

EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE - DUAL-CREDIT, ADVANCED PLACEMENT, AND DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES - BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM

Section 21 of Senate Bill No. 2013 (2019) directs the Legislative Management to study dual-credit, advanced placement (AP), and distance education courses. The study must include a review of early enrollment placement testing and the qualifications for dual-credit and AP courses. The study also must include a review of the costs and amounts of funding necessary to provide all students access to dual-credit, AP, and distance education courses, as well as the types of courses available and the delivery methods necessary to provide all students with access.

BACKGROUND Study Directive

Senate Bill No. 2013 (2019), the appropriation bill for the Department of Public Instruction, the State Library, the School for the Deaf, and the North Dakota Vision Services - School for the Blind, was amended to include the study of dual-credit, AP, and distance education courses.

An AP course is a college-level course in which a student takes an examination at the end of the school year or semester. The results of the test determine whether the high school student will receive college credit or "advanced placement." Advanced placement tests are scored on a one to five scale. Whether a postsecondary institution chooses to award college credit to a student based on AP exam scores is up to the individual institution. Many institutions award credit to students scoring at least a three on an AP exam. The AP program was created in 1955 by the College Board, a nonprofit organization to expand access to higher education. The curriculum and exams for AP courses are created by a development committee of experts, experienced AP teachers, and college-level educators in the field of study for each course to ensure the course and exam reflect college-level expectations. The development committees determine the content and ability level required for each exam, determine requirements for course syllabi, write and review course and exam descriptions, and write and review exam questions. According to the College Board website, AP courses undergo a 2- to 6-year development process before the courses are implemented in classrooms, and are regularly reviewed after implementation. For a high school course to be designated as an AP course, the course is audited by the College Board to determine if it satisfies the requisite curriculum and expectations.

A dual-credit course also is a college-level course taught at a high school through collaboration with a participating college, but counts for both college and high school credit. A student does not need to take an exam at the end of the semester or school year to earn college credit, but generally the student must receive a certain grade level in the class, typically a "C." A high school student who desires to take a dual-credit course generally must meet and apply for admission to the participating institution under the control of the State Board of Higher Education as a dual-credit student.

Distance education courses are courses offered to students who are usually not physically present. Distance education courses usually are offered to students through correspondence or digital resources. Distance education courses may be dual-credit or AP courses.

Related Legislation

House Bill No. 1122 (2019) would have amended the statutory provisions regarding the North Dakota academic scholarship and the North Dakota career and technical education scholarship to allow current North Dakota high school students who are enrolled in dual-credit or early entry courses for which college credit is earned to be eligible to receive an academic or career and technical education scholarship if the student met certain criteria. To be eligible, the student would have been required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 in all high school units in which the student was enrolled and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 in the enrolled dual-credit or early entry courses. An eligible student would have received a scholarship in an amount equal to the tuition rate for the number of college credits equivalent to the dual-credit or early entry course for which the student was enrolled. The amount would have been capped at the highest tuition rate for an equivalent college credit at an institution of higher education under the control of the State Board of Higher Education. The State Board of Higher Education would have been required to forward the scholarship amount directly to the institution through which the dual-credit or early entry course was offered to the student. The total scholarship amount for which a student would have been eligible would have remained capped at \$6,000, including payments for dual-credit and early entry courses. The bill failed to pass the Senate.

House Bill No. 1003 (2019), the appropriation bill for the North Dakota University System, repealed North Dakota Century Code Section 15-10-61. Section 15-10-61, enacted during the 2017 legislative session, created a dual-

credit course pilot program under the State Board of Higher Education. The pilot program offered a credit incentive to instructors teaching dual-credit courses in core subject matter areas at public and private high schools in the state. The program allowed instructors to receive a credit-for-credit coupon to be used for graduate level courses at public or private postsecondary education institutions in the state. The coupon would cover the cost of one graduate level credit for every credit-hour of a dual-credit course the individual teaches. The section also allowed an eligible individual to transfer the coupon to a family member or student being taught by the individual. The legislative history for the 2017 legislation indicates the program was meant to incentivize teachers to teach dual-credit courses to high school students.

Senate Bill No. 2216 (2019) amended Chapter 15-19 regarding distance education. The bill requires the state to provide K-12 courses, comprehensive educational support, and high school diplomas through the Center for Distance Education. The Center for Distance Education must provide a complete curriculum prescribed by state-mandated education accreditation entities which meets the requirements for digital education the Superintendent of Public Instruction deems appropriate. The bill moved the Center for Distance Education under the authority of the State Board for Career and Technical Education. Previously, the center was under the supervision of the Education Technology Council.

Section 6 of Senate Bill No. 2013 (2019) provided an additional exemption for AP programs. The section authorized the Superintendent of Public Instruction to use up to \$600,000 of unexpended amounts remaining from the 2017 integrated formula payments to provide AP examinations, AP teacher training, and college ready English and mathematics programs during the 2019-21 biennium.

Section 32 of Senate Bill No. 2031 (2015) provided an exemption and contingent funding for the delivery and participation of AP courses. The section directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction to use \$1,252,627 of money remaining in the integrated formula payments line item, after complying with statutory payment obligations for the 2013-15 biennium, to enhance the delivery and participation of students and teachers in AP courses during the 2015-17 biennium.

Existing Statutory Provisions

In addition to Section 15-10-61, which was repealed during the 2019 legislative session, "dual-credit" is referenced in two additional locations in Century Code.

- Section 15.1-21-02 addresses required high school units to be offered to students. The section requires public and nonpublic high schools to offer one unit of a dual-credit course or one unit of an AP course for the schools to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and
- Section 15.1-21-02.5 addresses the North Dakota academic scholarship. The section requires students to fulfill certain unit requirements through a dual-credit course to be eligible to receive the scholarship.

"Advanced placement" also is referenced in two locations in Century Code.

- Section 15.1-21-02 requires public and nonpublic high schools to offer one unit of a dual-credit course or one unit of an AP course for the schools to be approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and
- Section 15.1-21-02.5 addresses the North Dakota academic scholarship. The section requires students to fulfill certain unit requirements through an AP course and examination to be eligible to receive the scholarship.

"Distance education" is referenced numerous times throughout Century Code. The majority of the references are located in Chapter 15-19 regarding the Center for Distance Education. Additionally:

- Section 15.1-21-02.1 addresses minimum units required for high school diplomas. The section allows the Center for Distance Education to issue a high school diploma to a student when the student meets the minimum high school coursework units required by Section 15.1-21-02.2 regarding minimum requirements for high school graduation;
- Section 15.1-21-27 requires students enrolled in the Center for Distance Education to pass the required civics test to receive a high school diploma; and
- Section 15.1-23-17 allows the Center for Distance Education to issue a high school diploma to a student who is homeschooled, meets the center's requirements for high school graduation, and meets other required criteria.

Chapter 15.1-25 addresses postsecondary enrollment. While the chapter does not specifically address dual-credit, AP, or distance education courses, the chapter allows North Dakota high school students to complete and receive postsecondary credit.

- Section 15.1-25-01 provides "[A]ny North Dakota student enrolled in grade ten, eleven, or twelve in a public high school is eligible to receive high school and postsecondary credit for the successful completion of an academic course offered by any postsecondary institution accredited by a regional accrediting organization or a career and technical education course offered by a postsecondary institution in a program accredited by a national or regional accrediting organization recognized by the United States department of education";
- Section 15.1-25-02 provides "[B]efore enrolling in a course for credit under this chapter, the student must obtain written permission from the student's school district superintendent. The student's school district superintendent shall determine the number of credits for which the student is eligible and shall include the number of credits on the document granting permission required by this section Upon the student's successful completion of the course, the postsecondary institution shall notify the student's school district superintendent of that fact"; and
- Sections 15.1-25-03 and 15.1-25-04 require the student or the student's parent or legal guardian to be responsible for the costs of attendance and transportation at a postsecondary institution under the chapter.

Course Offerings and Price

According to the College Board website, students pay the school administering AP exams, not the College Board, and then the school pays the College Board. Advanced placement exams cost \$94 per exam at schools in the United States, United States territories, and Canada; \$124 per exam at schools outside the United States, United States territories, and Canada; and \$142 per exam for AP Capstone exams. Participating schools receive a rebate of \$9 per exam, and the College Board offers a \$32 per exam fee reduction for eligible students. The College Board currently offers 38 courses and exams through the AP program.

- AP Art History
- AP Biology
- AP Calculus AB
- AP Calculus BC
- AP Chemistry
- AP Chinese Language and Culture
- AP Computer Science A
- AP Computer Science Principles
- AP English Language and Composition
- AP English Literature and Composition
- AP Environmental Science
- AP European History
- AP French Language and Culture
- AP German Language and Culture
- AP Government and Politics: Comparative
- AP Government and Politics: United States
- AP Human Geography
- AP Italian Language and Culture
- AP Japanese Language and Culture
- AP Latin
- AP Macroeconomics
- AP Microeconomics

- AP Music Theory
- AP Physics 1
- AP Physics 2
- AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism
- AP Physics C: Mechanics
- AP Psychology
- AP Research (Second part of the AP Capstone program)
- AP Seminar (First part of the AP Capstone program)
- AP Statistics
- AP Spanish Language and Culture
- AP Spanish Literature and Culture
- AP Studio Art: 2-D Design (Soon to be AP 2-D Art and Design)
- AP Studio Art: 3-D Design (Soon to be AP 3-D Art and Design)
- AP Studio Art: Drawing (Soon to be AP Drawing)
- AP United States History
- AP World History (Soon to be divided into two courses--AP World History: Modern, AP World History: Ancient)

Bismarck Century High School offers 14 AP courses--AP Biology, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Chemistry, AP Computer Science A, AP Computer Science Principles, AP English 11 (English Language and Composition), AP English 12 (English Literature and Composition), AP Government (United States Government and Politics), AP Physics 1, AP Psychology, AP Statistics, AP Studio Art (2-D, 3-D, or Drawing), and AP United States History.

Bismarck High School offers 15 AP courses--AP English 11 (Language), AP English 12 (Literature), AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Physics I & II, AP Chemistry, AP Biology, AP Computer Science, AP United States History, AP Government, AP Psychology, AP Studio Art, AP Computer Principles, and AP Computer Science A.

Fargo public high schools offer 19 AP courses--Biology, Calculus AB, Chemistry, Computer Science A, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, English Language, English Literature, Environmental Science, European History, Government and Politics: United States, Human Geography, Physics 1: Algebra Based, Psychology, Statistics, Studio Art: 2-D Design, Studio Art: 3-D Design, Studio Art: Drawing, and United States History.

In 2016, pursuant to Section 32 of Senate Bill No. 2031 (2015), the Department of Public Instruction began an initiative to allow North Dakota high school students to take at least one AP test in English, mathematics, or science at no cost. The initiative allowed students from low-income families to take as many as four AP exams at no cost.

In addition to the Department of Public Instruction initiative, the Bank of North Dakota offers a dual-credit assistance program. The program pays for up to two dual-credit courses for eligible students, depending on available funds. To be eligible to receive assistance, the student must be a North Dakota student in grades 10 through 12, be authorized to take approved dual-credit courses, qualify for free or reduced lunch, and apply to the Bank for assistance during the course enrollment process. Students approved may receive assistance for application fees, tuition costs, and books.

The Center for Distance Education offers online high school and middle school distance education courses. The courses offered for high school students cover subject areas under the categories of aerospace, agriculture, art, business education, computer education, English, family consumer science, general education, health careers, mathematics, music, physical education and health, science, social studies, technical education, and world languages. The center partners with Mayville State University to provide online dual-credit courses under the subject areas of general education, mathematics, and science. A student enrolled in a dual-credit course through the center may earn between 2 and 4 units of college credit, and 0.5 units of high school credit, depending on the course taken. The center provides AP online courses under the subject areas of computer education, English, science,

and social studies; however, the center does not administer AP exams. Depending on the type of course and whether the student is an in-state or out-of-state resident, the price per course ranges from \$100 to \$550.

According to the Center for Distance Education's website, to be eligible to take dual-credit courses through the center a student must:

- Be in grade 10, 11, or 12;
- Have the permission of the local school administrator to enroll;
- Have at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average; and
- Have an ACT Aspire subtest score of 21 or higher, if the student is planning to enroll in college algebra.

Other Relevant Information

According to the College Board, in 2016, 21.9 percent of all public high school graduates scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school. In 2016, 9.6 percent of North Dakota public high school graduates scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam during high school.

STUDY APPROACH

In conducting this study, the committee may wish to receive information on the number of high schools and students in the state participating in AP, dual-credit, and distance education courses; the success rate of students in those courses; and the required qualifications and credentialing process for instructors who teach AP, dual-credit, and distance education courses in the state. The committee also may wish to receive testimony regarding how much it would cost to provide every student in the state with access to AP, dual-credit, and distance education courses, as well as information regarding how to most efficiently accomplish this goal. To receive adequate information to address these questions, the committee may wish to receive testimony from representatives of:

- The Department of Public Instruction;
- The Center for Distance Education;
- The College Board;
- The University System and institutions under the control of the State Board of Higher Education; and
- Other interested stakeholders and parties.