

# NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## Minutes of the

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 20, 2007  
Roughrider Room, State Capitol  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative RaeAnn G. Kelsch, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Members present:** Representatives RaeAnn G. Kelsch, Lyle Hanson, Gil Herbel, Bob Hunsakor, Lisa Meier, David Monson, Phillip Mueller, Gary Sukut, John D. Wall; Senators John M. Andrist, Tim Flakoll, Layton W. Freborg, Gary A. Lee

**Members absent:** Representatives C. B. Haas, Karen Karls, Francis J. Wald; Senator Carolyn Nelson

**Others present:** See [Appendix A](#)

Chairman Kelsch said Senator Freborg would serve as the vice chairman of the committee. She said the Legislative Council [Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Council](#) has been distributed to committee members. She said since most members are familiar with the rules, there will not be a formal presentation. However, she said, members need to be aware that the rules prohibit subcommittees without the approval of the chairman of the Legislative Council and that all committee communications expressing policy need to be approved by the chairman of the Legislative Council prior to distribution.

#### NORTHWOOD TORNADO - EFFECT ON SCHOOL DISTRICT

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, Mr. Tom Decker, Director, Finance and Reorganization, Department of Public Instruction, presented testimony regarding the provision of education to students in the Northwood Public School District. Mr. Decker distributed an e-mail from Mr. Kevin Coles, Superintendent, Northwood Public School District. The e-mail is attached as [Appendix B](#).

Mr. Decker said that the district was able to announce a plan for educating students after only three days and that students missed only five days of school. Mr. Decker said last year a reorganization plan involving the Hatton and Northwood School Districts was approved by Northwood, but not by Hatton. He said the reorganization is on hold for the present time.

Mr. Decker said the cost of constructing a 75,000-square-foot facility will be approximately \$9 million. He said the problem is that may not be what Northwood actually needs. He said if the reorganization is approved in the future, the elementary school should be in Hatton and the middle school and high school should be in Northwood. He

said if that decision is made, the district could consider constructing a state-of-the-art facility.

In response to a question from Representative Kelsch, Mr. Decker said Northwood needs to be helped to think through its options. He said Northwood may well be in temporary quarters until such time as a reorganization is approved.

In response to a question from Representative Mueller, Mr. Decker said the Superintendent of Public Instruction contacted the Northwood Public School District and offered staff assistance. He said the Northwood Public School District is still receiving per student payments because it is still an operating school district. He said this allows the district to pay salaries and meet other expenses.

In response to a question from Representative Herbel, Mr. Decker said both the Northwood and Hatton Public School Districts have their own superintendents. He said even though Northwood students are being educated in Hatton, state aid is paid to Northwood and Northwood in turn works out payment arrangements with Hatton.

#### ADEQUACY OF HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, committee counsel presented a memorandum entitled [Appropriateness and Adequacy of High School Curricula - Background Memorandum](#). She said North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) Section 15.1-21-02.1 provides that, beginning with the 2008-09 school year, a student may not graduate from high school without successfully completing four units of English, two units of mathematics, two units of science, three units of social studies, one unit of physical education, and one unit of a foreign or Native American language, fine arts, or career and technical education.

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, Mr. Greg Gallagher, Director, Standards and Achievement, Department of Public Instruction, provided testimony regarding the capacity of the state to provide an adequate education to its students. He said there must be a link between the work of the interim Education Committee and the work of the Education Improvement Commission. He said we need to define what graduation means, i.e., what a student has to know and be able to do before graduation occurs. He said the requirements for graduation need to allow for

a reasonable transition to higher education or to the workplace.

Mr. Gallagher said we determine eligibility to graduate by seat time, not by whether the student is ready to move into higher education or the workplace. He said it is imperative that we be clear about our goals. He said we need to be clear about what we believe is meant by "adequacy" and we need to be clear about how we intend to combine our desire for uniformity of instruction with local flexibility.

Mr. Gallagher said every student has the right to be exposed to the standards. He said standards allow us to understand how adequacy is defined in North Dakota and assessments allow us to measure how students are doing against the standards. He said we need to ensure that our state standards are sufficiently rigorous and we need to be clear about reporting results.

Mr. Gallagher said we can require that students take four units of mathematics prior to graduation, but then we need to ensure that those units are related to the standards. He said local schools can have flexibility with respect to how the standards are taught, but the state needs to measure their results to ensure that there is no slippage and there are no gaps.

Mr. Gallagher said it is important for us to have data that shows us how our students are doing and how our schools are doing. He said we need to fill in our assessments. He said we assess students in grades 3 through 8 and 11. He said we need to assess students in grades 3 through 12. He said we need to constantly be looking at the data and utilize remediation measures for those students who are not meeting the standards. He said whether or not the state's schools make adequate yearly progress (AYP) is a measurement that is placed on top of the student assessment data.

Mr. Gallagher said the national assessment of educational progress (NAEP) is a tool by which we can see how students in North Dakota measure up against students in all other states and how our cut scores measure up against those imposed in other states.

Mr. Gallagher said accountability is everybody's business. He said if we as a state intend to assess students, then assessment should carry some weight. He said results should be included on a student's transcript. He said we should not fear testing students in grade 12. He said students need to know that how they perform will impact how they are received into higher education and whether or not they will have to take remedial classes.

In response to a question from Senator Andrist, Mr. Gallagher said attention has been paid to allowing students great latitude in order to accommodate their test-taking skills.

In response to a question from Representative Wall, Mr. Gallagher said the benchmarks are widely available but their use is not mandatory. He said educators should be aware of the value of using standards. He said if grading in no way references

the standards, then all we have are personal preferences. He said that is not an appropriate way to measure students. He said each classroom should have a posted list informing students what they need to do and achieve in order to obtain a particular grade.

In response to a question from Representative Hunsakor, Mr. Gallagher said we need sufficient professional development opportunities so teachers and administrators understand what is needed.

In response to a question from Representative Kelsch, Mr. Gallagher said the state has the AYP data and every school has its data. He said how people grasp the data is another matter. He said the data is real and it is consistent. He said we can show year-to-year performance and we can show the disparities. He said the question is what do we do about it. He said we spend more time running away from the data than recognizing its legitimacy and responding to it.

In response to a question from Representative Kelsch, Mr. Gallagher said the NAEP is a statement about how we define proficiency. He said how the NAEP defines proficiency is very different from how it is defined in most states. He said North Dakota's content standards are developed with the assistance of McRel. He said the NAEP allows us to see how good we are in comparison to other states.

## REGIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, committee counsel presented a memorandum entitled [\*Regional Education Associations - Background Memorandum\*](#). Committee counsel said the statutory requirements with which a regional education association (REA) must comply are found in NDCC Chapter 15.1-09.1.

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, Mr. Jon Martinson, Executive Director, North Dakota School Boards Association, presented testimony regarding REAs. He distributed a document entitled *Regional Education Associations (2007-2008)*. The document is attached as [\*Appendix C\*](#). He said REAs began in 2003 and were initially referred to as joint powers agreements. He said they were and still are voluntary grassroots organizations. He said the 2007 legislative session provided REAs with \$3 million in funding. He said \$2 million of that is to come from contingency funds and will not be made available until the conclusion of the 2007-09 biennium. He said superintendents are reluctant to commit their own dollars and hope for reimbursement.

Mr. Martinson said the Great Northwest Education Cooperative received a grant in the amount of \$499,000 from the United States Department of Education for teaching United States history. He said the grant provides funding so that teachers can attend workshops given by professors from around the country and discuss the Civil War, World War II, and the Constitution. He said teachers receive all kinds of materials and other resources to develop their

teaching plans. He said some of the money went toward an access fee so that students could participate in a virtual museum. He said if the Great Northwest Education Cooperative had not joined with the North Central Education Cooperative there would not have been enough students to qualify for the grant.

Mr. Martinson said the Southeast Education Cooperative formed a partnership with the State College of Science to offer online courses to high school students. He said the courses include medical terminology, drafting, entrepreneurship, and introduction to psychology. He said the cooperative expended \$15,000 to offset the cost of the classes. He said the money covered books and the delivery of the online courses. He said students also had the opportunity to receive college credit.

Mr. Martinson said the Mid-Dakota Education Cooperative is hopeful about receiving a grant from the United States Department of Defense for a program called Starbase. It provides an opportunity for 600 fifth-grade students to have 20 to 25 hours of hands-on activity in the areas of mathematics, science and technology, and personal development. The activities would take place at the Minot Air Force Base. He said 31 other states have a Starbase Academy. He said the appropriation for this program is in conference committee. He said the Minot Public School District did not have enough students to qualify for the Starbase Academy. However, by joining with the Mid-Dakota Education Cooperative, the requisite number of students was reached.

Mr. Martinson said the Missouri River Education Cooperative has hired an assessment coordinator.

In response to a question from Representative Herbel, Mr. Martinson said in North Dakota we struggle with how best to offer education. He said people value effectiveness and efficiency. On the other hand, there are school boards and superintendents who are fiercely independent. They believe that they do not need to collaborate because they can do just fine on their own. He said there is suspicion and fear of the common good. He said on one hand we have a state-owned Bank and a state-owned Mill and Elevator. He said on the other hand, we still have 190 school districts, some for very few students, and we have 11 institutions of higher education for 45,000 students. He said his alma mater, the University of Texas, has 50,000 students.

In response to a question from Representative Mueller, Mr. Martinson said REAs have been supported by the state for only four years. He said there is progress but it is slow in certain places. He said there are some REA participants who are not fully committed and do not see the value of their association. He said all of the REAs have strategic plans. He said the direction from those involved in leadership within the REAs is very clear.

In response to a question from Representative Herbel, Mr. Martinson said a school district can join

and leave an REA whenever it wants. He said participation is totally voluntary.

In response to a question from Representative Meier, Mr. Martinson said the Bowman and Scranton Public School Districts decided not to participate in their area REA this year.

Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *Executive Summary*. The document is attached as [Appendix D](#). He said the document contains a good definition of an adequate education.

Mr. Decker distributed a document containing copies of his PowerPoint presentation. The document is attached as [Appendix E](#). He said we need to talk about adequacy standards, but we also need to talk about how to deliver education. He said a child starting kindergarten this fall will graduate from high school in 2020. He said we are looking at two North Dakotas with a huge discrepancy in size and population.

Mr. Decker said a frontier county is one that has no more than six people per square mile. He said North Dakota has 36 frontier counties. He said between now and 2017-18, the public school enrollment of frontier counties will decline by 23 percent and the public school enrollment of nonfrontier counties will decline by 7 percent. He said that is three times the rate of decline in those places that already have very small populations.

Mr. Decker said by 2020, 59 percent of our population will reside in 17 cities having populations of more than 2,500. He said the four largest cities have nearly 50 percent of the state's population. He said we are aging as a nation and North Dakota is aging faster than any other state. He said in McIntosh and Divide Counties more than 28 percent of their respective residents are older than 65. He said by 2020 more than 40 other counties will be in that same situation.

Mr. Decker said there are 188 operating school districts and 4 non-operating school districts. He said last year there were 95,600 students and this year there will be a reduction of 1,200 to 1,600 students. He said by 2012 we are expecting to have fewer than 90,000 students and fewer than 80,000 by 2018 or 2020. He said in a normal distribution there are more students in first, second, and third grades than in grades 10, 11, and 12. He said with dropouts, 100 students in grades 1 through 3 translate to 85 to 90 students in grades 10 through 12. He said school districts having more than 550 students in high school are experiencing an 8.1 percent enrollment decline. He said school districts having 150 to 549 students in high school are experiencing a 29.1 percent enrollment decline. He said school districts having 75 to 149 students in high school are experiencing a 27.9 percent enrollment decline. He said school districts having fewer than 75 students in high school are experiencing a 29.8 percent enrollment decline. He said this assumes that every student currently in school will stay and graduate.

Mr. Decker said the eight largest school districts are educating 51 percent of the students. He said the other 180 districts are educating the remaining 49 percent. He said this disparity will continue to grow.

Mr. Decker said the city of Carrington has been the poster child for successful economic development in a small town. However, he said, the Carrington Public School District had an enrollment of 763 in 1999 and this year its enrollment is 616. He said the Carrington Public School District has even added neighboring districts and its student population is still down. He said economic development does not necessarily lead to increased school enrollment. He said Dickinson, with the increased interest in oil, experienced a decline of 40 students. He said Richardton, with its new ethanol plant, and Bowman, which is also in oil country, declined in enrollment.

Mr. Decker said we are also facing a serious teacher shortage in the next three to seven years. He said our teaching force is made up primarily of baby boomers. He said success in the recruitment of teachers will be dependent on both salaries and, even more importantly, lifestyle offerings. He said shopping and entertainment venues are real issues for young teachers. He said REAs can at least provide a professional network with which young teachers can get involved.

Mr. Decker said the provision of educational services has always been dependent on access to tax dollars. He said one can also see increased resistance to taxes for the support of education. He said in some places, less than 20 percent of the residents even have students in school.

Mr. Decker said we have fixed ideas regarding schooldays and school years and fixed ideas about the services that each school must provide. He said no school district is completely independent. He said every school district must work with another district. He said we need to determine how to effectively organize that interdependence so we can provide educational services to our students. He said every district should look at the services it needs to provide and determine what it can provide cost-effectively. He said those services that cannot be provided cost-effectively by a district should be provided by the REA.

In response to a question from Representative Hanson, Mr. Decker said we desperately need a comprehensive student data system so we can know where a student started school, how long the student stayed in school, where the student went to college, which courses were taken, etc. He said we also need that data system to manage the learning system. He said a data system would allow teachers to look at how students are doing on a daily basis and adjust their teaching accordingly.

In response to a question from Representative Herbel, Mr. Decker said South Dakota and Montana are both in the process of developing REAs. He said during the 2007 session, the South Dakota Legislature

passed a law requiring the consolidation of school districts having student enrollments below 100.

In response to a question from Senator Lee, Mr. Decker said the best thing that REAs have done is bring some life and vitality to professional development. He said many school districts cannot provide professional development on their own. He said REAs are also magnets for grants. He said REAs are struggling through some growing pains. He said many believe that REAs are grassroots organizations and should remain as such. He said even with consolidation, we still need REAs. He said we need to put in place a timeline so that we can start incorporating certain services under the umbrella of the REAs.

In response to a question from Senator Lee, Mr. Decker said we need to deliver the message that in order to maintain a uniform system of adequate education, REAs will need to be an integral part of service delivery.

Senator Flakoll said the nine REAs have participating districts that vary in size and have levies varying from perhaps 155 to 255 mills. He said he wonders how the state can properly fund those REAs and whether it would be appropriate to do so on a per student basis.

In response to a question from Senator Flakoll, Mr. Decker said we need to look at the best models in other states with respect to how the REAs are organized and funded. He said REAs need state dollars to support basic administrative costs. He said the state is already paying costs. He said we are paying for 31 special education directors and we could get by with 9. He said we need vocational education across the state. He said we need nine vocational coordinators--one in each REA. He said school districts would be buying services from the REAs and providing the resources that the REAs need in most areas.

Senator Flakoll said he wonders if anyone has explored a virtual delivery system operated by the state. He said perhaps even an REA could not afford a particular teacher. He said with a state delivery system, the teachers could live wherever they wanted and the courses would be delivered electronically. He said delivering that which we want to deliver will be an even bigger problem as the decline in student numbers continues.

In response to a question from Senator Flakoll, Mr. Decker said we need to rethink many aspects of education delivery, including the systematic reorganization of distance-learning.

Representative Kelsch said as a policymaker, she is concerned that the Legislative Assembly is paying school districts to provide services to students and because some of those school districts are unable to provide the services, the Legislative Assembly is now being asked to pay for REAs so that the REAs can provide the services. She said she is concerned that we are enabling school districts to stay open without having to worry about how they will provide the



services that they are being paid to provide, because they now will have the REAs to provide the services. She said she wonders if this is a layering effect that is in essence allowing certain school districts to remain open and inefficient. She said we have spoken for years about the need to ensure that our school districts are viable and able to have longevity and make sense within the overall scheme. She said she wonders where that thought process is.

Mr. Decker said we need the courage to make a series of difficult decisions about school district operations. He said we need to fund REAs to be comprehensive service agencies and at the same time we need to put into law a meaningful requirement for shared services so that the small school districts are doing what they can cost-effectively and the REAs are doing the rest. He said that will keep us at least as cost-effective as we are today. He said if we do not, we will have accomplished that which our worst critics fear and that is the creation of another layer of bureaucracy and still allow school districts to remain open, inefficient, and to provide less than a quality education.

Mr. Decker distributed a document entitled *North Dakota Demographics - How Our Changing Population Will Impact Elementary and Secondary Education*. The document is attached as [Appendix E](#).

### **PROGRAMS TO REDUCE HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS THAT CAN LEAD TO SUICIDE ATTEMPTS**

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, committee counsel presented a memorandum entitled [Identification of High-Risk Behaviors - Reduction of Childhood Suicide Attempts - Background Memorandum](#). Committee counsel said between 1994 and 2003, 797 individuals took their own lives in this state and during that same period, there were 382 attempted suicides. She said the highest rates of suicide were found in the 15 to 24 and 45 to 54 age groups.

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, Mr. Mark LoMurray, Consultant, Mental Health America of North Dakota, presented testimony regarding state efforts to reduce suicide attempts. He distributed a copy of his testimony, which is attached as [Appendix G](#). He also distributed a document entitled *Sources of Strength - A Natural Helper Guide for Preventing Youth Suicide*, which is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. LoMurray said many teen deaths occur in clusters. He said in the late 1990s, North Dakota led the nation in suicides for the 10 to 14 age group. He said we were sixth in the nation for suicides among the 15 to 19 age group and we were in the top 10 for suicides among people who were in the 20 to 24 age group. He said North Dakota suicides among individuals in the 10 to 24 age group was almost double the national average. He said that was when the first state plan focusing on adolescent issues was put together.

Mr. LoMurray said 90 percent of suicide prevention efforts at the time consisted of one-shot awareness talks. He said research showed that approach was not very effective and that multiple contacts really were necessary. He said attempts were made to train school staff and community caretakers, especially those in the faith community. He said rural pastors provide a lot of mental health services, often without much training or backup support. He said in almost 80 percent of the suicides, friends knew that the individual was suicidal but did not tell an adult. He said peer groups were hearing about suicidal thoughts much earlier than adults. He said there was almost a code of silence among the young people. He said much of the training was focused on getting teens to talk to caring adults. He said teens were not going to go to institutions, but they would go to caring adults in their lives--people with whom they already had a relationship. He said that is how the sources of strength model came into existence.

Mr. LoMurray said depression, substance abuse, being traumatized, and having aggressive impulsiveness are the big four triggers for adolescent suicide. He said by undertaking a focused effort, North Dakota has seen a dramatic drop in suicide rates--the most of any state. He said, with a focused effort, lives can be saved and young people can be kept out of emergency rooms.

Mr. LoMurray said in 2005 the North Dakota Task Force reworked the state suicide prevention plan. He said the middle-aged group is one on which they now intend to focus. He said different strategies are needed for the different age groups.

Mr. LoMurray said we need to review whether schools have policies and protocols in place for dealing with a suicidal student. He said we need to ensure that schools have a system within which they can refer a student for an evaluation. He said the training standards for school staff have to focus on support staff, too, i.e., busdrivers, janitors, etc. He said it is often not the school counselor that receives the initial contact.

Mr. LoMurray said often if there are two or three suicides in a region, there is a sense that we should not talk about it because we will cause more to happen. He said there are dangerous ways to talk about suicide that can put students at risk. He said there are also safe and effective ways to talk about suicide and to educate people about the issue. He said healthy behavior approaches and how to stay strong are important to young people.

Mr. LoMurray said tracking is also very important. He said when suicidal youth are referred to mental health services, we need to ensure that they are receiving ongoing services.

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLES FOR CHILDREN

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, committee counsel presented a memorandum entitled [\*The Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles for Children - Background Memorandum\*](#). Committee counsel said healthy lifestyles fall into two categories--those that involve clinical issues, such as the use of tobacco, illegal substances, proper nutrition, daily exercise, etc., and those that involve both physical and mental health, i.e., positive relationships and livable environments.

At the request of Chairman Kelsch, Ms. Valerie Fischer, Director of School Health, Department of Public Instruction, and Ms. Kim Senn, Director, Division of Family Health, State Department of Health, presented testimony jointly regarding healthy lifestyles for children. They distributed a copy of their PowerPoint presentation. The document is attached as [Appendix H](#).

Ms. Fischer said healthy lifestyles for children are not isolated. They involve schools, homes, community environments, and individuals. She said you cannot understand behaviors and risks applicable to children until you understand behaviors and risks applicable to adults.

Ms. Senn said children imitate adults. She said they learn by modeling and by repetition. She said the concept of healthy lifestyles is up against much repetition from the media.

Ms. Senn said cardiovascular disease accounts for 36 percent of all adult deaths in North Dakota. She said in 2006 we spent about \$920 million on cardiovascular disease in North Dakota. She said we know what can impact this disease--diet and exercise. She said even though the elements of a healthy lifestyle seem as if they are innate, the reality is that they are not and people need to be educated and taught how to live a healthy lifestyle. She said it is a lot like parenting. Not everyone is a good parent. They need to be taught how to do it.

Ms. Senn said we know that the five things that most impact adult deaths in North Dakota are physical inactivity, poor nutrition, alcohol use, tobacco use, and the maintenance of an unhealthy weight.

Ms. Senn said research shows that adolescents require 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night and that they do not learn well in the early morning. She said many of our schools, however, have early classes.

Ms. Senn said the connection to work, family, community, and faith are very important for everyone and even more so for young people. She said in the 1940s and 1950s and even into the 1960s, children died from diseases--diphtheria, polio, and mumps. Today, she said, the No. 1 cause of death for children is accidents. Within that category, she said, motor vehicle accidents are the major cause of death. She said many of the motor vehicle fatalities stem from alcohol use.

Ms. Fischer said with respect to young people it would be wonderful if we could begin to address issues related to tobacco use, dietary behaviors,

physical activity, alcohol and drug use, sexual behavior, and violence and injury. She said tobacco use by high school students has decreased by 18 percent since 1999. She said students in grades 9 through 12 are twice as likely to be physically inactive as students in grades 7 and 8. She said the 2007 Youth Risk Survey indicates a slight drop in North Dakota binge drinking rates since last year. She said since we have not yet received the national data, we do not know if we still lead the nation in that activity.

Ms. Senn said there are multiple challenges when it comes to leading a healthy lifestyle in rural areas. She said local grocery stores, and even convenience stores, are not open long hours, tobacco cessation services are often not available, and access to walking trails, 24-hour gyms, and even safe indoor areas for exercise are limited at best. She said adults in rural areas tend to be more obese than adults in urban areas, they are more likely to suffer a stroke, and they are more likely to have high blood pressure. She said Native Americans make up about 5 percent of our population, but their rates for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, smoking, and similar unhealthy activities are almost double that of other groups in our population.

Ms. Senn said funding issues are a real challenge. She said federal funding is drying up and grants that are available are often very limited or restrictive in scope.

Ms. Fischer said sometimes the grants do not allow the types of partnerships that could be effective in our state.

Ms. Fischer said obesity in our youth will affect our workforce, our economic growth, and our ability to pay for medical care. She said 61 percent of military recruits did not meet boot camp physical requirements. She said obesity is preventable through exercise and diet. She said it is our personal responsibility to address this issue. She said it is difficult to legislate personal choice. She said we discussed limiting the content of vending machines in schools and no one wanted to be the "pop police." She said we can control what children have access to at school but not what they eat and do at home.

Ms. Senn said the state has been successful in decreasing youth tobacco use. She said the reason has been access to funding, availability of personnel, and the use of best practice strategies. She said tobacco cessation used a comprehensive approach that involved both schools and communities. She said in 1999, 40.6 percent of our youth smoked and in 2005, 22.1 percent of youth smoked.

Ms. Fischer said we know that schools that are healthy and have healthy children use a comprehensive approach and have top-down support. She said they have administrators who recognize the value of healthy students and choose to make that a priority. She said they allocate funds, resources, and time. She said the funding is probably the least significant aspect. She said it does not take a lot of money to have a healthy school and to implement

policies and practices that promote health and address risk behaviors.

Ms. Fischer said success also requires a buyin by all those who understand the connection between good health and academics. She said community coalitions are very important in supporting school efforts and they often function as liaisons between the schools and the parents. She said healthy staff who participate in worksite wellness programs also serve as good role models for the students.

Ms. Fischer distributed a document entitled *ND Department of Public Instruction - School Health Unit*. The document is attached as [Appendix I](#). She said it describes both the Coordinated School Health Unit and the responsibilities that fall upon it. She said the unit is primarily funded by two sources--the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Title IV - Safe and Drug-Free Schools. She said the unit has looked at risk and other behaviors via physical education, health education, health services, nutrition services, counseling and psychological services, healthy school environments, staff wellness, and family and community involvement. She said coordinated school health is directed toward keeping students healthy over a long period of time, positively reinforcing healthy behaviors throughout the schoolday, and making it clear that good health and learning go hand in hand.

Ms. Senn said there are seven major sections within the State Department of Health. She said the Community Health Section deals with preventative measures and works to provide direct services to public health units and schools. She said the section does work under the umbrella of Healthy North Dakota. She said Healthy North Dakota is a

framework that allows for communication and collaboration.

Ms. Senn said the State Department of Health has a significant number of programs and offers a significant number of services--many of them in our schools. She said she could provide a document showing the various programs and would gladly make that available.

Representative Kelsch asked Ms. Senn to forward the document to the Legislative Council staff for inclusion in the minutes. The document entitled *North Dakota Department of Health Organizational Chart* is attached as [Appendix J](#).

Ms. Fischer said promoting healthy lifestyles comes with challenges and opportunities. She said we know our approaches have to be comprehensive--not isolated efforts. She said we know we need a long-term commitment in order to achieve positive changes. She said many partners are eager to work together.

In response to a question from Representative Hunsaker, Ms. Fischer said high schools are required to offer one-half unit of health in grades 9 through 12 but there is no requirement that the course be taken by students. She said health classes serve as a vehicle for information regarding responsible choices and healthy lifestyles.

Chairman Kelsch adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

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L. Anita Thomas  
Committee Counsel

ATTACH:10