

January 13, 2025

North Dakota House Education Committee:

The Modern Classrooms Project (MCP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing equitable, effective, and student-centered learning environments through blended, self-paced, and mastery-based instructional models. We are writing in support of House Bill No. 1105, which seeks to amend and reenact Section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code, pertaining to virtual learning policies.

### **The Importance of Virtual Learning Policies**

This bill addresses a pressing need to ensure that all North Dakota students have equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities, regardless of geographic location, economic status, or individual learning needs. The proposed amendments offer flexibility for school districts while maintaining necessary safeguards to ensure the quality and accountability of virtual learning programs.

### **Key Benefits of HB 1105:**

1. **Expanding Access to Education**

By prohibiting resident school districts from denying open enrollment to approved virtual schools, the bill removes barriers for students seeking tailored learning experiences. This provision is critical for students in rural or underserved areas where certain courses or advanced programs may not be offered in traditional settings.

2. **Equity in Course Availability**

Requiring school districts to pay for virtual courses that they do not offer ensures that all students can access the credits they need to graduate on time. This policy directly supports the statewide goal of fostering equitable educational outcomes.

3. **Clear Accountability Measures**

The bill's requirements for annual reports on virtual instruction outcomes ensure transparency and data-driven decision-making. Comparing the performance of virtual learners to their peers will provide valuable insights for improving instructional practices.

4. **Flexibility for District Implementation**

Allowing districts to set eligibility criteria, time restrictions, and cost-recovery measures for virtual courses ensures that local needs and priorities are respected while maintaining student success as the central focus.

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**Conclusion**

House Bill No. 1105 is a vital step toward modernizing education in North Dakota and preparing students for the demands of a rapidly changing world. We urge the committee to support this bill and its potential to transform learning opportunities for students across the state.

Respectfully submitted,

- *Bob Shaw*

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