

CONTENTS

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xv

PART I. INTRODUCTION

- 1 Achievement Tests and the Role of Character in American Life 3
James J. Heckman and Tim Kautz

PART II. THE HISTORY OF THE GED

- 2 An Institutional History of the GED 57
Lois M. Quinn
- 3 Growth in GED Testing 109
John Eric Humphries

PART III. EVALUATING THE BENEFITS

- 4 Who Are the GEDs? 139
James J. Heckman, John Eric Humphries, and Tim Kautz
- 5 The Economic and Social Benefits of GED Certification 171
James J. Heckman, John Eric Humphries, and Tim Kautz
- 6 The Military Performance of GED Holders 268
Janice H. Laurence

PART IV. THE GED CREATES PROBLEMS

- 7 The GED Testing Program Induces Students to Drop Out 293
*James J. Heckman, John Eric Humphries, Paul A. LaFontaine,
and Pedro L. Rodriguez*
- 8 High-Stakes Testing and the Rise of the GED 318
Andrew Halpern-Manners, John Robert Warren, and Eric Grodsky

PART V. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROMOTE CHARACTER?

- 9 Fostering and Measuring Skills: Interventions That Improve Character and Cognition 341

James J. Heckman and Tim Kautz

- 10 What Should Be Done? 431

James J. Heckman, John Eric Humphries, and Tim Kautz

List of Contributors 437

Index 441

COMMENT FROM A GED INSTRUCTOR

As a GED teacher, I found your abstract very informative. I rarely see my students after they graduate (or not). My assumption has been that they go on to some form of success. However, I have wondered what level of success can be attained by students who barely meet the minimum requirements of the test or must retake sections numerous times.

I know this wasn't a focus of your paper, but another barrier to GEDs is the manner in which they are taught. Rather than a learning environment which motivates these individuals to reach their full potential, they are held captive in a classroom of pre-tests, assessments, and mounds of published workbooks. Many "teachers" do nothing more than assess and assign a course of study through endless mundane workbooks. The bottom line is that these students don't really master the material. (Actually, I have been in workshops with some GED teachers that had no grasp of the material.) . . .

What you opened my eyes to was the need to engage the whole person. Since reading your abstract, I have been talking to the principal about the need to include life skills, counseling, and motivational videos and speakers. Tomorrow I'm going to show a short video by Dewitt Jones on passion.

Thank you for your work,

Norm Frankenberger

Charles A. Jones Career and Education Center

Sacramento, CA

July 2010

