



**SB 2147 – Relating to high school graduation and curriculum requirements**

**March 10, 2021**

Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee – My name is Dr. Russ Ziegler, and I am the assistant director for the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders. I am testifying today in support of SB 2147.

This world is not a one-size fits all. There are students who need to have different options in place to achieve success. Even though a traditional diploma pathway may work for the majority of students it does not work for everyone. It is for that reason that we have the alternative diploma options. There are a couple of examples of different pathways that were made available in the past.

- 1) The first one being the GED (General Educational Development) which was established in 1942 by the United States Armed Forces Institute. The GED was a test that measured high school level academic skills. There have been numerous revisions since its inception with the most recent coming in 2014 along with dropping the General Educational Development and just going with the acronym GED. The GED consists of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- 2) A second pathway was established by the North Dakota the state legislature that would allow for an optional high school curriculum for students who might be struggling with the traditional diploma route. In the optional high school curriculum, a student may be able to take a different route if they meet certain criteria such as if they have failed to pass at least one-half unit from three subsections or has a GPA below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of other students in their district who are in the same grade. If the criteria are met then the school can meet with the student and parent to decide if the optional high school curriculum would be a good way to go.

This bill would allow another pathway for students who are struggling on the traditional diploma route. We believe this could be a helpful pathway to those students who might otherwise drop out of school due to unique circumstances. We believe having multiple pathways is a good option for students. We also are in support of this bill because it gives the local districts and school boards the ability to set the requirements and criteria for students to choose this option.

Thank you for your time and I can stand for any questions.