to three percent during that one-year interval, the corresponding numbers of Coloradans rose four to six percent.



As a result of GED efforts in the state during 2000, a Colorado adult without a high school diploma was almost twice as likely to take the GED tests and more than twice as likely to receive a GED diploma as his or her counterpart nationwide. (See Table 3.)

Colorado's participation rate in GED testing exceeded 2.5 percent, while the national rate was only about 1.5 percent. Colorado's credentialing rate—the percentage of adults who didn't complete high school who earned GED diplomas—was over 2.5 percent, while the national rate was only about one percent.

For more information about GED testing in Colorado, visit the Colorado Department of Education website's GED Information page at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/GEDindex.htm> or call Mary Willoughby, CDE's GED Consultant, at 303-866-6611.

**Table 3. Numbers of Colorado Adults Without High School Diplomas, Completing Test Battery & Issued Credentials, 2000**

Statistic	Jurisdiction	
	Colorado	United States
Adults without high school diplomas	375,970	45,523,643
Number completing test battery	9,780	718,159
Participation rate	2.6%	1.6%
Number of credentials issued	9,875	500,250
Credentialing rate	2.6%	1.1%



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### **SOURCES**

- The GED Tests: What's New for 2002?: A General Education Development Testing Service Fact Sheet. Available at: <http://www.gedtest.org>.
- **Who Took the GED? GED 2000 Statistical Report.** Available from: <http://www.acenet.edu/calec/publications.cfm?pubID=232>

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### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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