



May-Port CG Middle & High School  
La Lynda Blotsky, Principal  
900 Main St W, Mayville, ND 58257  
Phone (701) 788-2281  
Fax (701)788-2959

Peter Boe Jr Elementary School  
Billie Jo Soholt, Principal  
20 2nd St NW, Mayville, ND 58257  
Phone (701) 788-2281  
Fax (701)788-9115

Michael Bradner, Superintendent  
Deanna Kville, Business Manager

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2147; a bill relating to high school graduation and curriculum requirements.

This bill would make it so that a student who is behind credit-wise would be able to use the GED test in a specific subject area to count as a placement test for the lost credit.

At this time, at-risk students in our high schools have two options, go through high school and finish with the required 22 credits, or drop out and get the GED. Right now, when a student registers to take the GED there is a specific box to check that says that student is not taking any high school courses for credit. To me, as an Administrator, this is unfair to those at-risk students.

When it comes to at-risk students, many of whom have had the “deck” stacked against them from the day they stepped into Kindergarten, we have to do all we can to help them get their high school diploma and keep them in our buildings as long as possible. As an educator it is important that I share with you that education is not just hoops to jump through or credits to earn; it is also lessons learned, time spent, and relationships built. We want to have the adequate amount of time with each of our students to prepare them for their futures and when they drop out that cuts their time short with us.

This bill would allow for the Administrative Team and/or the School Board to make special accommodations for students who fall into this situation. Students who drop out most of the time do so because they know they are unable to achieve the credits needed to graduate in a timely manner. In most cases if a student is going to be 18 or 19 years old and not be able to graduate this will prompt them wanting to earn their GED.

If we can eliminate this barrier by allowing our students to take the GED in place of lost credit, and still graduate with a high school diploma I believe that would GREATLY change the drop-out rate in North Dakota.



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PATRIOTS

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I am an Administrator in a small district; K-12 we have around 500 students, we do not have an alternative school or alternative option for these students who have fallen behind credit wise and see their only option as dropping out and taking the GED.

If my staff and I do everything we can to help a student achieve their full potential as a high school graduate in conjunction with taking the GED sub-test for credit recovery, we should not be penalized for that by losing funding for that student. We should be rewarded, as should that student, because as a team we helped them to achieve the first step to creating their own future.

As educators we wake up every day and we do everything possible to help our students succeed. This would give us another tool in our toolbox, and if you know anything about education, we need ALL the tools we can get!

Passing this bill will give us the true definition of CHOICE READY planning.

Thank you for your time,

La Lynda Blotsky

May-Port CG Middle/High School Principal