

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

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1906, the Carnegie Unit was designed to free up children from farm fields and factories to have an opportunity to learn by guaranteeing a set time frame in school.

We now have an opportunity to make whether a student learns more important than when, where or how the student learns. HB 5392 carries some of the same assumptions about equating attendance with learning that are the core of the pupil accounting manual.

In the past, we have had a learning triangle with time, curriculum and learning that held time constant. The variables were curriculum and learning. We have the opportunity to now change that to hold learning and the curriculum as the constants, and make time the variable, but we have to have the regulations that enable that change. We are measuring the wrong part of the student with seat time. The log-in requirements for virtual learning say nothing about whether a student is learning.

Much of evaluation and control in the past has been based upon the inspection model. We explain what we want, where and when we want it, and the degree to which it is measurable. Then we inspect to see whether it happened. We need to move to a demonstration model, where we explain what we want, then have the student demonstrate that the proficiency is there.

We also need to expand beyond virtual learning and online learning to extended learning opportunities. We need to know what our students know deeply and are able to do long after the tests. How much of what you do now did you learn after schooling? As leader of a district that educates students hundreds of miles away, and has had a seat time waiver for several years, much has been learned by the experience that can guide us into moving into new a new vision for education, while being guided by experience with seat time waivers.

Let's do what makes sense, not hang on to what we have always done in the past. Let's also do what makes economic sense. The budget crisis gives us a great opportunity to change that may not present itself in good times. The addition of the resources of technology makes possible practices that were unattainable in the past. We can now individualize education. But we need to remove some of the barriers put up to keep in place the education structure of the past century. This bill is a good place to start. Let's level the playing field and let the districts that are pioneering this move into 21st century learning have the flexibility needed to achieve this vision. SB 624 allowing districts to compete statewide would be an example of just such a change.

Specifically, in HB 5392, `13 b maintains the idea that "attendance" by log in is what is important. 12 H requires that mentors be certified teachers. As every student already has a certified teacher as the highly qualified instructor, the additional requirement that the mentor be also a certified teacher adds unnecessary cost.