

## **Online High School Diplomas-Tips and Resources**

### **What is a high school “diploma mill?”**

- A high school “diploma mill” is a business or other organization that may be presented as a school, and offers a diploma or other document of high school completion with little or no required academic study, which may end up being essentially a worthless diploma

### **Signs that an online program may be a high school “diploma mill”**

- The program sounds too good to be true
- High school diplomas may be purchased for a flat fee
- “Fast track” or “life experience” diplomas are offered with no course work
- The diploma is granted based on online testing which may be immediately repeated or provides hints to correct answers
- A diploma program may be completed within a very short amount of time
- Little or no interaction with teachers or other staff is required
- No phone number, address, or e-mail information is available
- Transcripts show credits and grades for courses that were not taken
- Claims that diplomas are accepted in all 50 states and internationally

### **Suggestions to find out about an online high school diploma**

- Contact the online school directly and ask detailed questions about courses, guarantees, and accreditation
- Make sure that any information provided by the online school can be verified
- Check the registration of the school with the Department of Education at <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/PrivateSchoolDirectory/>, or by calling (800)447-1636
- Visit the Better Business Bureau Web site at <http://www.bbb.org/>
- Check with the State Attorney General’s Office for complaints or legal action against the online school.
  - Florida- <http://myfloridalegal.com/>
  - National- <http://www.naag.org/>
- Contact admissions offices, personnel offices, or military recruiters to verify the acceptability of an online diploma

The Florida Department of Education does not accredit, regulate, approve, or license private high schools. Additionally, the Florida Department of Education does not officially recognize any of the various agencies that accredit private schools.

Section 1002.42, Florida Statutes, requires K-12 private schools to register with the department by completing an annual survey each year and explicitly provides that submitting annual survey data and being listed in the directory of private schools should not be used by any private school to imply approval or accreditation by the state.

There are many organizations with widely variant quality standards and program requirements that accredit private schools. Requests for information about the accreditation of a specific school should be directed to the school staff or its designated accrediting agency. **The acceptance of diplomas from private schools will be subject to the requirements of the receiving educational institution or employer.**