

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION PROJECT: Examining Adult Basic Education in Indiana

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While it is known that over 500,000 individuals in the State of Indiana have not obtained a High School Diploma or Equivalency (StatsIndiana, 2015), limited empirical information exists on Indiana students pursuing adult basic education along with implications for a state that has changed its adult basic education high stakes high school equivalency assessment. This study is the first to use the full adult basic education population of a single state to compare learner characteristics and pass rates for two different High School Equivalency (HSE) exams. In 2014 Indiana switched from the GED test to the TASC test. Using quantitative methods, descriptive and outcome data for all students receiving federally and state funded adult basic education services over a three-year timespan (2012-2015) were analyzed. Three research questions guided the study: What are the demographic factors and learner characteristics that HSE exam passers and non-passers have in common? Is the pass rate different for each test (GED, TASC)? Did the outcomes for HSE passers and non-passers change per HSE exam? Results indicate that younger students are more likely to take and pass the HSE, while more women participated in adult education services, more men passed a HSE test, as the number of hours spent on classroom and distance education increase the likelihood of passing the HSE

decreases and students who took the TASC have lower Educational Functioning Levels as compared to those who took the GED. Results also indicate there was a difference in pass rates for the two HSE exams with more students taking and passing the GED but a higher pass rate for those who only took and passed the TASC as compared to those who only took and passed the GED. Finally results show that HSE passers have higher wage outcomes than non-passers. Study limitations and recommendations are discussed.