

Testimony
House Bill 1375
3/10/2021 – 10:00 am – Room 216
Senate Education Committee
By Frank Schill
Superintendent of Edmore Public School

Chairman Schaible, Members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am Frank Schill, Superintendent of Edmore Public School. I am here to testify in favor of HB 1375 thus providing a tuition credit incentive program for students taking dual-credit courses while in high school.

As lifelong resident of North Dakota and K12 educator for the past 33 years I have observed students to be more focused on post-secondary options and consequently initiate plans to achieve these options beginning while they are enrolled in high school.

I have also noticed that throughout my career there appears to be a growing number of students whose families do not have the financial resources to assist the student in paying for post-secondary tuition. Consequently, these students either accumulate a large sum of debt to realize their post-secondary goal, drop out of college/tech school, or attend a post-secondary institution for longer than the typical required time to earn the diploma/certification.

In an attempt to lessen or dilute the financial burden, students in the Edmore school take dual-credit courses their senior year. This spreads the financial debt over a five-year period rather than four. The majority of Edmore senior students will graduate with 18 college credits earned through the dual-credit program.

In recent years, I have needed to assist a growing number of students in financial need to take dual-credit courses. I have hired these students during the summer or during holiday breaks to work at the school to earn a paycheck to offset the cost of dual-credit courses.

In mid-January, my principal and I paid the tuition bill for a student that could not afford to pay for the dual-credit courses. This student has given us an assurance that we will be paid back in full and is working two part-time jobs in addition to attending high school. This student wants a better life. Throughout my career I have seen a growing percentage of single parent families and a growing number of parents that can barely afford to pay their monthly bills. They simply cannot afford to provide financial assistance for their child to take a dual-credit course while in high school. The children from these homes see that a better life is possible through furthering their education, but lack the financial means to attain this better life.

I believe the adoption of HB1375 will assist a growing number of financially challenged high school students in moving forward with achieving their post-secondary goals and reduce their financial debt.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I can now stand for questions.