

HB1375

House Education Committee

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Chair Owens and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Brenda Zastoupil, and I serve as the Financial Aid Director of the North Dakota University System (NDUS). I am here to provide testimony in support of HB1375.

Dual credit courses taken by students in high school have several benefits, including:

- Better preparation for college coursework and professor expectations, which creates an easier transition into post-secondary education;
- Affordability through access to lower cost coursework; and
- Quicker transition into the workforce as it takes less time to complete a degree.

This dual-credit scholarship program provides additional affordability and access for students who make college their choice following high school. It also encourages students to explore post-secondary education as an option following high school and places them on a path toward degree attainment far in advance of high school graduation.

The NDUS is in support of the recommended bill and proposes the following friendly edits regarding program administration. NDUS requests that:

- The program be termed a “scholarship” rather than “credit”. This program is not a discount, which “credit” implies, but rather is something that students must attain and earn;
- The term “rules” be changed to “procedure” in subsection 1, line 9, which reflects the NDUS structure of administering programs and is simply a technicality;
- Students be allowed to apply the scholarship towards both tuition & fees and asks that “fees” be added in subsection 2, line 11 as a component of the award;
- Language be included in subsection 2 (c) to allow ND resident students who are home-schooled and those residing on the border and meet statutory definitions, be eligible for the award. The ND state grant and other state scholarships already reflect this inclusive language;
- The program reward dual-credit courses taken only from ND institutions of higher education (subsection 2(d) and subsection 3 line 22); and,
- Clarify language in subsection 3, line 23 to ensure that the scholarship amount is “up to” the cost of tuition and fees with a maximum award of \$1,500.

This concludes my testimony in support of HB1375, and I will stand for questions from the committee.