

TESTIMONY ON NORTH DAKOTA STUDENT PASSPORT PROJECT

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ann Ellefson and I am the Director in the Office of Academic Support for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). I am here to provide information on the North Dakota Student Passport Project.

In August 2015, the department was contacted by a Fargo citizen with a challenge to create a North Dakota Passport as a learning/teaching tool for the staff and students of North Dakota. The content within the passport could represent a variety of areas highlighting North Dakota's tourism, agriculture, energy, and economic development opportunities.

The NDDPI contacted the original vendor of the Minnesota Passport and Wisconsin Passports, MW Passports out of Wisconsin, to gather more information regarding the passport concept. The Minnesota Passport and Wisconsin Passport both originated in 1988 and are updated each time they are reprinted. The passports are used for a variety of purposes including by corporate businesses for keepsakes or promotional gifts fulfilling business needs when entertaining U.S. or international clients.

The NDDPI discussed North Dakota's uniqueness that could be highlighted within a North Dakota Student Passport and the endless possibilities to use it as an educational resource and tool. Should the project come to fruition, the NDDPI would target distribution to those students in grades four and eight, aligning with the current North Dakota Studies course content and requirements.

Student data from the 2014-2015 school year was used to determine the potential costs of this project (approximately 17,000 students). Cost estimates were gathered from MW Passports (\$40,800) and North Dakota State Printing (\$10,000). These cost estimates represent printing alone and do not include potential project development costs or distribution charges. Alternately, a similar product already exists in the state as the North Dakota State Historical Society and U.S. Forest Service jointly publishes a *Passport to North Dakota History*.

Should it be determined that this project move forward, funding would need to be provided through the 2017-2019 biennium. Additionally, the department would reach out to the North Dakota Studies partners, including the State Historical Society and North Dakota Humanities Council regarding product development and product promotion.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee that concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.