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## **EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, July 20, 2021  
Roughrider Room, State Capitol  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Erin Oban, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Members present:** Senators Erin Oban, David A. Clemens, Cole Conley, Jay R. Elkin, Diane Larson, Richard Marcellais\*, Michael A. Wobbema; Representatives LaurieBeth Hager, Patrick Hatlestad, Pat D. Heinert, Jeff A. Hoverson, Donald Longmuir, Andrew Marschall, David Monson, David Richter, Cynthia Schreiber-Beck

**Member absent:** Senator Doug Larsen

**Others present:** Senator Donald Schaible, Mott, member of the Legislative Management  
See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

\**Attended remotely*

### **COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Mr. Dustin Assel, Counsel, Legislative Council, presented the committee's statutory responsibilities and a memorandum entitled [Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Management](#). He noted the memorandum was updated to require prior approval by committee chairmen for remote attendance by committee members and to prohibit payments to Legislative Management members for remote attendance at meetings of committees of which they are not members.

### **INNOVATIVE EDUCATION AND COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING STUDY AND RELATED REQUIRED REPORTS**

Mr. Assel presented a memorandum entitled [Innovative Education and Competency-Based Learning Study - Background Memorandum](#).

Mr. Joe Kolosky, Director, Office of School Approval and Opportunity, Department of Public Instruction, presented a report required under North Dakota Century Code Section 15.1-06-08 regarding requests from schools or school districts for waivers of rules governing the accreditation of schools.

Ms. Ann Ellefson, Director, Office of Academic Support, Department of Public Instruction, and Mr. Kolosky, presented a report ([Appendix B](#)) required under Section 15.1-06-08.2 regarding the innovative education program, including the status of the implementation plan, a summary of any waived statutes or rules, and a review of evaluation data results and a report required under Section 15.1-06-08.1 regarding waiver applications.

In response to a question from the committee, Ms. Ellefson noted four districts participating in the innovative education program work closely with the department through a cohort called the North Dakota Personalized/Competency-Based Learning, to collaborate with the department and receive ongoing support for the programs. Ms. Ellefson noted the department will reach out and offer support to a district if the district is undergoing transition in its administration and would like assistance with its program even if the district is not a part of the cohort.

In response to a question from the committee, Ms. Lisa Johnson, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, North Dakota University System, noted the University System's institutions are beginning to incorporate competency-based learning into the instruction and curriculum for future teachers.

Dr. Aimee Copas, Executive Director, North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders, noted the council hosts the innovation academy to train teachers and schools in proficiency-based learning, and 36 districts have undergone training through the innovation academy.

### **DYSLEXIA SCREENING PILOT PROGRAM REPORT**

Ms. Brenda Ehrmantraut, Assistant Director, Office of Academic Support, Department of Public Instruction; and Ms. Lea Kugel, Special Education Regional Coordinator, Office of Special Education, Department of Public Instruction, presented a report (Appendices [C](#) and [D](#)) regarding a recommendation whether to continue the dyslexia screening pilot program under Section 15.1-32-26 beyond the 2022-23 school year. Ms. Ehrmantraut noted several dyslexia screening pilot program districts use multi-tiered systems of supports as a successful way to implement plans to incorporate the dyslexia screening into their existing educational system and to ensure students identified as at-risk through the screening program do not fall behind academically. She noted dyslexia is a lifetime phonological processing disorder that requires coping skills to mitigate the effects. She noted the Department of Public Instruction strongly recommends the continuation of the dyslexia screening pilot program beyond the 2022-23 school year and recommends expanding the program statewide if the necessary legislation and funding is approved.

In response to a question from the committee, Ms. Ehrmantraut noted the \$250,000 for the pilot program was distributed among three selected applicants based on a required budget for the use of funds included in the applications, and the majority of the funds distributed for the programs were used for staffing needs and professional development.

### **COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STUDY**

Mr. Assel presented a memorandum entitled [Compulsory School Attendance Study - Background Memorandum](#). He noted North Dakota, which has required compulsory school attendance since statehood, requires students aged 7 to 16 to attend school for the duration of the school year.

In response to a question from the committee, Mr. Assel noted the parent or guardian having control over a student is subject to penalties under the law for failing to ensure the student is attending school in compliance with the compulsory attendance requirements.

Ms. Kirsten Baesler, Superintendent of Public Instruction, presented testimony regarding the committee's assigned study of compulsory school attendance laws. She noted every other month she meets with advisory cabinet stakeholder groups, which consist of local school superintendents, secondary principals, and elementary principals. She noted attendance issues are raised frequently in the cabinet meetings because 5- and 6-year old children who enroll have sporadic attendance, and 17- and 18-year old children can drop out. She requested permission from the interim committee to work with the advisory cabinets to study compulsory attendance laws to determine if the current compulsory requirements meet the needs of students in the state, and to report any findings to the interim committee.

**It was moved by Representative Heinert, seconded by Representative Hatlestad, and carried on a roll call vote that pending approval of the Chairman of Legislative Management, if necessary, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and her advisory committee cabinet members be allowed to study compulsory attendance laws and report the findings to the committee.** Senators Oban, Clemens, Conley, Elkin, Larson, Marcellais, and Wobbema and Representatives Hager, Hatlestad, Heinert, Hoverson, Longmuir, Marschall, Monson, Richter, and Schreiber-Beck voted "aye." No negative votes were cast. After consultation with the Legislative Council, Chairman Oban noted the request does not require additional approval from the Chairman of the Legislative Management because the request is not an expansion of committee work, it does not involve a subcommittee, and it does not require any additional funding.

### **ELECTRONIC SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS REPORT**

Dr. Becky Pitkin, Executive Director, Education Standards and Practices Board, presented a report (Appendices [E](#) and [F](#)) regarding electronic satisfaction survey results.

Some committee members questioned whether the report continues to be necessary. Dr. Pitkin noted the Education Standards and Practices Board will continue to collect the data for quality assurance purposes even if the requirement is removed from law.

**ALTERNATIVE TEACHER LICENSURE STUDY AND RELATED REPORTS**

Mr. Assel presented a memorandum entitled [Alternative Teacher Licensure Study - Background Memorandum](#).

Dr. Pitkin presented a report ([Appendix E](#)) regarding teacher licenses issued under an alternative teacher certification program. She noted the program is accomplishing the desired objectives and recommended the program be continued as an option to help mitigate the issue of teacher shortages in the state.

Dr. Pitkin presented testimony ([Appendix E](#)) regarding the criteria for alternative teacher licensure.

In response to a question from the committee, Dr. Pitkin noted teachers who use an alternative pathway to become licensed get the required clinical teaching experience in the classroom during their 1<sup>st</sup> year on the job, and the alternative certification program provides a supervisor for the new teacher to provide additional assistance.

Committee members noted while the alternative teacher certification program is not perfect, it helps address the teacher shortage issue, and teachers who enter the classroom through the program are making a positive impact.

Ms. Lori Wagner, alternative teacher permit recipient, presented testimony regarding her experience with an alternative teacher permit pathway as a result of House Bill No. 1531 (2019). She noted she is a family and consumer science teacher and she has taught under the permit for 3 years. She noted the permit allows her to be enrolled in school to receive her full teaching license while teaching in the classroom.

Ms. Laura Mastel, graduate of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence alternative teacher certification program, presented testimony regarding her experience enrolling in and graduating from the American Board alternative teacher certification program to receive licensure in the state as a result of House Bill No. 1287 (2019). Ms. Mastel, who holds a bachelor's degree in clinical laboratory science and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction, noted she has worked in laboratories and as a teacher at the college level. She decided to attempt to obtain a teaching license in science at the secondary level because of the limited college level teaching opportunities in her field in North Dakota. She noted despite her experience and advanced degrees, before the passage of House Bill No. 1287, to obtain a teaching license she would have needed additional coursework to meet North Dakota standards or a license in another state. The passage of House Bill No. 1287 provided her an easier and less expensive option to receive a North Dakota educator license by completing an alternative teacher certification program.

Dr. Katherine Terras, Chief Executive Officer, Certification Central, presented testimony (Appendices [G](#) and [H](#)) regarding criteria used for alternative teacher certification through Certification Central.

Ms. Morgan Nunberg, graduate of Certification Central, presented testimony ([Appendix I](#)) regarding her experience enrolling in and graduating from Certification Central to receive licensure in the state.

No further business appearing, Chairman Oban adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

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Dustin Assel  
Counsel

ATTACH:9