

1 Tuesday, January 14, 2025

2 Pamela Cronin, Principal, West Fargo Horace High School

3 Support for HB 1105

4 Good Morning Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

5 My name is Pam Cronin, and I am the Principal of West Fargo Horace High School. I am here today to
6 testify in support of House Bill 1105.

7 Under the current legislation, any student can take an online course simply by submitting a request.
8 While this provision may seem beneficial on the surface, it has caused significant challenges for high
9 schools. At our school, for instance, we have approximately 50 students out of 750 requesting to take an
10 online class in subjects such as PE, social studies, English, and math. The reasons for these requests
11 range from legitimate requests such as "it wouldn't otherwise fit in my schedule" to less compelling
12 reasons like "it will be easier" or "I just want an open period".

13 While online courses can be a practical option if a course doesn't fit into a student's schedule or the
14 school is unable to offer it, this is not always the case. For example, 1st semester, we had approximately
15 five students who genuinely needed to take an online course due to a scheduling conflict. The other 50
16 students requested online classes for varying reasons, many without a clear or pressing need.
17 Unfortunately, of those 50 students, approximately 15% did not pass their courses. This has left these
18 students in a situation where they are now off track for graduation, creating significant challenges for
19 both the students and the school.

20 This situation creates serious scheduling difficulties and imposes additional costs on school districts.
21 While we firmly believe that school districts should provide opportunities for students when the courses
22 they request are unavailable, this should be a measured and practical process. West Fargo has always
23 prioritized accommodating students in such cases. For example, we've supported students who face
24 conflicts with courses offered only at one time like AP Calculus, music, or Spanish II to allow them to
25 take an online course at our expense.

26 The amendments proposed address these challenges and help maintain the integrity and efficiency of
27 our school systems without the unintended consequences that we have discovered over the last two
28 years. I urge you to consider these changes for the benefit of our students and school districts.

29 Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.