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Survey: Lack of Support, Parenthood Top Reasons American High School Students Drop Out

Everest College's National Study Finds Time, Money Are Greatest Obstacles for Obtaining GED(R) Test Credential; 46% of Employed Dropouts Say They Have Little to No Prospects for Advancement in Current Job

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 14, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Lack of parental and educational support and becoming a parent are two of the most common reasons younger Americans drop out of high school, according to data released today in the 2012 High School Dropouts in America survey conducted by Harris/Decima on behalf of Everest College.

The national survey of 513 adults aged 19 to 35 found that nearly a quarter of Americans (23%) cited the absence of parental support or encouragement as a reason for not completing high school, followed by 21% who said they became a parent. Missing too many days of school ranked third at 17%, followed by failing classes (15%), uninteresting classes (15%) and suffering from a mental illness (15%), like depression.

The survey also found that women are three times more likely than men, 27% versus 9%, to leave high school because they became a parent. When it came to the issue of bullying, white respondents, more than any other racial group, cited bullying (14%) as a reason for dropping out.

Nationwide, about 7,000 students drop out every school day, amounting to approximately 1.3 million students each year, according to advocacy group Alliance for Excellent Education. In 1970, the United States had the world's highest rate of high school graduation. Today, the U.S. has slipped to No. 21 in high school completion, according to the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development](#).

"The data from this survey is an important step in deepening our understanding of America's high school dropout problem," said survey spokesman John Swartz, regional director of career services at Everest College. "Americans without a high school diploma or GED test credential face tremendous challenges. This is why we need to continue putting our dropout crisis under the microscope and develop substantive solutions going forward."

Time, Money Complicate Pursuit of GED Test Credential

More than three-quarters (76%) of respondents had not considered a GED credential or had looked into it but had yet to pursue entering the program. Time and money were the top two reasons for not seeking a GED credential. According to the survey, 34% cited time as a prohibitive factor, while 26% said associated costs was a reason for not looking into or obtaining their GED credential. Women were more likely than men to say it costs too much (30% vs. 18%).

"In this country, if a student drops out of high school, one of the most important things we can do is make the option of getting a GED credential easy and affordable," Swartz said. "The unemployment rate for high school dropouts is significantly higher than those with a high school diploma. At the same time, a dropout's access to postsecondary education and training, a requirement for many jobs in today's competitive economy, is severely restricted. To help address this crisis, we recently launched Everest GED® Advantage (info: 1-888-201-6547), a GED test preparation and credential completion program that is free and open to the public."

Employment Prospects for Dropouts

A third of the high school dropouts surveyed said they were employed either full time, part time or were self-employed. Men were more likely than women to say they are unemployed (38% vs. 26%). Among those who are employed, nearly half (46%) said they have little to no prospects for advancement in their current position.

"It's certainly not surprising that almost half of young Americans without a high school diploma feel like their career prospects are on shaky ground," Swartz said. "When you look at the numbers, the economic impact on someone who doesn't finish high school is staggering. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/wkyeng.nr0.htm>) that the median weekly earnings of someone without a high school diploma is about 30 percent less than someone with a high school diploma. So it makes sense that many people without a diploma or GED credential are having an extremely difficult time making ends meet in today's competitive job market.

"Completing high school or a GED program is fundamental to our economy and is the first step toward receiving post-secondary education and training for the in-demand jobs of the future, including those in the growing fields of health care and technology."

Industries and occupations related to health care, personal care and social assistance, and construction are projected to have the fastest job growth between 2010 and 2020, according to a February 2012 report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The industries with the largest projected wage and salary employment growth (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecopro.pdf>) between 2010 and 2020 include:

- Offices of health practitioners
- Hospitals
- Home health-care services
- Nursing and residential care facilities
- Computer system design and related services

By the Numbers: 2012 High School Dropouts in America Fast Facts

- Those living in the West were more likely to say they lacked the credits needed to graduate (29%), while those in the East and South were more likely to say they were bullied and did not want to return (16%)
- One third (34%) of those unemployed were more likely to say that a GED program costs too much money
- Six in 10 (59%) who work full-time said they do not have the time to pursue a GED

About the Survey

Everest College's 2012 High School Dropouts in America survey was conducted online using the Harris Interactive online panel (HPOL) between Oct.3-Oct.18, 2012 among 513 U.S. adults ages 19 to 35 who did not complete high school. Results were weighted for age, sex, and geographic region to align them with their actual proportions in the population.

About Everest College

Everest College is part of Corinthian Colleges, Inc., one of the largest post-secondary education companies in North America. Its mission is to prepare students for careers in demand or for advancement in their chosen field. It offers diploma programs and associate and bachelor's degrees in a variety of occupational areas, including health care, criminal justice, business, information technology and construction trades. Programs vary by campus. For more information, please visit www.everest.edu. For more information about our graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed the program and other important information, please visit our website at www.everest.edu/disclosures.

About Harris/Decima (a division of Harris Interactive)

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading custom market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers expertise in a wide range of industries including healthcare, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Serving clients in over 215 countries and territories through our North American, European, and Asian offices and a network of independent market research firms, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us - and our clients - stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Swartz, regional director of career services at Everest College, is available for interviews to discuss the survey. To schedule an interview or for more information on the 2012 High School Dropouts in America survey, please contact Ron Neal or Evan Pondel at PondelWilkinson Inc.: Tel: 310-279-5980; Email: rneal@pondel.com and/or epondel@pondel.com;

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Source: Corinthian Colleges, Inc.