Is a GED just like a regular high school diploma? A new study suggests not. The study says a high school equivalency may only be a little better for students than just dropping out. But La Crosse associate superintendent, Randy Nelson says equivalency is still essential for some students. Especially those who deal with conflict at home or wind up in jail. Nelson says, for those, getting a GED or HSED is essential for showing that they have what it takes to be a high school graduate. Nelson says the district doesn't encourage students to get a GED but can help them in that direction if needed.