

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee was assigned three studies.

Section 29 of 2015 Senate Bill No. 2031 directed a study of North Dakota content standards and assessments. The study was to provide for a review of the content standards applicable to all grade levels in this state, from kindergarten through grade 12, in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. The study also was to compare the content standards of this state to those of other states that are recognized as having high-academic achievement levels, and review the standards development process. The study was to review the purpose of general and alternate student assessments, examine the availability of existing and proposed assessment models, and examine the assessments utilized by other states that are recognized as having high-academic achievement levels. The study was to review those sections of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. 6301, et seq.] that address standards, assessments, accountability, and local flexibility, and any recent pertinent regulatory changes or policy statements issued by the United States Department of Education.

Section 36 of 2015 Senate Bill No. 2031 directed a study of the nature and scope of career and technical education (CTE) opportunities available to students in this state, the manner in which such opportunities are financially supported, and the manner in which such opportunities are monitored to ensure that they provide students with 21st century technical skills that are aligned to industry standards, in addition to providing appropriate academic foundations.

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4018 (2015) directed a study of the use of seclusion and restraint procedures in schools.

The Legislative Management delegated to the committee the responsibility to receive the following reports:

- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction by the end of February regarding the financial condition of school districts. (North Dakota Century Code Section 15.1-02-09)
- A compilation of annual school district employee compensation reports from the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Section 15.1-07-13)
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding a request from a school or school district for a waiver of any rule governing the accreditation of schools. (Section 15.1-06-08)
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding a request from a school or school district for a waiver of Section 15.1-21-03 regarding high school unit instructional time. (Section 15.1-06-08.1)
- A compilation of test scores of a test aligned to the state content standards in reading and mathematics given annually to students in three grades statewide from the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Section 15.1-21-10)
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction before July 1, 2016, regarding findings and recommendations of the School District Reporting Review Committee, pursuant to Section 28 of 2015 Senate Bill No. 2031.
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction by August 1, 2016, regarding the implementation of a uniform system for the accounting, budgeting, and reporting of data by an early childhood education provider who has received a grant pursuant to Section 6 of 2015 Senate Bill No. 2151.
- A report from the Education Standards and Practices Board regarding electronic satisfaction survey results of all interactions with individuals seeking information or services from the board. (Section 15.1-13-36)

Committee members were Senators Donald Schaible (Chairman), Howard C. Anderson, Jr., Kyle R. Davison, Robert Erbele, Tim Flakoll, Joan Heckaman, Richard Marcellais, Erin Oban, Nicole Poolman, and David S. Rust and Representatives Mike Nathe, Richard G. Holman, Bob Hunsakor, Mary C. Johnson, Jerry Kelsh, Alex Looyesen, Lisa Meier, David Monson, Karen M. Rohr, Mark Sanford, Cynthia Schreiber Beck, Kris Wallman, and Denton Zubke.

NORTH DAKOTA CONTENT STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS

Background

A standard is a concise, written description of that which students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. It is an educational objective applicable to a particular point, which is often the end of a course, a grade level, or a grade span. A standard does not prescribe any particular teaching practice, curriculum, or assessment method.

Standards are generally organized by subject matter--English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, etc. These are the same general subject-matter categories that schools have used for decades. Within each subject-matter category, standards are usually organized by grade level or grade span. The sequencing of the standards is called a learning progression. There are two main characteristics inherent in all sequential standards:

- The descriptions for each standard address the specific learning needs and abilities of students at a particular stage of their intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development; and
- The standards reflect clearly articulated sequences, so that each learning expectation builds upon previous expectations and at the same time prepares students for more challenging concepts and more sophisticated coursework at the next level.

The basic purpose of this organizational framework is to ensure students are being exposed to developmentally appropriate material and teachers are sequencing student learning effectively. Standards generally include overarching, long-term educational goals. These goals tend to reference the knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits teachers and schools are expected to foster. Finally, standards generally include references to content.

Standards are historically rooted in the concept of school improvement--improving the effectiveness of schools, improving the quality and consistency of teachers, and improving the academic achievement of students. Standards can be used to provide consistency and commonality with respect to that which is taught in different states, schools, and classrooms.

An assessment is a tool used to evaluate, measure, and document things such as a student's academic readiness, learning progress, and skill acquisition. Assessments are used to determine a 4-year-old's readiness for kindergarten and a 12th grade student's comprehension of advanced physics. Each assessment has a different purpose. The purpose dictates the design of the assessment. Measuring a student's perceived ability or readiness to learn requires a different type of assessment than one which measures the acquisition of certain skills or knowledge. Measuring a student's recollection of facts requires a different type of assessment than one which measures analytical and comprehension skills. Assessments also can be crafted to identify academic strengths and weaknesses so that teachers are better able to provide specialized academic support, educational programming, or social services.

Assessments come in many forms, depending on the purpose for which they are designed. Following is a description of the more commonly referenced types of assessments.

- Diagnostic assessments attempt to quantify that which a student already knows about a subject or a topic. They are generally given at the beginning of a school year or at the beginning of a new unit of study.
- Formative assessments are used to determine a student's progress toward a defined learning goal. They are given throughout the learning process.
- Interim or benchmark assessments are used to predict a student's performance on summative assessments. Interim assessments are given periodically, and generally at the end of a grading period.
- Summative assessments are used to determine a student's mastery of a topic after instruction. Summative assessments are given at the end of a school year or at the end of a unit of study.
- Norm-referenced assessments measure students against a national "norm" or an average, to rank the students against each other. Examples of norm-referenced assessments include the SAT and the ACT.
- Criterion-referenced assessments measure a student's performance against a standard or specific goal. Examples of criterion-referenced assessments include unit and chapter tests, as well as the assessments commonly referred to as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and Smarter Balanced.

Assessments can be delivered using a paper and pencil method or an online method. An online assessment can also be an adaptive assessment. As a student answers questions correctly, the assessment selects increasingly difficult questions. Likewise, if a student answers questions incorrectly, the assessment will select less difficult questions. Adaptive assessments provide information regarding the actual level of a student's knowledge and not just whether a student is functioning at, above, or below a particular level.

Under the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, there was a move toward organized school improvement. This effort centered around standards for learning and periodic measures of progress using state assessments. When the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 took effect, it required a concerted effort to pursue higher and more equitable outcomes for students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, their race, their ethnicity, or any existing disability. It also required a concerted effort to provide highly qualified teachers for all students.

Since 2002 these efforts have been pursued largely through test-based accountability strategies that articulated annual targets for growth and included consequences for not meeting those targets. State tests showed noticeable student gains over time. However, progress has not been evident on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. As for the Program for International Student Assessment, which is a more open-ended test evaluating how students can apply their knowledge and can demonstrate their reasoning. United States scores in mathematics, reading, and science declined between 2000 and 2012.

Some states are beginning to re-examine educational strategies and implement changes to ensure every student will be able to learn the higher-order skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century's global environment.

Testimony and Committee Considerations

Federal Law Regarding Standards

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 protects the right of each state to set its academic content standards and seeks assurances from the state that its self-determined standards are challenging and apply to all students, specify what children are expected to know and be able to do, contain coherent and rigorous content, and encourage the teaching of advanced skills. Academic content standards are designed to be appropriately concise, specific, sequentially articulated and interrelated across grade spans, progressively challenging, and manageable. Content standards progress from skills of recognition, to identification, to use, to application across disciplines, to analysis, to evaluation, or to other higher-ordered, critical-thinking activities appropriate for the subject matter. Content standards sometimes require the acquisition of knowledge or the demonstration of logical reasoning, critical thinking, or multi-step problem solving. Content standards may involve oral or written communication, constructive and detailed reading, procedural skill and fluency, quantitative analysis, measurement, artistic expression, language acquisition, physical training, health skills, and more, all based on the content subject.

A representative of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) provided information regarding the reauthorization of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The testimony indicated the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act pushed the direction of federal education policy from where it had been under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to allow more state and local flexibility. The United States Department of Education is required to write regulations to govern the implementation of the Act. Because full implementation of the law will not occur until the 2017-18 school year, the 2016-17 school year is viewed as a transitional year. The law will continue to require teacher equity plans to ensure the most disadvantaged students are not being taught by the least experienced or improperly credentialed teachers. State education officials will be required to be very knowledgeable regarding teacher backgrounds, qualifications, and performance. The law eliminates the federal requirement that states evaluate teachers based on student growth.

Standards and Assessments Utilized by Other States

The committee received information from a representative of the National Center on Education and the Economy regarding content standards and assessments in Kentucky, which was the first state to require implementation of the Common Core Standards. The state's strategy for implementing the standards involved individuals at the state and district level who were involved in the design of the plan. The proposal focused on systematic reform involving all the known features of top-performing educational countries altered to fit Kentucky, and addressed reform along a practical legislative continuum. The testimony indicated before the reform, Kentucky had one of the worst education systems in the United States. Kentucky has improved to the statistical middle for elementary and secondary education in almost all educational indicators and statistical categories.

The committee received information from a representative of NCSL regarding recent activity among states on Common Core Standards and content standards and assessments aligned to Common Core Standards. Generally, higher education systems and institutions have been the driving factor pushing for higher content standards because remediation rates across the country are a problem at many higher education institutions.

According to the NCSL representative, states typically have a 2- to 10-year window for review of content standards to determine if the standards remain relevant and accurate. In approximately 30 states, the name of the content standards has been changed and those states no longer use the terminology "Common Core." Almost all states have some degree of participation with either the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers assessment consortium or the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). The report indicated there were 16 states associated with SBAC, including North Dakota. There has been a major increase in legislative activity across the nation regarding Common Core Standards since 2011. The increase is a result of concerns, questions, and opinions being raised as states begin implementing standards. The states that have had the most seamless transition with Common Core Standards and college and career readiness standards have worked cooperatively with higher education systems and the institutions to promote a higher degree of preparedness for college. The National Conference of State Legislatures representative indicated Texas has long been considered to have high content standards, and other states have adopted Texas curriculum materials. According to the NCSL representative, implementation of standards by a state should include:

- A combination of academic content standards;
- The educator's role in making the standards come alive;
- Professional development of educators to ensure they are qualified to implement any changes made to academic content standards;
- Classroom practices that evolve out of the educator's role in implementing the standards;
- Curriculum and instructional materials used by the educators in the classroom;
- An assessment system that accurately and reliably reflects what the students are learning in the classroom;
- Accountability measures for the state to ensure the students are learning; and
- A role for higher education in ensuring new educators coming into the field are aware of the current content standards.

Assessment Performance Report

The Superintendent of Public Instruction provided information regarding state assessment test performance, comparisons to other states, plans for future assessments, plans for the superintendent's assessment task force, and assessments undertaken by school districts other than those required by statute. The results of the spring 2015 state assessment aligned very closely with other national results on the ACT. All 179 school districts within North Dakota were surveyed to determine which is given, at which grade levels, how many times per year, and how long the assessments take. Although only a few assessments are required by state and federal law, many school districts choose to offer more assessments.

The National Assessment of Education Progress is required to be given to grades 4 and 8 every other year. The ACT WorkKeys is an assessment required by the state to be taken by grade 11 students. State and federal law require a science assessment be given to students in grades 4 and 8 and once in high school. State and federal law also require assessments in mathematics and English language arts for grades 3 through 8 and grade 11. On average in the state, students spend 14,284 hours in school between elementary, middle, and high school. A student, on average, spends 138 of those hours taking standardized assessments, which is less than 1 percent of the student's total class time. The 138-hour average accounts for all required state and federal assessments as well as all optional assessments that the school districts choose to utilize. No school district is administering assessments that account for more than 2 percent of a student's total classroom time.

According to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 99 percent of all students in the state are tested under SBAC. She said 56,000 students were asked to sit for assessments this past year, and of the tests that were scored at the time of the report to the committee, 46 percent of the students were proficient in English and 40 percent were proficient in mathematics. The scores are in line with the state's results from other well-regarded national assessments, including the ACT and the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Review of the Standard Development Process

The committee received information from a representative of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) regarding the history of content standards in North Dakota. Under Article VIII of the Constitution of North Dakota, the Legislative Assembly is responsible for providing a uniform system of free public schools throughout the state, beginning with the primary and extending through all grades up to and including schools of higher education. The Legislative Assembly is required to take such other steps as may be necessary to prevent illiteracy; secure a reasonable degree of uniformity in the course of study; and promote industrial, scientific, and agricultural improvement.

In meeting its constitutional mandate, the Legislative Assembly has enacted certain statutes to secure a reasonable degree of uniformity in the course of study, including:

1. Declaring the Superintendent of Public Instruction responsible for supervising the development of course content standards and the assessment of students (Section 15.1-02-04.3);
2. Requiring all approved schools to meet curricular requirements set forth in state law (Section 15.1-06-06);
3. Requiring each instructional unit in approved high schools to meet or exceed the state content standards (Section 15.1-21-02); and
4. Requiring the annual administration of state assessments in prescribed subjects and grades that are aligned to the state's content standards (Section 15.1-21-08).

State law identifies state course content standards as a foundational assurance for securing a reasonable degree of uniformity in the course of study statewide. The Superintendent of Public Instruction has established uniform procedures that direct the development, review, and adoption of state academic content standards within defined courses of study.

For the past 2 decades, the DPI has developed and revised state academic content standards through a clearly articulated process, predicated on the principle that education stakeholders need to actively engage in determining appropriately rigorous learning expectations for all students at all levels of education, leading to meaningful college or career readiness. The department seeks to periodically revise content standards as suggested by classroom and community experiences and expectations and through the guidance of state and national education policymakers.

Supervision of state academic standards includes establishing broad content design and process procedures, administratively managing academic content standards development projects, approving and disseminating content standards documents, and evaluating elements of the content standards development process. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as reauthorized under the title No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires each state to demonstrate it has adopted challenging academic content standards. The Department of Public Instruction's standards development procedures provide for the proper management of state-defined and federally defined activities.

The Department of Public Instruction manages academic content standards development activities, including the solicitation and selection of any required external professional consultants for the purposes of providing independent facilitation and research, the solicitation and appointment of content area standards committee membership, the design and conduct of external research surveys, the sponsorship of statewide solicitation of public comments, and the control of all contracting to support the objectives of the various content program efforts. The department budgets sufficient funds and time to ensure a comparable effort across all academic content areas.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction establishes and maintains a statewide committee of representative education stakeholders to advise DPI regarding the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of the state's various content standards development projects and documents. The responsibilities of the advisory committee include advising DPI regarding:

1. Designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating academic content standards for all specified content areas and corresponding academic achievement assessments;
2. Planning for the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of certain state assessments, aligned to the state's academic content standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science;
3. Developing processes to support the implementation of the state's academic content standards and achievement assessments at the district level;
4. Developing evaluation strategies and consequential validation studies to assess the impact of the state's academic content standards and achievement assessments on student and school outcomes;
5. Coordinating communication efforts to educators, policymakers, and the public regarding the development of the state's academic content standards, achievement assessments, and other related activities; and
6. Proposing initiatives that might enhance the long-term stability and improvement of the state's academic content standards development efforts.

The Department of Public Instruction reviews all proposals to develop content area standards and develops standards in several subject areas, including:

1. The arts, including dance, drama, music, and visual arts;
2. English language arts;
3. World and foreign languages;
4. Health;
5. Library and technology;
6. Mathematics;
7. Physical education;
8. Science;
9. Social studies and sciences, including history, economics, government, civics, geography, and culture;
10. English language learner proficiency; and
11. Prekindergarten.

If, under the Superintendent of Public Instruction's content review process, a content standards advisory committee recommends an external standards document for adoption, the document must be amended to meet certain format specifications and include the title design for DPI, before approval by the Superintendent. All content standards development projects follow certain prescribed phases, including startup and draft preparation, approval and dissemination, and implementation and evaluation.

Within the development and draft preparation phase, a content standards development advisory committee is selected, convened, and trained. Committee members are nominated by local education leaders based on teaching experience, content expertise, leadership background, and other criteria. Training of committee members includes an overview of the state's development procedures; expectations of committee members; and instructions regarding the structure, format, and content of state academic content standards documents. Initial drafts are written, reviewed, revised, and distributed to education stakeholder groups and the public for review and comment. A preliminary draft is prepared for approval and placed for dissemination on DPI's website.

Within the approval and dissemination phase, the Superintendent of Public Instruction approves the final standards document. A content standards document is posted on DPI's website for online dissemination, and public notice is forwarded to various groups and individuals, including all school districts, libraries, universities, and other education-related organizations. The department offers technical assistance to school districts regarding the use of the standards document. School districts begin the process of drafting local curricula aligned to the state standards document.

Within the implementation and evaluation feedback phase, teachers and administrators use the standards document as the basis for standards-based curriculum development, instructional design, professional development, and evaluation. Teachers and administrators incorporate the standards documents into school improvement planning. Teachers and administrators also submit recommendations to DPI regarding improvements for future standards. Continual feedback on the effectiveness of the standards document is provided through online reporting and training opportunities, regional and statewide education conferences, graduate programs, and long-term local curriculum mapping and development initiatives. The department compiles submitted recommendations for the improvement of standards documents to prepare for the next generation of content standards development activities.

The Department of Public Instruction appoints a project director to supervise all content standards project activities. The department contracts with external content specialists or consulting organizations to assist the project director and content standards advisory committee regarding content and formatting matters. The department contracts with an external consultation organization to provide facilitation services throughout the revision project and contracts with an independent external evaluator to review the content and formatting of the standards document to assure subject matter competence and adherence to state procedures.

English language arts and mathematics standards are reviewed every 5 to 7 years. During the standards development process, participants select the best examples from a variety of states and make appropriate changes for this state to prepare students for college and careers. The Superintendent of Public Instruction contended the final approval of the standards will result in unique state English language arts and mathematics standards that will hold students to consistent high expectations that encourage excellence at all levels of education. Implementation of the standards will begin in classrooms in the fall of 2017.

A representative of Bismarck State College provided information to the committee regarding alignment of English language arts content standards with entry into higher education. According to the testimony, a vertical alignment committee created by the Superintendent of Public Instruction was tasked with identifying gaps in competency expectations for high school students and of those entering college. Upon completing the task, the vertical alignment committee members generally agreed that if successfully implemented, the Common Core Standards would present no skill gap between high school and college. The vertical alignment committee developed a measurement rubric for the purposes of assessing successful attainment of the basic course outcomes for English 110. The rubric is meant as a guideline for authentic writing assignments that could be graded in a holistic manner with the backdrop of overall course expectations. Reading and writing can be difficult to evaluate and measure on a standardized test.

A representative of North Dakota State University provided information to the committee regarding alignment of mathematics content standards with entry into higher education. The testimony indicated the actual content of mathematics has not changed much over the past 50 years. It is important for students to be able to solve new problems, not to just learn the content and be able to recite it. According to the testimony, the assessment is critical in determining the extent to which students are able to use and apply the content they have been given. However, it was argued under the current system, teachers tend to revisit the same topics repeatedly with students.

The representative of North Dakota State University provided testimony indicating research shows there are no gaps in the content standards for mathematics. According to the testimony, there is approximately a 50 percent overlap between Algebra I, Algebra II, and college Algebra, which creates inconsistent learning that requires review of content already taught. Statistically, college freshmen tend to have the worst mathematics retention. The testimony contended that unless the students were taking high-level mathematics courses, many high school seniors are trying to survive their final mathematics course and are not highly motivated and preparing for college mathematics.

A representative of the North Dakota University System provided information regarding alignment of K-12 content standards with entry into higher education. The testimony indicated there is collaboration between the K-12 and university faculty regarding vertical curriculum alignment. The next step in vertical curriculum alignment is to determine the scalability of rubrics and assessments at the state level. Placement of students in college courses is guided by the State Board of Higher Education and ACT scores, as well as complimentary University System procedures which are cross referenced with the ACT scores. The state participates in the SBAC high school assessment, which uses a one through four scoring system on its assessments. The testimony contended the scoring system can make it difficult to cross reference with ACT scoring, which uses a 36-point system.

State Assessment Process

Because state law requires the state assessment be aligned to state standards, DPI will initiate a request for proposals process for a state test in the spring of 2017 after state standards in mathematics and English are adopted. The test will be administered to students in the spring of 2018 and will be aligned to the mathematics and English standards that were used by teachers during the 2017-18 school year.

The state requires a request for proposal process to select a company to develop the tests to be administered to students in the state. According to a representative of DPI, an assessment task force met numerous times over the course of a year to discuss the requirements and considerations that go into developing a standardized test. The task force developed a list of recommendations to include in the request for proposal for the next assessment. Although it was reported the recommendations were continuing to be debated and processed, it has been determined the assessment should be computer-based while allowing for a paper alternative option.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction provided information regarding the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act and the North Dakota assessment task force. Along with 3 years of trending data from 2015-17 under the same assessment, test items and scores under a new assessment in 2018 will be analyzed and the old assessment and the new assessment will be calibrated. Because the bids in the request for proposals had not been received, the Superintendent of Public Instruction indicated the cost of the new assessment was not known. However, it is likely the new assessment will be more expensive than the assessment the state has been utilizing, which is approximately \$27 per student. A new hybrid assessment is likely to cost between \$37 and \$45 per student. Between 50,000 and 55,000 students take the assessment in a typical year. Because the assessments being developed will continue to be spring assessments, schools will use the results to plan class schedules and professional development for the following school year.

Availability of Existing and Proposed Assessment Models

The committee received a report from a representative of SBAC regarding assessment models, testing protocols, and the assessment development process of the consortium. According to the testimony, the assessments were designed to be similar to what will be expected of students in college and in careers following high school. The testimony contended the consortium created the most comprehensive set of tools, supports, and resources incorporated into an online assessment.

The assessment is adaptive and adjusts the test difficulty as students proceed through the test to ensure equal information is given to each student. An adaptive test ensures every student is challenged by the assessment regardless of individual ability. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium supports 10 languages on mathematics assessments, including live American sign language videos. As a result, over 90 percent of the primary languages students speak are covered.

Under SBAC, each state maintains its sovereignty. However, the consortium maintains consistency among the states by allowing the states to direct policy through an executive committee elected by the states. Every state is required to agree before the consortium adopts a new policy.

The representative of the consortium testified the only fundamental way to improve teaching and learning is to provide teachers the resources needed to help students learn more efficiently. The consortium works to achieve that by:

- Supporting professional learning through a digital library helping teachers think about how to measure the assessment and standards in a different way.
- Providing a system of interim assessments that are flexible, open, and used for actionable feedback.

- Providing a summative year-end assessment.

The representative of SBAC contended open source technology used by the consortium is the best method to ensure states will be able to obtain the highest quality software for the lowest price. The technology likely will have the ability to support 50,000 concurrent users. States have flexibility to change the content of the assessments by adding or removing standards or emphasizing certain areas while continuing to use the same blueprint for the assessments.

The representative of SBAC indicated there is a growing body of evidence showing the assessment is aligned to the Common Core Standards. Although there are a variety of assessment results states may release, the consortium recommends states release the total score of a student in English and mathematics to the student. A state also may release subsets of information regarding the mathematics scores to the students. The subsets include information regarding a student's knowledge of concepts and procedures, data analysis and problem solving, and communication and reasoning skills. A state may release additional information regarding student performance in English in the areas of reading, writing, listening, and research to allow a parent to see how a child is performing in a number of areas. The consortium uses the assessment result information to create percentiles and technical reports that are made available to states. The information also is used to create scale scores showing the range of a student's performance associated with an achievement level.

A representative of ACT Aspire provided information regarding assessment models, testing protocols, and the assessment development process of ACT Aspire. The ACT Aspire assessment system tests students in grades 3 through 10 and is benchmarked to track progress toward achievement of college and career readiness. The testimony indicated the earlier information is provided to a student regarding progress toward college and career readiness, the more likely the student is to achieve the student's goals.

The ACT Aspire assessments were designed to allow educators to intervene early to impact college and career readiness. Because learning gaps occur early and become harder to remediate the older a student becomes, ACT Aspire begins testing in grade 3 to identify learning gaps and help students get back on track. ACT Aspire has five achievement tests that assess the same areas as the ACT college entrance test--English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing. Each subject area on the tests indicates whether a student is on track for readiness and advancement at each grade level. The ACT Aspire also provides information on career readiness. The assessments are provided entirely online, and teachers can have results within 15 minutes.

In addition to the assessments, ACT Aspire offers support for educators and schools. The ACT Aspire program management team provides access to training in the form of webinars, live onsite training, access to manuals and assessment prep materials, videos, and call-center support.

According to the representative of ACT Aspire, the company bases the design of the products on empirical evidence. ACT Aspire administers a curriculum survey every 3 years to K-12 educators, college educators, and career stakeholders to help determine what is currently important for college and career readiness. The survey information is used in the design of the products and to optimize instructional and testing time.

ACT Aspire tracks a student from when the student takes the ACT through the second year of college. A student may use the information to compare the results of college courses with ACT scores.

The price charged for the online assessment is \$20 to \$23 per student depending on the level of augmenting the state requests. The paper assessment would be \$7 more than the price of the online assessment depending on augmentation.

A representative of Data Recognition Corporation provided testimony indicating that in addition to SBAC and ACT Aspire, there are six to eight major assessment vendors in the third through eighth grade testing market which the state should consider.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction formed a task force to provide input and recommendations as the Superintendent of Public Instruction selects the state assessment system. The assessment system will be selected in 2016 with implementation scheduled for winter or spring 2017.

Conclusion

The committee makes no recommendation regarding its study relating to content standards and assessments.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Evolution of Career and Technical Education

At the time of this country's founding, there were three ways in which an individual could be prepared for work. The first way was an apprenticeship program, which could have been voluntary or involuntary. The latter situation came about as a way of addressing child welfare issues. Whether voluntary or involuntary, apprenticeship programs generally provided food, clothing, and shelter; religious instruction; basic instruction in the traditional 3 Rs; and instruction in a trade or occupation. The second way in which an individual could be prepared for work involved a familial relationship, in which the fundamentals of a trade or occupation were handed down from elders to children. The third way involved observation and imitation, but little actual or formal instruction. It was not until the early 1900s that vocational education, as we think of it today, began to emerge.

Significant federal intervention in vocational education began with passage of the federal Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, also known as the National Vocational Education Act. Its primary purpose was to provide funds for the training of individuals who have entered upon or who are preparing to enter upon the work of the farm. In attempting to meet its primary purpose, the legislation required the establishment of a Board of Vocational Education, which in turn caused states to establish a board that was separate from the standard State Board of Education. The result was two distinct governance structures and a decades-long separation of vocational and academic education.

This separation was promoted by another feature of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which permitted the expenditure of funds on the salaries of teachers with vocational experience, but not on the salaries of academic teachers. The intent of Congress was to ensure that vocational dollars were not redirected to nonvocational purposes. The practical effect was further polarization of vocational and academic education.

During the 1930s, Congress began to place an emphasis on vocational education within the junior or community college setting. After addressing the unemployment of the 1930s and the war effort of the 1940s, the United States began its transition to a peace-time economy. Beginning in the 1950s, light industries were emerging, as were various health occupations, and with them, there was steady growth in the junior college system and adult education.

During the 1960s, vocational education experienced especially heavy enrollment growth while technological advances were producing employment dislocation. The gap between the affluent and the disadvantaged widened and poverty in areas of economic depression could no longer be ignored. Congress responded by enacting the Manpower Development and Training Act, followed by the Vocational Education Act of 1963.

The 1963 legislation continued to encourage the separation of vocational education and academic education. By 1968 pertinent amendments were setting aside additional dollars to expand offerings for students with special needs and disadvantaged students. Within a decade, vocational education funding was made available to assist students with limited English language proficiency, to assist Native American students, and to eliminate gender bias and gender stereotyping in vocational education.

Education reforms focusing on secondary education began in the early 1980s, prompted by concern about the nation's declining competitiveness in the international market, the relatively poor performance of American students on tests of educational achievement (both nationally and internationally), and complaints from the business community about the low level of skills and abilities found in high school graduates entering the workforce. This reform came in two waves. The first wave called for increased effort from the current education system--more academic course requirements for high school graduation, more stringent college entrance requirements, longer school days and years, and an emphasis on standards and testing for both students and teachers.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a second wave of school reform arose, based in part on the belief that the first wave did not go far enough to improve education for all students. The second wave called for changes in the way schools and the educational process were organized. While restructuring proposals included school choice and site-based management, there was an emphasis on improving the school-to-work transition for nonbaccalaureate youth by creating closer linkages between vocational and academic education, secondary and postsecondary institutions, and schools and workplaces.

At the federal level, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 continued the congressionally held premise that vocational education programs are essential to the nation's future as a free and democratic society. The Act was designed to improve the skills of the labor force, provide job opportunities for adults, and provide equal opportunities for adults in vocational education. Its successor, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990, was enacted in 1990 and known as "Perkins II." Under Perkins II, the United States Department of Education provided formulaic grants to state boards of vocational education. The distribution of grant funds within a state was directed to priority items established by the state in accordance with an approved state plan for vocational-technical education. Local education agencies and postsecondary institutions were eligible to receive subgrants.

Four years later, Congress enacted the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994. This Act also was designed to address the nation's shortage of skilled workers by the use of partnerships between educators and employers. School-based and work-based instructional components were integrated with the thought that if students were given knowledge, skills, abilities, and information about specific occupations, as well as the labor market, they would be better equipped to transition from school to work. Key elements of the Act included collaborative partnerships, integrated curricula, technological advances, adaptable workers, comprehensive career guidance, work-based learning, and a step-by-step approach.

In 1998 Congress passed another iteration of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. This time, Congress focused on two areas--increased accountability and the provision of increased flexibility with respect to the states' use of funds. The Act was reauthorized in 2006, at which point it became known as the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act. The terminology change from vocational education to career and technical education is one of the major areas that was subject to revision in that reauthorization. Other areas included increasing the focus on the academic achievement of CTE students, strengthening the connections between secondary and postsecondary education, and improving state and local accountability.

Career and Technical Education Opportunities

A representative of the Department of Career and Technical Education provided information regarding CTE in North Dakota. The Department of Career and Technical Education focuses on technical assistance to schools, programs, teachers, and student organizations. The department helps CTE programs adapt to industry standards, assists programs in selecting curriculum that matches those standards, and evaluates programs every 5 years with either an onsite visit or through a desk audit. The department also provides technical assistance to middle schools and to the public and tribal 2-year colleges and provides elementary programming in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and entrepreneurship. The department assists teachers in the regular certification process and sets licensing requirements for industry professionals who want to teach at the secondary or postsecondary level in the trades, health sciences, and information technology areas and provides the education and training those professionals need to become instructors. The department provides professional development for CTE teachers and administrators. An essential component of the technical assistance is providing leadership and coordination for CTE student organizations that operate in CTE program areas. The career and technical education programs include agriculture; business; career development; family and consumer sciences; health sciences; information technology; marketing; technology and engineering; and trade, industry, and technical.

The representative of the Department of Career and Technical Education testified it is a challenge to provide access to CTE programs for schools and students across the state. Distance continues to be the chief obstacle, especially in delivery of a hands-on curriculum like CTE programs. Each of the 148 high school districts in the state are required to offer two credits in CTE. Eleven area centers comprising 93 member districts provide programming to schools. In addition, cooperative arrangements provide incentives to schools that offer CTE programs through interactive video, online, or through sharing instructors with neighboring districts. Emerging technology is another cooperative effort between schools that rotate emerging technology equipment on a 4- or 6-week basis to all member schools.

Area centers were created in the mid 1970s to allow students to attend for part of the day and to receive their academic courses at their home school. The model has been widespread across the country and has been effective in providing a school more CTE program options than the school could provide alone. Each member district in an area center must have access to all area center programs and offer a minimum of five CTE programs. In 2007 a virtual area center was developed, and there are now six virtual centers in the state which have no physical building, but may use the classroom and shops of existing schools. The virtual centers benefit from the cooperative effort that makes area centers a viable delivery option for member districts.

In the 2014-15 school year there were 79 schools participating in 37 CTE courses delivered through interactive video, and 63 schools participating in 29 online CTE courses serving a total enrollment of 1,230 students. Although participation has increased, access and availability problems remain in the ability of many schools to offer a variety of CTE programs. The North Dakota career and technical education scholarship is available to students who take four CTE credits and two or more credits in a single area of interest, or two credits in a coordinated plan for the academic scholarship as a replacement for foreign language.

Emerging technology consortiums rotate high-tech type equipment modules between schools. Seven consortiums involving 99 schools participate in emerging technology. Under the program, state funding has been used for purchasing equipment and professional development for teachers. School districts provide local funding for the majority of the teacher training, the transportation cost to move equipment between member schools, administrative costs to track usage, and scheduling. The equipment modules supplement existing curriculum and are integrated by the teacher, but are not intended to be a standalone experience for students.

The role of the career advisors program, which was established as a result of 2009 House Bill No. 1400, is to assist school counseling programs and help schools meet the 1 to 300 counselor-to-student ratio required by that legislation. A career advisor must work under the direction and supervision of a school counselor specifically in the career domain. A career advisor is permitted to cover 30 percent of the counseling time needed for a school to meet the ratio. Career advisors disseminate labor market information to students and provide career exploration experiences for students.

The testimony indicated schools that have career development counselors generally have a higher percent of students qualifying for the North Dakota scholarship--28.69 to 17.58 percent--and the ratio of academic to CTE scholarships is 51 to 49 percent, compared to 60 percent academic to 40 percent CTE scholarships for schools that do not have a career development counselor.

Funding and Evaluation of Career and Technical Education Opportunities

A representative of the Department of Career and Technical Education provided information regarding funding and evaluation of CTE programs. The focus of the evaluation process is program improvement. The department evaluates each CTE program using 12 standards--instructional planning and organizing, instructional materials utilization, instructional personnel, enrollment and student-teacher ratio, equipment and supplies, instructional facilities, safety and sanitation training and practices, program advisory committee and community relations, leadership development opportunities and career and technical student organization, workplace experience and cooperative learning experience, special populations, and educational equity. The career and technical education programs in schools and colleges are evaluated on a 5-year rotating basis. Each program is evaluated by a specialist in that area.

When a school is on the evaluation schedule, all CTE programs and the administration within a school receive a program pre-evaluation questionnaire to assist the Department of Career and Technical Education focus evaluation efforts. Within 30 days of the onsite evaluation, the school receives an official report of the evaluation. A plan of action is sent to the school for each recommendation made in the report. A school must respond to each recommendation with corrective action within 90 days. Upon the conclusion of an evaluation, each instructor and administrator is sent a satisfaction survey to provide feedback on the department staff and the evaluation process.

For the 2015-17 biennium, the Department of Career and Technical Education received a general fund appropriation of \$33,920,062, which was reduced by \$1,373,763 after the general fund budget allotment to \$32,546,299. The funding is used for salaries, operating costs, project grants, and program grants, and is intend to serve as an incentive for schools to offer quality CTE programming and to offset the higher cost of operating a CTE program. To receive funding, a CTE program must meet the following requirements:

- A minimum of two credits per year must be taught (trade and industry and health sciences require three credits).
- A minimum of seven students participating in each course for schools with grades 9 through 12 enrollment of more than 100 students, a minimum average of seven students participating per course for schools with 50 to 100 students, and no minimum participating for schools with fewer than 50 students.
- A career and technical education-certified teacher must teach the course.
- The curriculum must be based on state, national, or industry standards for each program area.
- The facilities and equipment must meet standards.
- An advisory committee must meet at least two times a year.

Conclusion

The committee makes no recommendation regarding its study of CTE in the state.

RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION IN SCHOOLS

Background

Definitions

According to the United States Department of Education, the term "restraint" may refer to either physical restraint or to mechanical restraint.

"Physical restraint" refers to a "personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head freely. The term physical restraint does not include a physical escort. Physical escort means a temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location."

"Mechanical restraint" refers to the "use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement. This term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional and are used for the specific and approved purposes for which such devices were designed, such as:

- Adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports;
- Vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle;
- Restraints for medical immobilization; or
- Orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm."

According to the United States Department of Education, "seclusion" means the "involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. It does not include a timeout, which is a behavior management technique that is part of an approved program, involves the monitored separation of the student in a non-locked setting, and is implemented for the purpose of calming."

Federal Law

Congress has provided a set of national standards that must be adhered to by psychiatric treatment facilities. The standards differ, depending on whether the facility is a nonmedical community-based facility for children and youth or a health care facility. The former includes group homes. The latter includes hospitals, intermediate-care facilities, or other health care facilities, if they receive federal funds.

The standards require facilities to comply with the general principle of protecting and promoting an individual's right to be free from restraint and seclusion for purposes of discipline or convenience and provide restraint or seclusion only may be used to ensure the physical safety of the individual or others and only upon the written order of a physician or other duly authorized licensed practitioner. Medications and drugs used to control behavior and which are not a standard treatment for the individual's condition are considered a form of restraint.

If the facility is a "non-medical, community-based facility for children and youth," the use of restraint or seclusion is limited to emergency situations within which it is necessary to protect the immediate physical safety of the individual or of others. Restraint and seclusion may be utilized only by individuals who have been trained and certified by a state-recognized body in a list of competencies, that include understanding the physiological and psychological impact of restraint and seclusion, monitoring for physical signs of distress, and preventing the use of restraint and seclusion.

Because, in these facilities, time-outs and physical escorts are not defined as restraint or seclusion, the new standards do not apply to such procedures. However, in these facilities, mechanical restraints and drugs may not be used as a form of restraint. Seclusion may be used only when a staff member is engaged in face-to-face monitoring of the individual.

The United States Department of Education has identified 15 principles that it believes states and school districts should consider if they elect to develop and implement policies and procedures related to the restraint or seclusion of a student. These principles are designed to ensure that restraint or seclusion is not used in a school, unless there is a threat of imminent danger i.e., of serious physical harm to the student or others. Under such a circumstance, the restraint or seclusion may be used only in a manner that protects the safety of all students and adults at the school.

The United States Department of Education suggests that the documentation should be used to prevent the future use of restraint or seclusion by creating a record for consideration when developing a plan to address a student's needs or when developing a plan for staff training.

State Laws

A 2015 report indicates only 22 states had meaningful protections in their statutes and regulations protecting all children from both restraint and seclusion. The referenced states are Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

According to the report, some states offer meaningful protections against restraint or seclusion only for students with disabilities. Sixteen states require that an emergency condition in which there is a threat of physical danger exist before restraint can be used on any student. Two states ban seclusion for all students and five states ban seclusion for students with disabilities. North Dakota, together with Idaho, Mississippi, New Jersey, and South Dakota is credited in the aforementioned report with having no laws that protect students from seclusion or restraint.

Testimony and Committee Considerations

A representative of DPI provided information regarding the use of restraint and seclusion in public schools. In July 2009 Education Secretary Arnie Duncan sent a letter to the states and territories urging the development or review and, if appropriate, revision of state policies and guidelines to ensure every student is safe and protected from being unnecessarily or inappropriately restrained or secluded. Following Secretary Duncan's letter, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education was tasked to work with state officials to discuss the status of each state's efforts regarding limiting the use of seclusion and restraint to protect students.

North Dakota does not have a restraint and seclusion law that applies to all students in K-12. However, there are laws prohibiting corporal punishment (Section 15.1-19-02) and pertaining to the restraint and seclusion of developmentally disabled individuals (Section 25-01.2-10). There are no federal law mandating schools to have a restraint and seclusion policy. In 2012 the United States Department of Education published a document indicating 15 principles that highlight how schoolwide behavioral interventions can significantly reduce or eliminate the use of restraint or seclusion. These guiding principles offer states, school districts, and education leaders a framework for developing appropriate policies related to restraint and seclusion to ensure the safety of adults and children. The Superintendent of Public Instruction does not require school districts to collect or submit information regarding the use of restraints or seclusion, nor does DPI keep records of the number of incidents of restraint and seclusion in schools.

The committee received testimony indicating the North Dakota School Boards Association developed a sample restraint or seclusion policy due to the absence of requirements in state law and the federal government's heightened focus on these topics. The association created a policy template on restraint and seclusion guidelines that combines guidance from the 2012 Department of Education publication with policy standards gleaned from the Eighth Circuit of Appeals rulings and state law in an effort to establish reasonable and practical protections for students and staff in school districts.

The representative of the School Boards Association stated the restraint or seclusion policies created by the association apply to all students to keep the entire student body safe, to prevent claims of discrimination, and to ensure that regardless of the student involved, restraint or seclusion is implemented with standards established by local school boards. A school district board may adopt the template in its entirety to use as its own policy. A parent who believes a child was inappropriately restrained or secluded may file a report of suspected child abuse with the county social services office or contact local law enforcement to file a complaint.

According to the School Boards Association, 47 percent of school districts in the state have adopted a restraint and seclusion policy. An additional 47 percent have not adopted a policy, and there is no information available for the remaining 6 percent. As of 2009, the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights requires all schools to report the number of incidents of restraint and seclusion that occur. In North Dakota, from 2009 to 2011, there were 1,249 reports of restraint and seclusion being used in schools, 1,105 of which involved special education students.

A representative of Bismarck Public Schools provided information regarding the restraint and seclusion policies of the Bismarck school district. The school district has a policy that restricts the use of restraint and seclusion for all students. The testimony indicated the district builds a plan for a student who may be subject to restraint or seclusion to ensure the student is successful by including the parents of the student, the teacher, the principal, and a teacher of special services. The plan developed for a student includes a behavioral intervention plan and calls for instructing the student on how to self-regulate and recognize behaviors that cause the student to have to modify behavior to be successful. The final element of a plan is a crisis plan if a student's behavior becomes unsafe for the student or others.

If a crisis occurs, a teacher will attempt to de-escalate the situation verbally and calm the student by offering a distraction. If the verbal de-escalation is unsuccessful and there is concern the student may injure the student or others, the teacher may suggest the student walk to a calming room where the student can calm and self-regulate when overwhelmed. Each plan is built with the intention of never requiring the use of a calming room, and the focus is on teaching de-escalation techniques to educators and giving the educators schoolwide support. Standards created in 2011 regulate the rooms used for physical seclusion. All dangerous items in the room are removed.

The testimony from the representative of Bismarck Public Schools indicated no psychotropic medication is used on students as a means of restraint. Physical restraint and seclusion is used only in rare circumstances when a student's behavior poses an imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others. Restraint and seclusion is never used as punishment, discipline, retaliation, or coercion, and is used only as a last resort when other methods have failed. All incidents of restraint and seclusion are documented and reported to school district administrators, and administrators review each report to determine if the strategy and plan is working and if the policies are being followed. Parents of a student are contacted immediately when an incident involving restraint or seclusion occurs.

According to testimony from a representative of the Crisis Prevention Institute, 35 states have legislation or regulations regarding restraint and seclusion use in education and school settings. Although there is no federal legislation that addresses restraint and seclusion use in schools, the "Keeping All Students Safe Act" has been proposed for the past 5 years. The testimony contended a benefit of having a state law regarding restraint and seclusion is the ability to require reporting for the purpose of gathering data on the use of restraint and seclusion. Twenty-five of the 35 states that have passed legislation on restraint and seclusion have reporting requirements.

According to the testimony from the representative of the Crisis Prevention Institute, it is important to consider a number of factors when developing laws and policies on restraint and seclusion. It was contended a good policy always starts with clear and concise definitions. A law or policy also should address the limiting of high-risk positions in restraint and seclusion situations and include de-escalation considerations to reduce the need to restrain or seclude a student.

A representative of the Protection and Advocacy Project argued the state needs a reporting mechanism to collect the required data so that policymakers have the information necessary to address problems. The representative of the Protection and Advocacy Project requested the committee to create a task force on restraint and seclusion. However, committee members generally agreed creating such a group was beyond the scope of the committee's authority and stakeholders have the ability to organize meetings and share knowledge and information without a directive from the committee.

A representative of the North Dakota seclusion and restraint task force, which was created in March 2016 as a joint effort of numerous groups, including DPI and the Protection and Advocacy Project, provided information to the committee regarding the findings and recommendations of the task force. The task force, which includes over 40 members, has received presentations on best practices regarding restraint and seclusion from the Crisis Prevention Institute, the North Dakota Youth Correctional Center, the North Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Bismarck Public Schools, and representatives of the developmental disability sector. The task force worked to develop recommendations to protect students and staff while ensuring policies are developed at the local level.

The committee considered a bill draft to require reporting to the Superintendent of Public Instruction by school districts that adopt a policy regarding restraint and seclusion. Committee members expressed concern the bill only required reporting by school districts that have adopted a policy and did not address school districts with no policy.

The committee considered a bill draft to require school districts to adopt a policy regarding restraint and seclusion, and report any incidents to the parents of the student restrained or secluded. Concerns were expressed with respect to appropriate definitions of restraint and seclusion and with respect to reporting requirements, particularly for small school districts. Committee members generally agreed it is difficult to reach a consensus regarding definitions and reporting requirements and its study raised a number of questions that require further information.

Recommendations

The committee makes no recommendation with respect to its study regarding restraint and seclusion.

NORTH DAKOTA UNITED

The committee was informed various Century Code provisions and Section 6 of Article VIII of the Constitution of North Dakota refer to the "North Dakota Education Association," which no longer exists after its merger with the North Dakota Public Employees Association into North Dakota United. The committee requested a bill draft to revise the Century Code references.

A representative of the North Dakota School Boards Association presented information regarding the effect of the North Dakota United bill draft on the membership requirements, appointment processes, and authority of the North Dakota Education Association. The representative of that association testified in opposition to the bill draft arguing the bill draft is not a technical corrections bill draft because North Dakota United is an entirely new group and is different from the North Dakota Education Association. Because North Dakota United represents education support professionals, food service workers, maintenance and trade workers, transportation workers, grounds keeping staff, security personnel, health services personnel, higher education employees, state employees, county employees, and municipal employees, changing the references from the North Dakota Education Association to North Dakota United would allow for input from an entity that is much more diverse. It was argued the perspective of North Dakota United is not necessarily one which is connected to the classroom or the delivery of K-12 education services.

Under Section 6 of Article VIII of the Constitution of North Dakota, the President of the North Dakota Education Association is a member of the group that selects candidates to recommend to the Governor nominees to be on the State Board of Higher Education. Because the organization no longer exists, the representative of the North Dakota School Boards Association argued if a member of North Dakota United were to participate in making a recommendation to the board, the recommendation may be in violation of the state constitution.

A representative of North Dakota United reported the way in which North Dakota United appoints members to committees has not changed since the merger, which occurred 3 years ago. Although the two organizations merged to form North Dakota United, education and public employee issues are addressed separately within the organization. The representative of North Dakota United contended there is no significant issue with a member of North Dakota United sitting on the recommending committee for the State Board of Higher Education.

Recommendation

The committee [recommends a bill](#) to make technical corrections in Century Code to change references from the North Dakota Education Association to North Dakota United.

REPORTS

The committee received the following reports:

- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding the financial condition of school districts.
- A compilation of annual school district employee compensation reports from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding requests from schools or school districts for waivers of rules governing the accreditation of schools.
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding requests from schools or school districts for a waiver of Section 15.1-21-03 regarding high school unit instructional time.
- A compilation of test scores of a test aligned to the state content standards in reading and mathematics given annually to students in three grades statewide from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding findings and recommendations of the School District Reporting Review Committee.
- A report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding the implementation of a uniform system for the accounting, budgeting, and reporting of data by an early childhood education provider that received a grant distributed in accordance with Section 3 of 2015 Senate Bill No. 2151.
- A report from the Education Standards and Practices Board regarding electronic satisfaction survey results of all interactions with individuals seeking information or services from the Education Standards and Practices Board.
- A report from a representative of the North Dakota Center for Distance Education regarding the capabilities of the Center for Distance Education.
- A report from the North Dakota Teacher of the Year regarding the teacher of the year award.