



NDSBA
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BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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HB 1105
Testimony of Amy De Kok
Senate Education Committee
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Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Amy De Kok, and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA). NDSBA represents all 168 public school districts and their governing boards. I am here today to express our support for HB 1105. This bill provides important clarity and safeguards regarding virtual instruction policies while ensuring that school districts maintain an appropriate role in overseeing student enrollment in virtual courses.

NDSBA acknowledges the value of virtual learning opportunities, particularly those offered through the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE). However, we also recognize the necessity of ensuring that such opportunities do not inadvertently create financial or administrative burdens on local school districts or open the door for misuse of the system. The House Education Committee's amendments to HB 1105 strike an appropriate balance by preserving student choice while reinforcing the district's ability to manage and support effective virtual learning policies.

Key Amendments and Their Impact

1. **Ensuring District Oversight and Planning:** The bill now clarifies that school districts may require registration for virtual instruction to align with their existing course registration schedules and deadlines. This amendment prevents last-minute enrollments that could disrupt instructional planning and ensures students are making informed decisions regarding their coursework.
2. **Academic Readiness for Sequential Virtual Courses:** Districts may establish prerequisites for virtual courses that build on prior knowledge, ensuring that students are adequately prepared. This helps maintain academic integrity and student success by preventing enrollment in courses for which students lack foundational knowledge.
3. **Financial Responsibility and Course Access:** A critical amendment ensures that a school district must cover the cost of a virtual course only if the district does not offer the course and the credit is necessary for timely graduation. This provision ensures that virtual instruction serves as a

supplement rather than a financial loophole that could lead to an unnecessary transfer of educational costs from families to districts.

4. **Minimum Onsite Course Requirements:** The bill allows school districts to establish a minimum number of onsite courses students must take, whether in person or virtually. However, such policies cannot be used to unreasonably restrict student access to virtual options. This provision allows school boards to maintain student engagement with their home district while preventing abuse of virtual programs as a way to avoid in-person attendance entirely.
5. **Guidance on Virtual Course Retakes:** The amendments grant discretion to districts in determining whether they will pay for a student to retake a virtual course. This ensures that districts are not financially responsible for repeated coursework due to lack of student effort or accountability.

These amendments reflect a thoughtful approach that acknowledges the growing role of virtual education while preserving school district authority and responsibility. NDSBA supports HB 1105 in its current form, as it ensures that virtual instruction remains a valuable tool for student learning without becoming an undue burden on local schools.

I respectfully urge this committee to pass HB 1105 as amended and appreciate your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.