

Testimony of Kathryn Tyler in Support of HB 1478

Submitted to the House Education Committee

February 2nd, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Kathryn Tyler, a North Dakota resident, former participant in the Sleepy Hollow Summer Theatre Program and a graduate of Century High School in Bismarck, North Dakota. I am writing to encourage you to support HB 1478.

During my time in high school, it was not just the opportunity to learn from the wonderful teachers I had at CHS that made me a better student; it was activities outside of the classroom, particularly in the arts, that supplemented my learning and made me a more well-rounded student, person, and citizen of my community. One experience that I found particularly formative, and relevant to this bill, was my time spent in Sleepy Hollow Summer Theatre.

While participating in Sleepy Hollow productions, I learned what you might expect from a summer theatre program: how to sing, dance, act, memorize lines, follow directions, and be a part of a show. However, I learned so much more beyond these skills that I ended up taking with me into the classroom:

A theatre production is like one big group project; you cannot simply exist in your own corner and expect the show to go well. Everyone has an important role to

play, and it is both recognizing everyone's value to the team, and how to work together cohesively, that makes the show run smoothly. There is so much coordination required for a successful production, and it is a true feat of teamwork.

Sleepy Hollow also taught me how to think more creatively. The script is the basic structure of a show, but it is the combination of everyone's individual creative choices that gives the show its spark. To be successful is not always as simple as following directions, memorizing answers, and acing assessments. Learning to make your own creative choices boldly is an essential skill in the classroom, workplace, and everyday life.

Sleepy Hollow provides the opportunity to work alongside students of different age groups, something that is not always possible when in the bubble of your own grade level. This diversity of experience is a gateway to a wealth of knowledge. When I was new to the program, I learned so much from the older students I looked up to, and when I had been in the program for several years, I had the wonderful opportunity to be a mentor to newer students.

Additionally, I was able to become more confident. I was admittedly quite shy before I started the program for the first time, but by the end of the summer, I was able to stand up in front of an entire audience without stage fright, and that newfound confidence carried over into my academic life. Being able to

communicate ideas clearly and confidently, and to work with constructive criticism are crucial skills that were continually strengthened each year I participated.

Finally, my summers with Sleepy Hollow found their way into more of my college applications and essays than many of my academic experiences simply because of how invaluable the skills I learned there were. Looking back, I realize just how much my summers with Sleepy Hollow helped me with teamwork, confidence, project-based learning, creative thinking, and mentorship, all skills that were not only transferrable to the classroom, but that are still so very important to me today as a young woman developing her career.

Though much of my supplemental learning was through the arts, I believe this bill could be beneficial to many students of varying passions and interests. There are so many opportunities for young people in our communities to engage in their areas of interest outside the classroom. Not only do I think this will help further engage students in the subjects in which they already succeed, but it can also provide real-world experience that can help their education seem more meaningful, and teach them skills that will supplement, and even enhance, what they learn in every classroom.

I will emphasize that experiences like this can be fun and rewarding in their own right, but often require a considerable amount of time and effort outside the

school day. Offering academic credit for these kinds of experiences will not only reward students for hard work completed outside the classroom, but also encourage students to seek out these enriching opportunities in the first place, opportunities they may not have otherwise considered.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I urge a Do Pass on HB 1478.