

Summary of Testimony to Senate Education Committee on June 6, 2012

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Founder of the Consensus for Change Think Tank

- Now that you are in the “lifelong learner” phase of your life, how do you learn? Books, TV, Radio, iPad, computer, travel, museums, conversations, YouTube.....?
- What time of day is your peak learning time? 6 am, noon, 5pm, midnight, 2am?
- Wouldn't it have been nice to have had some of those same options and that same time flexibility when you were being formally educated?
- That is what educators are asking for ----- the opportunity to provide individualized and customized learning experiences for students with attached accountability for student achievement toward standards.
- To achieve Governor Snyder's goal of providing “any time, any place, any way, any pace” education, we must remove the barriers that exist to providing individualized learning.
- HB 5392 starts us in the right direction. However, sections of the bill are taken directly from the current Pupil Accounting Manual that was written and based on “seat time”. For example, Section 5-0-B requires seat time waiver students to demonstrate participation by logging on to their computers 10 times in a 30 day period. A login can be nothing more than a student logging on to a computer and immediately logging off of the computer which would be similar to a student walking into a traditional brick and mortar classroom and immediately turning around and leaving. Neither situation includes the expectation for a learning experience.
- Having just attended the State Auditor's Conference, I have an increased appreciation for the need to provide auditors with other tools and methods for measuring participation/”attendance” for students who are in all environments including the traditional brick and mortar, online/virtual, blended, colleges, trade schools, and environments that don't even currently exist.
- We must have conversations and legislation that will lead us to a funding distribution and verification system that is not based on time and place and we must address that now in HB 5392.
- Over the last 3 years as a part of my work with the Consensus for Change Think Tank, I have talked with people across the country to learn how others are measuring participation/attendance. In preparation for being here today, I had a conversation with several of those individuals to get updates on their methods and models.
- I will summarize four of those models now. I have also provided you with written copies of the summaries that are followed by more detailed information and links to resources and legislation.

The following document was prepared by:

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Examples of State Funding Models
June 2012

States across the U.S. are working to increase innovative, student-centric learning options by revising the way they determine/audit FTE. The challenge is to move from "seat time, time-based" auditing methods to alternative ways of looking at "attendance". Below please find summaries of several states and one Canadian Province who have all made changes and, as a result, have opened up their states to increased flexibility for delivering instruction. For the most part, each new model looks at the number of "credits" a student completes to determine FTE.

The first section of this document will briefly summarize each Funding Model. This will be followed by additional information and resources for further investigation.

Contact information for people in each of these states is available by contacting:

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Minnesota

Minnesota has determined a "formula" for equating credits successfully earned to "hours in a seat". This method allows for consistency in auditing as every student is funded on "hours in a seat" even though many are learning out of the traditional seat in a classroom. Students who complete only part of a course would receive the equivalent amount of FTE for that percentage. For example, if a student completes 75% of a course, 75% of the FTE would be funded. The recording of the data is consistent from one learning environment to another. This method leaves the door open to future learning configurations that don't currently exist. "Successful completion" is determined locally.

Students can enroll in any program of their choosing on a statewide level.

Florida

Florida's FTE is also based on successful completion of credits. At this time, this only applies to Florida Virtual School students. This is a relatively new process for Florida as they just completed their first cycle in this new funding method.

A 1% sampling of courses is audited where the following information is examined:

- Teacher Certification for each course
- Verification that the student had documentation for and received a passing grade for capturing the FTE

"Successful Completion" is, for the most part, determined by the grade the student receives in the course. However, Florida's Department of Education is in the midst of writing end-of-course assessments that will be the determinant for successful completion.

Utah

Utah has developed a method for funding where the "funding follows the student". Again, the funding is based on the successful completion of a course or credit. Utah allows for year round enrollment and exit, "Open Entry, Open Exit" which means that students are not attached to a traditional school calendar but rather operate on a 24/7/365 calendar. If the student demonstrates "engagement" in the course ("engagement is defined as one log in in the course) the first 50% of the funding is paid 20 days after the student enrolls. The remaining 50% is distributed when the credit is earned by the student. The earned credit is based on successful completion of the course that is determined by both locally and by required state assessments (CRTs) that are taken upon course completion. The state is required to make assessments available at any time.

Students can enroll in any program of their choosing on a statewide level.

British Columbia

Funding in this province is calculated on a course-based model, generally without an FTE limit. Successful course completion and active participation are required for garnering FTE. "Active Participation" is determined by various required components including:

- A clear course plan
- At least one example of instruction-related communication between the teacher and student
- At least one substantive assignment submitted to the teacher by the student
- A student learning plan (of eligible courses)

The remainder of the document will provide additional details to the summaries above:

Minnesota

Minnesota just posted an updated version of its auditing document the week of May 27, 2012. It is posted at:

<https://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SchFin/MARSSStuAcc/index.html> :

The document is entitled:

2011-2012 Reporting for Supplemental and Comprehensively Enrolled Online Learning Students

In Minnesota, state funding is based on student membership. There is a discussion in the referenced document about calculating membership. Most schools are seat-based, i.e., they have a set daily calendar with terms and a fixed length of day. For students who replace one or more of those classes with an Online Learning (OLL) or hybrid class, that OLL/hybrid class replaces one seat-based class period.

This also works for programs and schools that are full time OLL, if they have a set calendar that is term-based and a required number of class "periods" during the day. Each OLL class is considered one class period. If the student is taking a full course load, i.e., one OLL class per period in the OLL school, the student generates full membership.

For OLL schools that are more fluid, students complete work at their own pace rather than the teacher's pace, students generate membership based on the number of OLL credits they actually complete. This is the same membership computation model that we use for independent study at our alternative programs and for project-based schools. Each credit that is completed generates a given number of membership hours. The formula is designed so that a student who earns the same number of credits in the OLL or independent study program as a student enrolled in the district's seat-based school will generate the same average daily membership (ADM). Partially completed credits generate a prorated membership.

A transcript is essential in verifying that a student completed courses for which a school has claimed student membership.

Attendance is a subset of a student's membership and is determined locally. OLL schools must have some type of method to determine whether a student is considered in attendance on any given day. Our student data auditors don't audit attendance but they have used OLL class log-in records to show lack of participation which would impact the membership a student is eligible to generate.

ensure that the teacher was teaching in-field or that we had proper Board approval to use the teacher out of field.

Student records were evaluated to verify that the student had documentation for and received a passing grade to earn the FTE reported.

Courses being reported were validated against the FLDOE course code directory to ensure that a valid course was used and documented properly on transcripts.

You mention auditing a sampling of students. What percent of students and teachers are audited in the sample?

- They selected 300 teachers and 248 students. In 09/10 FLVS had about 1100 teachers so that would be approximately 25%. The students is more complicated. Our FTE was approximately 17,800. That would mean 1% was sampled. However, because most of our students only take 1-2 courses, we really have many more students than FTE. In 09/10 we served almost 100,000 students, so the % sampled is miniscule. I don't have specifics on audit criteria or the sampling process from the auditor's perspective – I was not in my role when that part of the audit took place. They did zero in on students with out of state addresses for obvious reasons but I know in-state students were also sampled.

How is a "passing grade" determined?

- The state of FL defines a passing grade as a final grade of D or higher. In FL, we report each semester grade separately as ½ credit so a student can pass one semester and not the other in a full credit course.

Are there "end-of-course" assessments? If yes, who generates those? The State?

- FL did not have end of course assessments in 09/10. Our first one was introduced in 10/11. We now have 3, and 4th test will be added in 12/13. They are created and administered by the state through a contract with Pearson Testing. All of these tests are multiple choice only.

Can mastery be determined through demonstration models or are standardized tests the main assessment tool?

- Every FLVS course has a variety of assessments. There is no one method used. Students are often given a choice of how they demonstrate mastery – they might create a Powerpoint presentation, or write a paper, or produce a video for formative assessments. A few courses also have a

project as part of the summative assessment. For example, Web Design includes a project as well as a multiple choice semester exam. The semester exam is weighted at 20% of the overall course grade.

Utah

The following information was provided by Robyn Bagley, Board Chair for "Parents for Choice in Education". Additional information can be found at:

www.choiceineducation.org

Funding Follows the Student to the Course

Through the Statewide Online Education Program every 9-12 grade student in Utah has access to the very best online courses and teachers regardless of zip code - whether they choose electives, foreign language, honors or AP, science, history, math, or anything in between.

Parents and Students are in the Driver's Seat

- They choose the courses.
- They choose the Course Providers
- Blended Learning – Student chooses whether to take their course from the Statewide Online Education Program or from their primary school of enrollment.

Subject Mastery Replaces Seat Time

- Allows students to advance based upon demonstrated competency.
- Open-entry, open exit permitted based upon provider parameters.
- Provider administers required state assessments (CRTs) upon course completion – state required to make assessments available at any time.

British Columbia

British Columbia has a tradition that distributed learning (DL) should be supported on continuous funding model.

All schools in province are funded on a course-based model, and all schools are funded for the courses they provide, generally without an FTE limit. Students can take supplemental DL courses from DL school, and BC funds DL school for those courses, in addition to courses they take at bricks/mortar school. Continuous entry model is assumed here, without a provincial limit to length of course – each is funded once, even if participation overlaps school

years. There are 3 counts, September, February, and May. For each count, DL schools report each new DL course since the last count, and the Ministry provides full course funding for each new reported course. Students must achieve Active status before they are eligible for funding.

Active participation in distributed learning is equivalent to attendance in a school and is a requirement under the School Act, Section 1 (1). Boards or authorities must have evidence of active participation to be funded by the Ministry for a distributed learning student's course or program.

POLICY

Students that meet the following criteria will be considered active for funding purposes.

Grades 10 - 12 student files must contain the following at the snapshot submission date as listed in the 1701 Instructions to be claimed for funding:

- **A clear course plan for each subject** listed on the signed student learning plan, which links to learning outcomes, performance standards, required resources and assessment strategies.
- Following completion of the student learning plan, **at least one example of instruction-related communication between the teacher and student.**
- **At least one substantive assignment submitted to the teacher by the student.** A substantive assignment addresses the learning outcomes of the course and noticeably impacts the final percentage value of the student's school mark.
- **A student learning plan (of eligible courses),** reviewed annually and signed by the student and parent (where applicable), which meets graduation requirements.

ii) Grades 10 - 12 students who become active will be reported for funding, and therefore may complete their final assignment prior to the snapshot submission date.

PROCEDURES

To claim funding for students in distributed learning courses or programs, boards or authorities must ensure:

1. Teachers lead educational programs using course plans that show how curriculum outcomes will be addressed through educational activities, assessment strategies, and learning resources. Examples include:

- Evidence of course or student timetables, registration reports, and information gathered through interviews with teachers and other staff.
- Evidence of a student learning plan on record, signed by teacher and parent (and by the student, if old enough to understand the plan), that refers to:
 - Learning outcomes in the Integrated Resource Packages for the program and/or course(s);

- Required areas of study for the program and/or course;
- The teacher's plan for providing learning activities;
- Learning resources required to complete the program and/or course(s);
- Standards of performance expected of the student;
- Teacher files that include course information, student learning plans, master assignments, records of contact and interaction (attendance equivalent), assessment, samples of student assignments, and other anecdotal commentary on the student's learning progress.

2. Teachers communicate with students to support the learning outcomes in their program and/or course. Communication may occur via email messages, telephone calls, face-to-face meetings, computer-mediated conferences, or submitted assignments.

- Evidence includes a record of telephone calls, email messages, orientation sessions, meetings (online and in person) time, date and outcome of the interaction.
- Evidence must include at least one contact for the student to be considered active in the program and/or course they are enrolled in.

3. Substantive assignments are submitted to teachers and address curriculum outcomes in the student's program and/or course. Assignments indicate communication and interaction between teacher and student, and contribute marks to the final grade or performance reports for the program and/or course.

- Evidence includes examples of student work, assessment data, and teacher gradebook reflecting student engagement in a significant portion of the program and/or course.
- Marked assignments are generally returned to students, but marks are recorded for evaluation and reporting purposes and filed in a gradebook, and samples of marked student work are kept on file.

4. Students in Grades 10-12 have a planned program of studies that leads to the completion of graduation requirements in accordance with the Provincial Graduation Requirements Order.

- Evidence includes a student learning plan that meets graduation requirements, or verification that the school of record is responsible for the graduation plan;
- For Graduated Adults, evidence that the course is a provincial or Board/Authority Authorized course listed on LearnNow BC.

5. The "Active Date" for a student in a course or program is the earliest date, supportable with evidence, which satisfies the above policy conditions. The Active Date is typically later than the date when the school assigns a student to a course through registration, enrollment, or class configuration mechanisms.

Supplemental funds for Special Education, remote/rural access, etc.

Supplemental funds go to "School of Record".

School of Record = School where students takes the most courses.