

2019 HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

HB 1170

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Coteau Room, State Capitol

HB 1170
1/23/2019
31277

☐ Subcommittee
☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk: Bev Monroe

Typed by: Elaine Stromme

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Relating to school calendar days on days of inclement weather

Minutes:

Attachment 1 - 2

Chairman Owens: Opened the hearing on HB 1170

Representative Jim Grueneich: Introduced HB1170 electronic testimony – Attachment 1
end 5:25

Chairman Owens: You are talking about inclement days, we heard a bill earlier that would change the school time to hours instead of day, if we would go to that do you believe making up hours electronically would make this even simpler and even more appealing?

Representative Grueneich: 6:20 This would be good if they have a contagious disease, or are bed ridden with an injury, there would be a lot of different applications. Yes, I think if we switched to hours instead of days that would be very beneficial. 7:20

Chairman Owens: Any questions?

Vice Chairman Cynthia Schreiber-Beck: On the back side 19 through 21 is that cumbersome to a point? Is there some way to make it simpler?

Representative Grueneich: in Section 17,18,19 & 20 there would be one other item; is the 95% student involvement because they kept track of kids doing homework? In school the numbers varied a little bit. end 9:30

Vice Chairman Cynthia Schreiber-Beck: 9:40 Is this considered a mass waiver? Are we duplicating a process? 10:16

Representative Grueneich: In regards to a waiver, I will let DPI answer that question.

Chairman Owens: Are there any further questions?

Representative Ron Guggisberg: Because of access to electronic equipment and to the internet is that why the 95 % is in. Does the school provide laptops for all the children? Are we providing adequate quality in education?

Representative Grueneich: 11:45 The 95% is actually student involvement. This isn't a one size fits all. There might be schools that don't have the technological access. It will be a pilot project. 12:50

Representative Mary Johnson: Is a virtual education plan an interactive type of presentation? Is there a teacher on the screen instructing or is it more of a read this and do this homework kind of plan? Is the instructor going to instruct from their home or how do you see this working?

Representative Grueneich: 14:00 The homework was when you actually took home paper work. There would still be a teacher student relationship through the internet. 15:00

Chairman Owens: Yes

Representative Grueneich: I would like Representative Satrom to speak on this.

Representative Satrom: I would like to introduce Jordan he would like to share some things with you. 15:30 Jordan Mikkelsen speaking 17:00 /17:00 Wyatt Limesand (Attachment 1) 18:30

Chairman Owens: Thank you so much.

Chairman Owens: support

Kirstin Baesler: 20:00 - 25:00 I am very supportive of this bill. As a State Superintendent I would like to share with you that would be helpful and informational to you as you make this decision. You may have seen where every school in ND had 1 gigabyte of infrastructure going up to their school building. Access to the internet is available all over North Dakota. The State makes a 2.3-billion-dollar investment in education to our school districts and the school districts use those dollars to contract with their teachers. I think we should give the schools the right to make the decision on what works for them.

Chairman Owens: Questions?

Representative Mary Johnson: Is there a minimum percent of attendance required to count as a school day?

Kirstin Baesler: Currently there is not.

Representative Pat D. Heinert: 25:45 - 26:35 Miss Baesler, If we allow this how are we going to make sure those kids are safe at home?

Kirstin Baesler: That is the conversation that the parents and the elected school board members of the community would have to have. The local school board could make that decision based on what is best.

Chairman Owens: support

Nick Archuleta: 28:00 This is what education is all about. We have students that have identified a problem and have taken steps to solve the problem. We will have to be creative to get to all of our students.

Chairman Owens: opposition

Jeff Fastnacht: Assistant Superintendent to Mandan Public Schools. (MPSD): 29:00 - 31:30 Do you believe that school should be in session for a certain amount of time? Do you believe that school is open to everyone regardless of their skills or their background we accept all. I support online learning. I think that this is where schools are going. What about the percentage of kids who do not learn in that fashion? About 12% of our population are students with learning disabilities, those kids need specialized training and specialized people. When we ask for a waiver for school we have to do it for all the students.

Representative Hoverson : This is about snow days, or dismiss early, or home sick.

Jeff Fastnacht: I have concerns with that, I don't think that is where this bill is going, I respect the fact of what these kids have done, to find a need and address it and learn. But there is a segment of our population that we serve that are not adept at online learning. end 34:00

Chairman Owens: opposition

Russ Ziegler, Assistant Director of North Dakota Council of Education Leaders (NDCEL): 34:30 (See Attachment #2) request a DNP 38:00

Representative Mary Johnson: There are a lot of children that don't attend school wouldn't this help increase attendance?

Russ Ziegler: I thought of that too, but if they are in the lower economics they might not have the funds or the technology to do that.

Representative Mary Johnson: I don't think we should sell our special needs students short, they understand more that we think they do. 40:25

Russ Ziegler: I totally agree with you. There are students that excel in technology but there are others that do not.

Vice Chairman Cynthia Schreiber-Beck: Any further opposition, any neutral

Joe Kolosky: 41:00 I am Deputy Director of the Office of School Approval and Opportunity for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. I am in charge of waivers, we would evaluate the situation and decide what is best, then it will go to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, then it will come back down to us on the committee level. It is a process. 43:35

Vice Chairman- Cynthia Schreiber- I am seeing none.

Representative Rick Becker: Continue with neutral.

Close Hearing

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Coteau A Room, State Capitol

HB 1170

1/28/2019

31752

☐ Subcommittee

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk: Bev Monroe Typed by: Elaine Stromme

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

Relating to school calendar days on days of inclement weather.

Minutes:

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Chairman Owens: Opened the hearing on HB 1170.

Representative Schreiber- Beck: Made a Motion Do Not Pass

Representative Guggisberg: Seconded

Roll Call vote was taken: Yes – 11 No – 2 Absent - 1

Do Not Pass Carries.

Representative Schreiber-Beck Will carry the HB 1170.

Date: 1/28/19
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2019 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE
ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1170

House Education Committee

☐ Subcommittee

Amendment LC# or Description: _____

Recommendation: ☐ Adopt Amendment
☐ Do Pass ☒ Do Not Pass ☐ Without Committee Recommendation
☐ As Amended ☐ Rerefer to Appropriations
☐ Place on Consent Calendar
Other Actions: ☐ Reconsider ☐ _____

Motion Made By Rep S. Beck Seconded By Rep R. Guggisberg

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman M. Owens	✓		Rep. Guggisberg	✓	
V. Chair. Schreiber-Beck	✓		Rep. Hager	✓	
Rep. Heinert	✓				
Rep. Hoverson	✓				
Rep. D. Johnson		✓			
Rep. M. Johnson	✓				
Rep. Johnston		✓			
Rep. Longmuir	✓				
Rep. Marshall	✓				
Rep. Pyle	✓				
Rep. Strinden	✓				
Rep. Zubke	✓				

Total (Yes) 11 No 2

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Rep Schreiber-Beck

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1170: Education Committee (Rep. Owens, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (11 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1170 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2019 TESTIMONY

HB 1170

No More Snow Days?

Many schools are replacing snow days with blizzard bag days.

JANUARY 22, 2018



Westend61/Getty Images (Girl); iStockPhoto/Getty Images (Snow)

In many places in the U.S., a big snowstorm can mean a day off from school. But for a growing number of kids, the learning doesn't stop when school closes. Their schools have turned snow days into blizzard bag days.

At some schools, blizzard bags are packets filled with worksheets. At others, the term is used for lessons that students complete online. When bad weather is forecast, teachers assign blizzard bags so their students can work at home if school is canceled.

Rhode Island recently passed a law allowing public schools to start blizzard bag programs this school year.

"Snow days are fun, but it's also important for students and teachers to stay on track with their learning," says Governor Gina Raimondo of Rhode Island.

Some schools in at least three other states already use blizzard bags. Public schools in the Kearsarge school district in New Hampshire have used them since 2009. For fifth-graders in that district, blizzard bags might include math worksheets or reading assignments. Students in sixth grade and up are given online assignments. If 80 percent of all students in the school complete their work, the day counts as a school day.

Kearsarge officials say blizzard bags are a good alternative to having to make up snow days at the end of the school year.

"We always have between five and eight snow days, so there were times we almost ran out of days in June," says Winfried Feneberg, the superintendent of the Kearsarge school district.

But critics say blizzard bags are no substitute for learning in class. Plus, some kids and parents think schools should just let students have time off on snow days, even if that means adding more school days in June.

3/13/18
19

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

I am a 4th grade teacher at Louis L'Amour Elementary School and my students have been learning about the Three Branches of Government. A few weeks ago, students learned about the legislative branch. They role played the legislative assembly and went through the process of how to make a bill into a law. One idea of a law came from a Scholastic News article about blizzard bags. (I have included the article we read.) Most students were in support of making blizzard bags a law in our state. This bill passed into law in our classroom, but students know it was just for fun. Then some realized that maybe we could send this idea to our legislators just to see what kind of response we would get. We have also been working on writing persuasive essays, so the students asked to write a persuasive letter to you to explain their reasoning as to why they feel blizzard bags should become a state law, as it is in a few other states. Please take some time and read what my students have written to you. We would love to hear back from you!

Thank you,



Kristy Landenberger

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

We want to have blizzard bags in ND. One good thing about them is that if 80% of the kids get the homework done, it would count as a school day. Also, if we have 5-10 assignments, you can get it done in a couple of hours, but a lot of work is accomplished. You can be comfortable while doing homework at home. Finally, it gets parents involved in their student's education. That is why blizzard bags are important.

Sincerely,
Cody

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

This is why I want Blizzard Bags in North Dakota. If 80% of students finished the bag, they might get rewarded by a teacher, and you get knowledge at home. If 80% of students finished, then we won't have to make up missed days of school. That is why I want Blizzard Bags.

Sincerely,

Tayte

HB1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

These are some reasons why we should have Blizzard Bags. First, we would have the same amount of work with a typical day of school. Second, if you have to walk to school on a questionable weather day, you won't have to, and you can just stay home and be safe. A third reason is you don't have to go to school, you can just sleep in until you want to do your Blizzard Bag. Those are all of my reasons why I want Blizzard Bags. I hope you agree with my reasoning.

Sincerely,

Brooke

HB1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

We need Blizzard Bags for school and this is why. Kids get bored during snow days, so if we had Blizzard Bags, they would have something to do. If someone has an F in school, on snow days they can catch up on learning. If kids do Blizzard Bags, they will be ready for the next day of school. If kids forget what lesson they are on, Blizzard Bags have worksheets to remind them about the lesson. Those are reasons why we need Blizzard Bags.

Sincerely,

Shelby

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

Our class has come up with an idea to implement "Blizzard Bags" into all of the school districts of North Dakota. Here are some reasons why. If we had Blizzard Bags we wouldn't have to make up days we have missed because of bad weather. Even though Blizzard Bags might take a couple hours to finish, we still will learn a lot from it. Students might learn even more, because some kids just cheat, or do what the teacher is doing in class. Blizzard Bags can also get parents involved in their kid's education. Also, students won't feel rushed and they might do better than when students do feel rushed. Pupils can also take a brain break or do it at whatever time they want as long as they do it on time. I hope you support our opinion.

Sincerely,
Becky

1

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

I'm going to tell you some reasons why we want Blizzard Bags. It would take less time than a typical school day, but we are learning a lot. If 80% of the kids do it, then it would count as a full school day. We could take our time, so we wouldn't have to do it in a certain amount of time. It would be a good review, so kids wouldn't forget the lesson. Kids could wear their pajamas all day while they are doing their work. That is why we need Blizzard Bags. Please support our idea! Have a nice day!

Sincerely,

Breanna

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

You should do Blizzard bags, this is why. When it is very cold, it's like a blizzard out, so kids shouldn't go outside. Blizzard bags have school work, so kids don't have to go to school when it is very cold outside. You don't have to do work at school because you did the work at home. That is why we should do Blizzard bags.

Sincerely,

Mikaela

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

This is why we should have Blizzard Bags. First, they probably don't cost very much money, because all it is is a bag full of work. It only takes 2-4 hours to complete, and a normal day of school is 7 hours long, but we are learning just as much. If we get Blizzard Bags, we don't have to make up school days right after Easter or in the summer that we missed because of snow days .In order to get credit for a day of school 80% of the students have to do the work. Hope you agree with me.

Sincerely,

Wyatt

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear Legislator,

We all want Blizzard Bags. We want Blizzard Bags because your mom and dad will help you with the work and in my opinion it is better than the teacher's help. If we have Blizzard Bags, it will have some activities and worksheets for review and it will only take a few hours to do it, but we are still learning. With Blizzard Bags, you don't have to go to school, so you can be in bed and do your work. That is why we all want Blizzard Bags.

Sincerely,

Aiden

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear Legislator,

This is why we think we should have Blizzard Bags. If they're used, there will be less school at the end of the year because of missed snow days. You can just have time to settle down and get some work done at home. Again if they're used, the students will have time to focus at home, plus it takes less time than a normal school day, but we are still learning a lot .

Sincerely,

Tori

12

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

We need Blizzard Bags in North Dakota. You don't have to go to school in the summer to make up snow days then. Yay! When you do Blizzard Bags at home, you can sit in bed while wearing your pajamas while doing your homework!!! If you're stuck on a problem, you can have your parents help you. Finally, you can work at your own pace and finish it in your own time. See, that is why we need Blizzard Bags! I really hope you consider my idea!

Sincerely,

Jordan

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear Legislator,

This is why I think that all school districts should have Blizzard Bags. Kids wouldn't forget what they're learning in school, and if 80% or more do their work, we wouldn't have to make up the missed day. There is a selection of work in the bag, so if someone is stuck they can just work on a new sheet or get their parents involved to help them. That is why I think all school districts should have Blizzard Bags.

Sincerely,

Autumn

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

This is why I think North Dakota should have Blizzard Bags. First, people could stay away from cars and buses blowing over on bad weather days if we have school. Next, students can go their own speed and not be rushed doing the work. Last, it takes about 2 to 3 hours at home and not 7 hours at school. That is why we need Blizzard Bags.

Sincerely,

Elise

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

This is why you should consider letting us have Blizzard Bags. One reason you should let us have them is so we don't forget what we are learning in school. You can eat and be in a comfy spot while you work on your homework at your house. If 80% or more of the students complete the work, we don't have to make up the day, but it is still a good review on what we are learning in school. This why I think we should have blizzard bags.

Sincerely,

Adri

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

This is why I think we should have Blizzard Bags. It takes less time, about 2 hours rather than a 7 hour school day, but we are learning a lot. I also think we should have Blizzard Bags because parents can help you to make it easier. I also think we should get Blizzard Bags because you can sleep when you're done, kids don't get enough sleep now days. That is why I think we should have Blizzard Bags.

Sincerely,

Isabella

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

These are some reasons why we should have Blizzard Bags. It's better so there is no accidents while people are trying to get their kids to school on bad weather days. The kids can have a stress-free day. If your family is home, you can spend a whole day with them and get parents involved your education. Then you don't have to use up one of your summer days to make up the missed day. Those are some reasons why I want Blizzard Bags, and I hope you have a nice day.

Sincerely,

Ethan

HB1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

I think we should have Blizzard Bags. Here are some reasons. If we don't have Blizzard Bags, we have to go to school when we normally don't have to. We might even have to skip important plans to make up a missed day of school. You can work at your own speed while doing Blizzard Bags. It would only take a couple hours, but we are reviewing our learning. I hope you think the same way I do. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kaida

19

HB 1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

We should have Blizzard Bags in North Dakota, other states such as Rhode Island does. I think we have a lot of blizzards in North Dakota, and someone on a questionable day, could get in a car crash. You can also get your parents involved in your education when they help. Plus you can sleep in or work at your own pace. We pretended to be the legislative assembly in class, and the Blizzard Bags bill passed into law, maybe it will pass in real law. That is why I want Blizzard Bags.

Sincerely,

Kendra

HB1170
1-23-19
#1

Dear legislator,

We want blizzard bags because it would get more parents involved in their education. Also, it wouldn't take Easter Monday away from us, and it wouldn't add more days to the school year if 80% of the kids did it. Blizzard days can help with studying. Lastly, kids wouldn't forget the lesson that they are learning because they are reviewing with the bags. That is why we need blizzard bags.

Sincerely,

Kaden

HB1170
1-23-19
#1

Wyatt

Hi I'm Wyatt

Virtual Classrooms are what North Dakota's winter's needs, here's why. First driving in bad weather conditions are dangerous, for both teachers and our future generation. Also, kids would rather do a little homework at home than miss out on sports or other fun activities in the summer. Instead of having their school year extended into the summer. And all students will already know what they are being asked to do, because it will be a lesson that they have previously learned in class. Overall most kids support this and so do teachers because they like to do fun stuff too in the summer.

Most school districts have already started doing program such as New Hampshire. Chris Sununu (SU-NEW-NEW) is the governor of New Hampshire and "It has work positively for New Hampshire." Says The people of New Hampshire. Jerry Frue is the superintendent for Governor Went Worth school district in New Hampshire says, "It is very disruptive and hard for a class to come back from a Blizzard Day." Could you imagine having a test planned on Friday but having it interrupted by a blizzard day so then It will be on Monday or maybe Tuesday.

The students might think we get to go skiing or ice skating, but if it is white out conditions like a blizzard you can't do those activities. This bill is one that should be passed. That is why I feel you should pass this bill. Thank you for listening to me and finally ~~make America along with North Dakota~~ GREAT AGAIN!!

have an amazing dayk

22

HB1170
1-23-19
#1

We thank you one last time for taking the interest in our virtual classroom bill. We highly recommend passing it. Thank you for taking your time to listen to us. That's all that we have for you today. Crazy to think it all started as a scholastic news

THANK YOU!!!

HB170
1-23-19
#1

Hello, my name is Jordan. First, off I'd like to say thank you for having us. So this whole idea started with us reading a "Scholastic News" about these things called Blizzard Bags, in Rhode Island. We thought, Huh? What are those? At the time we were also studying government. We thought this was a good idea, especially for living in North Dakota. So we wrote to the legislature about why we thought it was a good idea. That is why we are here today.

I think it is a great idea especially now that most kids have their own electronics so this would be fairly simple. Also, I think it's a great idea to do it online rather than manual worksheets and textbooks. This would help us so much if there ~~were~~^{would} happen to be a snow day in the year. Then we wouldn't have to use up our summer vacation at school. If you look at it, it really is a great idea and fairly simple. So please, help this bill pass and make our schools and North Dakota even better than they already are. Thank you!



Russ Ziegler

HB 1170
1-23-19
#2

HB 1170 – Virtually make up a weather related closure day – Testimony in Opposition

Good afternoon Chair Owens and members of the House Education Committee, I stand before you on behalf of NDCEL which is the organization that serves our school Superintendents, Principals, CTE Directors, Technology Directors, AD's, County Superintendents, Business Officials and truly every school leader with the exception of teachers and school board members. We stand before you today in support of the positive intent behind HB 1170.

While the intentions of the bill are well intended and even innovative, we are not sure that implementation would be possible. According to the bill a school would not have to make up a weather related closure if they submitted a virtual education plan that is approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. To be approved the school would have to show that 95% of the students actively participated in the virtual education plan and that 95% of the school's teachers and administration were also active participants. Even with that high of a participation rate our fear is that it would create an inequity with certain groups of students. One of those groups of students would be the student who would not have access to the needed technology in order to participate, we have students who cannot afford computers or even internet connections, so those students would miss out on the valuable instruction going on. Even though there are some schools implementing one-to-one initiatives. Some of those do not let the students bring the technology home, especially in the lower grades. The other group of students that may be left out of the instruction would be some special education students. Some IEP students may not have the ability or skills to utilize the technology that would be necessary to participate. If this is the case, then could potentially segregate that group of students.

Another concern for NDCEL is the logistics that would be needed to get the low grades onto the technology to do the instruction. With a majority of households have single parents or both parents working who would be responsible to help the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, graders get onto the technology and be doing what is necessary. Would that shift to the daycares? We are not sure how that would work when a day care provider may be overseen numerous children with various ages.

Because of the items listed we respectfully request a Do Not Pass on HB 1170