

2009 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1172

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1172

House Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: **January 20, 1009**

Recorder Job Number: 7311

Committee Clerk Signature

Jan Prudde

Minutes:

Chairman Kelsch opened the hearing of HB 1172.

Representative Gary Sukut, District 1, co-sponsor, introduced the bill. **(Attachment 1)**

Senator Rich Wardner, District 37, co-sponsor, testified in favor of the bill. This is an area that has been long overdue. I have been in education for 33 years and dealt and worked with young people that for many reasons were at risk. Some dropped out of school. That is a group of people that we need to pick up and this program does that. The program has been flat as far as funding. The people that teach in these programs are saints. They are not paid high salaries, but they stay there. There is little turnover. The students want a second chance and are being given that chance. This program should be a priority and if we have to take money from someplace else to get this done, I think it's time that we do it. This is a strategic investment.

Representative Hanson: I want to correct one thing. It's not just young people, its older adults too. My wife taught adult education and had a lady that was 75 years old get a GED.

Representative John Wall, District 25, co-sponsor, testified in favor of the bill.

(Attachment 2)

Gil Herbel, former Representative, spoke in favor of the bill. **(Attachment 3)**

Representative Phil Mueller, District 24, co-sponsor, testified in favor of the bill. We had a good presentation of this issue in our Interim Education Committee. I was pleased to be able to sign on to the bill. Some time ago, I taught GED courses in Grand Forks. The funding level for the program has proportionately not changed for the program. Folks who came to further their education were motivated and excited to be there. It was fun to be with them. They worked hard to complete those courses. They saw value in what they were attempting to do. The statistic for what those people can earn with a GED is undeniable. Another thing we gain is that those folks are not being part the penal system—that often happens. They become better citizens.

Valarie Fischer, director of Adult Education, DPI, testified in favor of the bill. **(Attachment 4, 4a)**

Representative Hanson: There are seventeen learning centers in ND. How many alternative high schools are there? Are some in the same cities?

Fisher: There are eighteen adult learning centers. I do not know how many alternative high schools there are. I can find out for you. Some are in the same cities.

Paul Johnson, superintendent, Bismarck School District, spoke in support of the bill. **(Attachment 5)**

Vice Chairman Meier: How many students do we have enrolled in our adult learning center here?

Johnson: We have 66 students enrolled, with a waiting list of 8 students, and 16 students have already obtained their GED this year.

Nice Stordeur, former Adult Learning Center student, testified in favor of the bill. I would just like to speak up in support of more funds for the Adult Learning Center. I moved here from Huston TX when I was 18 years old. I didn't have my high school diploma. I had very

little money. I didn't have a job. I wanted to prepare for ministry. Not everyone that grows up has a very stable atmosphere in their home. I didn't have a good support system to encourage, inspire, to get educated. Often times a high school dropout might be somebody whose circumstances did not permit them to be able to go school. I heard about the Adult Learning Center through some friends of mine who let me stay with them until I got on my feet. I started in November of 2004 and with the help of that program I was able to finish my GED within a year—in December of 2005. I graduation was in May of 2006. I was then motivated to continue my education. I wasn't able to pursue college right away. I was working at McDonalds. But, now I'm in BSC in my second semester. I hope to have my two-year degree by 2010. I want everyone to know that this investment is not wasted. A lot of the teachers I worked with are still there but a lot are not because there just isn't money to keep them there.

I want you to know I support this and I hope that you do too.

Representative Hunsakor: What you shared is very interesting. How many opportunities do you have to share with other people who may have been in the same circumstances you were in and encourage them to further their education through GED?

Stordeur: I will my siblings and if I'm aware of people that are in my situation, I will advise them to go to the Adult Learning Center.

Chairman Kelsch: What are you majoring in at BSC?

Stordeur: Business Administration. Originally I was focusing on getting my two-year degree there, and I wasn't too sure if I wanted to further that to a 4-year degree. As of right now I do plan to do that.

Sandy Wollan, Adult Learning Center, Bismarck, provided testimony in support of HB 1172.

(Attachment 6)

Representative Karls: Can you explain the difference between alternative high schools and the learning centers?

Wollan: We only give GEDs through college prep. We don't do high school diplomas.

That's the major difference. We do see a lot of their students come down to us.

Representative Karls: So some come to your center, do some of your younger students go to them to get their high school diploma rather than a GED?

Wollan: We encourage that. If looks like there is any hope they can get their high school diploma, I really encourage them to do so. Many times they just need one or two credits. I also work with parents in that.

Vice Chairman Meier: Do you work with any individuals that are incarcerated?

Wollan: They have their own program. We get people who get released and then continue with us.

Representative Kelsh: Can employers or the military differentiate at all between a GED and a regular high school diploma?

Wollan: I've heard a number of people say they have high school graduates that can't read or do math, but they know if they have GED they have those skills. There still is a little bit of stigma attached to a GED, that it's less than a high school diploma. I seriously would put our students up against any high school student.

Ginny Nerman, student, Minot Adult Learning Center, testified in favor of the bill.

(Attachment 7)

Kelly Kraus, rehabilitation consultant, CorVel Managed Care Center, testified in favor of the bill. **(Attachment 8)**

Larry Anderson, talent coordinator, Workforce Development Division, testified neutral on the bill. **(Attachment 9)**

David Massey, assistant superintendent, DPI, testified in favor of the bill (**Attachment 10**)

There was no testimony in opposition to bill, Chairman Kelsch closed the hearing.

Later that same day.

Chairman Kelsch: Again this morning we had this bill that has money in it. So far we are seeing how they are faring on the floor. It is my best advice as a Committee is if we see some projects that we believe are truly worthy, we need to be prioritizing them. We won't be able to pass out every single spending bill we have before this Committee. I'm guessing they are just not going to make it. If we pass out bills that have funding outside of the executive budget, we need to work hard to get them passed by the full body and get them to Appropriations so there can be further discussion regarding the issues. Funding bills need to be out of this

Committee by February 5.

Representative Mueller: Do you have a sense from the Appropriates folks that they would be interested in our prioritizing them in terms of what they will do?

Chairman Kelsch: No.

Representative Johnson: There have been some pretty good bills as far as Adult Ed and after school programs; would it be better to send them out of here with a little less money on them?

Chairman Kelsch: That's a possibility. We have some amendments we want to put on some of these bills. We may want to look at a little bit of reduction in the amount.

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1172

House Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 3, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 8545

Committee Clerk Signature

Carmen Hart

Minutes:

Vice Chair Lisa Meier made the motion for a **Do Pass** on HB 1172. It was seconded by **Rep. John Wall**.

Rep. Jerry Kelsh: Is this money in the Governor's budget?

Chairman Kelsch: There is their budget and there isn't any more in there. Appropriations has talked to me about this. This is a real big issue for us, both with higher ed. and in our interim education committee this past go around. They know that we need to put more money into it.

I am not sure what is the right amount. It is possible it will come out with a million.

Appropriations Committee understands that there is a great need to put more funding into adult learning. We will send it out this way, and we will make as good of a case as we possibly can so that we can keep as much in there as we can. Knowing in the end that if we have a million dollars in there, they are going to be very appreciative of just getting the extra money.

DO PASS AND REREFERRED TO APPROPRIATIONS. 14 YEAS, 0 NAYS.

Rep. John Wall is the carrier of the bill.

Date: 2-3-09
Roll Call Vote #: _____

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1172

House Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken ☒ Do Pass ☐ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended

Motion Made By Rep Meier Seconded By Rep Wall

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman RaeAnn Kelsch	✓		Rep. Lyle Hanson	✓	
Vice Chairman Lisa Meier	✓		Rep. Bob Hunsakor	✓	
Rep. Brenda Heller	✓		Rep. Jerry Kelsh	✓	
Rep. Dennis Johnson	✓		Rep. Corey Mock	✓	
Rep. Karen Karls	✓		Rep. Phillip Mueller	✓	
Rep. Mike Schatz	✓		Rep. Lee Myxter	✓	
Rep. John D. Wall	✓				
Rep. David Rust	✓				

Total (Yes) 14 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Rep Wall

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Rerefer to appropriations

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1172: Education Committee (Rep. R. Kelsch, Chairman) recommends DO PASS and BE REREFERRED to the Appropriations Committee (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1172 was rereferred to the Appropriations Committee.

2009 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

HB 1172

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 1172

House Appropriations Committee
Education and Environment Division

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 10, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 9060

Committee Clerk Signature

Shirley Branning

Minutes:

Chairman Skarphol: Called the Committee to order to discuss HB 1172, an appropriation for adult basic and secondary education. This would be Rep. Wald's bill. We put the \$500,000 into budget so this could come out with a **Do Not Pass**.

Rep. Hawken: Do Not Pass.

Rep. Wald: Second

Chairman Skarphol: Further discussion. We give them the flexibility and everything.

Rep. Klein: I'd like to ask, is this related to the one we were hoping to put some money in and we don't need this?

Chairman Skarphol: right, we put the \$500,000 in and we give them the flexibility to use it for instruction or new centers, so this one is not necessary. They're up by about \$300,000 over this biennium. Further discussion? If not, take the role on HB 1172.

Do Not Pass: Yes 7, No 1, Absent 0. Carrier – Rep. Hawken.

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 1172

House Appropriations Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 11, 2009

Recorder Job Number: 9286

Committee Clerk Signature

Nancy L. Gerhardt

Minutes:

Chm. Svedjan: Next we will go to HB 1172.

Rep. Hawken: I would move a Do Not Pass on HB 1172.

Chm. Svedjan: Is there a 2nd?

Rep. Skarphol: 2nd.

Chm. Svedjan: 2nd by Rep. Skarphol. Discussion?

Rep. Hawken: This bill is a really good bill. It helped with funding for adult education. That is an area we have neglected for a number of years. We have amended some money for adult education into the DPI bill and as a result there is no need for HB 1172.

Rep. Skarphol: Just for the information for the committee, in this current biennium adult education has been appropriated 1million 305 thousand dollars, or given authority for that amount. \$200,000 of that was a contingent appropriation they did not receive. They operated with 1 million 55 thousand dollars. They service about 2,000 students. They currently have to turn away individuals who want to get their GED and improve themselves.

Chm. Svedjan: Any further discussion? Seeing none on a Do Not Pass motion on HB 1172 we'll take a roll call vote.

Vote: 25 Yes 0 No 0 Absent Carrier: Rep. Hawken Motion carries.

Date: Feb. 10, 2009
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1172

House House Appropriations Education and Environment Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken ☐ Do Pass ☒ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended

Motion Made By Rep. Hawken Seconded By Rep. Wald

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Bob Skarphol – Chairman	✓		Joe Kroeber	✓	
Francis Wald – Vice Chairman	✓		Kenton Onstad		✓
Kathy Hawken	✓		Clark Williams	✓	
Matthew M. Klein	✓				
Bob Martinson	✓				

Total Yes 7 No 1

Absent _____

Bill Carrier Rep. Hawken

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 2/11/09
Roll Call Vote #: _____

2009 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1172

Full House Appropriations Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Not Pass

Motion Made By Harber Seconded By Skarphol

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Svedjan	✓				
Vice Chairman Kempenich	✓				
Rep. Skarphol	✓		Rep. Kroeber	✓	
Rep. Wald	✓		Rep. Onstad	✓	
Rep. Hawken	✓		Rep. Williams	✓	
Rep. Klein	✓				
Rep. Martinson	✓				
Rep. Delzer	✓		Rep. Glassheim	✓	
Rep. Thoreson	✓		Rep. Kaldor	✓	
Rep. Berg	✓		Rep. Meyer	✓	
Rep. Dosch	✓				
Rep. Pollert	✓		Rep. Ekstrom	✓	
Rep. Bellew	✓		Rep. Kerzman	✓	
Rep. Kreidt	✓		Rep. Metcalf	✓	
Rep. Nelson	✓				
Rep. Wieland	✓				

Total (Yes) 25 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Rep. Harber

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 13, 2009 6:12 p.m.

Module No: HR-27-2801
Carrier: Hawken
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1172: Appropriations Committee (Rep. Svedjan, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (25 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1172 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2009 TESTIMONY

HB 1172

TESTIMONY HB1172

ADULT EDUCATION BILL

MADAME CHAIR: FOR THE RECORD – MAY NAME IS GARY SUKUT AND I REPRESENT DISTRICT 1 FROM WILLISTON

- ADULT ED IS ONE OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAMS THAT RIDES IN THE CABOOSE OF THE EDUCATION FUNDING TRAIN
- ND ADULT ED PROGRAM SERVES 2000+ STUDENTS OF WHICH 60% ARE 16-21 YRS OF AGE
- STATE HAS AN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS UNTIL THEY ARE 21 YEARS OLD
- WE ARE TALKING ABOUT K-12 FUNDING
- YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL FOR MANY DIFFERENT REASONS BUT MANY SOON FIND OUT THAT A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL
- WE WILL PUT ADDITIONAL DOLLARS INTO K-12 EDUCATION THIS SESSION
- THE MAJORITY OF ADULT ED STUDENTS ARE 16-21 YRS OLD – THEY ARE K-12 STUDENTS AND THEIR NEEDS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED WITH THE SAME INTENT AS TRADITIONAL K-12 STUDENTS
- FOR MANY IN THIS PROGRAM THEY WILL MOVE FROM WELFARE TO THE WORKFORCE OR IMPROVE THEIR POSITION IN THE WORKFORCE
- THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM NEEDS TO BE MOVED FROM THE CABOOSE TO THE FRONT OF THE FUNDING TRAIN – THIS PROGRAM NEEDS HELP NOW!
- PLEASE GIVE HB1172 A DO PASS!

Prepared for House Education Committee
Representative RaeAnn Kelsch, Chairwoman

Good morning Madam Chair and Members of the House Education Committee. For the record I am District 25 Representative John Wall, and I appear today to help introduce and offer support for HB1172.

The genesis for this bill was an Interim Education Committee meeting which several House Education Members attended. At this meeting, compelling testimony was given by adult education directors and others concerning the need to increase funding for existing basic and secondary adult education programs and to geographically expand adult education programs.

Section 1 of HB1172 asks for an additional appropriation over the current level to meet the needs of centers which now are not able to offer alternative schedules (Fridays, evenings, weekends) nor a summer session. Also, many centers must prematurely end their spring session because funds are depleted. Additional teachers are needed to eliminate waiting lists and to provide instruction, and technology at local centers needs to be updated (computers and computer programs) to be current with workplace and curricular demands.

Section 2 of HB1172 requests \$250,000 or so much of the sum as may be necessary for providing grants to implement new adult basic and secondary education programs. Much of the state is currently underserved, for instance, the only center south of Interstate 94 is at Wahpeton; however, other communities have expressed an interest in serving as satellite centers if money is made available.

Most people living in North Dakota realize our state has a workforce shortage. Interim committees discussed workforce development and training and, I believe, the passage of HB1172 would be a good investment in solving some of our workforce needs. There are many jobs available in North Dakota, but the vast majority requires at least a GED. During the 2007-08 school year 843 students between the ages of 16-19 received their GED, through the adult education program.

Through legislation we are not going to stop everyone from dropping out of high school, but we can help make those choosing to leave school before they receive a diploma more productive citizens who face a brighter future because they have earned a GED which allows them to find employment or attend college.

I believe passage of HB1172 would be good for many individuals and ultimately good for the state of North Dakota.

Several people more knowledgeable will testify after me, but I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Madam Chair and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Gil Herbel and I am here today in support of HB 1172. This is a very important and necessary bill. Without this funding, the ND adult learning centers will not be able to do the job that will benefit many ND citizens. Currently we have approximately 1800 students that attend adult learning centers in ND each year. Over 1000 of these students are between the ages of 16 and 21. If these students were to attend a high school, the state would be required to fund their schooling at a much higher level than what this bill is asking. HB 1172 is asking for only a portion of that funding.

With the current funding, the adult centers are unable to offer alternative schedules that would benefit many of our citizens. This increase in funding is necessary to eliminate waiting lists and provide for updating the technology needed to be current with trends and demands in the workplace.

The mission of the adult learning centers is to serve ND citizens 16 years and older that are not enrolled in an educational program and lack the basic skills to be employable or do not have a high school diploma. The 2005-2007 census data indicates that we have over 56,000 individuals without a high school diploma and about 1000 are being added to this list each year.

Statistics from the U.S. census also shows that those who receive a G.E.D. will earn nearly \$10,000 more annually than those without a G.E.D. This will increase the states tax base and boost our economy. It will also remove many of those who are presently getting assistance from the state.

The bottom line is that the adult learning centers will be able to provide the opportunities for many individuals to have a better life.

I commend the sponsors of this bill for bringing this issue before the assembly. Please do the right thing and give HB 1172 a unanimous do pass. Thank you for your time.

Questions?

TESTIMONY ON HB 1172

House Education Committee

January 20, 2009

Valerie Fischer, Director of Adult Education

328.4138

Department of Public Instruction

Madam Chair and members of the House Education Committee – I'm Valerie Fischer, Director of Adult Education and Director of School Health for the Department of Public Instruction. On behalf of DPI, I am here to provide supportive testimony for HB 1172.

Passage of HB 1172 will accomplish two critical functions; increase state funding for existing adult education programs and provide funding for additional pilot (satellite) programs. Current annual funding for Adult Education programs include federal (\$1,194,296), state (\$550,000) and local funds for a total of \$1,744,296 [see attachment]. These funds support 18 programs in 30 sites across the state. There has been no State funding increase since 1994; a targeted increase appropriated in 2007 was only partially received from foundation aid contingency funds which were later depleted. The federal funding is anticipated to decrease. Within the current DPI budget request, Adult Education has identified its continued appropriation of \$1,055,000 for the biennium. The proposed increase in funding would allocate a state budget of \$1,777,500 annually for adult education.

This bill requests additional state funding to address the following critical needs:

- **Waiting lists:** many Adult Learning Centers report waiting lists for services. This is a consequence of limited staff and in some cases limited space; some students wait as long as 4-6 months for enrollment and some centers have waiting lists of 40+ students. It takes such courage to return to school - imagine the apprehension of an incoming student

who has finally made that critical decision to go back to school only to be told they must wait and return at a later time – often they do not. Never should any student, regardless of age or circumstance, have to wait to receive a public education.

- **Staff:** the assurance of quality education includes skilled staff, appropriate class size, instructional materials and resources. Additional staff would alleviate student waiting lists. More than half of last year's 'student body' (1081 of 1800; 60%) were a) between the ages of 16-21, b) students who received special education, and c) students requesting ELL (English Language Learners) services, all which require one on one or increased instructional time.
- **Flexible schedules:** in many cases, the target population served by the Adult Learning Centers cannot attend classes between 8 am and 5 pm. The Centers want to accommodate students who are employed, have family responsibilities and other commitments by providing flexible scheduling. However, at this time, Centers cannot afford to offer classes on Friday, evenings or Saturday; no summer schedules are offered; and many Centers lack funding to provide services through the standard school year, closing prematurely.
- **Technology:** it is critical that technology (computers and computer software/programs) be current with workplace demands. Existing technology needs upgrading.

The second component of the appropriation request will allow DPI to develop satellite centers in geographic areas of need. As you can see on the attached ND map, with the exception of Wahpeton, there are no Centers south of Interstate 94 and many pockets are evident. Students travel considerable distances to receive services and issues of child care, travel options and expenses, work and family schedules are often complications. Our plan includes collaboration

with school districts, career and technical centers and community colleges to provide additional sites where current services are not available. Communities such as Garrison, Linton, Hettinger, and Bottineau have expressed interest and need in operating as a satellite center.

Over the past several years, ND Adult Learning Centers have served between 1800 – 2500 students per year. The 2005-2007 census data estimates 56,000 individuals in ND are without a high school diploma (age 19-24 year old: 7379; 25 and older: 49,355). Approximately 1000 additional individuals are added to this list every year as a result of high school drop outs. This past year (2007-08), ND ALC's served 1800 students: 1297 students received their GED – General Educational Development (843 ages 16-19), 71 went immediately into post secondary education and 228 obtained / retained employment.

According to the US Census (attachment), individuals who receive a GED will earn \$9671 more annually than those who do not. This in turn, improves an individual's economic status, spending patterns and tax contributions. National statistics show that the US has the strongest economy in the world because of adult education programs. ND needs every able body in the workforce – ALC's can put out workers in a reasonable time that meet the needs of employers.

If students don't receive at least a high school diploma or GED, North Dakota will have to deal with ...

- Fewer qualified employees who can fill open positions in the workplace
- Fewer students who enroll in post secondary programs
- Fewer enlistees for military service
- More individuals who will need public assistance and utilize state programs

- More families will remain in poverty

ND will always have students who drop out of high school; the primary alternative becomes the Adult Learning Centers. The demand for services has increased while the funding has not.

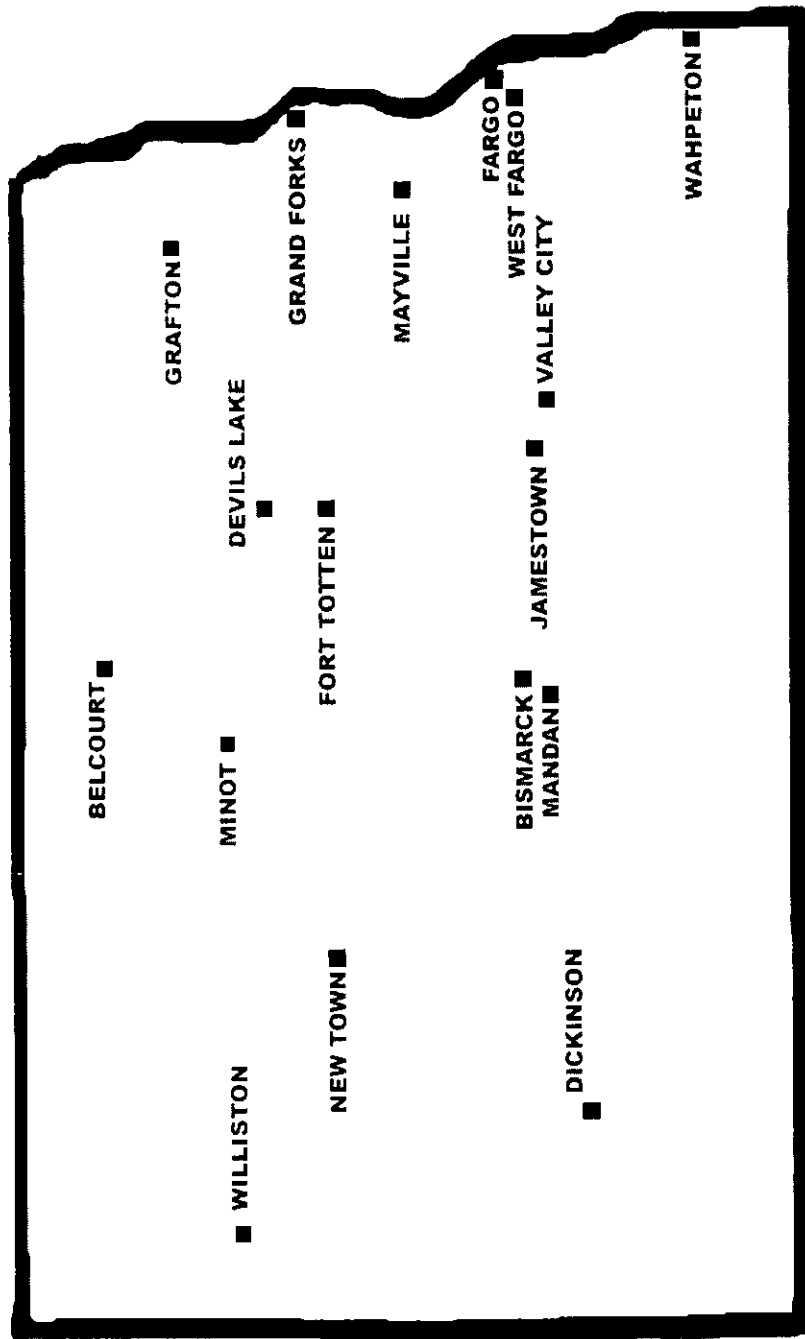
Elimination or reduction of existing services is not the answer. Adult Learning Centers require a consistent level of appropriation and revenue from state funds. Providing adequate state funding to maintain current programming and expand programs is an immediate necessity.

This morning you will hear from others about the benefit and need of the Adult Learning Centers. This concludes my testimony. I'm available to take any questions the Committee may have for me. If not, thank you for your time and support of HB 1172.

HISTORY OF ADULT EDUCATION FUNDING- Past 10 years

By Year and Source

Year	Federal	State	Total
2008-09	1,194,296 ↴	550,000 ⇧	1,744,296 ⇧
2007-08	1,210,412 ⇄	450,000 ⇄	1,660,412 ⇄
2006-07	1,210,412 ↴	450,000 ⇄	1,660,412 ↴
2005-06	1,219,745 ↴	450,000 ⇄	1,669,745 ↴
2004-05	1,227,014 ⇧	450,000 ⇄	1,677,014 ⇧
2003-04	1,210,416 ↴	450,000 ⇄	1,660,416 ↴
2002-03	1,338,308 ⇧	450,000 ⇄	1,788,308 ⇧
2001-02	1,264,609 ⇧	450,000 ⇄	1,714,609 ⇧
2000-01	1,110,596 ⇧	450,000 ⇄	1,560,596 ⇧
1999-00	1,000,568 ⇄		
1998-99	1,000,568 ⇄		



This issue brief was made possible with the generous support of MetLife Foundation.

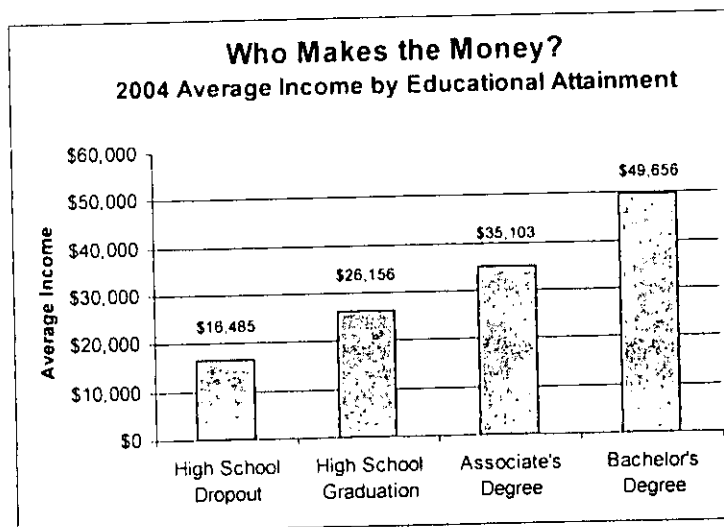
The High Cost of High School Dropouts What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools

Every school day, seven thousand students become dropouts. Annually, that adds up to about 1.2 million students who will not graduate high school with their peers as scheduled. Lacking a high school diploma, these individuals will be far more likely to spend their lives periodically unemployed, on government assistance, or cycling in and out of the prison system.

Most high school dropouts see the result of their decision to leave school most clearly in the slimness of their wallets. The average annual income for a high school dropout in 2004 was \$16,485, compared to \$26,156 for a high school graduate, a difference of \$9,671 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005). The impact on the country's economy is less visible, but it is nevertheless staggering.

If the nation's secondary schools improved enough that they were able to graduate all of their students, rather than the 68 to 70 percent of students that are currently graduated annually (Editorial Projects in Education, 2006), the payoff would be significant. **For instance, if the students who dropped out of the class of 2006 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$309 billion in income over their lifetimes.**

Everyone benefits from increased graduation rates. The graduates themselves, on average, will earn higher wages and enjoy more comfortable and secure lifestyles. At the same time, the nation benefits from their increased purchasing power, collects higher tax receipts, and sees higher levels of worker productivity.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005

Students Who Learn More Earn More

Research by Cecilia Rouse, professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton University, shows that each dropout, over his or her lifetime, costs the nation approximately \$260,000 (Rouse, 2005). Unless high schools are able to graduate their students at higher rates, more than 12 million

students will drop out during the course of the next decade. The result will be a loss to the nation of \$3 trillion.

The calculations on page 4 show the monetary benefits each state could accrue over the lifetimes of just one year's dropouts if those students could be converted to graduates. The numbers vary from state to state, of course: North Dakota (at the low end) would see its economy increase by \$425 million; Alabama (near the middle) would add \$3 billion to its economy, and California's economy (at the high end) would accrue an additional \$36 billion over the lifetime of each graduating class. These figures are conservative, and do not take into account the added economic growth generated from each new dollar put into the economy.

More Graduates Benefit Society

Obviously, dropouts are a drain on the economies of each state and the nation. Lower local, state, and national tax revenues are perhaps the most obvious consequence of higher dropout rates; even when dropouts are employed, they earn significantly lower wages than graduates. State and local economies suffer further when they have less-educated populations, as they find it more difficult to attract new business investment. Simultaneously, these entities must spend more on social programs when their populations have lower educational levels.

The nation's economy and competitive standing also suffers when there are high dropout rates. Among developed countries, the United States ranks seventeenth in high school graduation rates and fourteenth in college graduation rates (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2006). Dropouts represent a tremendous waste of human potential and productivity, and reduce the nation's ability to compete in an increasingly global economy.

High school graduates, on the other hand, provide both economic and social benefits to society. In addition to earning higher wages, which results in attendant benefits to local, state, and national economic conditions, high school graduates live longer (Muennig, 2005), are less likely to be teen parents (Haveman et al., 2001), and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children. In fact, children of parents who graduate from high school are themselves far more likely to graduate from high school than are children of parents without a high school degree (Wolfe & Haveman, 2002). High school graduates are also less likely to commit crimes (Raphael, 2004), rely on government health care (Muennig, 2005), or use other public services such as food stamps or

Who Doesn't Graduate?

- Only about 56 percent of Hispanic students and 52 percent of black students will graduate on time with a regular diploma, compared to 77 percent of Asian students and 76 percent of white students (EPE, 2006).
- Among all races and ethnicities, females graduate at a higher rate than their male peers—73 percent versus 65 percent (EPE, 2006).
- Graduation rates are significantly lower in districts with higher percentages of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (a measure of poverty) (Swanson, 2004).
- High school students living in low-income families drop out of school at six times the rate of their peers from high-income families (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).
- The lowest-achieving 25 percent of students are twenty times more likely to drop out of high school than students in the highest achievement quartile (Carnevale, 2001).



housing assistance (Garfinkel et al., 2005). Additionally, high school graduates engage in civic activity, including voting and volunteering in their communities, at higher levels (Junn, 2005).

Reducing Dropouts by Improving High Schools

To increase the number of students who graduate from high school, the nation's secondary schools must be dramatically improved. Although the investments made in the early grades are beginning to pay off, with higher student reading scores and a reduction in the achievement gap between white and minority students (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), too many of America's high schools are still serving their students poorly.

In a recent survey of high school dropouts, respondents indicated that they felt alienated at school and that no one even noticed if they failed to show up for class. High school dropouts also complained that school did not reflect real-world challenges. More than half of respondents said that the major reason for dropping out of high school was that they felt their classes were uninteresting and irrelevant (Bridgeland & di Iulio, 2006). Others leave because they are not doing well academically; only about 30 percent of high school students read proficiently, which generally means that as the material in their textbooks becomes increasingly challenging, they drop increasingly further behind.

How Much Does a High School Dropout Cost?

Researchers have started to examine various annual and lifetime costs associated with high school dropouts.

- The United States could save between \$7.9 and \$10.8 billion annually by improving educational attainment among all recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, food stamps, and housing assistance (Garfinkel et al., 2005).
- A high school dropout contributes about \$60,000 less in taxes over a lifetime (Rouse, 2005).
- If the male graduation rate were increased by only 5 percent, the nation would see an annual savings of \$4.9 billion in crime-related costs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006b).
- America could save more than \$17 billion in Medicaid and expenditures for health care for the uninsured by graduating all students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006a).

Whatever the causes, the nation can no longer afford to have a third of its students leaving school without a diploma. Our high schools must be improved to give all students the excellent education that will prepare them for college or work, and to be productive members of society.

**For more information about the state of America's high schools,
and to find out what individuals and organizations can do
to support effective reform at the local, state, and federal levels,
visit the Alliance for Excellent Education's website at www.all4ed.org.**

MetLife Foundation

The Alliance for Excellent Education is grateful to MetLife Foundation for its generous financial support for the development of this series of briefs, which explore the economic and social benefits of education. The findings and conclusions presented are those of the Alliance and do not necessarily represent the views of the funder.



**Estimated Additional Lifetime Income if High School Dropouts Graduated With Their
Class in 2005-2006¹**

State	9th Graders (2002-2003)	Estimated Graduation Rate (2005-2006)	Estimated Number of Dropouts for the Class of 2006	Total Lifetime Additional Income if Dropouts Graduated
Alabama	31,150	60.7%	12,242	\$3,182,907,000
Alaska	11,568	63.6%	4,211	\$1,094,795,520
Arizona	68,646	70.0%	20,594	\$5,354,388,000
Arkansas	36,657	71.8%	10,337	\$2,687,691,240
California	482,355	71.0%	139,883	\$36,369,567,000
Colorado	58,710	72.5%	16,145	\$4,197,765,000
Connecticut	43,977	79.3%	9,103	\$2,368,842,140
Delaware	10,150	60.7%	3,989	\$1,037,127,000
District of Columbia	5,289	58.9%	2,174	\$565,182,540
Florida	223,743	57.5%	95,091	\$24,723,601,500
Georgia	125,388	56.3%	54,795	\$14,246,584,560
Hawaii	15,629	63.7%	5,673	\$1,475,065,020
Idaho	20,038	77.8%	4,448	\$1,158,593,360
Illinois	164,554	76.3%	38,999	\$10,139,817,480
Indiana	82,602	73.0%	22,303	\$5,798,660,400
Iowa	41,394	82.5%	7,244	\$1,883,427,000
Kansas	39,683	75.0%	9,921	\$2,579,395,000
Kentucky	56,678	69.7%	17,173	\$4,465,092,840
Louisiana	63,869	60.6%	25,164	\$6,542,740,360
Maine	17,036	74.0%	4,429	\$1,151,633,600
Maryland	70,346	74.4%	18,009	\$4,682,229,760
Massachusetts	77,733	72.1%	21,688	\$5,638,751,820
Michigan	135,897	66.4%	45,661	\$11,871,961,920
Minnesota	71,222	79.0%	14,957	\$3,888,721,200
Mississippi	39,404	60.8%	15,446	\$4,018,055,680
Missouri	75,791	74.7%	19,175	\$4,985,531,980
Montana	13,532	75.8%	3,275	\$851,433,440
Nebraska	24,861	77.8%	5,519	\$1,434,976,920
Nevada	24,618	55.9%	10,857	\$2,822,899,880
New Hampshire	17,520	77.7%	3,907	\$1,015,809,600
New Jersey	89,234	84.5%	13,831	\$3,596,130,200
New Mexico	29,307	56.7%	12,690	\$3,299,382,060
New York	252,864	62.5%	94,824	\$24,654,240,000
North Carolina	111,493	66.2%	37,685	\$9,798,004,840
North Dakota	9,677	83.1%	1,635	\$425,207,380
Ohio	156,492	76.5%	36,776	\$9,561,661,200
Oklahoma	50,270	71.0%	14,578	\$3,790,358,000
Oregon	45,619	69.0%	14,142	\$3,676,891,400
Pennsylvania	153,464	79.1%	32,074	\$8,339,233,760
Rhode Island	12,548	72.3%	3,476	\$903,706,960
South Carolina	62,883	52.5%	29,869	\$7,768,050,500
South Dakota	11,247	74.5%	2,868	\$745,676,100
Tennessee	74,699	62.2%	28,236	\$7,341,417,720
Texas	359,368	66.8%	119,310	\$31,020,645,760
Utah	35,961	76.7%	8,379	\$2,178,517,380
Vermont	8,748	81.2%	1,645	\$427,602,240
Virginia	95,017	74.9%	23,849	\$6,200,809,420
Washington	86,602	68.2%	27,539	\$7,160,253,360
West Virginia	23,876	72.8%	6,494	\$1,688,510,720
Wisconsin	78,961	80.6%	15,318	\$3,982,792,840
Wyoming	8,059	74.0%	2,095	\$544,788,400
United States	3,906,429	69.6%	1,189,727	\$309,328,929,000



¹ The Alliance for Excellent Education determined the average additional lifetime income if one class of dropouts were to graduate by multiplying the number of dropouts—as determined using enrollment data for the ninth-grade 2002–03 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data: 2002) and the high school graduation rate in 2006 (Editorial Projects in Education, 2006)—by the \$260,000 estimated lifetime earnings difference between a high school dropout and a high school graduate (Rouse 2005).

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**Testimony in Support of HB 1172
January 20, 2009**

Representative Rae Ann Kelsch, Chair
House Education Committee
Pioneer Room, Judicial Wing
State Capitol, Bismarck

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Johnson, I am superintendent of the Bismarck School District, and I am appearing today to testify in support of HB 1172. For approximately three decades the Bismarck School District has operated an Adult Education Center as a companion program to the South Central Alternative High School. Currently, South Central and the Adult Learning Center are housed at Hughes Education Center on Washington Street here in Bismarck. The program currently serves 66 students with a secretary, 2 full and 8 part-time teachers. There is a waiting list of 8 and 16 students have graduated this school year. Services are offered mornings, four afternoons, and two evenings per week. The Center is available to any person 16 or older in Region VII.

The Adult Learning Center provides the following:

1. Prepare students from age 16 on to complete the entire GED test battery with passing scores and as high percentages as possible.
2. Help students chart a career course after completion of their GED. This means career guidance, testing, and planning along with study skills, sources of job training, employment skills, etc.
3. Assist injured workers in updating academic skills so they can return to work after they are physically ready to do so.

4. Teach people from other countries to speak, read, and write effectively in English. Once this is accomplished, students will enter either employment or further education.
5. Work with Displaced Homemakers to update academic skills and gain self confidence with a weekly support group of peers.
6. Offer specialized reading program (Read Right) for all students in need of reading improvement.
7. Assist single parents, adjudicated youth, and disadvantaged adults in updating academic skills, earning the GED, and/or work readiness skills.

The reason that HB 1172 was introduced is that federal support for Adult Education is declining and state support has not substantially increased for many years. The Adult Learning Centers currently receive about \$637.00 per student in federal funds and \$276.00 per student in state funds. The Bismarck School District currently provides one full time teacher as well as the space, and related expenses, for the program. Remember this program is offered to all adults in Region VII not only adults in Bismarck.

It would seem to be an opportune time to increase support for adult basic education at a time when the lack of employees seems to be an overriding concern in ND. There is always a waiting list for the Center. We have the space to serve more students. Increased funding would allow us to serve more individuals thus contributing to the supply of competent workers for the Bismarck area and for North Dakota.

I urge a Do Pass on HB 1172.

Madam Chair and members of the House Education Committee, I'm Sandy Wollan from the Adult Learning Center in Bismarck, ND. I am here to provide supportive testimony for HB 1172.

1. The mission of Adult Learning Centers in ND is as follows:

- ▶ to serve all ND citizens age 16 years or older who are not currently enrolled at another educational facility and lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills, or do not have a high school diploma or GED, or are unable to read, write, speak English.
- ▶ Between 1,800-2,500 people access ND Adult Education services each year.

2. Typical Adult Learning Center students are:

- a. **16-21 year olds** who have dropped out of high school. At the Bismarck Adult Learning Center, this percentage per year is from 60-63% of our total student population.
- b. **Injured workers** who need to update their skills prior to returning to work or being retrained in another career field.
- c. **Displaced Homemakers** (widowed, separated, divorced, or those who are economically dependent)
- d. **English Language Learners** come to the centers to learn to speak, write, and read English.
- e. **People** who come in because they dropped out of high school years ago and now want to obtain their GEDs. Currently ND has approximately 56,000 individuals (2005-2007 Census) without a high school diploma or GED.
- f. **People** come to the Adult Learning Centers that want to be promoted in their jobs or get better jobs than they are qualified for with their current level of education.

3. There are 18 currently funded programs with over 30 sites working towards these goals in ND. Each year the funding gets tighter and tighter with the decreasing availability of federal money and we are facing ever increasing demands for the services in ND.
4. At the Bismarck Adult Learning Center, we frequently have waiting lists to come into class. Students say to me “You need to hire some more teachers.” I would love to hire more teachers. I would love not having to tell parents “I’m sorry. I have to put your 16 year old on a waiting list. Keep calling to see when we have an opening.”

Some students give up after awhile and stop calling. That is discouraging to know we have missed an opportunity to help someone to move forward in his/her life. It also means that that person may have walked away and said “There is no place for me in school anymore and no one cares about what happens to me.” That is a terrible message for anyone to walk away from a school believing.

5. Why do we need the Adult Learning Centers?
 - a. Look at this map of ND. There are 862 students that drop out of ND schools every year on average. There are 862 toothpicks on this map.
 - b. Region Seven, the region served by the Bismarck Adult Learning Center, has 143 students that drop out per year. We cannot serve all of the students that dropped out this year much less all of the students from past years that now realize they need their GED.
 - c. Think of K-12 education and then Higher Education. If you don’t complete the first one, you can’t utilize the second one. We cannot create the workforce of tomorrow in ND with unskilled, undereducated people. We need educated, highly skilled people to take jobs in ND and to build our state’s future.

- d. Most ND employers want employees that have either a HS diploma or GED at least. Many employers require them to even begin employment. That was not the case in years past and so today's students are facing a bleak future without their HS diploma or GED.
- e. Today's labor market has so many more educational demands to it than before. We cannot afford to ignore the requirements of the world of work, the needs of our citizens, and discard the human potential in each person. We need to help all of our citizens to be prepared for the future that arrived yesterday.
- f. Some times people don't understand why students drop out in the first place. There is no one answer that is true for all students but there are some commonalities that many share. I will give more information on those commonalities in a moment.

Many people stigmatize others who dropped out of school and stereotype them in negative ways. Sometimes there is a lot of blaming of the student that only hurts our progress going forward. If you could meet the students that I meet every day, you would change your mind about "those dropouts." You would see the complex interplay of situations, choices, and events that brought them to our door. You wouldn't see the dropout; you would see the person.

Here are a few examples of situations our students come from:

1. Many of them began working outside the home much earlier than most people because of economic necessity. They came from homes where that extra income made the difference between making it and not making it.

These are students who at a young age are working 20-40 hours a week to provide for themselves and help their families. They are so tired that they miss classes, fall asleep in classes, or don't do the required homework to stay current with the class. They

quickly drop out of school because they cannot possibly do it all. School quickly loses its appeal even if they would like to be able to continue and earn their high school diploma.

2. Many of our students missed too many days in the traditional school setting and lost credit over the years. By the time they were 17 or 18, they realized they would not be able to gain the credits necessary to graduate before the age of 21. Now with graduation credit requirements increasing in ND, we are going to have more and more young people and their families asking for services at Adult Learning Centers.
3. Some of our students have faced serious medical problems that caused them to miss too many days in school. They may have battled different ailments and had to give up on their goal of a high school diploma. Depression has been a serious issue with some of our students as well. It is amazing to watch them change when they realize not only can they complete their education but they can go on to post secondary training, employment, or the military. What a life changing event we are witness to when this happens. At the Adult Learning Center, they can have flexible schedules that accommodate their different needs.
4. Some of our students become parents at an early age. Among their needs to stay with their children, provide a living for them, and finish school, they are in a tough situation. The Adult Learning Centers are often the last and only hope for these students.
5. Some of our Adult Education students were in Special Education services while they were in K-12 schools. They come to the ALC for many of the same reasons others come, but they come with different learning challenges.

We do not have special education services in Adult Learning Centers but we try to do the best we can with our individualized approach with each student. Our instructors are experts in helping students learn and their success rate with students is excellent.

6. Some of our students are injured workers who have now suffered a terrible blow not only physically but psychologically. The life they prepared for and thought they were going to have and keep, is not the life they have now.

Our injured workers take some time to let go of what was and embrace what can be. Given some time, they frequently become our most dedicated students and come back to see us as time goes by. Their journey through the Adult Learning Center teaches them to not only become competent academically, but confident in a new environment. This newly developed confidence allows them to move forward into post secondary training, if that option is available, or to take different positions with their new skills.

8. The Displaced Homemakers come to try to get their lives started over again. Most are divorced people but many have been in a position of economic dependency upon someone else in the household. There are often very few options for them other than the Adult Learning Centers. We offer counseling, both personal and career, along with support groups and the other regular educational services.
9. Some of our students have made some poor life choices. They would be the first to admit that. It sometimes takes time and maturity for them to realize what they gave up when they left high school. Some realize it quickly and some do not.

Many of them can recount the poor choices they made in letting other priorities take the place of their education. Having said that and admitting some poor choices, what are we going to offer them now? Are we about second chances or one chance and suffer the

consequences for the rest of your life? These consequences go far beyond that one individual; to their families, communities, and our state.

What a high price to pay for mistakes. I hope we can send a message to all ND citizens that need Adult Learning Center services that we will leave no one behind. North Dakota will show its citizens that they are important and education matters in every situation and circumstance.

What will we do with additional funding?

1. We will offer expanded numbers of classes and not have waiting lists for services. There would be no more telling parents and their children that they have to wait for a spot in classes. We would hire enough instructors to meet the current need and to prepare for a likely increase in demands for GED services as the ND graduation requirements increase in the future.
2. We will offer expanded evening classes to students who need the services in the evening. Currently we have evening classes only two times per week. This expansion of classes would allow a more flexible schedule for those students whose jobs take them out of town or those that occasionally have to work some evenings.
3. We will offer a full day of Friday classes. Now we have Friday morning classes only.
4. We will offer classes on Saturdays that could meet the needs of those students whose commitments at work and with their families do not allow for their attendance with the ALC during the regular school day and week. We will offer career guidance activities, college prep, intensive GED, and life skills classes on Saturdays. These services would be a great benefit to the community and offer a one stop education approach in a school.

This concludes my testimony. I'm available to take any questions the committee may have for me. If not, thank you for your time and support of HB 1172.

TESTIMONY ON HB 1172

House Education Committee

January 20, 2009

Ginny Nerem

857-4488

Madam Chair and members of the House Education Committee – I'm Ginny Nerem, from Minot, ND. I am here to provide supportive testimony for HB 1172.

My name is Ginny Nerem, and I would like to tell you what Minot Adult Learning Center did for me.

I was raised by my grandmother, she was a very old fashion lady. She didn't believe that girls needed an education. I remember a man and a woman would come to our house to take me to school.

When I was fourteen I moved to a city in Virginia to live with my mom. My mom died when I was sixteen. I was sixteen and in the seventh grade. I got teased everyday about my weight and my age, so I quit school.

I got pregnant and got married. I had my first child when I was seventeen. Five years later I didn't have a husband or an education. I had two children and two jobs. I now have three wonderful children and two grandsons. My one grandson has been living with me since he was two, he is now twelve. He struggles in school and he has to work hard for his grades. About two years ago he was bringing home homework that I couldn't help him with. He told me that he hates school and that he was going to quit when he was old enough, like I did. This is when I decided it was time for me to go to the Minot Adult Learning Center. I was very nervous for the first few classes, because once again I was the oldest in class.

Once I got to know Deb Sisco and Jennifer Kraft, I looked forward to my classes. Lots of nights I would have to leave class early so I could get home and help my grandson with his homework. Deb Sisco always made sure I had additional resources and materials to study prior to each test. Jennifer Kraft gave me the confidence and the encouragement I needed to take each test. Both of these ladies were great with all of the students. We all had great encouragement and praise from them both. Not only do I feel great about my accomplishment I now have the confidence and the know how to help my grandson more. He is proud of me, and he trusts me more to help him.

The Minot Adult Learning Center not only helped me, it helped my grandson. I think the Adult Learning Center is important to Minot, because when you teach an adult you are also helping children, and what could be more important.

This concludes my testimony. I'm available to take any questions the Committee may have for me. If not, thank you for your time and support of HB 1172.

Madam Chair and members of the House Education Committee, I'm Kelly Kraus from Bismarck, ND. I am here to provide supportive testimony for HB 1172.

I have been employed as a rehabilitation consultant with CorVel for 17 ½ years. CorVel is a national, independent provider of managed care services. CorVel has been providing medical and vocational case management services to clients receiving ND Work Force Safety and Insurance benefits since 1992.

I provide vocational counseling to assist industrially injured workers return to work in their pre-injury or alternative employment situation. Part of my responsibilities is to identify an individuals academic skills, and coordinate appropriate skill upgrading to assist my client in returning to work or preparing to participate in a post high school training program. The Adult Learning Center (ALC) is extremely helpful in accomplishing this goal.

The ALC administers the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), which provides information regarding and individuals current Reading, Math, Language, and Spelling skill reported in grade equivalent. Upon reviewing this information, I am able to determine if my client will need to upgrade their academic skills. The ALC is the only public agency that offers skill upgrading for adults free of charge.

There are private learning facilities, however the fee's associated with using those facilities is cost prohibiting.

The ALC is a safe non-judgmental environment where my clients can upgrade

their academic skills at their own pace. There are no preconceived expectations by the staff at the ALC regarding how quickly one should be increasing their skills. Often my clients did not have a favorable experience when attending middle and high school, and may have not obtained their high school diploma. They may be apprehensive about attending the ALC, because of their experiences. This concern is quickly dissolved when my clients meet and work with the instructors and staff from the ALC. The instructors provide instruction in a kind, caring, and nurturing manner; which allows my clients to excel at increasing their academic skills.

Often times, my clients have work injuries that precludes them from being able to tolerate prolonged positions. The ALC provides the opportunity for individuals to change positions as frequently as necessary to include sitting, standing, and walking. The ALC will work with CorVel and my clients to provide accommodations which include ergonomic chairs, podium to allow a student to study while standing, or adjusting a table to allow my client to kneel while working. The ALC is open to making any feasibly appropriate accommodation. By doing this, it increases my client's ability to concentrate and retain the material being studied.

The instructors truly want my clients and all students at the ALC to succeed in reaching their goal, whatever that goal may be. My clients and all students receive individual assistance as needed. The instructors adjuster their teaching

methods to meet the needs of the individual, and don't give up on a student who may be struggling. This manner of instruction allows my clients and all students to enjoy the learning process. My clients often look forward to attending class; even those most resistant to attending the ALC will quickly change their attitude and report enjoying attending class.

The ALC will periodically re-test students to determine their level of improvement and identify academic areas that one may need to concentrate on improving.

This allows me to track my client's progress and to solidify a return to work option or determine if a client has the potential to be successful in attending a post high school training program. The ALC offers college prep assistance on an as needed basis to provide instruction to prepare my clients to attend a post high school training program. A majority of my clients have been out of school for 10 years or more and this added assistance is essential in preparing them for succeeding in a post high school training program.

The ALC offers GED preparation and testing. A GED is required for a majority of occupations and to attend post high school training. In my experience, my clients are not as successful passing the GED tests using study guides or on-line services. The ALC instructors are available to answer questions, provide information regarding the correct method to solve problems, and assist my clients prepare for the tests. The instructors provide practice tests to ensure the greatest likelihood of passing a particular GED test, before one takes the test. The

instructors want the student to succeed and will assist as much as needed to accomplish the goal of obtaining the GED.

If the ALC services were not to continue, there would be no place for my clients to upgrade their skills for employment or to prepare for attending a post high school training program. This would leave a large number of adults unemployed or underemployed. These adults would need to seek assistance from other social service agencies to meet their everyday needs, as they would not have the skills to qualify for positions that will meet their financial obligations. The ALC is extremely important to providing my clients with the skills they need to succeed. I ask you to support HB 1172.

This concludes my testimony. I'm available to take any questions the committee may have for me. If not, thank you for your time and support of HB1172.

Attachment 9
(2 copies)

**Department of Commerce Testimony on HB 1172
January 20, 2009
House Education Committee
Pioneer Room
Representative RaeAnn Kelsch – Chair**

Larry Anderson – Talent Coordinator, Workforce Development Division

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Larry Anderson, Talent Coordinator, Workforce Development Division with the North Dakota Department of Commerce.

The 2007 Legislative Assembly established the requirement for the development of a Single Unified State Biennial Strategic Plan for Workforce Development, Workforce Training and Talent Attraction. The responsibility for this was charged to the Department of Commerce Workforce Development Division.

Attached to my testimony is a graphic from this plan which illustrates how each of the state agency partners is contributing to the Talent Development needs of our state with goals for the Expansion, Attraction and Retention of Talent in our state. These programs and services are designed around the needs of business and industry and intended to provide for economic prosperity for all North Dakotans.

As I indicated this plan has been developed. In his letter presenting the plan Commerce Commissioner Goettle writes and I quote:

“North Dakota is experiencing unprecedented economic growth and prosperity. With this growth and prosperity North Dakota business and industry are facing increasing challenges in obtaining the talent and workforce needed to support their continued growth”. To take advantage of strategic opportunities, workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction must function as one system within a unified state plan with a common vision and common goals to increase the quantity and quality of the North Dakota workforce and talent pool” unquote.

As with any strategy there must be a plan for implementation to ensure the goals are reached. This accountability falls to the Workforce Development Division and the state agencies identified by the 2007 legislative assembly which includes the Department of Public Instruction among the other state agencies. The plan for implementation is formed around four focus areas:

- Focus on Structure – Governance Goals
- Focus on Alignment of Resources – Alignment Goals
- Focus on Workforce Intelligence – Council Goals
- Focus on Partnership Expansion Goals

Madam Chair and members of the Committee the Department of Public Instruction is a key partner in addressing the basic educational needs of an often times underrepresented segment of our population, young people, who for whatever reasons haven't been successful in the

traditional educational setting and adults who are deficient and or are lacking in the basic education necessary to contribute and enjoy the economic prosperities of our new economy.

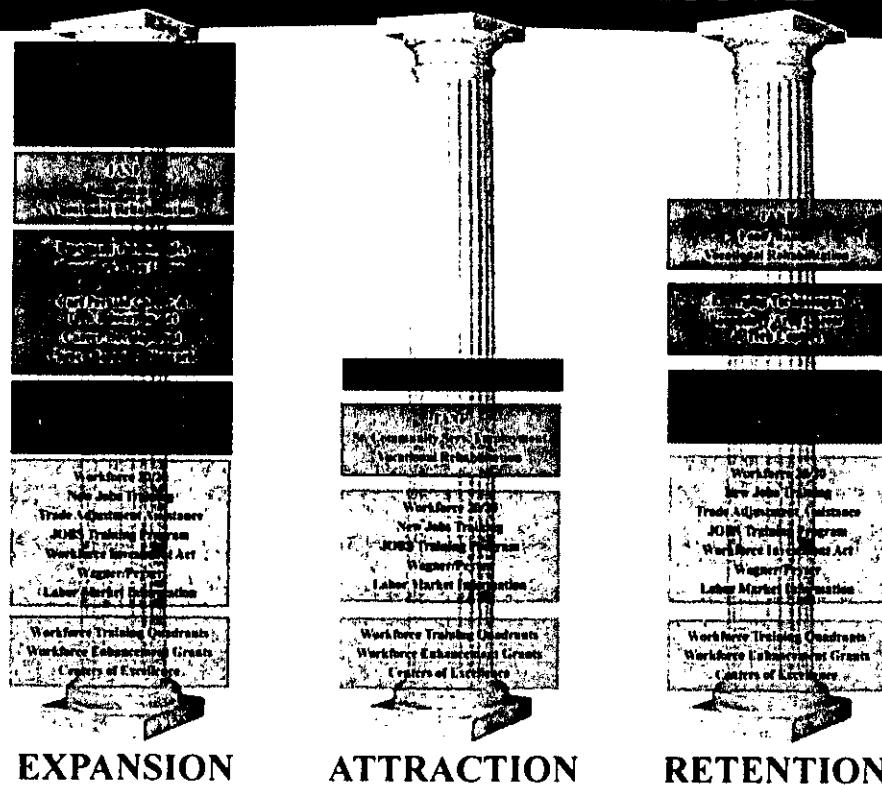
The adult basic and education programs and services provided by the Department are central to ensuring a well qualified well prepared workforce critical to our overall workforce needs in the state. In addition these educational services are essential to meeting the common measures of performance under the federally authorized Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as part of our State Plan for WIA and Wagner Peyser.

Madam Chair and Committee members this concludes my testimony. I would be glad to answer any questions from the Committee.

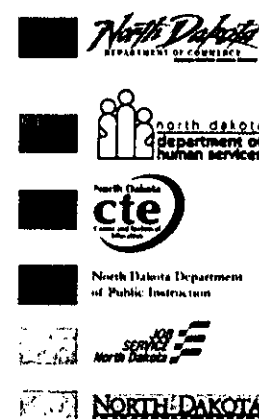
Unified Biennial Strategic Plan Goals and Their Supporting Programs

The intent of the Biennial Strategic Plan is to support North Dakota's Talent Initiative. The Planning Committee is the central point of connectivity for partners to ensure integration of a common set of goals to assist in the Talent Initiative strategy. As shown in the table below, each partner makes a contribution to the overall success of the state's strategic direction. This is immediately followed by matrix of the partners workforce goals while goals vary from partner to partner they a focus on the three pillars.

PILLARS & PARTNERS OF THE TALENT INITIATIVE



PARTNERS



**TESTIMONY
HOUSE BILL
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
January 20, 2009**

Madam chair and members of the House Education Committee.
My name is David Massey, Assistant Superintendent with the Department of Public Instruction. I am appearing before you in support of HB 1172. Much has been already been shared with you. I would like to share a couple of other points with you.

I know you are aware that the student numbers are declining in our state. Only a few years ago we had approximately 110,000 students in ND schools. In the past few years we have seen a steady decline, currently around 95,000. In the next 5 years it is projected to further decline.

In this day and age when our employers are looking for more skilled workers we should make every effort to keep every student in school to prepare them for further education, training and the labor market. However, as far back as I can research we had student drop outs and we will continue to have drop outs in our state and throughout our country.

As public policy makers we need to ask ourselves this question, since we are going to have drop outs "what should we do with these students". Let them find their own way forward or should we provide a network of services that can guide them to become productive citizens of the state.

Madam chair and members of the committee this bill calls for funding to address the question and offers a solution through a successful existing delivery system. Many of us support the concept of leaving "No child left behind". If not addressed we would literally leave these students behind.

I ask for you support of this bill and I will be happy to answer questions you may have.