

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

2127

2007 SENATE EDUCATION

SB 2127

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 2127

Senate Education Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 8, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 703, 705

Committee Clerk Signature

Minutes:

Chairman Freborg opened the hearing on SB 2127, a bill relating to renaming the division of independent study the center for distance education. All members were present.

Jon Skaare, director of the Division of Independent Study, testified in favor of the bill. (Written testimony attached)

Senator Flakoll asked if there is any way to assure the name North Dakota will be used in the title. It is not in the bill, only in Mr. Skaare's testimony.

Mr. Skaare said they obviously will promote North Dakota and they will always use North Dakota as part of their name. He has no problem if the committee wants to make that change in the bill.

Senator Flakoll asked if there should be a reference to high school in the name of the agency since some people might mistake it for a higher education agency, should there be a reference to the age of the student?

Mr. Skaare said they considered other names, and they think this one is the best fit. Distance Education often refers to higher education but it does best describe what they do.

Senator Flakoll asked for an estimate of the cost of transition of the name change.

Mr. Skaare said \$27,000.

Senator Taylor asked if the Division of Independent Study was self supporting. Are tuition rates the same for in and out of state students? He is aware they serve remote areas around the country including Alaska.

Mr. Skaare said tuition is higher for out of state students. Their tuition is competitive with other states.

Senator Gary Lee asked about page 5 of the written testimony, what does the reference to self sufficient mean?

Mr. Skaare said they are on the path to self sufficiency. Their goal is to be self sufficient by 2010. They want to have all things in place by then and this name change is a part of that plan.

Dr. Wayne Sanstead, Superintendent of Public Instruction, testified in favor of the bill. He distributed the North Dakota Division of Independent Study Course Catalog – 2006 – 2007. He pointed out that the title of the catalog contains the words North Dakota. He referenced page 50 which has an impressive list of courses including print based courses, video courses, DVD courses and CD ROM courses. There are many opportunities for students. This is an area of education that is rapidly expanding. There will be a teaching and technology seminar in June where teachers will learn more about these opportunities. He referred to “America’s Digital Schools 2006”, a national study that details the growth in this area of education. He will share it with the division. He supports the name change.

Senator Flakoll clarified that Dr. Sanstead was in favor of the bill.

Dr. Sanstead said he was in favor of the bill.

Senator Gary Lee asked how students complete the lab portion of a physical science class.

Dr. Sanstead said there is now simulated lab work.

Senator Bakke asked with the growing number of home schooled students, are they using the distant education opportunities?

Dr. Sanstead said they use the division heavily. He commends the efforts to make it an independently funded business. He also commented that some schools that have difficulty attracting teachers in certain areas, have their students take their classes through distance education.

Senator Flakoll asked if student records are kept at the division as well as at a remote location.

Dr. Sanstead said he did not know.

Senator Flakoll asked if there is a difference in the percentage of students requiring remediation vs. traditional classroom education?

Dr. Sanstead said he doesn't know but this will be studied.

Chairman Freborg said he can vouch for the division; he took a course with them in commercial law.

Chairman Freborg closed the hearing on SB 2127.

Senator Flakoll moved a Do Pass for SB 2127. Senator Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0-0. Senator Flakoll will carry the bill.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2127

Senate Education Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Senator Flakoll Seconded By Senator Taylor

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Freborg	X		Senator Taylor	X	
Senator Flakoll	X		Senator Bakke	X	
Senator Gary Lee	X				

Total Yes 5 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Flakoll

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
January 8, 2007 11:34 a.m.

Module No: SR-04-0288
Carrier: Flakoll
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2127: Education Committee (Sen. Freborg, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2127 was placed on the
Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 HOUSE EDUCATION

SB 2127

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. SB 2127

House Education Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 6 February 2007

Recorder Job Number: 2921 & 2926

Committee Clerk Signature

Jan Prindle

Minutes:

Jon Skaare, director of the Division of Independent Study, introduced the bill. (Testimony Attached.)

Representative Hunskor: Is distance learning available to US citizens or any folks in another country?

Skaare: Yes, it is available to students around the world. Often it's an American citizen on a missionary trip or some reason such as that. We do allow students from all over the US and the world.

Representative Mueller: You made reference to 2800 high school graduates. Where are those folks from and how many of them more specifically are from ND.

Skaare: Typically the North Dakotans average around 27% of the program.

Representative Wall: You mention that you offer over 180 courses. This is in relationship to another bill we are studying. How do you decide on a course offering? For instance, we had a request to study a non-typical foreign language. Do you get a lot of requests to start a course?

Skaare: We do keep statistics on enrollments in every course each year. We want to make sure we are the maintaining and keeping track of our core courses. We have a curriculum team that evaluates new curriculum and new ideas. Oftentimes when we talk about those

classes you talk about—an atypical world language—we have to make sure we can find a licensed teacher to offer that courses. We try to follow the market as far as course study offerings.

Representative Haas: What percent of your courses are offered exclusively on line and do you still use the old paper method at all?

Skaare: We offer 185 courses and of those 105 are on line. What we are looking at doing in the future is turning all of those to the on line format. There is still a demand for print based courses so offer oftentimes both. We provide the option.

Representative Haas: My second question relates to reciprocity with other states. Do you think it is appropriate that if there are other distance learning organizations in other states that are accredited by similar organizations that ND would have reciprocity with those states as far as putting credits on the student's transcript.

Skaare: There are a lot of good programs like ours that are out there. They run a top notch program. There is nothing wrong with using their programs. There are a lot of "fly by nights" out there too. If they are accredited and following standards similar to what we are doing, they should be allowed to come into the state. They are direct competitors of me. If schools are going to go elsewhere, they need to use programs that are legitimate. Of course I want as many as enrollments as possible but the reality is that as long as other programs are fully accredited and use qualified teachers there is no problem.

Vice Chairman Meier: What is your most requested course.

Skaare: The most requested right now is World History. The most requested are the core courses for juniors and seniors.

Representative Haas: Do you offer classes in Comparative Religion. There has been a significant increase in the interest of studying religions worldwide and the impact they have on world politics.

Skaare: It's interesting that you bring that up. We do currently offer a World Politics class but it needs to be updated. I have a supervisory team and at their meeting last Thursday, a

proposal for a world religions course and is actually evaluated by our management team right now. We are considering that class because there is an interest in it.

Representative Mueller: You referenced that you have some promotion kinds of things ready to roll out. I hope you do. Distance Education isn't very glamorous. How are you going to grab people's attention for this one.

Skaare: Our catalog goes out to all high schools across the nation. We are going to be doing promotional flyers and mailings with our catalog. We are looking at increasing our current catalog mailing to more than once a year. Taking out a radio ad is not something we could do or afford. We are looking at some of the periodicals we put out there, our web pages, and the exhibits that we go to.

Representative Herbel: Has there been a problem with students being able to distinguish the difference between those that are accredited and those you refer to as fly by night.

Skaare: Fly by nights are getting very creative in the wording of their accreditation which they are basically making up themselves. Their web pages list these and they make it sound like it is something that is actually legitimate. It is important to ask the question of who is evaluating and what is being done. There are many institutions that no teacher ever evaluates the work. That's the difference with us. We have a resident staff of teachers all licensed by the ESPB. There are institutions where it is just a scanner.

Representative Hunskor: Motivation discipline can be a problem for someone involved in independent learning. What percent of students that start finish or don't finish.

Skaare: Currently 66% of students complete our program. The national average is 50%. If you give them a course and no one looks after them, you are asking for trouble. If you have a

student with a learning disability and you give them a course where they have to read the entire contents, you are asking for trouble.

Representative Hanson: Do you have many home-schooled students.

Skaare: We do have a lot of home-schooled students. Many home schoolers who want to do it properly are looking at institutions similar to us to provide the curriculum materials to help them along.

Chairman Kelsch: Just a comment, Jon. You are probably the first person that stood before the legislature this session and didn't say you need more money. We appreciate that. Thank you very much.

There was no further testimony. Chairman Kelsch closed the hearing on SB 2127.

At a later time on the same day, Chairman Kelsh opened discussion on SB 2127.

Representative Mueller: I move Do Pass.

Representative Wall: I second.

Chairman Kelsch: It is refreshing to see someone who is very excited and passionate about he does. He did a nice job of talking about his division and why he thought it was appropriate for it to be renamed. Although it's not the glitziest of names, I think he will do a nice job of marketing it.

A roll call vote was taken: Yes: 12, No: 0, Absent: 1 (Solberg)

Representative Meier will carry the bill.

Date: 6 Feb 07
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2127

House Education Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken No Pass

Motion Made By J. Mueller Seconded By Stall

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Kelsch	✓		Rep Hanson	✓	
V Chairman Meier	✓		Rep Hunskor	✓	
Rep Haas	✓		Rep Mueller	✓	
Rep Herbel	✓		Rep Myxter	✓	
Rep Johnson	✓		Rep Solberg	0	
Rep Karls	✓				
Rep Sukut	✓				
Rep Wall	✓				

Total Yes 12 No 0

Absent 1 (Solberg)

Floor Assignment Meier

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

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 6, 2007 12:58 p.m.

Module No: HR-25-2256
Carrier: L. Meier
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2127: Education Committee (Rep. R. Kelsch, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2127 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2007 TESTIMONY

SB 2127

North Dakota Division of Independent Study (NDIS)

Senate Education Committee
January 8, 2007

Senator Freborg and members of the Committee, my name is Jon Skaare, director of the Division of Independent Study. I am in support of SB 2127. If this bill is passed, it would essentially change the name of the North Dakota Division of Independent Study to the North Dakota Center for Distance Education.

In this bill we are also recommending that all references to “correspondence” be replaced with “distance education,” which is the most up-to-date wordage in our industry.

North Dakota Division of Independent Study – A Brief History

The Division of Independent Study (NDIS) was established by the 1935 Legislative Assembly to provide correspondence courses to the rural students of North Dakota. Today, in our 72nd year, the Division offers more than 180 courses to students in grades 4–12, with more than 100 of these courses available online. NDIS is one of the largest accredited distance education schools in the nation with over 5,000 students and over 9,000 enrollments annually. We are proud to provide distance education opportunities to students in all 50 states and in over 40 other countries.

As the state's distance education high school, we are fully accredited with commendation by the *North Dakota Department of Public Instruction*, the *North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement* (NCA/CASI), and the *Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation* (CITA). The Division is an institutional member of the *University Continuing Education Association* (UCEA), and all Division core courses meet the eligibility requirements established by the *National Collegiate Athletic Association* (NCAA).

In addition to providing distance and independent study courses to students and schools, the Division of Independent Study offers a fully accredited **high school diploma**. Since June of 1944, NDIS has proudly granted high school diplomas to more than 2,800 graduates. Also, in accordance with legislation passed in the last session, the Division's graduation requirements have increased from 19 to 21 units of credit.

For the first 50 years of our history, the Division of Independent Study functioned as an independent state agency. In 1989, the Legislative Assembly moved the Division under the Department of Public Instruction where it remained for 12 years. In 2001, the Division was moved under the direction and governance of the Educational Technology Council.

Our Name's History

When NDIS was founded in 1935, it was called the *Department of Correspondence Study*. The program opened with a staff consisting of T.W. Thordarson, eight part-time teachers, and three office workers. The Department of Correspondence Study was located in the basement of Old Main on the NDSU (then NDAC) campus. Since that time, NDIS has continued to grow and modernize in accordance with the changing times and needs of our students. Because of that growth and modernization the name has been updated several times throughout the years.

The program maintained the Department of Correspondence Study name for nineteen years, until 1954. In that year, the Division was renamed the *Division of Supervised Study* to more clearly define its function and to emphasize the role of the local supervisor. This name was maintained until July 1, 1971 when it was renamed the *Division of Independent Study*.

A New and Improved Division of Independent Study

For most of the last 35 years, the current name has served the program well, as it emphasized its predominant mission of supervised and independent study. However, in the last ten years, NDIS has spent a great amount of time and energy developing our online program, and as was previously mentioned, we are proud to offer 100 courses online. Additionally, in recent years, the focus of the program has evolved to include

synchronous learning (video conferencing), as well as both **online *and* print-based** delivery of its courses and services.

NDIS continues to grow and prosper because our faculty and staff members want to ensure that the individual needs of every student are met. To reflect our new progressive focus, it is important that we change the name of the North Dakota Division of Independent Study to the North Dakota Center for Distance Education in order to remain a leader in the field of distance education. Currently, we are the fifth largest high school distance education provider in the United States.

The entire distance education industry has evolved from the traditional supervised, independent study to focus on the broader perspective of distance learning. In fact, a majority of the other distance learning providers that operate similarly to NDIS have already made a name change to better identify their role. Names of some of the other distance education high schools include: Missouri Virtual School, Colorado Online Learning, Virtual Community School of Ohio, Florida Virtual School, and Pennsylvania Charter School. Of course there are many others. The main point I want to make is that the name change that we are suggesting has longevity. We are not a “virtual” school (which to me implies that these institutions are “almost” a school), but instead, we are a distance education provider—one who can meet the needs of students in our state, across the nation, and even across the world.

More significantly, because the Division of Independent Study is on a course of action to become self-sufficient, the proposed name change will help in that process, as it will keep us in forefront of our industry. Often times we are overlooked as a distance education provider because the services that we provide are not reflected clearly in our current name. According to my research, 39 states currently have or are developing high school distance education programs. Ten years ago that number was less than 20. In order for us to stay competitive in this ever growing industry, we must specifically identify ourselves a first-rate distance education institution.

I certainly understand and respect our current name. It has served us well over the past 35 years. However, the current name does not emphasize us as a quality distance education high school that we are. The new name will reflect more accurately our mission and function as a distance learning provider.

A detailed plan has been already drawn up to market this name change if this bill is passed. However, I am not requesting any additional funding to market the name change. If you are interested, I would be happy to go into further detail about that plan.

Thank you, Senator Freborg and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of the staff and faculty at NDIS, I want to extend my appreciation for

the long-standing support we have received from the Legislative Assembly. And now, if you have any questions, I will do my best to address them.

**Jon Skaare, State Director
North Dakota Division of Independent Study
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Fargo, ND 58105
Jon.Skaare@sendit.nodak.edu
701.231.6007**

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