

Testimony for Hearing on HB1521
Eric J. Murphy, District 43

Thank you, Chairman Heinert and my honorable colleagues on the Education Committee. For the record, my name is Eric James Murphy, representative from District 43, Grand Forks.

As we learned, Learning Everywhere is an important educational opportunity for high school students that incorporates hands on learning at a location that is not in a traditional school setting. For instance, a student who may want to become a nurse by have an educational experience for part of the school day in an health care setting or perhaps it is a student who wants to study journalism and has a full immersion experience with the local newspaper. The potential for this program is vast. Yet despite the potential, in its two years of existence, only one school district has chosen to implement this program.

Why? Why only one school district?

Part of this reason appears to be the lengthy approval process for an educational opportunity for a student. Currently, the local school board approves the proposed opportunity, then the K12 Educational Education Coordination Council must review the proposal. Then the Superintendent of Public Instruction has 90 days to approve the proposal approved by the school district. Time sort of passes by and the opportunity goes from perhaps a fall semester start to a spring semester start. Sort of a problem, eh!

This bill streamlines the approval process, allowing the school district's board of education to approve the program without additional approval. The Superintendent of Public Instruction still has oversight over the program approved by a school district and can suspend the program if it does not meet the intended requirements for credit. In other words, academic rigor is maintained by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

If the program falls into a CTE category, the authority over the program is through the department of career and technical education. Hence, reporting would be to this Director of Career and Technical Education. Additional to the CTE component herein adds an additional educational opportunity as these programs may be at the CTE and traditional academic education opportunity.

In the end, bill HB1521 will amend and reenact section 15.1-07-35 of North Dakota Century Code in a manner that will hopefully add to this unique educational opportunity.