

March 7, 2015

Dear legislators,

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the cuts that have been proposed for virtual schools for adult education.

I currently work as a special education teacher, and I can tell you that not every student can make it through high school in a traditional timeline. If students want a diploma and are willing to work for it, they should be able to get one. I have known many kids who struggled making good decisions as teens when hormones were wreaking havoc on them. These same kids later became very much positively contributing members of society with good jobs. Their success is largely the result of their ability to complete diplomas later in life after they had matured a bit.

Imagining that every child comes from supportive backgrounds or that all students can complete high school on time is unrealistic. There are many valid extenuating circumstances that may interfere with a student's ability to complete high school by age 18. These are not limited to "poor choices." Medical reasons, family reasons (including the death of a parent), and financial reasons may be factors that cause students to drop out of traditional high schools. Living situations may often force students to choose a job over school. Several of the students that I have come into contact with work full time—even two full time jobs—by the time they are 16. Some families face homelessness, and finding a new home becomes their central focus.

If adults decide that they want to obtain a diploma later in life, over time as they work to support their families, the funding should be there to support them in their endeavors.

I urge you not to cut funding to virtual programs for adult education!

Sincerely,

Marion Dawson