



Goodwill Industries of Kansas, Inc.

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NexStep Written Testimony to the Senate Education Committee 02/11/2020

My name is Christopher Stanyer, Vice President of Career Services for Goodwill Industries of Kansas and the Director of the NexStep Alliance adult education program. NexStep is an educational partnership between Goodwill Industries of Kansas and WSU Tech that provides career-focused GED preparation for over 600 students per year in the Wichita MSA. Most of these students are low-income with multiple barriers such as transportation, childcare, and inadequate housing. Obtaining a high school diploma is an important step to financial and social independence, but it is only a step. Post-secondary education training resulting in an industry-recognized credential towards a regionally in-demand occupation is a vital cog in the wheel to student success.

Goodwill and the NexStep Alliance would like to stand in support of Senate Bill 336 and the proposed Kansas RISE scholarship. This scholarship will generate keen interest for NexStep graduates and for individuals who already have a high school diploma but deemed basic skills deficient based on the TABE academic assessment required by all Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) adult education programs. The Kansas Board of Regents allows and encourages adult education programs to provide academic and job skills training to these individuals but options for post-secondary funding can be limited. Senate Bill 336 would provide a funding bridge allowing access to existing KBOR-approved college pathways to individuals who are ready and willing to work.

As worded, however, the legislation may inadvertently leave a large group of individuals without access to the RISE Scholarship. The proposed law as presented requires graduation from a high school or a General Education Certificate (GED) to qualify for consideration. The State of Kansas does not currently produce a General Education Certificate. In Kansas, GED is a brand name for the test students must take and pass to receive their Kansas High School Diploma. This diploma is equal to the high school diploma earned by graduating from a Kansas high school. However, adult education students do not graduate from a high school. I would humbly request revision of the language to include Kansans who earn a high school diploma by passing the GED exam.

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