EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Section 46 of Senate Bill 2003 (2025) required the Legislative Management to study dual credit in the state, including which institutions may offer dual-credit courses, where dual-credit courses may be provided by the institutions, and state funding provided for dual credit.

In addition to the study assigned to the Education Committee for the 2025-26 interim, the committee was assigned to:

- Receive an annual report from the Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Education Coordination Council on the activities of the council, pursuant to North Dakota Century Code Section 15.1-01-04(9);
- Receive a report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction on any updates to the strategic vision and the collaborative report of the strategic plans of each steering committee member entity receiving state education funds, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-04;
- Receive an annual report from the Superintendent by the end of February on the financial condition of school districts, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-09;
- Receive from the Superintendent the compilation of annual school district employee compensation reports, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-13;
- Before the Superintendent may submit proposed changes to the state accountability plan, the Superintendent must present changes to an interim committee designated by the Legislative Management, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-17;
- Receive an interim report from the Superintendent regarding the implementation of intervention measures for chronically low-performing schools, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-23;
- Receive a report from the Superintendent of a request from a school or school district for a waiver of any rule governing the accreditation of schools, pursuant to Section 15.1-06-08;
- Receive a report from the Superintendent regarding waiver applications, pursuant to Section 15.1-06-08.1;
- Receive an annual report from the Superintendent regarding the Innovative Education Program, including the status of the implementation plan, a summary of any waived statutes or rules; and a review of evaluation data results, pursuant to Section 15.1-06-08.2;
- Receive a report from the Superintendent in even-numbered years regarding a comparison of academic performance of students participating in virtual instruction versus those not participating in virtual instruction and the use of the statewide prekindergarten through grade 12 strategic vision framework goals, pursuant to Section 15.1-07-25.4;
- Receive a biennial report from the Superintendent regarding proposals to allow students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 to earn course credit through educational opportunities with a sponsoring entity, pursuant to Section 15.1-07-35;
- Receive a report from the Superintendent before December 1 of each year on the categories and amount spent by each school district on school safety and security measures during the previous school year, pursuant to Section 15.1-07-36;
- Receive a report from the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) regarding electronic satisfaction survey results of all interactions with individuals seeking information or services from the board, pursuant to Section 15.1-13-36;
- Receive from the Superintendent the compilation of test scores of a test aligned to the state content standards in reading, mathematics, and science, given annually to students statewide, pursuant to Section 15.1-21-10;
- Receive periodic reports from the Superintendent on the implementation and effectiveness of reading curriculum and professional development training requirements in improving educational outcomes and reading competency of students, pursuant to Section 15.1-21-12.1;
- Receive periodic reports from the Superintendent on the implementation and effectiveness of the new section to Chapter 15.1-21, created to improve educational outcomes and student competency in mathematics, pursuant to Section 15.1-21-12.3; and
- Receive a report from the Superintendent within 3 years of approving the first public charter school, which summarizes the strategic vision and progress of each public charter school; performance of each operating public charter school, according to the performance measures and expectations specified in the charter performance agreement; status of charter applications, including charter schools that were not approved, not renewed, and closed; oversight and services provided by the Superintendent to public charter schools; and total amount of fees collected from each public charter school, how the funds were expended to support the public charter school, and the costs incurred by the Superintendent to oversee each public charter school, pursuant to Section 15.1-40-06.

Committee members were Representatives Jim Jonas (Chairman), Collette Brown, Jay Fisher, Matthew Heilman, Scott Louser, Mike Motschenbacher, Eric J. Murphy, SuAnn Olson, David Richter, and Mike Schatz and Senators Michelle Axtman, Jeff Barta, Jose L. Castaneda, Ronald Sorvaag, and Paul J. Thomas.

DUAL-CREDIT STUDY

Background

A dual-credit course is a 1-semester college course taken through a 2- or 4-year institution of higher education for which the student earns high school credit. A three credit college course equals one semester of high school credit. North Dakota's dual-credit program allows students in grades 10 through 12 to take college courses and receive college credit, which also may be used to meet high school graduation requirements. Tuition, fees, books, and other costs are the student's responsibility. Classes are taught by approved instructors, either face-to-face in the classroom, online, through the Center for Distance Education (CDE), or through an interactive video network. The Higher Learning Commission requires teachers of dual-credit courses to have a master's degree or higher in the discipline or subfield in which they will be teaching. If the individual holds a master's degree or higher in a discipline or subfield other than that in which they will be teaching, a minimum of 18 graduate credit-hours must be completed in the academic field in which they will be teaching.

The committee received background information regarding:

- Funding for dual-credit courses included in the higher education funding formula.
- Tuition and fees paid by the student to the North Dakota University System institution.
- Funding provided through the K-12 state school aid funding formula for students enrolled in dual-credit courses.
- A dual-credit tuition scholarship for students who have completed a dual-credit course, graduated from high school, and enrolled at any postsecondary institution in North Dakota, including public, private, tribal, or proprietary institutions.
- A Bank of North Dakota dual-credit assistance program for eligible low-income high school students that covers the cost of the college application fee, tuition, fees, and books.

The committee also reviewed prior dual-credit studies, including a 2019-20 interim Education Policy Committee study of dual credit, advanced placement, and distance education courses and a 2023-24 interim Higher Education Committee review of all funding sources for dual-credit courses. The committee was informed, in addition to its study, the Higher Education Institutions Committee, as a part of its higher education study directed in Senate Bill 2242 (2025), is to consider a statewide dual-credit expansion to develop standard 3-year bachelor's degree programs.

Testimony

Department of Public Instruction

The committee received testimony from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) regarding funding for dual-credit courses included in the K-12 funding formula and higher education funding formula, the cost of dual-credit courses, and the department's concerns regarding cost, access, and rigor.

The committee was informed high school students enrolled in dual-credit courses are included in the average daily membership of their school district of residence and the K-12 funding formula is not adjusted for students taking dual-credit courses. In addition, higher education institutions charge tuition for students taking dual-credit courses. Completed dual-credit hours also are included in the higher education funding formula for purposes of funding higher education institutions.

The committee was informed that for dual-credit courses, colleges and universities assess a subsidized tuition rate of $87.24 per credit-hour when dual-credit instruction is provided by a qualified high school staff member, who is also an approved adjunct instructor, and the school district is paying most or all of the instructor's salary. Institutions assess an unsubsidized tuition rate of $154.36 per credit-hour when dual-credit instruction is provided by a qualified high school staff member, who is also an approved adjunct instructor, or an approved institution instructor, and the institution pays the instructor directly. In addition to tuition paid by students, the higher education funding formula reimburses colleges and universities for credit-hours at rates that vary by institution from $79.57 to $215.84 per credit-hour. Revenue to colleges and universities through the higher education funding formula, when added to tuition paid by students for a three-credit course, could range from $500 per course to as high as $909 per course, depending on the institution.

The committee was informed DPI's concerns include:

- The cost of subsidized credits to students. Because institutions are not paying teacher salaries, the cost of providing subsidized credits does not justify charging high school students tuition. Removing tuition charges for subsidized dual-credit courses would increase affordability and access to dual-credit courses.
- A State Board of Higher Education policy limits access to certain dual-credit programs based on geography, which discriminates against rural schools and limits students' ability to choose the institution from which they will earn credits.
- The variability in academic rigor and quality in dual-credit courses across the state. Standardized procurement of dual-credit partners would ensure competition, efficiency, and equal access.

North Dakota University System and Select Institutions

The committee received testimony from the University System regarding the dual-credit program which indicated dual-credit enrollment is available from all University System institutions. During the 2021-23 biennium, high school dual-credit hours totaled 82,842 hours, or 4 percent of total hours, and are anticipated to generate approximately $13.9 million, or 2 percent of the higher education funding formula base appropriation during the 2025-27 biennium. During the 2024-25 school year, 12,090 high school students enrolled in 59,302 credits, representing 26 percent of all students eligible to participate, including 39 percent of students in grade 12. The committee was informed increases in dual-credit courses have made dual credit a larger factor in the higher education funding formula than when the formula was first established.

The committee received testimony from Valley City State University (VCSU) regarding dual-credit program quality, faculty qualifications, partner schools, student data, and dual-credit revenue and expenses. The committee was informed dual-credit courses have the same academic rigor as college courses and are evaluated each semester. Policies and procedures for determining faculty qualifications also are used for dual-credit teachers, evaluations are done annually, and dual-credit faculty meet with VCSU representatives to align the syllabus, assessments, and learning outcomes. The committee was informed during the 2025-26 school year, 1,063 students are projected to complete 5,539 credits and 130 students are expected to earn a college studies certificate. During the 2025-26 academic year, the subsidized tuition rate is anticipated to generate $513,908 of revenue. Expenses include stipends paid to dual-credit teachers, which are expected to total $193,865, as well as other direct costs and overhead.

Testimony from Lake Region State College (LRSC) indicated LRSC served 913 dual-credit students in the fall 2025 semester. Approximately one-half of the students at LRSC are in high school and those students account for about one-third of the credits generated. Approximately one-half of dual-credit students at LRSC are using traditional online courses taught by an online college instructor and the remaining dual-credit students are taking face-to-face college classes in the high school setting.

North Dakota School Districts

The committee received testimony from representatives of Fargo Public Schools, West Fargo High School, and Drake-Anamoose School Districts regarding dual-credit courses. The committee was informed:

- Dual-credit courses prepare students by exposing the students to different course delivery platforms and providing opportunities for advanced classes, cost-savings, and an understanding of college expectations.
- A more aligned system of higher education is essential to fully realize dual-credit opportunities for students. Inconsistencies across institutions create barriers in student registration and enrollment processes, often requiring families and schools to navigate multiple systems, deadlines, and requirements. By establishing common practices and shared expectations, colleges can simplify access and reduce confusion.
- When higher education institutions have varying requirements for instructor qualifications or course alignment, it limits the number of educators who can participate and restricts program growth. Teacher credentialing and course approval also should be aligned and include clear transfer pathways for students.
- In some cases, dual-credit courses do not meet college-level rigor and there should be a better process to evaluate dual-credit courses.

Bank of North Dakota Financial Assistance Program

The committee received testimony from the Bank of North Dakota regarding the Bank's dual-credit assistance program which indicated students who meet the eligibility criteria, primarily those qualifying for the federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program or attending a Community Eligibility Provision school, may receive funding for up to two dual-credit courses per academic year. From July 2024 through June 2025, the Bank approved 1,364 dual-credit course assistance applications representing 116 school districts and providing approximately $535,000 for tuition, fees, and books. For students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for free assistance, the Bank offers a student loan option. Students who complete dual-credit coursework may be eligible for the state's dual-credit tuition scholarship, which provides up to $750 toward future college expenses. The scholarship program is administered by the University System with funding of $1.5 million provided from Bank profits for the 2025-27 biennium.

Committee Considerations and Recommendations

Based on information received, the committee noted:

- The per student payment rate in the state school aid formula includes funding for teacher salaries and school districts receive the formula payments, based on average daily membership, for students enrolled in unsubsidized dual-credit courses which are taught by an instructor paid by the college.
- Higher education formula reimbursement rates for colleges and universities are based on the cost of instruction and physical plant costs related to maintaining a college campus. Although there are no physical plant costs, colleges and universities are reimbursed for dual-credit courses taught at the school district at the same rate as courses taught at the college campus.
- If tuition for subsidized dual-credit courses were waived, college students would be required to pay for the same class high school students are able to take at no cost. In addition, there was concern that if students receive free dual-credit courses, the students may be less engaged.
- Students are required to take a dual-credit course while in high school to qualify for the state scholarship, which is a good recruiting tool for the state's colleges and universities. Students from families that cannot afford the dual-credit course may not be eligible for the state scholarship.

The committee makes no recommendation regarding its dual-credit study.

OTHER COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The committee was assigned to receive several reports, including reports from the Superintendent, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Education Coordination Council, and the ESPB.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Report on Public Charter Schools

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-40-06, a report from the Superintendent regarding the status of public charter schools in the state. The report indicated administrative rules related to charter schools have been approved and DPI anticipates releasing application materials in fall 2026. The department anticipates executing charter performance agreements with approved developers in the summer or fall of 2027. The department has received a 5-year federal grant totaling $7,988,000 to assist with implementation, support, and monitoring of charter schools.

Report on the Prekindergarten Through Grade 12 Education Strategic Vision

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-04, a collaborative report from DPI, Department of Career and Technical Education, Department of Health and Human Services, North Dakota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and CDE regarding the work of the PK-12 Education Strategic Vision Steering Committee and anticipated updates to the statewide strategic vision framework. The collaborative report related to five strategic themes included in the PK-12 Education Strategic Vision Framework: quality early childhood experiences; support for safe and healthy behaviors; career awareness, exploration, and development; quality education personnel; and quality student-centered instruction. The committee received information regarding a work-based learning coordinator endorsement; kindergarten transition grants to school districts; the Best in Class Program; the Waterford Upstart Program; behavioral health resource coordinators; and the implementation of the science of reading standards across programs.

The committee was informed the steering committee is considering updates to the statewide strategic vision framework. Stakeholders across the state were invited to provide information regarding priorities for improvements to the K-12 education system using online surveys. Survey results ranked the percentage of students who graduate prepared for college, the workforce, or the military; interpersonal skills; and basic life skills as the most important student outcomes. The survey ranked funding, student behavior, and teacher recruitment and retention as the most significant challenges facing K-12 education. The steering committee anticipates adding long-term outcomes and metrics related to wellness, career experiences, and teacher recruitment and retention to the strategic vision framework.

Financial Condition of School Districts

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-09, a report from the Superintendent regarding the financial condition of school districts. The committee was informed the report, entitled *School Finance Facts*, was initially published in February 2026 and a corrected report was published in March 2026. The annual report contains a statewide financial overview and school district level information regarding mill levies, expenditures and revenues, average cost per student, student enrollment, the number of teacher and administrator full-time equivalent positions, payroll information, state aid funding, and open enrollment. The committee was informed the financial data collected in the new student information system will be the same and the reporting will look similar; however, there may be opportunities to modify and add certain reports.

School District Employee Compensation

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-13, a report from the Superintendent regarding a compilation of annual school district employee compensation reports. The report includes data for school years ending in June 2023, 2024, and 2025 and, for comparison purposes, only includes full-time licensed school district employees who have worked more than 144 days. The committee was informed the average base salary for administrators increased from $107,826 to $114,127, or 5.8 percent, from 2023 to 2025 and the average base salary for teachers increased 6.5 percent, from $57,496 to $61,229, over the same period.

Proposed Changes to the State Accountability Plan

Pursuant to Section 15.1-02-17, before the Superintendent may submit proposed changes to the state accountability plan to the United States Secretary of Education, as required under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, the Superintendent must present the proposed changes to an interim committee designated by the Legislative Management. The committee was informed DPI is proposing changes to the state accountability plan, which include: general updates to modernize language and broaden definitions; improved measures of school performance, including what should be measured and the assignment of weights; a strengthened accountability system, including a separate set of measures for middle school accountability to incorporate the creation of a middle school choice-ready framework; and a more clear public understanding of relative performance, including definitive rankings for both schools and districts in place of letter grades. The department anticipates public comments will be accepted from December 2026 through January 2027, and plan amendments will be submitted to the United States Department of Education in March 2027.

Intervention Measures for Chronically Low-Performing Schools

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-02-23, a report from the Superintendent regarding the implementation of intervention measures for chronically low-performing schools. The committee was informed, within the state's system of support, designations are based on graduation rates, subgroup performance, and state assessment rankings. Schools are designated as general support and improvement, targeted support and improvement (TSI), or comprehensive support and improvement (CSI). A school designated as a CSI school also may be designated as a fostering improved results for school transformation (ND FIRST) school. As of October 2025, 17 schools were designated as TSI schools and 19 schools were designated as CSI schools, of which 9 schools are designated as ND FIRST schools. Approximately 8 percent of public school enrollment, or 9,113 students, attend TSI and CSI school districts. Schools designated as TSI or CSI are required to notify parents of the designation and may apply for a federally funded school improvement grant of up to $75,000 per year.

The committee was informed the $1 million provided by the Legislative Assembly for the ND FIRST Program has been used for a pay-for-performance support contract which provides payment for certain outcomes. Expectations are set with 18- and 36-month benchmarks and DPI is drafting memorandums of understanding with ND FIRST school districts.

School District Waiver Requests

The committee received, pursuant to Sections 15.1-06-08 and 15.1-06-08.1, reports from the Superintendent regarding waivers of school accreditation rules and certain education statutes.

The committee was informed for the 2026-27 school year, 18 schools or school districts are operating on a waiver of high school instructional unit time requirements pursuant to Section 15.1-06-08, an increase from the 8 schools or school districts that operated on the waiver during the 2025-26 school year.

The committee was informed Section 15.1-06-04 provides that any school that chooses to implement a 4-day school week must submit a waiver to DPI, and rules regarding the waiver are provided in North Dakota Administrative Code. Recent revisions to the administrative rule regarding the 4-day school week were made to base approval of 4-day school week waivers on student outcomes. Cost savings and greater flexibility in the use of school facilities no longer are allowable reasons. The committee was informed for the 2026-27 school year, 19 school districts are operating with a 4-day school week pursuant to Section 15.1-06-08.1, an increase from 15 school districts that operated on a 4-day school week during the 2025-26 school year.

Innovative Education Program

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-06-08.2, reports from the Superintendent regarding the Innovative Education Program. The program allows districts to apply for a waiver of certain statutory provisions which will allow the district to improve the delivery and administration of education, provide increased educational opportunities for students, or improve the academic success of students. The committee was informed during the 2025-26 school year, in addition to CDE and Marmot High School at the Youth Correctional Center, five school districts participated in the program, a decrease from the six school districts that participated in the program during the 2024-25 school year. Waivers were approved for certain statutory sections related to school calendar hours, teacher qualifications, instructional time, graduation, and scholarships.

The committee was informed funding to promote innovative education was used to support a state intermediary for innovative education. The Department of Public Instruction established the North Dakota Network for Personalized Learning through a contract with VCSU. Through professional learning, shared tools, and classroom examples, the network supports schools and districts in the design of learning experiences.

Academic Performance of Students Participating in Virtual Instruction

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-07-25.4, a report from the Superintendent regarding a comparison of academic performance of students participating in virtual instruction to those not participating in virtual instruction and the use of the statewide prekindergarten through grade 12 strategic vision framework goals. The committee was informed, during the 2025-26 school year, 916 students were enrolled in virtual schools, compared to over 115,000 students enrolled in nonvirtual schools. Because the number of students enrolled in virtual instruction is much smaller than the number of students enrolled in nonvirtual instruction and an even smaller number of virtual students participate in the state assessment, less than 50 percent compared to over 95 percent of nonvirtual students, DPI does not have sufficient information to make a valid comparison. However, considering the data limitations, in most cases, nonvirtual instruction students scored better on state assessments than virtual instruction students.

The committee was informed geography and student demographics may be reasons students enrolled in virtual instruction do not participate in state assessments. The only way to determine the effectiveness of virtual instruction is to encourage virtual academies to participate in the state's measuring tools, which could be part of virtual school approval. The committee was informed DPI is exploring the establishment of a school accountability measure for schools using "non-traditional" instruction methods.

Alternative Curriculum Proposals - Learn Everywhere Program

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-07-35, a report from the Superintendent regarding alternative curriculum proposals, or the Learn Everywhere Program. The committee was informed the program allows school districts and nonpublic schools to adopt a policy allowing students in grades 6 through 12 to earn course credit for educational opportunities outside the classroom through a sponsoring entity. Northern Cass School District is the only school district participating in the program. Northern Cass School District has seven sponsoring entities that provide opportunities in Spanish language and culture; youth life skills in leadership, communication, and personal responsibility; character development, citizenship, physical fitness, and leadership; robotics; emergency medical services; music; and philanthropy. The Department of Public Instruction is determining how the program is being used across the state and whether schools may be implementing the program without having submitted the school policies and subsequent proposals to the department as required.

School Safety and Security Spending

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-07-36, a report from the Superintendent regarding the categories and amount spent by each school district on school safety and security measures. The committee was informed during the 2024-25 school year, school districts reported statewide expenditures related to school safety and security measures totaling $80.5 million, including $70.9 million for remodeling and capital expenditures. Remodeling and capital expenditures included entrances, flooring, roofs, sidewalks, curbing, fencing, playground upgrades, and infrastructure modernization. Other expenditures included security personnel ($5.8 million), costs related to security technology and equipment ($2.7 million), and other expenses, including security planning and preparedness ($1.1 million). The committee expressed concern regarding some of the capital expenditures reported as safety and security measures, including flooring, roofs, sidewalks, and curbing, and suggested DPI provide clarity to school districts regarding the reporting of capital expenditures to ensure only safety and security projects relating to unauthorized access are included in the report.

Statewide Test Scores

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-21-10, a report from the Superintendent regarding the testing instrument, the methodology used to test and assess students, established cut scores, the methodology used to determine cut scores, validation of all test products, test scores, and the significance of the test scores. The committee was informed DPI has changed testing instruments and the North Dakota Academic Progression of Learning and Understanding of Students is a new system of assessments. The North Dakota Alternate Assessment is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The primary purpose of the North Dakota Academic Progression of Learning and Understanding of Students is to provide state longitudinal academic achievement data and to allow for school-to-school and district-to-district comparisons. Because the assessment was first administered during the 2024-25 school year, longitudinal academic achievement data comparisons are not possible, and scores and percentages of performance levels should not be compared to the prior state assessment. In addition, a testing error during the 2024-25 assessment prevents accurate data comparisons to subsequent testing years, making data from the 2025-26 assessment the new benchmark for longitudinal data comparisons going forward. The contract with the new vendor is for 10 or more years. Because a linking study can maintain the longitudinal data, there should be no need to draft a new test when standards change if the state keeps the same vendor.

The committee was informed student performance level is based on the student's scale score and is identified as novice, approaching proficient, proficient, or advanced. Statewide, test scores indicated 40 percent of students were proficient or advanced in English language arts, 41 percent were proficient or advanced in mathematics, and 38 percent were proficient or advanced in science.

Implementation and Effectiveness of Reading Curriculum and Professional Development

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-21-12.1, a report from the Superintendent regarding the implementation and effectiveness of reading curriculum and professional development training requirements to improve educational outcomes and reading competency of students. The committee was informed all school districts must report to DPI for their kindergarten through grade 3 school buildings regarding science of reading professional development, school curriculum, and processes, including assessments and resources to diagnose, monitor, and inform reading instruction that meets each child's unique needs. Based on the degree of alignment with science of reading professional development, curriculum, and assessment requirements, schools may be required to report every year, every other year, or every 3 years.

The committee was informed DPI collaborates with regional education associations to provide support, guidance, and unified messaging regarding science of reading curriculum and professional development. Because Section 15.1-21-12.1 requires all teachers and principals in kindergarten through grade 3 school buildings receive science of reading professional development, regional education associations have developed professional development for teachers who are not primarily reading instructors.

Implementation and Effectiveness of Mathematics Curriculum and Professional Development

The committee received, pursuant to Section 15.1-21-12.3, a report from the Superintendent regarding the implementation of a new section to Chapter 15.1-21 created to improve educational outcomes and student competency in mathematics. The committee was informed DPI, the regional education associations, and school districts collaborate to unify messaging regarding mathematics curriculum and professional development. The system that has been established is the North Dakota Cultivating Outcomes through Unified Teacher Support Program. Administrative rules related to the program were established in 2025 and the North Dakota Cultivating Outcomes through Unified Teacher Support Pilot Program began in January 2026 with 17 school districts. Participating schools must implement regular formative assessments to gauge student progress and identify learning gaps. Professional development for grades 4 through 8 teachers was to begin in the summer of 2026 and professional development for teachers in kindergarten through grade 3 is required after June 30, 2027.

Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Education Coordination Council

Activities of the Council

The committee received annual reports from the Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve Education Coordination Council regarding the activities of the council pursuant to Section 15.1-01-04(9). The council has 20 members and 4 subcommittees that work collaboratively with DPI and the Legislative Assembly on K-12 education issues. Subcommittees include support and innovation; statewide projects, duplication, and replication; aspirational goals; and legislative approval initiatives. The report indicated that over the past decade, North Dakota schools have experienced a steady decline in student attendance. Chronic absenteeism rates ranged from 11 to 15 percent from the 2017-18 school year through the 2020-21 school year. The chronic absenteeism rate peaked at 22 percent in the 2021-22 school year and remained at 20 percent the next 3 school years. The council proposed a study to help the state identify the root causes of absenteeism, learn from schools that have successfully improved attendance, and develop actionable recommendations.

The committee received information regarding the council's student attendance study. The committee was informed the council partnered with the University of North Dakota Bureau of Evaluation and Research Services to study schools and districts that had improved attendance outcomes. The study reinforced that absenteeism rarely has a single cause and student, family, school, community, transportation, behavioral health, and system-level factors often overlap. Schools with high attendance rates had individual successes, such as attendance review boards, credit recovery, student relationship programs, professional learning, and family events. The council will be preparing recommendations related to early intervention, cross-agency roles, student and family supports, culture of attendance, and data, policy, and further study.

Education Standards and Practices Board

Satisfaction Survey Results

The committee received a report, pursuant to Section 15.1-13-36, regarding electronic satisfaction survey results of all interactions with individuals seeking information or services from the ESPB. The committee was informed all applicants who receive email correspondence from ESPB staff or automated messages from the ND Teach system are prompted to complete the survey with nine questions, including two optional demographic questions and seven questions relating to timeliness, availability, courtesy, knowledge, responsiveness of staff, and ease of obtaining information or

services. Stakeholders also may leave comments. The committee was informed survey results show strong performance across all major customer service metrics. A small number of survey respondents identified challenges relating to unclear steps, difficulty with multistep login security features, and delayed communication as areas needing improvement.

OTHER REPORTS AND INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE

In addition to the other responsibilities assigned to the committee, the committee received information from the:

- Superintendent regarding a publication entitled *North Dakota Legendary Learners - Legendary Family Learning - Building Literacy Skills*, created to provide a resource for families of early learners.
- BARR Center, Williston Basin School District #7, Milnor Public Schools, and Fargo Public Schools regarding the Building Assets, Reducing Risks system. The system is a K-12 coaching and training partner that works with schools for 3 years to train personnel in a more effective and efficient way to work.
- North Dakota High School Activities Association, regarding an annual report and a new student athlete transfer rule. The new rule provides a student who has previously transferred from one high school to another high school may return to the student's original high school of eligibility and be immediately fully eligible if the return is made at the beginning of the school year. The provision may be exercised only one time while the student is in grades 9 through 12.
- Department of Public Instruction regarding dyslexia screening, intervention, and professional development.
- Department of Public Instruction regarding the Amira Learning reading tool.
- Representatives of DPI, Department of Health and Human Services, and Waterford Upstart regarding the Waterford Upstart Program.