

March 6, 2015

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my concern regarding proposed cuts to the funding for virtual programs for adult students.

I currently work as a teacher at New Directions Learning Academy in Topeka, Kansas. As a teacher, I have observed various students in their educational endeavors. There is nothing more gratifying than seeing an adult student with a diploma in hand!

Our students range in age from 19 to 82. Many of our students have families and full-time jobs. For these non-traditional students, virtual learning is not only a convenience, it is a necessity. Many of our students work on courses after they have finished a long day at work, and/or after they have put their children in bed. Our students often work late into the night, during the time that most traditional schools are closed.

If funding for virtual schools is cut, there is always the chance that adult students could achieve a high school diploma through a GED test. However, many of the students that we encounter lack the basic skills to pass such a test. Many students come to us without any high school credits. Some of these students have a difficult time with fifth grade English and mathematics. Yet these students have the desire to finish their high school requirements. When they do finish, the look of pride on their faces really is something to be seen.

Our particular program has been open nearly twenty years. In that time, we have grown into a very successful program in which students are able to enroll and take classes at no cost. Since 2010, we have issued over 3,500 grade cards for completed classes. We have helped more than 972 students graduate, and we are hoping to hit 1,000 by the end of the current school year. It is anticipated that the number of graduates will compound in the future, as our enrollment continues to increase as word-of-mouth spreads regarding our program.

Our particular program works with eight school districts in the Topeka and surrounding area. These include USD 341, Oskaloosa USD 341, Perry LeCompton USD 343, Seaman USD 345, Silver Lake USD 372, Santa Fe Trail USD 434, Washburn Rural USD 437, Shawnee Heights USD 450, and Topeka Public Schools USD 501. In addition, our service center based in Clearwater, Kansas works with numerous other school districts in Kansas including those in Wichita, El Dorado, and Pratt among others.

Adult education programs for virtual learners are vital to our community and our state. I urge you to reconsider the abrupt cuts that have been proposed. These cuts would be devastating to virtual programs, and they would leave hundreds of students in Topeka with no means to pursue their dreams of completing their high school requirements. If cuts must be made, I would ask that a gradual decrease in funding over several years be considered.

Thank you,


Lisa Wolf, NDLA

Phone: (785) 228-2336

Text: (484) 393-5472

Fax: (785) 228-9278