

# Helicon, Inc.

MATHEMATICS RESOURCE AND SUPPORT CENTER FOR FEMALES

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For Immediate Release

## Helicon, Inc. releases analysis of official GED test data: 51% of females fail math subtest

NEW YORK, N.Y.—Females who take the GED Tests in New York City fail the math subtest at a disproportionately high rate.

Females who have contacted Helicon, Inc. for help with GED Math over the past six years all told the same story: having long since passed the other four subtests of the GED, they were still preparing to take the math subtest for the third, fourth, fifth, etc., time. Official statistics supporting these anecdotal data were not available until very recently because the New York State Education Department refused, for almost five years, to respond to repeated requests for that information from Helicon, Inc.

In July, 2005, thanks to the intervention of Legal Momentum (the new name of NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund) which filed a Freedom of Information Act request on behalf of Helicon, Inc., the New York State Education Department sent information on “GED Test Takers from the five boroughs of New York City” between February 1, 2002—when the “2002-series GED Tests” were introduced—and June 7, 2005. A preliminary analysis reveals that, indeed, the females who contacted Helicon, Inc. had not been exaggerating their predicament:

GED TEST FAILURE RATES BY SEX		
FEMALE	SUBTEST	MALE
51%	MATH	35%
17%	READING	18%
27%	SCIENCE	17%
22%	SOCIAL STUDIES	16%
32%	WRITING	35%

— more —

Presently, there are at least **15,619 females** in New York City who have taken the “2002-series GED Tests” and have yet to pass the math subtest; some of these females have taken the GED math subtest as many as eight times in the three and one-third year period between February 2002 and June 2005.

These numbers are even more disturbing when considered within the following context: 76% of females who took the GED are African-American or Latina; and 83% of females who failed the math subtest of the GED are African-American or Latina. Females are clearly ill served by New York City’s GED preparation programs with respect to mathematics instruction.

(To earn a New York State High School Equivalency certificate, a person must score a minimum of 410 points on each section, or subtest, and a minimum total score of 2250. If she does not score enough points to pass the GED Tests, either on a subtest (410) or in total (2250), then the person must retake those specific sub tests on which she did not score at least 410 points. The maximum score on each subtest is 800 points, and the maximum total test score is 4000 points. A person can retest three times in a twelve-month period.)

If a person doesn’t pass all five subtests of the GED Tests, the person doesn’t get a GED certificate and if, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a person doesn’t have a high school diploma or GED certificate, that person’s ability and opportunities to support herself and her family are very severely limited.

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Helicon, Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt not-for-profit organization, was founded in 1999 for the purpose of helping females learn the mathematics (and “numbers-related” disciplines) they need to achieve their academic and career goals.