

February 2, 2021

I am testifying in full support of HB 1478

A prediction based on the implementation of HB 1478: Within five years, a longitudinal study will confirm an increase in degree and certification completions in apprenticeship programs and NDUS institutions. It will also acknowledge a reduction in dropout rates and non-completers in post-secondary education for the students participating in self-directed electives resulting from HB 1478. High school students active in Learn Everywhere programs will enjoy graduation rates similar to the unparalleled rates produced by Career and Technical Education course concentrators.

Student benefits for participation in self-directed independent study include:

- Unlimited career exploration opportunities and academic flexibility.
- A student athlete identifying their high school sport as a required PE credit allows the student to take additional electives offered at school.
- A student in work based learning may confirm their career aspirations and pursue formal post-secondary training.
- A student in work based learning may decide this is not the career path they want to pursue and would be able to examine alternatives before seeking post-secondary training.

As a vehicle for independent study credits, HB1478 is unequalled as the most cost effective method of increasing elective choices to school offerings without added investment for instruction, facilities or equipment.

It provides an avenue for increased interaction between our business communities, school districts and students.

HB 1478 satisfies some of the recommendations from the Work Force Development Council which include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing work based learning opportunities and collaborative business / labor associations.
- Implementing specific career exposure courses.
- Retain youth and recruit former residents.
- Enhance PK-12 career experience curriculum.

- Internships designed for small business, hands on, applied learning.

To date our nation's education industry is an institution whose function is the measuring of institutionally defined knowledge but not acknowledging or crediting observed competencies originating outside of the academic environment. As we increase the Carnegie Units required for graduation we simultaneously reduce the time available for elective classes.

The University of Minnesota Mankato offers a Master of Science degree in Experiential Education based on its observations of a candidate's experiential learning and competencies. HB 1478 accomplishes the same for regular education students in North Dakota.

Kent Ellis
Bismarck, ND