

2021 SENATE EDUCATION

SB 2196

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2196

1/26/2021

A BILL relating to the establishment of a North Dakota competency framework and to instructional time requirements.

Vice Chair Elkin opened the hearing at 9:39 a.m.

Discussion Topics:

- Change time restraints
- Remove barriers from Century Code

Chair Schaible introduced the bill in support. #3165
Dr. Aimee Copas, NDCEL Dir. –testified in support
#3445

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbema	P

Lillian Pace, Policy & Advocacy, KnowledgeWorks, testified in support via Zoom. #3219.

Lorie Phillips. Dir. Teaching & Learning for KnowledgeWorks Testified via Zoom.
#3216.

Dale Hoerauf, Career & Tech Academy – testified in support. #3368.

Patrick Phillips, Systems Innovator – BPS – testified in support. #3249, #3250.

Travis Jordan, Supt Beulah Schools-testified in support #2770.

Kraig Steinhoff, Supt. Oaks Public Schools testified in support. #3444.

Dr. Cory Steiner, Supt. Northern Cass School Dist., Hunter, ND. Testified in support.
#3447

Ann Ellefson, NDDPI, testified in support. #3158.

Additional written testimony:

Fred Jones – support- #3338
Nick Archuleta – support - #3252
Carrie O'Rourke – support - #3021

Adjourned at 11:07 a..m.

Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk



NORTH DAKOTA SENATE

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Senator Donald Schaible

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COMMITTEES:

Education
Energy and Natural Resources, Chairman

January 26, 2021

Good morning Senate Education committee, for the Record my name is Senator Don Schaible, representing District 31. I am here to introduce SB 2196 which is to establish a North Dakota competency framework. This conversation has been going on for some time and a lot of work has been done by stake holders whom you will hear from later. The idea behind competency framework is to provide a personalize pathway to graduation while ensuring mastery of content which may not be the same path as our conventional graduation path. The meat of this bill is in Section 1 that suggests that the State Board of Public Instruction will establish and certify this framework. I knew when I introduced this bill that more work is needed on how this will be accomplished and if the State Board of Education is the correct place to do this. There has been talk about letting the Education Coordination Council work on this or maybe an Interim Committee take a look at it. The concern is that would take another session and the results would not go into effect until at least some time in 2023. I think we can find a solution quicker than that. There is experts and teachers that have been working on this for a while and it may best to let them explain it better than I can. With that Chairman Elkin I would try to answer any questions.



1 **SB 2196 – ND Competency Framework**

2 **NDCEL Testimony in Support**

3 Senator Schaible, members of the Senate Education Committee – for the record my name is Dr.
4 Aimee Copas – I serve as the Executive Director for the North Dakota Council of Educational
5 Leaders. I’m here today to share our support with the concepts before you. What is laid out before
6 you today is a product of much work. The bill before you today is not just an idea that is coming
7 together in bill form like spaghetti that we are trying to stick to the wall. This is a result of time
8 intensive, ongoing, and still going work for our students of North Dakota. This is work ground in
9 real data, science, and competencies for students.

10 You are going to hear behind me professionals that have been working on this for years. You are
11 going to hear about how multiple efforts (Portrait of a Graduate, Learning Continuum,
12 Competency Pathways) – all efforts grounded in student success are coming together this summer
13 to finish the certifiable pathway. While the words are few, the impact of this bill is HUGE and it
14 is what is right for kids. There are fine folks behind me today who are going to help teach you
15 about all of this and help you see and support this work. We are asking for this NOW because our
16 students can’t wait another two years. This bill would allow much needed pathways for our current
17 high schools and could provide real avenues to address workforce needs this fall.

18 In the bill you will see that we ask that this framework be certified by the State Board of Public
19 Education. Why that board, you might ask? Because of the expansive breadth of this work – it
20 needs the review and feedback of many. The field is CRYING for a way to do the right thing
21 without yet another waiver process. This bill would preserve that wish. It would not eliminate the
22 work that a district would need to do to appropriately implement the work, but it would; with an
23 approved framework, leave the power to decide curriculum, delivery, and instruction where it
24 belongs – with the district and their locally elected school board rather than needing to seek the
25 approval from a state entity.

26 Further clarification: The State Board of Public Education has broad representation of the state –
27 NDDPI, CTE, School Boards, and education representation. It is also the board that has under its

*NDCEL is the strongest unifying voice representing and supporting administrators and educational leaders in pursuit of quality
education for all students in North Dakota.*

Executive Director: Aimee Copas-----Assistant Director: Russ Ziegler



1 purview the K12 Coordination Council. We'd suggest that the board ask the K12 Coordination
2 council to review and make a recommendation of the work done before certification. As a
3 reminder, the K12 Coordination Council has representation from the Governor, ND Legislators,
4 the State Superintendent, Director of CTE, Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, Counselors,
5 Special Education, Federal Schools, NDCEL, NDSBA, NDUnited, REA's, NDSOS, & others.
6 Once the work is done, the K12 Coordination council has weighed in, then the State Board, we
7 believe the legislature can feel confident that the work, if certified, would absolutely be more than
8 credible.

9 There are several here who will be sharing with you the nuts and bolts and I yield my time to the
10 experts in the field. Thank you for your consideration and we ask for a strong DO PASS on this
11 bill.



CRITICAL THINKING

A North Dakotan...

- Consistently improves the quality of one's own thinking by being socially aware, questioning bias and assumptions.
- Applies disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded.
- Understands the global perspectives while also proposing solutions that are mindful to the impact they may have on the local communities.



EMPATHY

A North Dakotan...

- Seeks, understands, and productively responds to the points of view, feelings, and experiences of others.
- Embraces, global, local, and personal responsibility for making the world a better place.
- Understands that addressing societal challenges often requires compromise while promoting understanding of complex issues and varying perspectives.



PERSEVERANCE

A North Dakotan...

- Understands the relationship between effort, attitude, and achievement.
- Embraces the idea that failure is a part of success and quickly pivots to keep moving forward.
- Navigates adversity by identifying its source and duration, utilizing strengths and available supports.
- Demonstrates grit, curiosity and positive attitudes while on a life-long quest for knowledge and skills.



COMMUNICATION

A North Dakotan...

- Listens to understand before communicating to be understood.
- Articulates thoughts and ideas effectively in a variety of forms and contexts.
- Uses communications for a range of purposes and audiences (e.g. to self-advocate, build positive relationships, resolve conflict, achieve shared goals,) to give and receive feedback.



COLLABORATION

A North Dakotan...

- Assumes shared responsibility to utilize strengths to build collective commitment and action.
- Contributes to group effectiveness in pursuit of a shared vision.
- Possesses a team mentality that elicits diverse perspectives and contributions.



ADAPTABILITY

A North Dakotan...

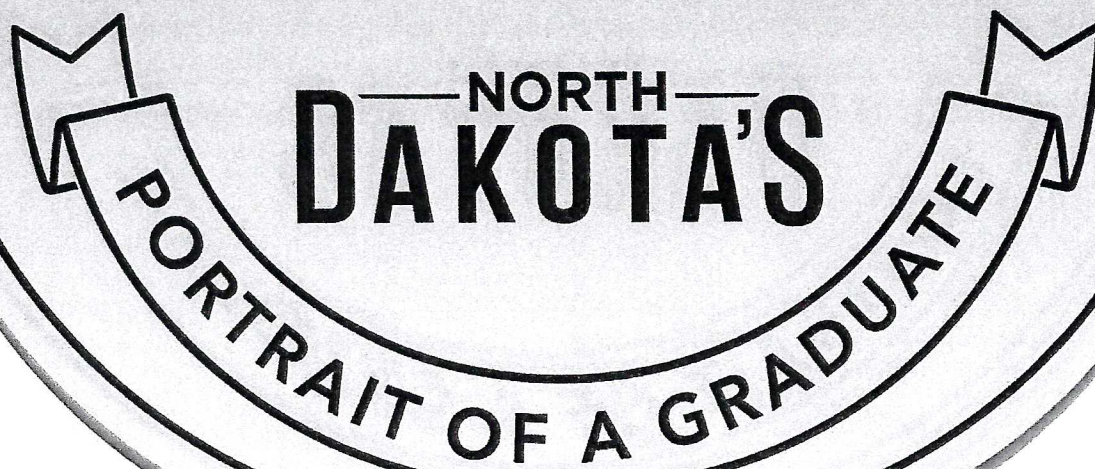
- Responds productively and positively to feedback, praise, setbacks, and criticism.
- Understands, negotiates, and balances diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions.
- Analyzes conditions to create a plan utilizing self-awareness and self-management to overcome them.



LEARNER'S MINDSET

A North Dakotan...

- Embraces a commitment to lifelong learning while approaching their pursuits with passion.
- Possesses the desire to learn, unlearn, and relearn.





**CRITICAL
THINKING**



COMMUNICATION



EMPATHY



COLLABORATION



**LEARNER'S
MINDSET**

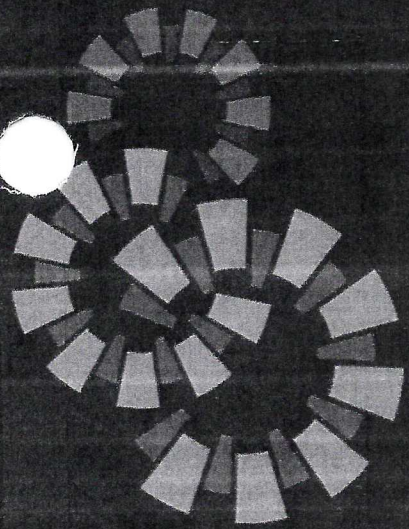


ADAPTABILITY



PERSEVERANCE

**— NORTH —
DAKOTA'S**
PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



SUMMARY REPORT FOR:

Portrait of a Graduate

PRESENTED TO:

The State of North Dakota

October 2020

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Battelle
forKids

Realizing the power and
promise of 21st century
learning for every student

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The State of North Dakota- Liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable

Why Develop a Portrait of a Graduate?

A "Portrait of a Graduate" (Portrait) serves as a visioning device for a school system. It establishes the purpose for schools because graduates represent the culmination of the K-12 learning experience. Most families hope their children wear their cap and gown and walk across the graduation stage. A student's successful graduation is one of the first rites of passage that can have significant implications on the scope of life choices to follow. While graduation itself is not enough to help young people maximize life's opportunities, the attributes students develop by the time they graduate often inform the opportunities available to them after high school.

The State of North Dakota engaged in the Portrait development process to discuss with community members the attributes North Dakota prioritizes for its graduates. This process addresses several limitations in current education systems. Historically, education has emphasized content over skills and mindsets. A focus on coursework is necessary, but insufficient to prepare graduates for their post-secondary lives. As such, information about what students know and are able to do is either unclear or short in supply. The Portrait re-oriens how learning is organized and reported, based on a manageable set of prioritized attributes that best prepare students for success after high school. Consequently, the "target" becomes clearer for how North Dakota's communities want to prepare students for their futures, and information about the same is clearer to all stakeholders. This has implications for aligning curriculum, assessment, and designing students' learning experiences.

North Dakota and its stakeholders wish to develop in students a set of key attributes that are transferable across time, space, and life's myriad situations. Few, if anyone, can predict what situations students will find themselves in when they leave high school within The State of North Dakota. It is difficult to know exactly what content and skills they will need. To hedge against this uncertainty, it is critical to develop in our students' transferable skills and mindsets that can be applied in many situations, so they will meet challenges, seize opportunities, and continually grow throughout life.

The Portrait Development Process

The State of North Dakota assembled a Portrait Design Team, a diverse team of community members from around the state that represent the various stakeholder groups. The Portrait Design Team identified the attributes for its Portrait through a rigorous process, including research, concept design and development. Through this process, many stakeholders had opportunities to interact in the community conversation on North Dakota's Portrait of a Graduate. Per communications from the leadership team to their Portrait Design Team, this

group's charge was to "develop a collective vision that articulates our state's aspirations for all of our students," including the youngest learners all the way to the district's graduates.

APPROACH AND OBSERVATIONS

The Portrait Design Team's approach included these steps:

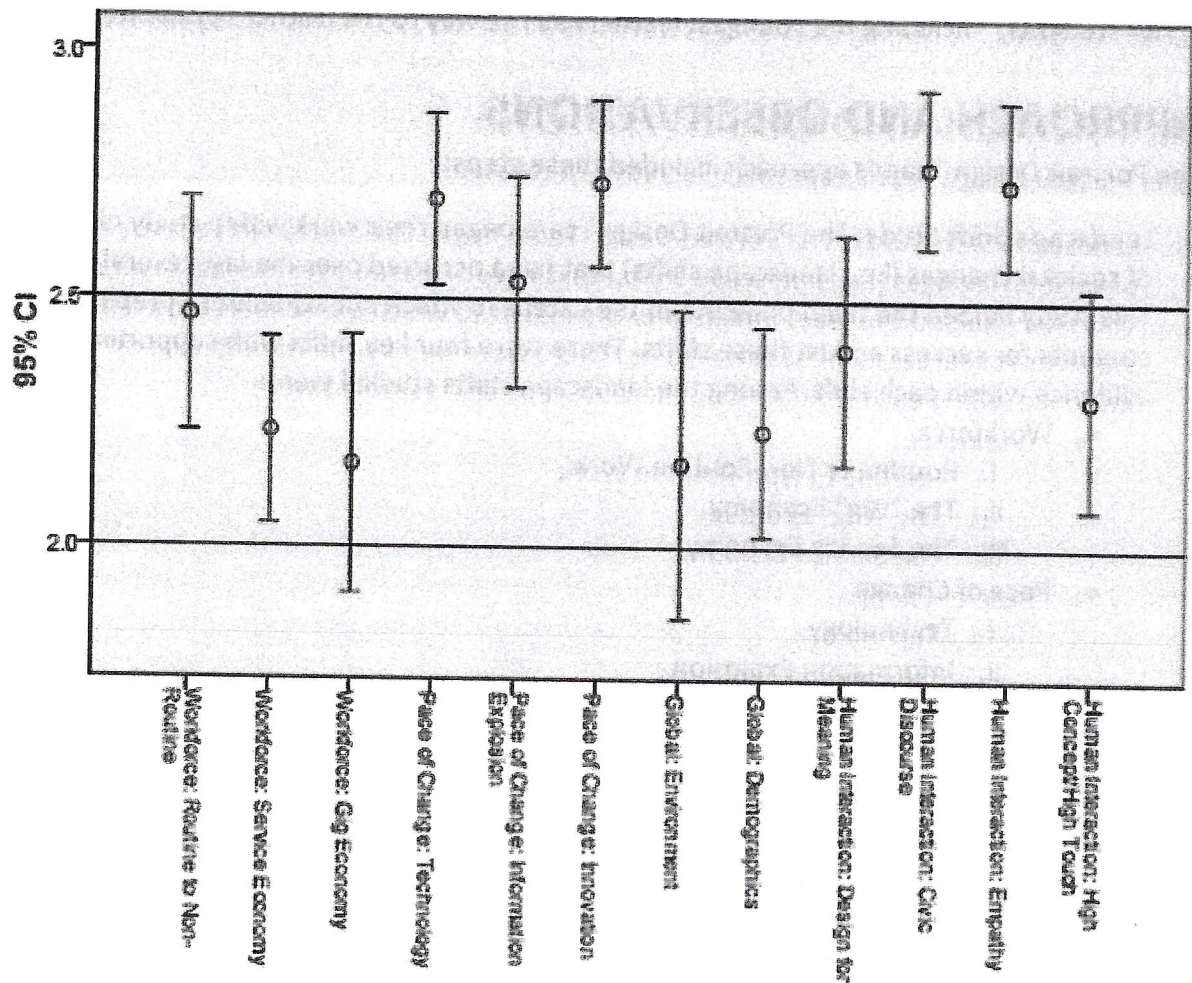
1. **Landscape Shift Study:** The Portrait Design Team began their work with a study of a variety of societal changes (i.e., landscape shifts) that have occurred over the last several decades. This study helped the team understand the extent to which our schools are preparing students for success amidst these shifts. There were four key shifts with supporting evidence within each shift. Among the landscape shifts studied were:

- Workforce
 - i. Routine to Non-Routine Work
 - ii. The "Gig" Economy
 - iii. The Service Economy
- Pace of Change
 - i. Technology
 - ii. Information Explosion
 - iii. Innovation
- Global
 - i. Environment
 - ii. Demographics
- Human Interaction
 - i. Design for Meaning
 - ii. Civic Discourse
 - iii. Empathy
 - iv. High Concept/High Touch

During this study of various landscape shifts, Portrait Design Team members rated the importance of each shift based on their relevance to The State of North Dakota and the communities they serve. During this process they considered how these landscape shifts may impact students' prospects for current and future success. The following chart illustrates the landscape shift results, where each landscape shift was rated on a three-point scale:

- Critical—3
- Important—2
- Interesting, but not compelling—1

All supporting data is listed below.



Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum
Human Interaction: Civic Discourse	32	2	3
Pace of Change: Innovation	36	2	3
Human Interaction: Empathy	32	2	3
Pace of Change: Technology	37	2	3
Pace of Change: Information Explosion	36	1	3
Workforce: Routine to Non-Routine	38	1	3
Human Interaction: Design for Meaning	32	1	2
Human Interaction: High Concept/High Touch	30	1	3
Workforce: Service Economy	37	1	2
Workforce: Gig Economy	37	1	2
Global: Demographics	33	1	2
Global: Environment	33	1	2
Valid N (listwise)	30		

In Meeting Poll

Workforce: Routine to Non-Routine		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	5%	Number of Responses: 38
Important	45%	
Critical	50%	

Workforce: Service Economy		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	5%	Number of Responses: 37
Important	65%	
Critical	30%	

Workforce: Gig Economy		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	13%	Number of Responses: 37
Important	49%	
Critical	38%	

Pace of Change: Technology		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	0%	Number of Responses: 37
Important	30%	
Critical	70%	

Pace of Change: Information Explosion		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	3%	Number of Responses: 36
Important	44%	
Critical	53%	

Pace of Change: Innovation		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	0%	Number of Responses: 36
Important	25%	
Critical	75%	

Global: Environment		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	24%	Number of Responses: 33
Important	36%	
Critical	40%	

Global Demographics		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	6%	Number of Responses: 33
Important	67%	
Critical	27%	

Human Interaction: Design For Meaning		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	6%	Number of Responses: 32
Important	47%	
Critical	47%	

Human Interaction: Civic Discourse		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	0%	Number of Responses: 32
Important	25%	
Critical	75%	

Human Interaction: Empathy		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	0%	Number of Responses: 32
Important	28%	
Critical	72%	

Human Interaction: High Concept/High Touch		Single Answer Poll
Interesting, but not compelling	7%	Number of Responses: 30
Important	57%	
Critical	36%	

2. **Community Aspirations for their Graduate:** Portrait Design Team members used an online crowdsourcing tool to share their “hopes, dreams, and aspirations” for their young people. The data from the exercise helped identify thoughts and comments that trend and resonate strongly with the whole group. There were 36 participants who submitted thoughts.

Hopes, Dreams, and Aspirations
<i>“That they'll be exposed to new ideas and pushed to think differently than they otherwise would. That their teachers guide them through the questioning process in and with a group of their peers. That their curiosity has been nurtured and becomes part of who they are.”</i>
<i>“Students experience a relevant education that prepares them with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to society, whether military, college or career. That our students find purposeful and live lives with meaning. That they'll want to stay in North Dakota for their lives and careers!”</i>
<i>“Provide opportunities to keep students in North Dakota after they graduate.”</i>
<i>“Graduate ready to start their next journey (work, further education, other).”</i>
<i>“Hope - to see a future and a path to a meaningful life.”</i>
<i>“My hope is for students to have rigorous course work that is personalized to their passions and interests and is not “one size fits all.”</i>
<i>“My hope is for every learner to be able to own their learning. We must work with them to help develop the skills where they can advocate for oneself. They need to be provided opportunities to authentically experience the world outside the walls of the building. It is time for us to ask our learners what they need and find a way to get it for them.”</i>

<i>"I hope students are prepared through their K-12 educational experience to be in a position to make an educated decision for their "next steps" as it relates to their post-secondary options (education/training, military, workforce) that align with their skills, interests, and abilities."</i>
<i>"I hope learners find their self-worth, acknowledge it, and live it. I hope that they know being a North Dakotan carries worth and that they reflect on what values they cherish. I hope that learners aspire to be decent human beings with a growth mindset."</i>
<i>"I hope that all students have the ability to understand the many career options that lay ahead of them and they are equipped with the skill set to be successful. I also, hope that they come out of school with a passion for learning throughout their life."</i>
<i>"To be confident and empathetic and want to learn their whole lives."</i>
<i>"To be ready to enter the workforce upon graduation in a field of study they find interesting, fulfilling and have passion for which will promote their independence and success in life."</i>
<i>"North Dakota students will have a personalized graduation option to allow flexibility in their learning and preferred future."</i>
<i>"My hope for North Dakota students is that whatever career they pursue in life they do so with passion and rigor."</i>
<i>"Learn how to learn, learn to LOVE learning, understand that to be successful they must be learners for the rest of their lives."</i>

3. **Competency Identification to Meet Shifts:** Following the group study of societal changes, Portrait Design Team members reviewed an inventory of skills, literacies, and mindsets to broaden their consideration of the possible attributes that could be included in North Dakota's Portrait. Then, each team member submitted individual selections of the top seven attributes he or she prioritized based on the landscape shifts study. The group then reviewed and discussed the aggregate results of team members' submissions. The top twelve attributes—from most frequently submitted to least—were as follows:

Attribute	Individual %
Communication	70
Critical Thinking	70
Empathy	57
Adaptability	55
Collaboration	45
Learners Mindset	37
Conflict Resolution	32
Perseverance	32
Problem Solving	32
Leadership	27
Self-Goal Directed	27
Confidence	25

4. **Small Group Consensus to Prioritize Attributes:** The Portrait Design Team then worked in small groups to develop a set of prioritized attributes and shared their rationale with the broader group. This allowed team members to “test” their initial ideas with their peers. The results the group submissions were as follows:

Attribute	Group Selection
Communication	9
Critical Thinking	7
Collaboration	7
Empathy	6
Adaptability	6
Learners Mindset	4
Perseverance	4

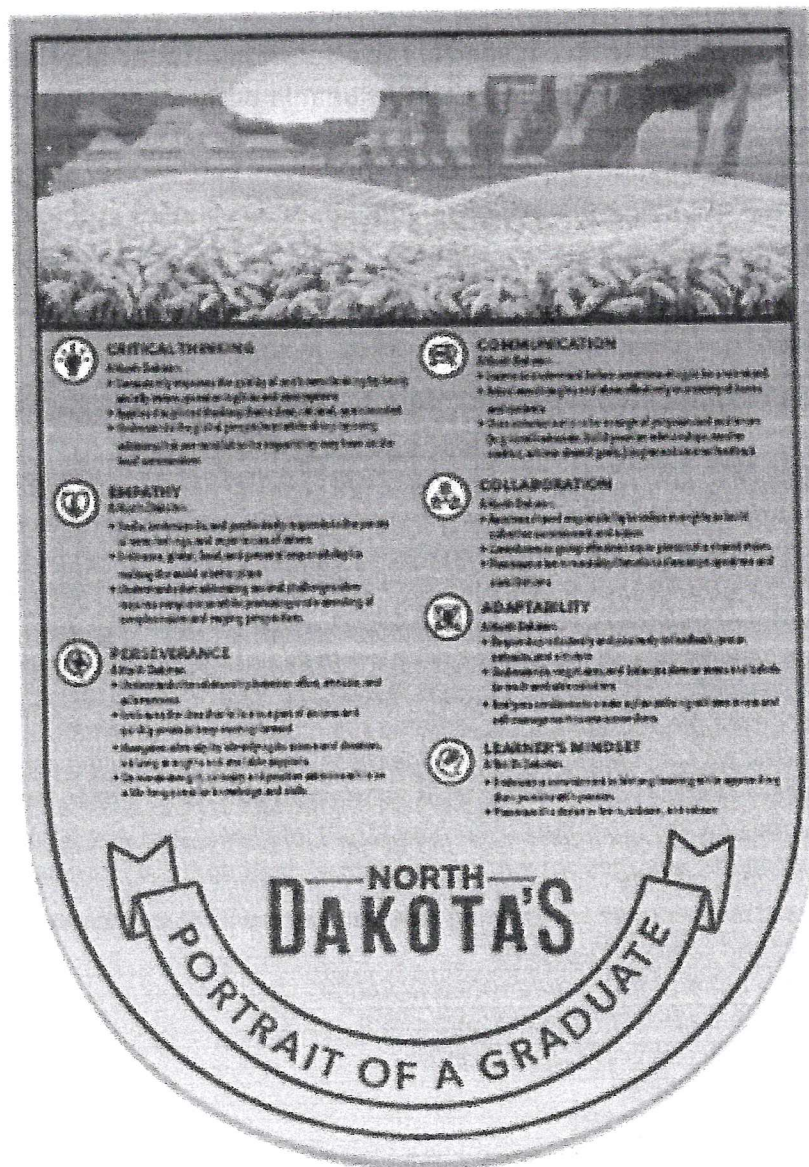
5. **Further Refinement of Attributes:** After the pros and cons of attribute set options were shared, a sharper list of attributes was devised and discussed with the Portrait Design Team. Then, the leadership team tailored and fine-tuned the definitions for each attribute. Through this process, they worked to embed language that describes the attributes that resonate with North Dakota's broader community.

- **Adaptability**
 - A North Dakotan...
 - Responds productively and positively to feedback, praise, setbacks, and criticism.
 - Understands, negotiates, and balances diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions.
 - Analyzes conditions to create a plan utilizing self-awareness and self-management to overcome them.
- **Collaboration**
 - A North Dakotan...
 - Assumes shared responsibility to utilize strengths to build collective commitment and action.
 - Contributes to group effectiveness in pursuit of a shared vision.
 - Possesses a team mentality that elicits diverse perspectives and contributions.
- **Communication**
 - A North Dakotan...
 - Listens to understand before communicating to be understood.
 - Articulates thoughts and ideas effectively in a variety of forms and contexts.
 - Uses communications for a range of purposes and audiences (e.g. to self-advocate, build positive relationships, resolve conflict, achieve shared goals,) to give and receive feedback.
- **Critical Thinking**
 - A North Dakotan...
 - Consistently improves the quality of one's own thinking by being socially aware, questioning bias and assumptions.
 - Applies disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded.
 - Understands the global perspectives while also proposing solutions that are mindful to the impact they may have on the local communities.
- **Empathy**
 - A North Dakotan...
 - Seeks, understands, and productively responds to the points of view, feelings, and experiences of others.
 - Embraces, global, local, and personal responsibility for making the world a better place.

- Understands that addressing societal challenges often requires compromise while promoting understanding of complex issues and varying perspectives.
- Learner's Mindset
 - A North Dakotan...
 - Embraces a commitment to lifelong learning while approaching their pursuits with passion.
 - Possesses the desire to learn, unlearn, and relearn.
- Perseverance
 - A North Dakotan...
 - Understands the relationship between effort, attitude, and achievement.
 - Embraces the idea that failure is a part of success and quickly pivots to keep moving forward.
 - Navigates adversity by identifying its source and duration, utilizing strengths and available supports.
 - Demonstrates grit, curiosity and positive attitudes while on a life-long quest for knowledge and skills.

6. Portrait Visual Design:

Sample Portraits from across the country were shared with the North Dakota Portrait Design Team to help spark thinking about the State of North Dakota Portrait of a Graduate, and the visual story it tells. The Portrait Design Team was asked for input to inform the creative inspiration for the State of North Dakota Portrait of a Graduate. Many creative ideas were provided, including badlands and wheat fields. The project leadership team considered all of the creative inspiration and helped provide creative direction to showcase the strong iconography of the state. The final Portrait of a Graduate design was inspired by state-wide context, and continues to communicate a consistent, compelling story from the State of North Dakota.



CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The following emerged during the development and vetting processes of The State of North Dakota Portrait:

- The project leadership team assembled a strong, dynamic, and committed team of statewide stakeholders. This team worked well together and stayed mostly intact throughout the entirety of the process and provided critical input to inform the Portrait of a Graduate.
- The leadership team, consisting of superintendents and other leaders, were mindful throughout the process of the needs of the students and various communities. Clearly, this team was uniquely committed to envisioning a brighter future for North Dakota students in addition to the needs for a continued relevant and rigorous curriculum.
- As the portrait design team engaged in the discussions around how the world has changed over the last generation, it almost unanimously found “civic discourse” to be a critical consideration.
- Given the unique circumstances around this virtual gathering of stakeholders from around the state, the project leadership team determined that the last meeting should be leveraged to generate ideas for the cultivation of the portrait attributes both in and outside the traditional classroom setting. The results of the brainstorming session are listed below.

What kind of experiences could we create to cultivate our state portrait both in and outside of schools across North Dakota?
<i>“Active learning including field trips, extended experiences outside of the school like internships and job shadows, authentic opportunities in community, and project and problem-based learning. Include in-school leadership opportunities to develop/practice communication and conflict resolution skills. Maximize common occurrences in school such as a conflict on the playground being an opportunity to empower students to develop empathy, communication, etc. rather than the adult solving or resolving the issue. The learning targets for all of these activities need to be taught, modeled, and measured (e.g. rubrics built in Oakes). We need to be open to learning happening outside of school and with other experts. For example, a great deal of learning can happen in co-curricular, extra-curricular, and club-based activities; we can intentionally leverage these activities for learning experiences. Through all of this, we believe student voice and agency is very important. For example, they can submit a proposal to describe how they can meet a learning target and being part of a team or club could help them meet these targets, and then submitting evidence of meeting these learning targets. Another example is having students engage in community events like crowd sourcing challenges to solve real problems with peers and community experts.”</i>
<i>“All students have the opportunity for internships (equity).”</i>
<i>“Career awareness for opportunities beyond our state.”</i>
<i>“Opportunities to demonstrate civic responsibility.”</i>
<i>“Service-learning opportunities.”</i>
<i>“Self-directed learning opportunities.”</i>
<i>“Opportunities to solve real problems in the community.”</i>
<i>“Student led based learning experiences.”</i>

"Internships, Capstone experiences."

"Working more with students to get them into more of a hands-on environment in which they have a voice. (Ex. Offering more internships, planning their own field trips from start to finish. Letting them spend time in areas they love and might want to pursue.) Allowing more classroom time to give more real-life experiences and giving students more ownership in planning those things. Having students present to authentic audiences as well."

"I'd love to see more of the schools that are implementing these models highlighted well in social media. Innovation Playlist is an example."

"Parents / mentors can also facilitate -- not just the responsibility of a school district."

Activating The State of North Dakota's Portrait of a Graduate

The Portrait of a Graduate should serve as a North Star. Turning the Portrait of a Graduate into a reality for each student means re-examining teaching and learning.

Once the state has embraced the Portrait of a Graduate, the project leadership team should intend to build the work into the statewide professional development plan in a manner consistent with the state educational strategic plan.

With a Portrait, The State of North Dakota should consider the implications for:

- **Visionary Leadership:** Establishing a unifying and enduring vision for the community's shared aspirations for all students, a 21st century vision that is locally developed and globally positioned.
 - Share attributes with the state board and describe rigorous process to understand learning.
 - Align board meetings to uplift ideas embedded within the Portrait of a Graduate.
 - Work to ensure collective 21st century vision and ideas are an integral part of the strategic planning process.
- **Measurable Impact and Stewardship:** Leverages meaningful evidence to demonstrate progress, inform continuous improvement, and elevate confidence in the impact of the system to prepare graduates as lifelong learners and contributors in the 21st century.
 - Communicate to stakeholders and create a gap analysis to determine where these attributes are currently being elevated in classrooms and throughout the state.
 - Establish a communication forum to share ideas and then integrate ideas into the existing curriculum.
- **Empowered Workforce:** Elevates all staff in the service of students with human capital systems that attract, grow and retain innovative talent equipped to realize the district's 21st century vision.
 - Determine a course of action for the Portrait of a North Dakota employee.
 - Consider onboarding and professional learning opportunities for employees around the State of North Dakota's Portrait of a Graduate.
 - Consider using PCBL units to foster thinking associated with attributes.
- **Thriving Ecosystem:** Fosters a high functioning, equitable, interdependent system, including the broader community, ensuring support for and alignment to the district's 21st century vision.
 - Continue to seek input from strategic planning teams or community members to gain various perspectives on the work around attributes. Continue to build relationships.
 - Engage in a network to elevate the work.
- **21st Century Learning Design:** Purposely integrates rigorous academic content with experiences that intentionally cultivate skills, mindsets and literacies essential for all students to become lifelong learners and contributors in the 21st century.
 - Work with staff to understand the selected attributes and understand the process used.
 - Develop outcomes for the attributes and possible assessment strategies to allow students to demonstrate specific learning.

- Create a look-for/listen-for document to allow teachers to deepen their understanding of what the state portrait looks like in practice.
 - Create scope and sequence for scaffolding attributes.
- **Caring, Responsive Culture:** Nurtures a welcoming, inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives and cultivates engagement across a safe school community.
 - Provide opportunities for all students to see themselves in the portrait.
 - Vertically align and articulate attributes.
 - Ensure all students have access to and intentional engagement in learning outcomes.

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Please find on the supplemental materials the summary report from Meeting Pulse.



Tuesday, January 26, 2021

The Honorable Donald Schaible, Chairman
North Dakota Senate Education Committee

Testimony in Support of SB 2196, the establishment of a North Dakota competency framework and to waive instructional time requirements.

Submitted By: Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, KnowledgeWorks

Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee, I am Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for KnowledgeWorks. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 2196, which would establish a North Dakota Competency framework to guide student mastery in place of traditional instructional time requirements.

KnowledgeWorks is a nonprofit organization with 20 years of experience exploring the future of learning, growing educator impact and working with state and federal policymakers to advance personalized, competency-based education systems. We are especially proud of our partnership with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Personalized Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) Cohort, a group of four districts - Northern Cass, Oakes, West Fargo, and the Marmot School within the Youth Correctional Facility – that are pioneering a five-year vision to transform student-centered teaching and learning.

The guiding vision for these districts is a strong commitment to personalized, competency-based learning systems that elevate student voice and emphasize mastery of academic knowledge and skills over time-based structures that make acceleration challenging, or worse, allow many students to advance with significant learning gaps that widen over time.

Thanks to the forward-thinking educators in these districts, along with community partners, business leaders, and postsecondary institutions, North Dakota is receiving national recognition for its vision to create a more student-centered education system. This was fueled by passage of SB 2186 in 2017 to create an innovative education program and continues today thanks to the ongoing support and visionary leadership of North Dakota's policymakers.

By establishing a North Dakota Competency Framework and enabling districts to emphasize student mastery in lieu of traditional instructional hours, SB 2196 is an important next step in this work. Stakeholders across the education system would have access to a learning continuum with a transparent set of grade level expectations aligned to state standards and critical skills.

This emphasis on mastery of essential knowledge and skills would give North Dakota graduates a strategic advantage in today's rapidly changing economy. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, most students graduate without the career readiness competencies that employers deem necessary for success. For example, just 56% of graduates nationwide are proficient in problem solving, 43% in work ethic, and 42% in communication.

To this end, a growing number of North Dakota stakeholders recently collaborated to identify seven essential attributes for North Dakota graduates. These include valuable skills such as critical thinking, perseverance, empathy, collaboration and a learner's mindset. SB 2196 would build on this important work, providing every district access to a competency framework for integration into K-12 classrooms and learning environments.

In addition to elevating essential knowledge and skills, SB 2196 would remove the seat-time barrier around the state's instructional hours requirement. This policy change would help participating districts elevate the goal of mastery over time-based policies that restrict learning innovation by moving students through the education system at the same pace. This not only empowers educators to design authentic learning experiences that may occur outside the classroom with business leaders and community partners, but also gives educators greater opportunity to personalize learning supports through acceleration or additional time.

Like every state, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted North Dakota's education system. School schedules were disrupted, instructional hours decreased, and maintaining student engagement has been challenging. While policymakers moved quickly to respond to these challenges with emergency waivers and stimulus funds, long-term solutions to address these challenges are needed. This includes revisiting what high-quality instruction and learning look like, including how we deliver it, how much time it takes, and how credit is awarded. North Dakota should seize this moment to pass legislation that empowers districts to design high-quality student-centered learning experiences.

The state is well positioned to take this step because of the strong foundation and leadership of the North Dakota PCBL Cohort. These educators are ready to serve as a learning network to support other interested districts. As a partner in this work, KnowledgeWorks is also committed to the growth and sustainability of high-quality practice across North Dakota.

I encourage the committee to pass SB 2196 and thank you for your time. I am prepared to answer questions, but respectfully request to pass to my colleague, Lori Phillips, KnowledgeWorks' Director of Teaching and Learning who will address the progress of the ND PCBL Cohort and the ongoing work to create a state level competency framework.



#3216

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

The Honorable Donald Schaible, Chairman
North Dakota Senate Education Committee

Testimony in Support of S.B. 2196, the establishment of a North Dakota competency framework and to waive instructional time requirements.

Submitted By: Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, KnowledgeWorks
Lori Phillips, Director of Teaching and Learning, KnowledgeWorks

Chairman Schaible, and members of the committee:

My name is Lori Phillips, Director of Teaching and Learning for KnowledgeWorks. I am here today representing KnowledgeWorks to provide supportive testimony for *SB 2196*, which would establish a North Dakota competency framework to guide student mastery in place of traditional instructional time requirements.

During the legislative assembly in 2017, SB 2186 set the stage for innovative education practices to occur across North Dakota, including personalized, competency-based learning. The flexibility provided under this statute, along with the strong relationship between KnowledgeWorks and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, established the North Dakota Personalized, Competency-Based Learning cohort in 2018. West Fargo, Oakes, Northern Cass and The Marmot School within the Youth Correctional Center committed to a five-year partnership designed to support systems change and build capacity at the local level to scale personalized, competency-based learning statewide. The cohort districts intentionally represent diverse systems with unique experiences and needs, inspiring other districts in the state to learn from these pioneers.

- West Fargo representing a large district with 11,500 students, 70 leaders and 1200 staff spread throughout 21 school buildings and counting
- Oakes and Northern Cass representing medium districts, comprised of 500-660 learners, 3-4 leaders and 45-50 staff contained in one school building
- The Marmot School within the Youth Correctional center representing at-risk learners from across the state, their staff of less than 10 working to impact the whole child in the weeks, months, or years they have with each student contained in one school building

The cohort spent the first two years building trusting relationships, creating a local vision, deepening their understanding of personalized, competency-based learning and developing action plans to set goals, collect data and monitor progress. In year three the districts are establishing a collaborative network, strengthening leadership skills, increasing levels of transparent communication, and changing their systems to meet the needs of all learners.

A critical component of this work is embedding a culture of continuous improvement. Each district participates in Fall and Spring site visits from our National evaluation partner WestEd. WestEd, based in San Francisco, is tasked with collecting data through surveys, classroom walkthroughs and focus groups. Due to the pandemic, the Spring and Fall site visits were completed virtually. District specific data is shared individually, while cohort-wide patterns and trends are shared collectively. According to the Fall 2020 site visits,

- Districts with a clear vision are seeing higher levels of implementation
- Educators credit personalized, competency-based learning with helping them adapt to hybrid and remote learning models
- Several districts report increased student engagement with personalized, competency-based learning practices

As the cohort transitions from visioning and planning to implementation, it is critical to engage educators in the process. Between February and May, three learning opportunities, focused on personalized, competency-based learning basics, instruction, and assessment, will take place. Cohort members, representatives from the Department of Public Instruction and interested leaders and educators from the cohort districts will collaboratively learn, apply what they are learning and reflect on success and challenges. The goals are that leaders and educators will form a sustainable network of learning and collaboration that can serve as a model across the state.

For districts to fully transform to personalized, competency-based systems, the state's K-12 education system must begin to integrate engaging learning experiences that give learners the opportunity to master academic content and essential skills aligned to their postsecondary, career and military interests. SB 2196 is intended to offer flexibility in how learners choose to access and engage in learning as well as ensuring they demonstrate mastery of academic and 21st century skills.

A competency framework, consisting of a learning continuum and clear guidance for implementation, can serve as the foundation for competency-based systems, communicating common, high-level expectations for all learners. A learning continuum is a transparent document containing a progression of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (academic and 21st century skills), aligned to college- and career-ready pathways. Establishing a learning continuum, that is accessible to all members of the learning community (families, learners, educators, board members, community, etc.), creates an environment for learners to engage fully in the learning process and make decisions based on their needs, preferences and goals for the future.

KnowledgeWorks partnered with the Utah Department of Education in 2020 to convene stakeholders from K-12, post-secondary, business, and community to design a state level learning continuum. The continuum consists of PreK-Post-secondary, grade-banded competencies aligned to their portrait of a graduate. Example provided in Attachment A. I have also provided an example of work done in Farmington, MN focused on academic competencies (Attachment B)

The design of a state level learning continuum for North Dakota, including academic and 21st century skill competencies, will take place in June and July, with a draft completed by Fall of 2021. Twenty-six K-12 districts and eighteen higher education institutions (listed in Attachments C,D) as well as the Regional Educational Associations have been invited to participate in competency design committees as well as review councils; two introductory webinars, outlining the components of a learning continuum as well as the design process, were hosted by KnowledgeWorks and NDDPI last November. Access to the slides and recorded session can be found in Attachment E. The inclusion of diverse stakeholders and Native voice will be critical to the success of the learning continuum design and implementation.

The learning continuum may be adopted and implemented locally by ND districts who are interested in pursuing a personalized, competency-based system or utilized as a resource for districts to develop their own using local context. This transparent progression of learning expectations will support learner voice in how they access, engage, and express their learning.

Now more than ever there is a National urgency to rethink education, providing personalized opportunities that meet the needs of every learner. North Dakota can be a leader in this movement. We urge the committee to pass SB 2196.

That concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.

Attachment A: Example of Utah Portrait of a Graduate Competencies



WELLNESS

Develop self-awareness, self-advocacy skills and the knowledge to maintain healthy lifestyles that provide balance in life and improve physical, mental and social-emotional well-being.

Pre-K	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	Postsecondary
Students will be able to identify emotions, recognize physical and social needs, ask for help and participate in guided wellness activities.	Students will be able to explore self-awareness, participate in wellness activities and develop self-advocacy skills to express physical and social-emotional needs appropriately with trusted adults.	Students will be able to develop self-awareness, participate in wellness routines and practice self-advocacy skills by asking for help with mental, physical and social-emotional needs from trusted relationships.	Students will be able to practice self-awareness and self-advocacy, set goals and build routines towards balance through mental, physical and social-emotional wellness.	Students will be able to apply self-awareness to assess and monitor needs, set goals and routines and self-advocate for the supports they need to develop balance through mental, physical and social-emotional wellness.	Lifelong learners will be able to evaluate and adjust self-awareness and self-advocacy skills, be adept in achieving goals, maintain wellness habits and seek out supports to create lifelong balance through mental, physical and social-emotional well-being.

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Attachment B: Example of Farmington Area Public Schools (MN) Science Academic Competencies

Academic Example: Farmington High School

Science: Questioning

The ability to generate and use questioning to investigate relevant phenomena.

K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
Learners will be able to ask questions that will help them guide and design investigations, test ideas, and provide evidence to support their learning.	Learners will be able to generate questions which leads to development and use of models to represent their understanding of phenomena.	Learners will be able to plan and carry out investigations to answer student-driven questions about phenomena.	Learners will be able to design and conduct investigations, using appropriate technologies, to collect and organize data to evaluate ideas, answer questions, and explore phenomena.

Attachment C: ND Districts invited to participate in Learning Continuum Design and Review

Beulah	Marmot School: Youth Correctional Center
Bismarck	Midway
Dakota Prairie	Minot
Devil's Lake	Minto
Dickinson	Northern Cass
Fargo	Northwood
Grafton	Oakes
Grand Forks	Rugby
Hillsboro	Solon-Cannonball
Jamestown	Tate Topa
Langdon	West Fargo
Mandan	Williston
Manvel	Wilton

Attachment D: ND Public, Private and Tribal Higher Education Institutions invited to participate in the Learning Continuum Design and Review

Bismarck State College	Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
Cankdeska Cikana Community College	Sitting Bull College
Dakota College at Bottineau	Turtle Mountain Community College
Dickinson State University	United Tribes Technical College
Lake Region State College	University of Jamestown
Mayville State University	University of Mary
Minot State University	University of North Dakota
North Dakota State College of Science	Valley City State University
North Dakota State University	Williston State College

Attachment E: Introductory Learning Continuum Webinar Slides and Recording

- [Webinar Slides](#)
- [Webinar Recording](#)

Senate Bill 2196

Chairman Schaible and Committee Members, Good Morning! My name is Dale Hoerauf. I am the Director of Career and Technical Education/Adult Learning Center for Bismarck Public Schools and Director of the Bismarck Public School Career Academy. I am also the Director of Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (virtual center). I am here today representing Bismarck Public School and testifying in favor of Senate Bill 2196.

A competency-based approach is one that focuses on what students learn, is standards-driven, and not about the time spent sitting in their seats. The structure depends on the individual learner. Authentic learning means the focus is on real- work learning. Meaningful projects, Career and Technical pathways, Capstone programs, internships, learning trips and other educational opportunities that allow students to explore. One of the strongest outcomes of a competency- based learning approach is student engagement.

Since this approach is flexible, the structure depends on the individual learner. Self paced, the focus is on gathering evidence of learning along the way and the final outcome. We have seen the success of this approach first hand at the Bismarck Public Schools Career Academy. The Department of Public Instruction approved a waiver for the Bismarck Public Schools to allow students in our Innovational Pathway to waive "seat time" in core subject areas such as English, Math, and Social Studies. This freed students to adjust their daily schedules and enable them to take advantage of the Innovation Pathway. Students have a voice and a choice in how, when, and where they complete projects and assessments. Students have opportunities to work in the community on projects and developing partnerships. Student personalization in the Innovation Pathway is anchored in standards-based curriculum and learning data is used to ensure mastery of the standard.

A parent of one of our Pathway students was at a recent presentation for the Bismarck/Mandan Chamber of Commerce on our Innovation Pathway and spoke about her son. He is a junior enrolled at the Career Academy and is concurrently receiving English credit while pursuing an aviation career pathway. She said, "My son talked about the English standards he was learning for a half an hour the other night at the dinner table. He has never talked about English before."

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome you to tour the Career Academy or you can contact me at 323 4341. I will stand for any questions you may have at this time.

SB2196 - ND Competency Framework
Bismarck Public Schools Testimony in Support

Good morning Chairman Shaible and members of the committee, and thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2196.

My name is Pat Phillips, and in my role as a Systems Innovator in the Bismarck school district, I have the privilege and responsibility of working collaboratively with many departments both within and without Bismarck schools to ensure the systemic conditions necessary to empower each of our learners to thrive. For me, these efforts have manifested most recently in the opportunity to support and encourage innovation as a contributing member of the design team of the second NDCEL Innovation Academy, which, in our district, grew into the Bismarck Career Academy's Innovation Pathway - our instance of the ND Innovative Education pilot program.

The great educators of this state have long understood that instructional time is merely one among many factors that impact student achievement. It makes little sense to measure the effectiveness of any system based on inputs rather than outputs, and instructional time is an input to our learners' educational experience, not an output of it. At its core, the option for learners to earn credit through a competency framework represents an insightful shift towards the use of instructional time as a *resource* to empower learners rather than a one-size-fits-all requirement in the best cases, or - in some of the worst case scenarios - a *limiting* factor to growth and achievement.

It is often hard to envision the changes in practice that might emerge from a change in policy. Our Innovative Education pilot implementation is anchored in multiple areas of Bismarck Public School's strategic plan. It represents only one of the ways that the educators in Bismarck are responding to our community mandate to provide authentic and personalized learning experiences that are rooted in inclusion and equity while maintaining the level of academic rigor and excellence that our stakeholders and students expect and deserve. I am sharing this because this opportunity for our learners is enabled by our innovative education waiver, which is tantamount to the change in policy represented by this bill, and so I find myself in the unique position of having the ability to share with you a glimpse of the kind of learning experiences that might be engendered on a much more efficacious scale if this bill were to pass. In doing so, I would like to present evidence in all three of the elements called for in the Innovative Education Pilot implementation proposal. These being (1) the improvement of the delivery of education, (2) the improvement of the administration of education, and (3) increased educational opportunities.

I. In the area of the improved delivery of education, the shift to competency based credits presents the opportunity to leverage connections between learners' personal goals and interests and mastery of ND state standards in multiple subject areas. The improvement in

delivery here is that teachers and learners are able to make the experience more personalized by taking advantage of the learners unique abilities and interests. Currently, learners in the Innovation Pathway are benefiting from opportunities to practice and display mastery of core credit competencies in the context of their CTE classes, community partnerships and individual passion projects.

In just the first short semester of our pilot these changes have taken the form of a learner working towards mastery of ELA speaking and listening standards through leading discussions in his auto tech classes. Learners are working towards mastery of writing standards through researching relevant personal topics ranging from whether or not to accept a scholarship based on a college program's accreditation history, to whether GMO agriculture will yield sustainable results for a family farm. These learners then apply and refine their communication skills through authentic communication with community partners. It appears as a learner showing mastery of math standards by demonstrating and applying his understanding of logarithmic functions in the context of electronics. And a learner showing her mastery of the concepts of congruence and geometric relationships through her personal passion for art and design.

These are only a few of the ways that our educators are collaborating with each other, our community and learners to leverage competency-based learning to increase both the efficiency and relevance of student experiences.

II. In the area of the improved administration of education we strive to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of our systems. I will tell you of a learner who is progressing in mastery of literacy and communication skills through the seamless matriculation to 12th grade English standards immediately after showing mastery of the 11th grade standards. In an administrative structure with instructional minutes as the metric for credit, that learner would have been waiting around, and "putting in the time" to earn their English 11 credit. Instead, this capable and motivated young adult is leveraging the increased efficiency to deepen their ELA skills in authentic contexts while adding value for multiple community partners in the Bismarck area.

Conversely, I can share the story of a learner on an IEP, who is similarly adding value through community partnerships, and working in the same authentic contexts while simultaneously leveraging those experiences to meet developmentally appropriate learning targets and building a sense of efficacy and agency over his education. Without a competency-based framework in which to implement these interventions, this learner would not have these opportunities as his schedule would have been filled with intervention classes leaving little room for electives or enrichment experiences.

Perhaps most importantly in the realm of school administration, our short pilot implementation has spurred an increased level of interdisciplinary collaboration between

teachers. This has resulted in an increased capacity to leverage and support the mastery of core course standards in career and technical education courses. More broadly, it represents the opportunity for our entire district to cultivate a more aligned and integrated curriculum that is not only guaranteed and viable, but flexible enough to meet the 21st century educational challenge of designing personalized experiences that honor who learners are, how they learn best, and what they aspire to be.

III. In the area of increased education opportunities, I would encourage you to consider how the examples I have already shared represent increased educational opportunities for the learners involved in our pilot. Then, I would ask you to consider these opportunities not just in terms of their number or diversity, but also the quality and relevance thereof for our learners.

I am proud to share with you that the disruptive climate of the first 18 weeks of the 2020-2021 school year represented increased rather than decreased learning opportunities for our Innovation Pathway learners. The competency-based framework of our innovative education waiver has facilitated collaborative work with community partners including: Northern Plains Dance, Dakota Zoo, Lincoln Park District, Global Neighbors, State Historical Society Archives, Adult Learning Center, Bismarck Parks and Recreation and the Heaven's Helpers Soup Cafe.

The youth that this waiver has helped to empower have delivered, or are currently working collaboratively on products including a cost and materials estimate for and the construction and installation of a sprung dance floor, a municipal dog park re-design and budget proposal, an interactive GIS map to help families new to our communities locate and access resources, Historical biographical sketches for the ND manuscript collections, materials for the support of family literacy, and a job safety analysis for stage construction at Sleepy Hollow Arts park.

You needn't take my word for it, however, as I have included a [handout of student testimonials](#) from our Innovative Education Pilot. I would ask that you take some time to explore the student experience in their own words, and reflect on whether all learners deserve to feel this way about school. The Innovation Pathway is housed less than 2 miles from where you are right now; If you'd like to know more, we invite you to come talk to our teachers and learners, or reach out to our community partners.

Chairman Shaible; members of this committee, I hope you share my belief that the youth of our state have too much creativity, energy, and capacity to be relegated to punching the proverbial educational clock in order to earn a HS diploma. This bill represents the potential removal of a systemic barrier to high quality, equitable personalized and authentic learning experiences for every

learner in North Dakota. I urge you to take advantage of the opportunity that you have to invest in our state's most precious and valuable resource by supporting this bill.

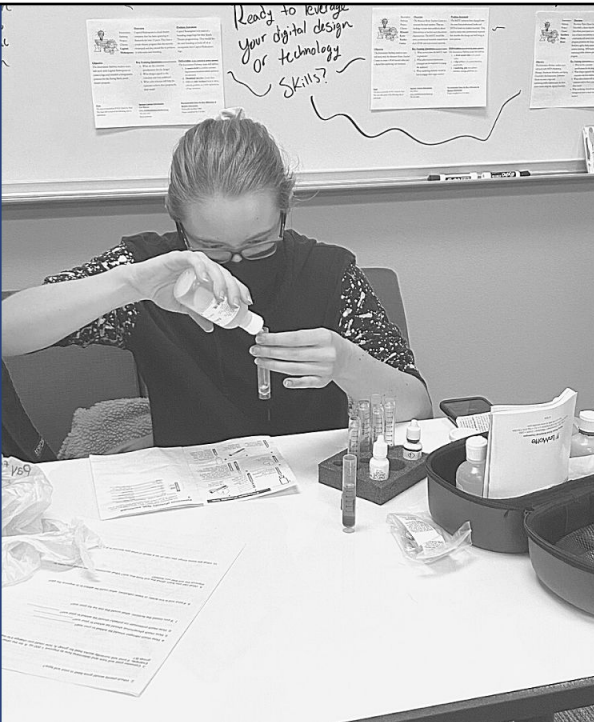
Respectfully submitted,

Pat Phillips

Bismarck Public Schools

pat_phillips@bismarckschools.org

701.595.1713



I couldn't entirely comprehend what this class was going to be like when it was first mentioned. Once I started, it was better than I could've imagined.

This pathway has allowed me to pursue and further my passions while helping the community and still gaining credits for core classes.

ALT HORNE

JUNIOR



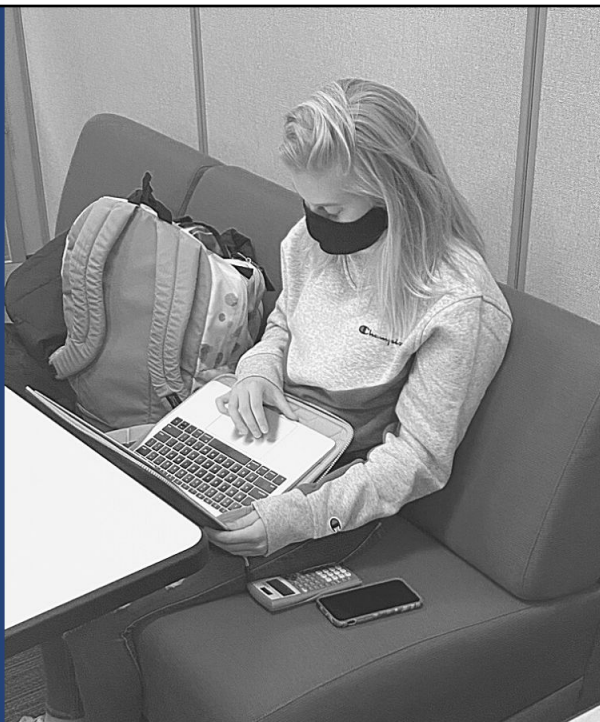
I am very glad I got to be a part of the first year of the Innovation Pathway program. This is by far the most engaged I've ever felt in a class and I really like how I get to control my learning path.

This is the only class I've had where my teachers are engaged specifically in my interests and are looking out for my future.

BEN ONTIS

JUNIOR





I chose the Innovation Pathway so I could focus on learning that was going to help me out in the future. The personal style of learning helps me to be engaged and work on projects I am truly passionate about.

This is the first time in awhile I have been truly excited to go to school. The teachers are amazing at making personal connections, and fitting course material to you instead of the other way around.

BRYANNE EDWARDS

JUNIOR



I really enjoy being a part of the Innovation Pathway because of the teachers, the students, and the projects we get to be a part of in the Bismarck Community.

I also enjoy the one-on-one teaching of topics that are taught to me using my interest in Aviation and Agriculture. Doing that allows me to be more focused on the project or task at hand.

TONY NAGEL

JUNIOR





The Innovation Pathway allows me to connect with the community and help where I'm able. It also gives me time to work on my vehicles.

At the beginning of the year, Mr. St. Peter wanted us to think about a project that we would like to do and mine was replacing the brakes on my Jeep.

SEAN MARCHUS

JUNIOR



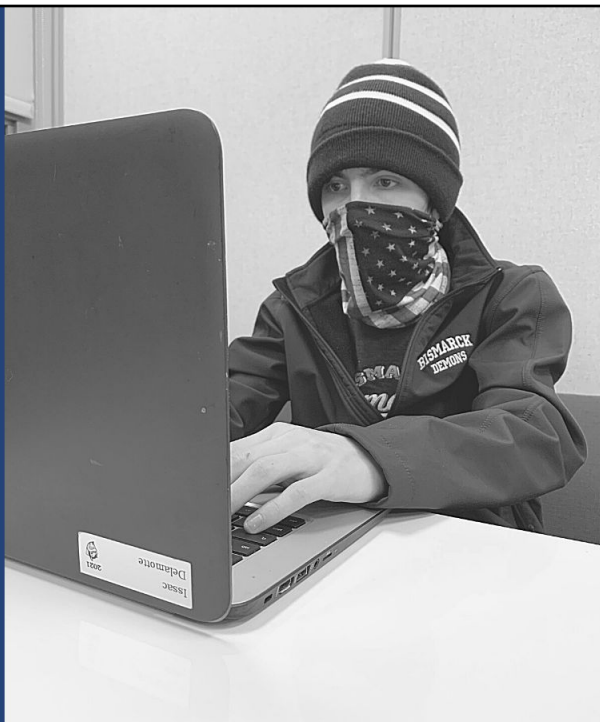
The reason I chose the Pathway is so that I can make my learning easier. I appreciate the time and effort everyone puts into the program to keep us going.

I enjoy the freedom it gives us to get work done and to work on our own or in a group. It also lets us work at our own pace. I love the things I get to do, I get a choice on what I want to write about or talk about and I can do all this and still get my English 11 credit.

MILES STIEFEL

JUNIOR





The Innovation Pathway is an amazing program that allows me to connect with local businesses and connect that to my learning.

Being a part of this program also allows me to make bonds with the people and businesses I work with.

ISSAC DELAMOTTE

SENIOR



The Innovation Pathway is a great substitution for core classes. I am able to get an English credit by doing things I am more interested in, and also it helps me with more real life skills by working with the community.

I enjoy being a part of the Innovation Pathway because I feel I am learning more and am more engaged than I would be in a regular English class.

JOEY LUTES

JUNIOR



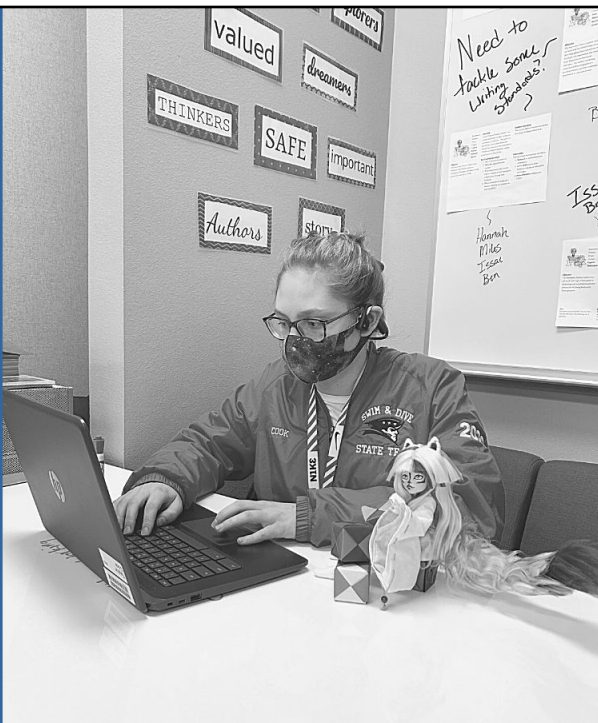


I chose the Pathway because I wanted to control my learning. This control allows me to work on things at my own pace and also allows me to pick the project that I want to do for English credit.

I enjoy the projects that I have done and look forward to the future projects that I will have. This program allows me to give back to the community in different ways.

HANNAH STYMEIST

LEGACY HS SENIOR



I like that the Innovation Pathway gives me time to work on my personal project with my creative art and crafting skills.

I am currently working on Geometry skills in whatever art I make. One example is in the patterns and templates I used for my doll repainting project.

TAYLOR COOK | TAY

JUNIOR



1 Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2021, 9:15AM

2 To: North Dakota Senate Education Committee

3 From: Travis Jordan, District Superintendent, Beulah Public Schools

4 Re: Support for SB 2196

5 Good Morning Chairman Schaible and members of the committee. I am Travis Jordan, District
6 Superintendent at Beulah Public Schools. Today I speak to you in support of SB 2196.

7 For years now, you've likely heard talk about personalizing education; individualizing instruction to
8 meet the unique learning needs of each of our learners. It's certainly refreshing to hear, but have we
9 actually truly seen it? We talk about it all throughout a learner's school career, but at the end of the
10 day, when they walk across the stage to graduate – all learners must fit into the same box for a
11 diploma. All learners must have met the same criteria to indeed graduate. I don't call that
12 personalization. The bill before you gives our school districts the ability to truly personalize a
13 pathway to graduation that meets the unique learning needs and desires of our learners, all the while
14 ensuring mastering of necessary content skills.

15 Just a few years back in 2018 I was afforded the opportunity to attend the National Forum on
16 Education in Washington, DC where I heard a presentation that will stick with me forever. Gallup
17 Education had surveyed businesses and industries throughout our nation and found that just 11% of
18 them indicated our learners coming from high schools, colleges, and universities were ready for the
19 jobs they were hired for. This means 89% of our businesses and industries thought otherwise.

20 Up until this past summer, I would venture to say that the education community and the world of
21 work have never truly come together to discuss what skills are necessary for our learners to be
22 successful as they venture out after high school and post-secondary schooling. That indeed
23 happened this summer however, at which time the groundwork was laid for this particular bill.

24 My colleagues will touch more on what a competency-based system of education looks like (and I
25 can certainly answer questions to that as well), but I'd like to talk more on what you don't actually
26 see with your eyes or likely process in your mind as you read this bill and hear other testimony.

27 Since a dark day in the Fall of 2010 when a student of mine decided to take her own life – my
28 thoughts on how we educate students changed. I missed an opportunity to help this person just
29 hours before she decided she couldn't face the world anymore. It was in the moments and days
30 after that I realized education has to be different. We cannot just simply educate the mind without
31 educating the heart. Quite honestly, educating the heart first provides for a nourished mind that is
32 ripe for learning.

Beulah Public Schools
Mr. Travis Jordan – District Superintendent

33 You might ask, how does one educate the heart. It's quite simple – give every single child the one
34 thing they need to be successful – connection. When a child is connected to someone or something
35 it gives them purpose. Purpose then turns to passion and with passion one has the ability to change
36 the world.

37 How does that tie into this bill? We must allow our learners to engage in real and relevant
38 curriculum that they are interested in and passionate about. All too often in education we cast our
39 curriculum (like one would cast a net to catch fish) over our learners and they get trapped. We must
40 allow our learners to swim outside of the net. Instead of throwing our curriculum out and hoping it
41 sticks with our learners, let's allow our learners to wrap their passions around the curriculum or better
42 yet let's allow them to help create it. Too many of our learners feel like they are trapped in the net.
43 They are limited and confined in a learning space that doesn't allow them to truly grow and follow
44 their passions. Let's bring the world of work in and marriage their needs with the passions and
45 interests of our learners. We simply cannot expect to grow living in silos.

46 When we allow our businesses and industries to partner with our schools to provide real and
47 relevant learning opportunities, we not only grow our learners, we grow the world of work as well.

48 One bill, SB 2196 has the power to enrich our learners like we have never done before. It has the
49 power to curb the mental health crisis that continues to grow at a faster and faster rate across the
50 world, as it connects learner interest and passion with real and relevant work. It has the ability for
51 small town and large town North Dakota to grow their cities by providing work opportunities for our
52 learners. Subsequently, we will begin to close the gap that exists between what the world of work
53 needs and what schools are producing. And finally, it allows our learners to swim outside of the net
54 to find endless possibilities to connect their passion to their future positions in a world that is thirsting
55 for that right now.

56 Thank you Chairman Schaible and members of the committee for allowing me to share my passion
57 with you here today. I'll yield to any questions you may have.

58 Travis Jordan, District Superintendent, Beulah Public Schools.

SB 2196

Tuesday, January 26th, 2021

The Honorable Donald Schaible, Chairman

The Honorable Jay Elkin, Vice Chairman

North Dakota Senate Education Committee

Testimony in support of SB 2196

Submitted by: Kraig Steinhoff, Superintendent of Oakes Public Schools

Chairman Schiable and members of the committee: I am Kraig Steinhoff, Superintendent of Oakes Public Schools. Oakes Public Schools serves 500 students PK-12 and is in Dickey County, approximately 55 miles south of Valley City. This year is my fifteenth year as an administrator in Oakes. I was the assistant director of the Southeast Region Career & Technology Center for ten years and am in my fifth year as superintendent. I am here today representing my district in support of SB 2196.

Oakes is in the third year of transitioning to personalized competency-based learning. We are fortunate to partner with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, West Fargo, Marmont School, Northern Cass, and KnowledgeWorks. We believe all students deserve to be at their fullest potential upon graduation and be college, career, or military ready.

SB 2196 will allow the establishment and certification of a North Dakota competency framework and qualify for our students' personalization of graduation requirements. We want our students to have agency in their learning. However, under the current law we can't allow for the personalization of their graduation requirements. We're able to personalize their education from K-12 but must still force all students into the same requirements for graduation. This bill will allow for personalization and provide our students more opportunities to meet the current graduation requirements and have the autonomy to pursue their passions and find fulfillment in education. As a former CTE teacher and administrator, students' challenge to fit in the classes they desire with the courses they are required has been a long-standing hurdle. I believe that SB 2196 can help with this hurdle by allowing more flexibility for our students to be in classes that align with their passions while earning the required credits established by law.

The work on the learning continuum is already scheduled for this summer. Twenty-six districts were invited along with the Regional Education Associations. The twenty-six districts were selected because of their previous work on North Dakota priority standards. Learning continuums will be written for Math, ELA, Social Studies, and Science. Our educators will do the work in North Dakota in collaboration with KnowledgeWorks.

Our moral imperative is to prepare our students for their futures and not force them to follow the requirements that prepared former graduates for their futures. Thank you for considering my testimony supporting SB 2196, and I am happy to answer questions.

Testimony of Dr. Cory Steiner
Northern Cass Superintendent
Support of SB 2196
Tuesday, January 26th, 2021

Good morning Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. It is my privilege to testify in support of SB 2196. My name is Dr. Cory J. Steiner and I'm the Superintendent of Schools at Northern Cass School District in Hunter, North Dakota. We are a PK-12 district with 660 learners located 25 miles northwest of Fargo. We are an innovative school district which is in the midst of a transformation to personalized, competency-based learning.

The issues in education are profound, but more importantly, they are urgent. The structure and function of our schools must transform to meet the ever-changing demands of society. We continue to operate within an industrial model of education. It is important to understand every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets. Our system is getting the results it is supposed to get. Unfortunately, what is being asked of schools has changed since the design of the system. In schools, we have been tasked to prepare learners to be productive members of society. We have been asked to prepare learners for college, career, and military. We are asked to develop 'soft' skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. We must develop academic, social, and emotional skills while making sure to develop long-lasting relationships in a safe environment. In other words, we must prepare learners to be choice ready for a future which is constantly changing. The expectations on schools continue to grow and the list of 'to do's' is never-ending. Administrators, teachers, and board members are willing to do more and be the linchpin for societal change but cannot accomplish this work with the current barriers in century code. We are faced with a moral imperative to transform our system.

To accomplish this challenging work, we must begin to remove the barriers which have traditionally been held in high regard in K-12 education. One of these barriers is traditional graduation requirements. Our graduation requirements continue to be built for a society which values formal postsecondary education above all else. We are fully supportive of learners attending postsecondary schooling, but that has proven to no longer be necessary for success after high school. If success is no longer linked to postsecondary attendance, the requirements of graduating high school must change to recognize the values of our current society. Our current educational system is based on reaction. If a learner struggles, we react as best we can, but this should not be how we operate. Our current system sees learners as interchangeable instead of as individuals. For example, the optional curriculum diploma was added to provide an alternative for learners who have significant failure in high school. This was appreciated but didn't address the inequity in our system. An educational system must be built to be proactive. We know there is a better system and when we know, we have an obligation to act. SB 2196 is intended to offer flexibility in how learners choose to access and engage in learning as well as ensuring they

demonstrate mastery according to a set of competencies. A North Dakota learning continuum will serve as the foundation for the competency-based system, which will in essence, create high and achievable expectations for all learners. The establishment and certification of a North Dakota competency framework will allow districts to personalize graduation requirements for their learners. The work on the learning continuum is already scheduled for this summer. Twenty-six districts have been invited. The twenty-six districts were selected because of their previous work on North Dakota priority standards and the Personalized Learning Competency-Based work with KnowledgeWorks. A learning continuum with competencies will be written for Math, ELA, Social Studies, and Science. North Dakota educators will do the work in collaboration with KnowledgeWorks. In the summer of 2020, a large group worked with Battelle for Kids to create a Portrait of a Graduate which could be used as the foundation for this framework. A group of representatives from education, the business and religious community, higher education, K-12 learners, and legislators met. Over the course of multiple meetings that included significant collaboration, the group identified adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and perseverance. These attributes could become the foundation for the development of North Dakota competencies.

Although this work is transformative, it is not new. The states of Maine, Arizona, New York, Colorado, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin, Washington, and Virginia have passed legislation allowing for some form of competency-based graduation requirement. These laws have included, but are not limited to, eliminating seat time requirements, allowing for a Portrait of a Graduate to be the foundation for competencies, allowing work-based learning to articulate for credit, and the use of portfolios to demonstrate mastery. Northern Cass is currently working with Mastery Transcript Consortium to do this work. This 'transcript' opens up opportunity for every learner from all backgrounds, locations, and schools to have their unique abilities, interests, strengths, and histories fostered and celebrated.

Today, I ask you to support a recommendation of 'do pass' for SB 2196 allowing for the establishment of a competency-based framework as an additional pathway for graduation requirements. As a leader of an innovative school district, one of the biggest concerns shared with me by parents and learners is our learners not having the same opportunities as those who attend a more traditional system. This bill is a step in the right direction to recognize education can and will look different across the state of North Dakota. Your support for this bill will indicate your commitment to local control, innovation, and doing what is in the best interest of all learners throughout the state of North Dakota. We have boards, administrators, and educators ready to change the model into one which promotes authenticity through a personalized approach. I visit with many of my colleagues who can only see the barriers that exist to change. By passing this legislation, we will remove barriers and allow the greatest group of educators in our country to begin to redefine our system. Over the past few sessions, the legislature has been an advocate for education by reducing barriers to implementing change. You have supported innovation. This bill is a logical next step in moving our state. I don't speak to you today asking

for funding, but simply making sure our system is equitable. I ask all members of this committee to recommend a 'Do Pass' and do so knowing it will begin the further transformation of our education system which will become the model for our great country. With the passing of this legislation, schools throughout our great state will be able to achieve the true purpose of education. We must help young people grow and develop into honest, kind, and compassionate citizens. Thank you for time and consideration.

TESTIMONY ON SB 2196
Senate Education Committee
January 26, 2021
by Ann Ellefson, Director of Academic Support
(701) 328-2488
Department of Public Instruction

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

My name is Ann Ellefson, Director of the Office of Academic Support of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). I am here today representing NDDPI to provide supportive testimony for SB 2196, which provides for the establishment of a North Dakota competency framework and provides flexibility regarding the requirements for instructional time.

Although personalized, competency-based education might be a new star in the spotlight for North Dakota, the concepts and ideas have been around for some time. The KnowledgeWorks Foundation, a well-known, established organization supporting competency-based education, has over twenty years of experience in supporting education reform and transforming educational systems. Since 2016, State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler has leaned on KnowledgeWorks as coaches and thought partners in redefining education for the students of North Dakota.

When SB 2186 was passed by the legislative assembly in 2017, I had the privilege to work with a cross department team in the development, rollout, and support of the innovative education programming bill. Also, during the 2016-2017 school year, I personally was introduced to the phenomenal organization that has grown to be a true partner to education in North Dakota—KnowledgeWorks. Together the NDDPI and KnowledgeWorks secured a five-year commitment of philanthropic dollars to support transformational systems change in North Dakota. This opportunity, referred to as North Dakota Personalized, Competency-Based Education (ND PCBL), was open to

all districts throughout the state and today, three years later, we continue to work with four districts on innovative change. I have enclosed a full list of districts operating under the Innovative Education Program flexibility as well as those who have submitted formal inquiries (Attachment A). As the department lead for this work, I continue to feel privileged to work so closely with these districts. It has provided the state education department great insight on the complexity and logistics of transforming educational systems and informed our practices moving forward.

The Department of Public Instruction has provided written support for a variety of competency-based education bills during this 67th legislative assembly. Superintendent Baesler testified in support of HB 1135 addressing the state scholarship and the use of proficiency-based grading systems (Attachment B); and I recently testified in support of the K12 Coordination Council's proposal HB 1111 which would provide a legislative management study of competency-based learning and innovative education programs. (Attachment C). The department strongly believes that personalized, competency-based learning systems are a way for North Dakota schools and districts to better meet student needs by addressing each students' unique learning styles and personal strengths.

In order to ensure that the important and necessary strides being made in SB 2196 are long-lasting and effective, the department asks the committee to consider the following:

- Stakeholder review and engagement. Over the last eight years, the department has worked tirelessly to ensure inclusive voices are represented in the work we do. The proposed North Dakota competency framework process deserves the same. The department hopes a suitable process can be developed that includes working with the legislative body, the state education agency, and school/district stakeholders (including students and families) in the review and development process.

- The North Dakota competency framework will be a sister framework to other similar structures (i.e., North Dakota subject area standards, state requirements for elementary and secondary schools). It is important to note that these frameworks do not move forward with a one-and-done approach. Rather, there needs to be an established process that supports the evolution for the framework to be reviewed, further developed, and revised on a regular basis. Education department administration and oversight of the process for establishing the North Dakota competency framework will be important.
- Flexibility addressing graduation requirements. When referring to SB 2196, people often reference it as the “graduation pathway bill” implying the flexibility granted by these statutory changes would allow for greater flexibility in student graduation. High school diploma and graduation requirements are addressed in NDCC 15.1-21-02.1; 15.1-21-02.2; and 15.1-21-02.3. So, for this bill to be effective in creating flexibility in diploma and graduation requirements, we suggest referencing NDCC 15.1-21-02.1; 15.1-21-02.2; and 15.1-21-02.3 on page 1 line 17 of the bill in lieu of NDCC 15.1-21-01 and 15.1-21-02. The current citation in the bill addresses what a public school must **offer** to be an approved school. In my close work with districts pursuing or implementing personalized, competency-based learning structures, I believe their students would benefit most if additional flexibility were granted around graduation requirements.

The department believes these adjustments will ensure a solid foundation for developing, sustained support to schools and districts, and a product that can withstand the test of time, providing opportunities for many more students in the decades to come.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Attachment A

List of schools requesting Innovative Education Program

School	Date Submitted	Short Description	Response on Planning Proposal (PP)	Response on Implementation Plan (IP)	NDCC Waived
Bismarck – Career Academy	October 7, 2019	CBE in CTE	Approved October 2019	Approved April 2020	15.1-21 HS Grad 15.1-18 TQ 15.1-20 HS Time
Center for Distance Education	August 21, 2018	CBE in virtual classes	Approved September 2018	Approved December 2018	15.1-20 HS Time
Northern Cass	May 2017	Career <u>Exploration</u> (Jaguar Academy) PCBL w/ KW	Approved August 2017 Working with KnowledgeWorks	Approved July 2017	15.1-20 Instructional Calendar Time 15.1-18 TQ
Northern Cass	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	15.1-20 HS Time
Northern Cass	Spring 2019	1x a month shortened high school day, 5.5 hrs instead of 6 hrs		Approved April 2019	15.1-20 Time
Northern Cass	February 2020	State Scholarship		Approved March 2020	15.1-21 Scholarship
Oakes	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	15.1-20 HS Time
West Fargo	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	N/A
West Fargo	Spring 2019	Hybrid Courses at Sheyenne HS		Approved April 2019	15.1-20 Time
New Rockford-Sheyenne	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	N/A
New Rockford-Sheyenne	Spring 2019	Flex-Mod Schedule			15.1-20 HS Time
YCC	Summer 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	15.1-20 HS Time
YCC	Spring 2019	4-day School Week		Approved April 2019	N/A

IP – Implementation Plan
PP – Planning Proposal
HS – High School

CBE – Competency-Based Education
PCBL – Personalized Competency-Based Learning
KW – KnowledgeWorks

Schools Expressing Interest – Contact and additional information was provided

1. Bismarck – Simile Middle School (January 2019)
2. Bismarck – Bismarck High school (January)
3. Beach & Home on the Range (April 2019)
4. Dunseith (November 2018)
5. Ellendale (March 2018)
6. Grand Forks (October 2018)
7. Larimore – Kal Triplet
8. Midway (May 2019)
9. Milnor (March 2018)

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1135
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

January 13, 2021

**By: Kirsten Baesler, Superintendent of Public Instruction
701-328-4570
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction**

Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kirsten Baesler, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of North Dakota. I am here to speak in favor of HB 1135, regarding proficiency-based grading for the North Dakota Academic and CTE Scholarship.

HB 1135 will allow districts that use locally approved proficiency-based grading scales as part of an approved innovative waiver to have those grades count towards meeting the criteria of the North Dakota Academic and CTE Scholarship, commonly referred to as the state scholarship. Two of the requirements for the scholarship are to have a grade point average at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale, and also to have no grades lower than a C. These current requirements are based on a traditional A, B, C, D grading scale. Students graduating from schools using a proficiency-based grading scale are not currently eligible for the scholarship. HB 1135 allows schools to use equivalent scores from the proficiency-based grading scale to meet the North Dakota academic and CTE scholarship requirements. HB 1135 adds value to innovative education and rewards all students who work hard to earn the North Dakota scholarship.

Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee that concludes my prepared testimony and I will stand for any questions that you may have.

K-12 Education Coordination Council Meeting Minutes

1:00 PM November 24, 2020 - Zoom Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Luke Schaefer at 1:02 PM with the following members of the K-12 Education Coordination Council in attendance: Superintendent Kirsten Baesler, Senator Kyle Davison, Senator Erin Oban, Representative Pat Heinert, Luke Schaefer, Nick Archuleta, Alexis Baxley (designee for Holly Stromsodt), Aimee Copas, Brandt Dick, Rupak Gandhi, April Foth, Kevin Hoherz, Michelle Strand, Melissa Vollmer, Jen Weber, Governor Burgum joined in progress, Jeff Fastnacht joined in progress.

Also present were: Wayne Sick, Dave Schaibley, Jim Upgren, Kayla Effertz Kleven

Absent: Wayne Fox

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Aimee Copas to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Superintendent Baesler.

Results of roll call vote:

Aimee Copas – yes

Alexis Baxley – yes

April Foth – yes

Senator Oban – yes

Brandt Dick – yes

Wayde Sick (designee for Jeff Fastnacht) – yes

Kevin Hoherz – yes

Superintendent Baesler – yes

Motion carried unanimously.

Nick Archuleta – yes

Senator Davison - yes

Jennifer Weber - yes

Representative Heinert - yes

Rupak Gandhi - yes

Michelle Strand - yes

Melissa Vollmer – yes

Luke Schaefer – yes

Draft Legislation:

Chairman Schaefer gave the Council 15 minutes to review the draft legislation and asked for them to be ready to have very frank conversation regarding the draft. Additionally, he asked the members to bring any questions or concerns they may have forward to have a draft ready to approve at the December meeting that will have a full consensus of the Council.

The Chair opened the meeting for discussion on both agenda items three and four; the drafts of legislation and the annual report and asked for any questions regarding those agenda items. A question was raised regarding the legislation that concerns competency based learning. After discussion it was clarified that what the Council is looking for is a study to gather more information about this topic. Further discussion led the Council to decide that the scope of the study should focus on programs that incorporate competency-based learning initiatives and innovative programs. The study should be expanded beyond those who had requested a waiver to participate in innovative education programs.

A question was raised about the funds being requested in the legislation to expand the teacher mentoring program. Clarification was provided that an increase in funding across the biennium was being requested to expand the program. Discussion was held regarding what is anticipated to be many teachers leaving the profession after this school year, mainly due to the added burdens that Covid has placed on teachers. It was decided that if this program is a priority for the Council then it is the individual members' job to promote the importance of it to the legislature.

Further discussion was held about where North Dakota student's scores are this spring as compared to where scores were last fall. Superintendent Baesler shared that, in North Dakota, about one in four students in grades 3-11 who were at grade level last fall are now below grade level.

Report Draft:

A concern was raised that the language in the Career Awareness, Exploration and Development subcommittee section of the annual report was too specific regarding the programs named. It was decided to broaden that section, so it didn't appear as though the Council was promoting or endorsing specific programs.



A New Dawn for
Every Learner

Date: January 26, 2021

To: North Dakota Senate Education Committee, North Dakota Legislative Branch

From: Fred Jones, Jr., Policy Director, Aurora Institute

RE: SB 2196

Chairman Schaible, Vice-Chairman Elkin, and Members of the Senate Education Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide brief testimony today.

For the record, my name is Fred Jones, and I am the Policy Director for the Aurora Institute. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization focused on developing research on K-12 competency-based education (CBE) and advancing personalized, competency-based learning in K-12 education systems.

Aurora Institute's mission is to drive the transformation of education systems and accelerate the advancement of breakthrough policies and practices to ensure high-quality learning for all students.

We would like to voice our support for the intent to encourage more K-12 schools and districts to implement competency-based learning by way of supporting policies that promote student advancement based on mastery of content, not seat-time policies.

Today, the prevailing traditional, one-size-fits-all K-12 education model is not meeting the unique needs of diverse learners. For instance, according to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, less than 50 percent of 3rd-grade students have met grade-level standards on the state reading assessment. To prepare all students for success in the future economy requires whole-system transformation through thoughtful, but deliberate, student-centric policy efforts.

Background

In 2017, North Dakota SB 2186 was signed into law. Our understanding is that this bill allowed districts and schools to submit a waiver request to the Department of Public Instruction, allowing for innovation, such as flexibility from seat-time for learning outside regular school

hours or off school premises, and flexibility around total instructional hours, the number of school days, and school years.

In January 2019, the North Dakota state legislature repealed the [North Dakota Century Code Sec. 15.1-06-05](#). The passage of [SB No. 2265](#) appears to have removed the waiver application for districts seeking flexibility from instructional time and seat-time structures.

No matter where a state is starting from, there are various entry points along a continuum for policymakers to support and build CBE systems and seat-time flexibility.

State examples

- **Arkansas's** [Act 601](#) creates the Districts and Schools of Innovation program through which districts can request flexibility from seat-time requirements.
- **Kentucky** passed HB 37 in 2012, creating Districts of Innovation. Some of the policies that were waived for the innovation zones include seat-time policies, average daily attendance calculation, and learning opportunities in communities, afterschool programs, and other experiences outside of school walls.
- **North Carolina's** [NC Implementation Guide for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery](#) allows "Credit by Demonstrated Mastery" shall be available for all North Carolina students in grades 9-12 for high school courses and in grades 6-8 for high school courses offered in middle school."
- **Wisconsin's** [WS 118.33\(1\)\(d\)](#) enables a school board to grant a high school diploma to a student who has not completed traditional credit hour requirements if the student is enrolled in an "[alternative education program](#)" and the school board determines the student has demonstrated a level of proficiency equivalent to that which he or she would have attained if he or she had satisfied the requirements under traditional high school requirements.

Conclusion

The goal to move away from seat-time towards supporting mastery-based or CBE is critical. Aurora Institute applauds the advancement of state policy to move away from language that locks in seat-time policies in regulations toward CBE systems, to ensure all students graduate with the knowledge and skills to prepare them for future success in higher levels of learning, future-focused careers, and civic engagement.

Thank you.

My contact information is:

Fred Jones, Jr., Policy Director, Aurora Institute

Email: fjones@aurora-institute.org; Cell Phone: 412-527-6638



#3252

Great Public Schools

Great Public Service

**Testimony on SB 2196
Senate Education Committee
January 26, 2021**

Chairman Schaible and members of the Committee, for the record, I am Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. On behalf of our membership, I rise today to support SB 2196 and to urge a DO PASS recommendation for this important and innovative piece of legislation.

SB 2196 allows for the creation and certification of a competency framework for the students of North Dakota. Once the framework is in place, students who have demonstrated a mastery of course content can waive further unit instructional time. This waiver would allow students to explore other academic disciplines or to engage in job shadowing or even internships.

For these reason, Mr. Chairman, I am happy to urge a DO PASS recommendation for SB 2196. I am happy to stand for any questions you may have.

January 26, 2021

Chairman Schaible and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Carrie O'Rourke and I represent **yes. every kid.** We are dedicated to creating an environment where every student receives an individualized education. Today, I write in support of **SB 2196 – Establishment of North Dakota Competency Framework.**

We applaud the efforts this body has taken to embrace bold and positive reforms for students and families which propels North Dakota forward by empowering school leaders with the flexibility to implement innovative programs and learning models. To succeed in today's dynamic global economy, young people need different skills that the current system was not designed to foster.

This legislation will enable North Dakota students to receive an education that is responsive and flexible to their individual learning styles and needs. Rather than confining students to a one-size-fits-all system, North Dakota families will be able to ensure their children receive an education that's customized and adaptable. If we've learned anything from the learning disruptions that families, student and educators have faced in the last year, it is the need to lean in and embrace student-centric solutions that celebrate the diversity of our student population.

SB 2196 will provide the opportunity for a wide variety of experiences and educational methods that has the potential to transform a student's life – allowing all students to realize their full potential to discover, develop, and apply their innate gifts to maximize their ability to contribute to society.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my supportive testimony, and most of all, I applaud this committee and the state for putting the needs of students first and reimagining what is possible. This legislation will guarantee North Dakota is national leader in creating an education system built around the needs of every student.



Carrie O'Rourke
Regional Director
c: 850-510-5399
yeseverykid.com

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2196
2/9/2021

A BILL relating to the establishment of a North Dakota competency framework and to instructional time requirements.
--

Chair Schaible opened at Committee at 9:00 a.m.

Discussion Topics:

- Amendment 21.0630.01001

Sen Oban: Motion to adopt amendment 21.0630.01001

Sen Elkin: Second.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 Motion Passed

Sen Elkin: Motion for **Do Pass as Amended**

Sen Oban: Second

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 Motion Passed

Sen Oban will carry the bill

Adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbema	P

Amendment 01001	
Senator	Vote
Chairman Schaible	Y
Senator Elkin	Y
Senator Conley	Y
Senator Lemm	Y
Senator Oban	Y
Senator Wobbema	Y

SB 2196	Vote
Chairman Schaible	
Senator Elkin	
Senator Conley	
Senator Lemm	
Senator Oban	
Senator Wobbema	

February 1, 2021

Shirley
A
1005

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2196

Page 1, line 1, after "to" insert "create and enact a new subdivision to subsection 7 of section 15.1-01-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the duties of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council; and to"

Page 1, line 1, after "15.1-01-03" insert ", section 15.1-02-04, subsection 3 of section 15.1-21-02,"

Page 1, line 3, replace "competency framework" with "learning continuum"

Page 1, line 3, after "time" insert "and unit"

Page 1, line 15, replace "competency framework" with "learning continuum"

Page 1, line 15, remove "students"

Page 1, line 16, replace "who have demonstrated content mastery of" with "a district-approved, mastery framework policy to award"

Page 1, line 17, after "15.1-21-02" insert "and"

Page 1, line 18, after "15.1-21-03" insert ", upon the recommendation of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council"

Page 1, after line 18, insert:

"SECTION 2. A new subdivision to subsection 7 of section 15.1-01-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Review the North Dakota learning continuum and provide recommendations to the state board of public school education.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-02-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-02-04. Superintendent of public instruction - Duties. (Effective through June 30, 2023)

The superintendent of public instruction:

1. Shall supervise the provision of elementary and secondary education to the students of this state.
2. Shall supervise the establishment and maintenance of schools and provide advice and counsel regarding the welfare of the schools.
3. Shall supervise the development of course content standards.
4. Shall supervise the assessment of students.
5. Shall serve as an ex officio member of the board of university and school lands.

6. Shall keep a complete record of all official acts and appeals.
7. As appropriate, shall determine the outcome of appeals regarding education matters.
8. Shall direct school district annexation, reorganization, and dissolution and employ and compensate personnel necessary to enable the state board of public school education to carry out its powers and duties regarding school district annexation, reorganization, and dissolution.
9. Shall facilitate a process to review and update annually the statewide prekindergarten through grade twelve education strategic vision. The process must include input and participation from a steering committee that includes representatives of all state-level entities receiving state education funding and education stakeholder groups. Each steering committee member entity receiving state education funds shall provide components of the entity's strategic plan which are aligned to the statewide strategic vision. The steering committee shall prepare a collaborative report of the strategic plans of each committee member entity receiving state education funds. The superintendent shall provide the collaborative report and any updates to the strategic vision to the legislative management during each interim and to a joint meeting of the education standing committees during each regular legislative session.
10. Shall administer a student loan forgiveness program for individuals teaching at grade levels, in content areas, and in geographical locations identified as having a teacher shortage or critical need.
11. Shall facilitate the development and implementation of a North Dakota learning continuum in collaboration with the department of career and technical education, upon the recommendation of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council.

Superintendent of public instruction - Duties. (Effective after June 30, 2023)

The superintendent of public instruction:

1. Shall supervise the provision of elementary and secondary education to the students of this state.
2. Shall supervise the establishment and maintenance of schools and provide advice and counsel regarding the welfare of the schools.
3. Shall supervise the development of course content standards.
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10. Shall facilitate the development and implementation of a North Dakota learning continuum in collaboration with the department of career and technical education, upon the recommendation of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council.

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT. Subsection 3 of section 15.1-21-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

3. Each unit which must be made available under this section must meet or exceed the state content standards, unless a school district or governing board of a nonpublic high school has adopted a mastery framework policy and awards units based on the successful completion of the relevant portions of the North Dakota learning continuum. A mastery framework policy adopted by a school district or governing board of a nonpublic high school must identify the portions of the North Dakota learning continuum which must be mastered for a student to attain units necessary for high school graduation under section 15.1-21-02.2."

Page 2, line 9, replace "aligned to the North Dakota competency" with "attained from a district-approved mastery"

Page 2, line 10, replace "15.1-01-03" with "15.1-21-03"

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2196: Education Committee (Sen. Schaible, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2196 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 1, after "to" insert "create and enact a new subdivision to subsection 7 of section 15.1-01-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the duties of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council; and to"

Page 1, line 1, after "15.1-01-03" insert ", section 15.1-02-04, subsection 3 of section 15.1-21-02,"

Page 1, line 3, replace "competency framework" with "learning continuum"

Page 1, line 3, after "time" insert "and unit"

Page 1, line 15, replace "competency framework" with "learning continuum"

Page 1, line 15, remove "students"

Page 1, line 16, replace "who have demonstrated content mastery of" with "a district-approved, mastery framework policy to award"

Page 1, line 17, after "15.1-21-02" insert "and"

Page 1, line 18, after "15.1-21-03" insert ", upon the recommendation of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council"

Page 1, after line 18, insert:

"SECTION 2. A new subdivision to subsection 7 of section 15.1-01-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Review the North Dakota learning continuum and provide recommendations to the state board of public school education.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT. Section 15.1-02-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15.1-02-04. Superintendent of public instruction - Duties. (Effective through June 30, 2023)

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5. Shall serve as an ex officio member of the board of university and school lands.
6. Shall keep a complete record of all official acts and appeals.

7. As appropriate, shall determine the outcome of appeals regarding education matters.
8. Shall direct school district annexation, reorganization, and dissolution and employ and compensate personnel necessary to enable the state board of public school education to carry out its powers and duties regarding school district annexation, reorganization, and dissolution.
9. Shall facilitate a process to review and update annually the statewide prekindergarten through grade twelve education strategic vision. The process must include input and participation from a steering committee that includes representatives of all state-level entities receiving state education funding and education stakeholder groups. Each steering committee member entity receiving state education funds shall provide components of the entity's strategic plan which are aligned to the statewide strategic vision. The steering committee shall prepare a collaborative report of the strategic plans of each committee member entity receiving state education funds. The superintendent shall provide the collaborative report and any updates to the strategic vision to the legislative management during each interim and to a joint meeting of the education standing committees during each regular legislative session.
10. Shall administer a student loan forgiveness program for individuals teaching at grade levels, in content areas, and in geographical locations identified as having a teacher shortage or critical need.
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process must include input and participation from a steering committee that includes representatives of all state-level entities receiving state education funding and education stakeholder groups. Each steering committee member entity receiving state education funds shall provide components of the entity's strategic plan which are aligned to the statewide strategic vision. The steering committee shall prepare a collaborative report of the strategic plans of each committee member entity receiving state education funds. The superintendent shall provide the collaborative report and any updates to the strategic vision to the legislative management during each interim and to a joint meeting of the education standing committees during each regular legislative session.

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Page 2, line 9, replace "aligned to the North Dakota competency" with "attained from a district-approved mastery"

Page 2, line 10, replace "15.1-01-03" with "15.1-21-03"

Renumber accordingly

2021 HOUSE EDUCATION

SB 2196

2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2196
3/9/2021

Relating to the duties of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council; relating to the establishment of a ND learning continuum and to instructional time and unit requirements

Chairman Owens called the hearing to order at 2:30 PM. Roll call: Reps. Owens, Schreiber-Beck, Heinert, Hoverson, D. Johnson, M. Johnson, Longmuir, Marschall, Pyle, Richter, Zubke, Guggisberg and Hager present.

Discussion Topics:

- Innovation pathway report
- Practical application of education
- Competency based learning framework
- Increased educational opportunities
- Learner created curriculum
- Student interpersonal skills

Sen. Schaible introduced the bill, #8145

Aimee Copas, ND CEL, #7923

Dale Hoerauf, Dir., Career & Technical Education, Bismarck Public Schools, #7671

Nick Archuleta, ND United, #8183

Penny Veit-Hetletved, Dir. Of Education, ND Dept. of Corrections & Rehabilitations, #7959

Pat Phillips, Systems Innovator, Bismarck Public Schools, #7920, #7921

Cory Steiner, Supt., Northern Cass Schools, #7928

Jeff Fastnacht, Asst. Supt., Mandan Public Schools, #7855

Alexis Baxley, ND School Boards Association, oral testimony in support.

Wayde Sick, Dir., #8088

Ann Ellefson, DPI, #8268

Travis Jordan, District Superintendent, Beulah Public Schools, #7818

Kraig Steinhoff, Supt., Oakes Public Schools, #8150

Beth Slette, Supt., West Fargo Public Schools, #8334

Additional written testimony: #7838, #7867, #8091

Chairman Owens closed the hearing at 3:33 PM.

Bev Monroe, Committee Clerk



NORTH DAKOTA SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Donald Schaible

District 31
9115 Highway 21
Mott, ND 58646-9200

Residence: 701-824-3168
dgschaible@nd.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Energy and Natural Resources, Chairman

Good morning Chairman Owens and the House Education committee, for the Record my name is Senator Don Schaible, representing District 31. I am here to introduce SB 2196 which is to establish a North Dakota district-approved, mastery framework policy. The groundwork for this bill has been going on for some time with some of this state's best innovators and forward-thinking educational leaders. For years we have discussed that the traditional educational framework may not be the best pathway for all students or that a more innovated approach may improve how we educated our learners.

The idea behind this framework is to provide a personalize pathway to graduation while ensuring mastery of content which may offer better options to our conventional graduation path.

I knew when I introduced this bill that more work would be needed on how this will be accomplished and if the State Board of Education is the correct place to do this. After introduction of this bill in the Senate, I coordinated a meeting of stakeholders, educational leaders, DPI, the Governor's Office, and legislators to develop a reasonable approach to accomplish this. Mr. Chairman and Committee, the Engrossed SB 2196 is the product of that work. This learning continuum work anticipates completion this summer. The meat of this bill is in Section 1 that suggests that the State Board of Public Instruction will establish and certify this framework. The amendments to the bill provide assurances to the legislature of the quality of this work and positive impacts for students and ultimately the ND Workforce.

(Sec 2 and 3) This work and will be facilitated by the state superintendent in collaboration with the CTE department. Upon completion of the work, it will be brought to the K12 coordination council for further review. Once review is complete, and modifications/recommendations have been vetted, the K12 coordination council will make a recommendation to the state board of

public education regarding adoption of the continuum. The state board is the point of certification because of the broad base of membership including the field, CTE, NDDPI, and school boards. (Sec 4) If recommended a school district may adopt a policy implementing the learning continuum. (Sec 5) If implemented and followed by the procedures that will be developed then the seat time requirement in law would be waived.

Mr. Chairman and committee, that concludes my introduction and with that I will try to answer your questions.



1 **SB 2196 – ND Competency Framework**

2 **NDCEL Testimony in Support**

3 Chairman Owens, members of the House Education Committee – for the record my name is Dr.
 4 Aimee Copas – I serve as the Executive Director for the North Dakota Council of Educational
 5 Leaders. I’m here today to share our support with the concepts before you. What is laid out before
 6 you today is a product of much work. The bill before you today is not just an idea that is coming
 7 together in bill form like spaghetti that we are trying to stick to the wall. This is a result of time
 8 intensive, ongoing, and still going work for our students of North Dakota. This is work ground in
 9 real data, science, and competencies for students.

10 You are going to hear behind me professionals that have been working on this for years. You are
 11 going to hear about how multiple efforts (Portrait of a Graduate, Learning Continuum,
 12 Competency Pathways) – all efforts grounded in student success are coming together this summer
 13 to finish the certifiable pathway. While the words are few, the impact of this bill is HUGE and it
 14 is what is right for kids. There are fine folks behind me today who are going to help teach you
 15 about all of this and help you see and support this work. We are asking for this NOW because our
 16 students can’t wait another two years. This bill would allow much needed pathways for our current
 17 high schools and could provide real avenues to address workforce needs this fall.

18 In the bill you will see that we ask that this framework be certified by the State Board of Public
 19 Education. Why that board, you might ask? Because of the expansive breadth of this work – it
 20 needs the review and feedback of many. The field is CRYING for a way to do the right thing
 21 without yet another waiver process. This bill would preserve that wish. It would not eliminate the
 22 work that a district would need to do to appropriately implement the work, but it would; with an
 23 approved framework, leave the power to decide curriculum, delivery, and instruction where it
 24 belongs – with the district and their locally elected school board rather than needing to seek the
 25 approval from a state entity.

26 The State Board of Public Education has broad representation of the state – NDDPI, CTE, School
 27 Boards, and education representation. It is also the board that has under its purview the K12

*NDCEL is the strongest unifying voice representing and supporting administrators and educational leaders in pursuit of quality
 education for all students in North Dakota.*

Executive Director: Aimee Copas-----Assistant Director: Russ Ziegler



1 Coordination Council. This amended version we support as it includes the very diverse and vested
2 K12 Coordination council to review and make a recommendation of the work done before
3 certification. As a reminder, the K12 Coordination Council has representation from the Governor,
4 ND Legislators, the State Superintendent, Director of CTE, Superintendents, Principals, Teachers,
5 Counselors, Special Education, Federal Schools, NDCEL, NDSBA, NDUnited, REA's, NDSOS,
6 & others. Once the work is done, the K12 Coordination council has weighed in, then the State
7 Board, we believe the legislature can feel confident that the work, if certified, would absolutely be
8 more than credible.

9 There are several here who will be sharing with you the nuts and bolts and I yield my time to the
10 experts in the field. Thank you for your consideration and we ask for a strong DO PASS on this
11 bill.

SB Bill 2196

Chairman Owen and Committee Members, Good Afternoon! My name is Dale Hoerauf. I am the Director of Career and Technical Education/Adult Learning Center for Bismarck Public Schools and Director of the Bismarck Public School Career Academy. I am also the Director of Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (virtual center). I am here today representing Bismarck Public School and testifying in favor of Senate Bill 2196.

A competency-based approach is one that focuses on what students learn, is standards-driven, and not about the time spent sitting in their seats. The structure depends on the individual learner. Authentic learning means the focus is on real- work learning. Meaningful projects, Career and Technical pathways, Capstone programs, internships, learning trips and other educational opportunities that allow students to explore. One of the strongest outcomes of a competency- based learning approach is student engagement.

Since this approach is flexible, the structure depends on the individual learner. Self paced, the focus is on gathering evidence of learning along the way and the final outcome. We have seen the success of this approach first hand at the Bismarck Public Schools Career Academy. The Department of Public Instruction approved a waiver for the Bismarck Public Schools to allow students in our Innovational Pathway to waive “seat time” in core subject areas such as English, Math, and Social Studies. This freed students to adjust their daily schedules and enable them to take advantage of the Innovation Pathway. Students have a voice and a choice in how, when, and where they complete projects and assessments. Students have opportunities to work in the community on projects and developing partnerships. Student personalization in the Innovation Pathway is anchored in standards-based curriculum and learning data is used to ensure mastery of the standard.

A parent of one of our Pathway students was at a recent presentation for the Bismarck/Mandan Chamber of Commerce on our Innovation Pathway and spoke about her son. He is a junior enrolled at the Career Academy and is concurrently receiving English credit while pursuing an aviation career pathway. She said, “My son talked about the English standards he was learning for a half an hour the other night at the dinner table. He has never talked about English before.”

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome you to tour the Career Academy or you can contact me at 323 4341. I will stand for any questions you may have at this time.

*Great Public Schools**Great Public Service*

Testimony on SB 2196
House Education Committee
March 9, 2021

Chairman Owens and members of the Committee, for the record, I am Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. On behalf of our membership, I rise today to support SB 2196 and to urge a DO PASS recommendation for this important and innovative piece of legislation.

SB 2196 allows for the creation and certification of a competency framework for the students of North Dakota. Once the framework is in place, students who have demonstrated a mastery of course content can waive further unit instructional time. This waiver would allow students to explore other academic disciplines or to engage in job shadowing or even internships.

For these reason, Mr. Chairman, I am happy to urge a DO PASS recommendation for SB 2196. I am happy to stand for any questions you may have.

**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE MARK S. OWENS, CHAIRMAN
MARCH 9, 2021**

**DR. PENNY VEIT-HETLETVED, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS & REHABILITATION
PRESENTING TESTIMONY SENATE BILL 2196**

Chairman Owens and members of the Education Committee, my name is Dr. Penny Veit-Hetletved, and I am the Director of Education for the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) and the Superintendent of Marmot School also known as the ND Youth Correctional Center. Today, I am here to testify on behalf of the department in support of Senate Bill 2196.

Senate Bill 2196 is intended to offer flexibility in how learners choose to access and engage in learning as well as gathering artifact of students' mastery according to a set of standards. The ND Youth Correctional Center feels privileged to be one of four innovation schools transforming to personalized competency-based learning. Certainly, compared to our counterparts, we are the smallest school. Our student picture and story; however, should not be minimalized by a census total. Our students come from any district and often can speak the language of an antiquated school system where seat time is the equivalency of them being done with their diploma journey.

Our students experience barriers in their education for a great deal of reasons to include not meeting them where they are to take them to the diploma finish line. Personalized competency-based learning is a great deal more work but is imperative to remove these barriers. Education can no longer be transactional. Education must be

student-driven and student-led. Education must prepare our students to not only be good citizens but be better informed in what will be their employability in the future. Currently, our educational structure intensifies the need for formal post-secondary pathways for students success. Though I have no issue in this pathway, we lose site of individualized instruction that customizes each student's pathway—truth be told many jobs in ND that are at high levels of wages are based in career and technical fields that lead our learners down other pathways—a fork in the road—to post-secondary.

Senate Bill 2196 will offer a competency framework, consisting of a learning continuum and clear guidance for implementation. This framework is ND education's next step to becoming progressive and intuitive to the needs of our learners. For districts to fully transform, districts that we serve at the ND Youth Correctional Center, personalized, competency-based systems must begin to happen across our state's districts. As a superintendent for students who are at-risk on many levels, I'm often challenged with the concerns from stakeholders regarding how education looks and is delivered from ND YCC...that it will not look the same to those who attend a traditional system. They are absolutely right, learners in our state must no longer follow the traditional system of learning...antiquated in its delivery. We owe it to our learners who are more diverse than ever before, to meet them where they are and develop them into empowered learners.

I'd like to end by telling a story of a student at ND YCC. This student is one of the first to spend an elongated period of time in the PCBL environment. When he was asked about learning in this environment, he said it made him think about leadership. "A

leader to me is someone who leads by example, someone who is knocked down and gets back up. Someone who comes over obstacles. I now understand, I am a leader.” He went on to explain, “In regular school, I know sometimes when a teacher is teaching and you have a question and there is at least 30 heads in the classroom it is not always easy to raise your hand in class and ask a question. At YCC there is a more comfortable connection with our teachers and classmates. Discussion is more open and is more elaborate. It is more fun and easier to learn something with hands-on projects rather than being lectured. I’ve learned more in six months here than I have in my whole high school time.” This young man was taught in a personalized, competency-based environment by exceptional teachers. All districts have exceptional teachers—it is the mode that significantly impacted this young man’s confidence that he could not only be an empowered learner but also a leader—a title he would not naturally bestow upon himself. This is the impact of passing Senate Bill 2196. Establishing a competency-based framework as an additional pathway for graduation requirements is not only good for ND learners but I would state is our duty.

Chairman Owens and members of the Education Committee, I ask that you support Senate Bill 2196 with a “do pass.” I will now stand for questions.

2196 - ND learning continuum
Bismarck Public Schools Testimony in Support

Chairman Owens and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Bill 2196.

My name is Pat Phillips, and in my role as a Systems Innovator in the Bismarck school district, I have the privilege and responsibility of working collaboratively with many departments both within and without Bismarck schools to ensure the systemic conditions necessary to empower each of our learners to thrive. For me, these efforts have manifested most recently in the opportunity to support and encourage innovation as a contributing member of the design team of the second NDCEL Innovation Academy, which, in our district, grew into the Bismarck Career Academy's Innovation Pathway - our instance of the ND Innovative Education pilot program.

The great educators of this state have long understood that instructional time is merely one among many factors that impact student achievement. It makes little sense to measure the effectiveness of any system based on inputs rather than outputs, and instructional time is an input to our learners' educational experience, not an output of it. At its core, the option for learners to earn credit through showing mastery represents an insightful shift towards the use of instructional time as a *resource* to empower learners rather than a one-size-fits-all requirement in the best cases, or - in some of the worst case scenarios - a *limiting* factor to growth and achievement.

It is often hard to envision the changes in practice that might emerge from a change in policy. Our Innovative Education pilot implementation is anchored in multiple areas of Bismarck Public School's strategic plan. It represents only one of the ways that the educators in Bismarck are responding to our community mandate to provide authentic and personalized learning experiences that are rooted in inclusion and equity while maintaining the level of academic rigor and excellence that our stakeholders and students expect and deserve. I am sharing this because this opportunity for our learners is enabled by our innovative education waiver, which is tantamount to the change in policy represented by this bill, and so I find myself in the unique position of having the ability to share with you a glimpse of the kind of learning experiences that might be engendered on a much more efficacious scale if this bill were to pass. In doing so, I would like to present evidence in all three of the elements called for in the Innovative Education Pilot implementation proposal. These being (1) the improvement of the delivery of education, (2) the improvement of the administration of education, and (3) increased educational opportunities.

I. In the area of the improved delivery of education, the shift to mastery-based credits presents the opportunity to leverage connections between learners' personal goals and interests and mastery of ND state standards in multiple subject areas. The improvement in

delivery here is that teachers and learners are able to make the experience more personalized by taking advantage of the learners unique abilities and interests. Currently, learners in the Innovation Pathway are benefiting from opportunities to practice and display mastery of core credit competencies in the context of their CTE classes, community partnerships and individual passion projects.

In just the first short semester of our pilot these changes have taken the form of a learner working towards mastery of ELA speaking and listening standards through leading discussions in his auto tech classes. Learners are working towards mastery of writing standards through researching relevant personal topics ranging from whether or not to accept a scholarship based on a college program's accreditation history, to whether GMO agriculture will yield sustainable results for a family farm. These learners then apply and refine their communication skills through authentic communication with community partners. It appears as a learner showing mastery of math standards by demonstrating and applying his understanding of logarithmic functions in the context of electronics. And a learner showing her mastery of the concepts of congruence and geometric relationships through her personal passion for art and design.

These are only a few of the ways that our educators are collaborating with each other, our community and learners to leverage mastery-based learning to increase both the efficiency and relevance of student experiences.

II. In the area of the improved administration of education we strive to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of our systems. I will tell you of a learner who is progressing in mastery of literacy and communication skills through the seamless matriculation to 12th grade English standards immediately after showing mastery of the 11th grade standards. In an administrative structure with instructional minutes as the metric for credit, that learner would have been waiting around, and "putting in the time" to earn their English 11 credit. Instead, this capable and motivated young adult is leveraging the increased efficiency to deepen their ELA skills in authentic contexts while adding value for multiple community partners in the Bismarck area.

Conversely, I can share the story of a learner on an IEP, who is similarly adding value through community partnerships, and working in the same authentic contexts while simultaneously leveraging those experiences to meet developmentally appropriate learning targets and building a sense of efficacy and agency over his education. Without a mastery-based framework in which to implement these interventions, this learner would not have these opportunities as his schedule would have been filled with intervention classes leaving little room for electives or enrichment experiences.

Perhaps most importantly in the realm of school administration, our short pilot implementation has spurred an increased level of interdisciplinary collaboration between

teachers. This has resulted in an increased capacity to leverage and support the mastery of core course standards in career and technical education courses. More broadly, it represents the opportunity for our entire district to cultivate a more aligned and integrated curriculum that is not only guaranteed and viable, but flexible enough to meet the 21st century educational challenge of designing personalized experiences that honor who learners are, how they learn best, and what they aspire to be.

III. In the area of increased education opportunities, I would encourage you to consider how the examples I have already shared represent increased educational opportunities for the learners involved in our pilot. Then, I would ask you to consider these opportunities not just in terms of their number or diversity, but also the quality and relevance thereof for our learners.

I am proud to share with you that the disruptive climate of the first 18 weeks of the 2020-2021 school year represented increased rather than decreased learning opportunities for our Innovation Pathway learners. The mastery framework of our innovative education waiver has facilitated collaborative work with community partners including: Northern Plains Dance, Dakota Zoo, Lincoln Park District, Global Neighbors, State Historical Society Archives, Adult Learning Center, Bismarck Parks and Recreation and the Heaven's Helpers Soup Cafe.

The youth that this waiver has helped to empower have delivered, or are currently working collaboratively on products including a cost and materials estimate for and the construction and installation of a sprung dance floor, a municipal dog park re-design and budget proposal, an interactive GIS map to help families new to our communities locate and access resources, Historical biographical sketches for the ND manuscript collections, materials for the support of family literacy, and a job safety analysis for stage construction at Sleepy Hollow Arts park.

You needn't take my word for it, however, as I have included a [handout of student testimonials](#) from our Innovative Education Pilot. I would ask that you take some time to explore the student experience in their own words, and reflect on whether all learners deserve to feel this way about school. The Innovation Pathway is housed less than 2 miles from where you are right now; If you'd like to know more, we invite you to come talk to our teachers and learners, or reach out to our community partners.

Chairman Owens; members of this committee, I hope you share my belief that the youth of our state have too much creativity, energy, and capacity to be relegated to punching the proverbial educational clock in order to earn a HS diploma. This bill represents the potential removal of a systemic barrier to high quality, equitable personalized and authentic learning experiences for every

learner in North Dakota. I urge you to take advantage of the opportunity that you have to invest in our state's most precious and valuable resource by supporting this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Phillips

Bismarck Public Schools

pat_phillips@bismarckschools.org

701.595.1713

@BPS_CA_IP

BPS INNOVATION PATHWAY



I couldn't entirely comprehend what this class was going to be like when it was first mentioned. Once I started, it was better than I could've imagined.

This pathway has allowed me to pursue and further my passions while helping the community and still gaining credits for core classes.

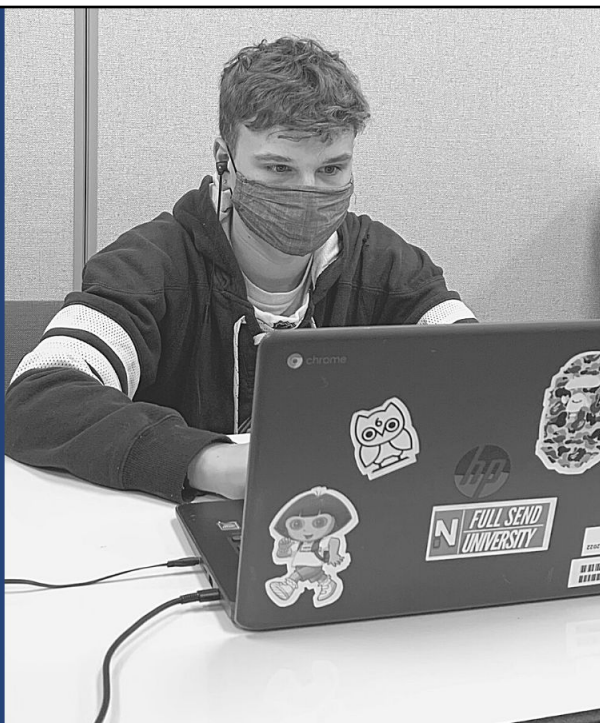
ALT HORNE

JUNIOR



@BPS_CA_IP

BPS INNOVATION PATHWAY



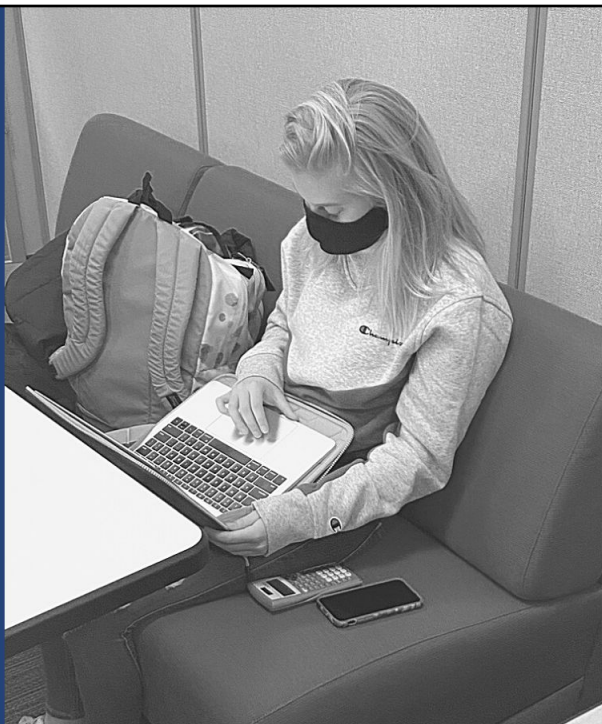
I am very glad I got to be a part of the first year of the Innovation Pathway program. This is by far the most engaged I've ever felt in a class and I really like how I get to control my learning path.

This is the only class I've had where my teachers are engaged specifically in my interests and are looking out for my future.

BEN ONTIS

JUNIOR





I chose the Innovation Pathway so I could focus on learning that was going to help me out in the future. The personal style of learning helps me to be engaged and work on projects I am truly passionate about.

This is the first time in awhile I have been truly excited to go to school. The teachers are amazing at making personal connections, and fitting course material to you instead of the other way around.

BRYANNE EDWARDS

JUNIOR



I really enjoy being a part of the Innovation Pathway because of the teachers, the students, and the projects we get to be a part of in the Bismarck Community.

I also enjoy the one-on-one teaching of topics that are taught to me using my interest in Aviation and Agriculture. Doing that allows me to be more focused on the project or task at hand.

TONY NAGEL

JUNIOR





The Innovation Pathway allows me to connect with the community and help where I'm able. It also gives me time to work on my vehicles.

At the beginning of the year, Mr. St. Peter wanted us to think about a project that we would like to do and mine was replacing the brakes on my Jeep.

SEAN MARCHUS

JUNIOR



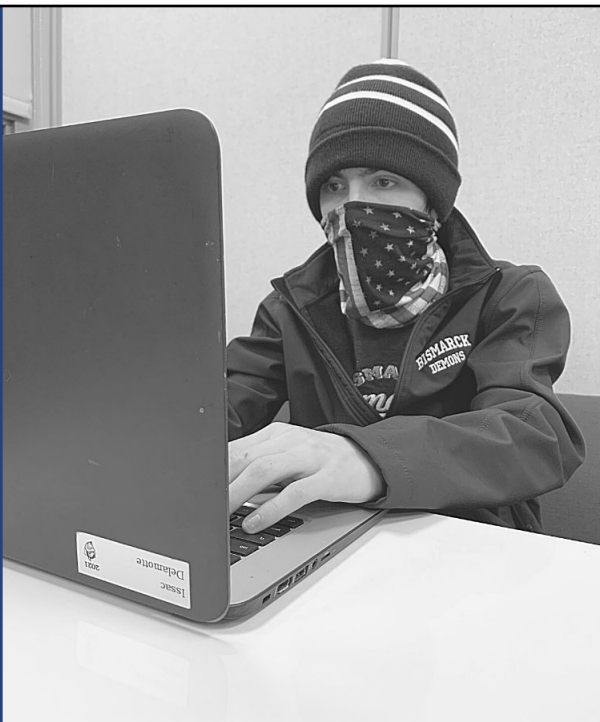
The reason I chose the Pathway is so that I can make my learning easier. I appreciate the time and effort everyone puts into the program to keep us going.

I enjoy the freedom it gives us to get work done and to work on our own or in a group. It also lets us work at our own pace. I love the things I get to do, I get a choice on what I want to write about or talk about and I can do all this and still get my English 11 credit.

MILES STIEFEL

JUNIOR





The Innovation Pathway is an amazing program that allows me to connect with local businesses and connect that to my learning.

Being a part of this program also allows me to make bonds with the people and businesses I work with.

ISSAC DELAMOTTE

SENIOR



The Innovation Pathway is a great substitution for core classes. I am able to get an English credit by doing things I am more interested in, and also it helps me with more real life skills by working with the community.

I enjoy being a part of the Innovation Pathway because I feel I am learning more and am more engaged than I would be in a regular English class.

JOEY LUTES

JUNIOR



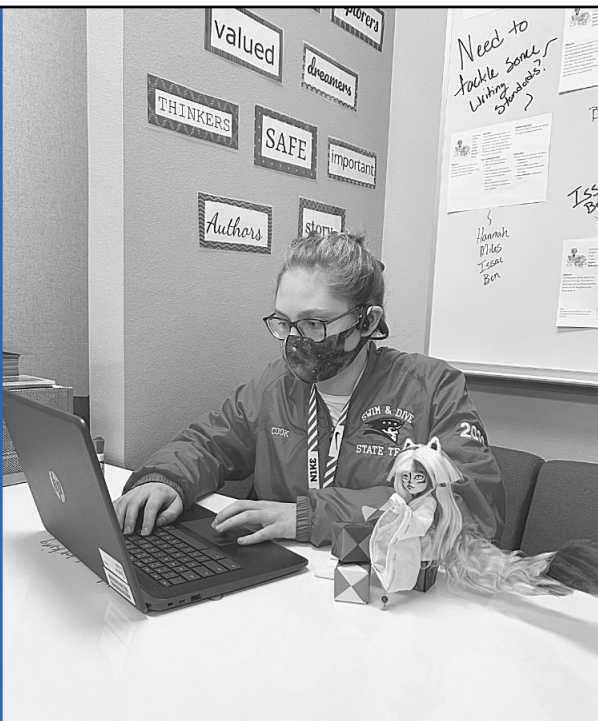


I chose the Pathway because I wanted to control my learning. This control allows me to work on things at my own pace and also allows me to pick the project that I want to do for English credit.

I enjoy the projects that I have done and look forward to the future projects that I will have. This program allows me to give back to the community in different ways.

HANNAH STYMEIST

LEGACY HS SENIOR



I like that the Innovation Pathway gives me time to work on my personal project with my creative art and crafting skills.

I am currently working on Geometry skills in whatever art I make. One example is in the patterns and templates I used for my doll repainting project.

TAYLOR COOK | TAY

JUNIOR



Testimony of Dr. Cory Steiner
Northern Cass Superintendent
Support of SB 2196
Tuesday, March 8th, 2021

Good morning Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee. It is my privilege to testify in support of SB 2196. My name is Dr. Cory J. Steiner and I'm the Superintendent of Schools at Northern Cass School District in Hunter, North Dakota. We are a PK-12 district with 660 learners located 25 miles northwest of Fargo. We are an innovative school district which is in the midst of a transformation to personalized, competency-based learning.

The issues in education are profound, but more importantly, they are urgent. The structure and function of our schools must transform to meet the ever-changing demands of society. We continue to operate within an industrial model of education. It is important to understand every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets. Our system is getting the results it is supposed to get. Unfortunately, what is being asked of schools has changed since the design of the system. In schools, we have been tasked to prepare learners to be productive members of society. We have been asked to prepare learners for college, career, and military. We are asked to develop 'soft' skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. We must develop academic, social, and emotional skills while making sure to develop long-lasting relationships in a safe environment. In other words, we must prepare learners to be choice ready for a future which is constantly changing. The expectations on schools continue to grow and the list of 'to do's' is never-ending. Administrators, teachers, and board members are willing to do more and be the linchpin for societal change but cannot accomplish this work with the current barriers in century code. We are faced with a moral imperative to transform our system.

To accomplish this challenging work, we must begin to remove the barriers which have traditionally been held in high regard in K-12 education. One of these barriers is traditional graduation requirements. Our graduation requirements continue to be built for a society which values formal postsecondary education above all else. We are fully supportive of learners attending postsecondary schooling, but that has proven to no longer be necessary for success after high school. If success is no longer linked to postsecondary attendance, the requirements of graduating high school must change to recognize the values of our current society. Our current educational system is based on reaction. If a learner struggles, we react as best we can, but this should not be how we operate. Our current system sees learners as interchangeable instead of as individuals. For example, the optional curriculum diploma was added to provide an alternative for learners who have significant failure in high school. This was appreciated but didn't address the inequity in our system. An educational system must be built to be proactive. We know there is a better system and when we know, we have an obligation to act. SB 2196 is intended to offer flexibility in how learners choose to access and engage in learning as well as ensuring they

demonstrate mastery according to a set of competencies. A North Dakota learning continuum will serve as the foundation for the competency-based system, which will in essence, create high and achievable expectations for all learners. The establishment and certification of a North Dakota competency framework will allow districts to personalize graduation requirements for their learners. The work on the learning continuum is already scheduled for this summer. Twenty-six districts have been invited. The twenty-six districts were selected because of their previous work on North Dakota priority standards and the Personalized Learning Competency-Based work with KnowledgeWorks. A learning continuum with competencies will be written for Math, ELA, Social Studies, and Science. North Dakota educators will do the work in collaboration with KnowledgeWorks. In the summer of 2020, a large group worked with Battelle for Kids to create a Portrait of a Graduate which could be used as the foundation for this framework. A group of representatives from education, the business and religious community, higher education, K-12 learners, and legislators met. Over the course of multiple meetings that included significant collaboration, the group identified adaptability, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, empathy, learner's mindset, and perseverance. These attributes could become the foundation for the development of North Dakota competencies.

Although this work is transformative, it is not new. The states of Maine, Arizona, New York, Colorado, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin, Washington, and Virginia have passed legislation allowing for some form of competency-based graduation requirement. These laws have included, but are not limited to, eliminating seat time requirements, allowing for a Portrait of a Graduate to be the foundation for competencies, allowing work-based learning to articulate for credit, and the use of portfolios to demonstrate mastery. Northern Cass is currently working with Mastery Transcript Consortium to do this work. This 'transcript' opens up opportunity for every learner from all backgrounds, locations, and schools to have their unique abilities, interests, strengths, and histories fostered and celebrated.

Today, I ask you to support a recommendation of 'do pass' for SB 2196 allowing for the establishment of a competency-based framework as an additional pathway for graduation requirements. As a leader of an innovative school district, one of the biggest concerns shared with me by parents and learners is our learners not having the same opportunities as those who attend a more traditional system. This bill is a step in the right direction to recognize education can and will look different across the state of North Dakota. Your support for this bill will indicate your commitment to local control, innovation, and doing what is in the best interest of all learners throughout the state of North Dakota. We have boards, administrators, and educators ready to change the model into one which promotes authenticity through a personalized approach. I visit with many of my colleagues who can only see the barriers that exist to change. By passing this legislation, we will remove barriers and allow the greatest group of educators in our country to begin to redefine our system. Over the past few sessions, the legislature has been an advocate for education by reducing barriers to implementing change. You have supported innovation. This bill is a logical next step in moving our state. I don't speak to you today asking

for funding, but simply making sure our system is equitable. I ask all members of this committee to recommend a 'Do Pass' and do so knowing it will begin the further transformation of our education system which will become the model for our great country. With the passing of this legislation, schools throughout our great state will be able to achieve the true purpose of education. We must help young people grow and develop into honest, kind, and compassionate citizens. Thank you for time and consideration.

Mandan Public School District

District Offices

#7855

Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021
To: North Dakota House Education Committee
From: Jeff Fastnacht, Asst. Superintendent
Re: Support for SB 2196

Good Afternoon, Chairman Owens and members of the committee. I am Jeff Fastnacht, Asst. Superintendent at Mandan Public School. I am also a member of the North Dakota State Board of Public Education, President of the North Dakota Board of Career and Technical Education, and important for this testimony a member of the North Dakota Education Coordination Council.

I stand in support of an educational system that meets the unique needs of each and every one of our students. I stand in support of a system that allows students to pursue their passions and improves student engagement, resulting in improved learning outcomes. I stand in support of the work done by Dr. Steiner, Dr. Steinhoff, and others to advance personalized learning in our state.

I believe a change is needed in North Dakota statute to allow schools to innovate within a framework, allowing us to transform our schools without cumbersome paperwork and reporting requirements. It is my experience that innovation is already happening in our schools. We have outstanding leaders and educators moving our schools, particularly our high schools, in a new direction. This bill allows for the creation of a North Dakota Learning Continuum under the leadership of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Ms. Baesler. This framework would then be reviewed by the Education Coordination Council and ultimately approved by the State Board of Public Education. This framework will provide the foundation needed for schools to create alternate pathways toward graduation outside of the regimented and one-size-fits-all Carnegie system we have now.

I support SB 2196 and look forward to working on this with outstanding educational leaders as you have heard from today.

Thank you for your time and I would stand for any questions from the committee.

"Where the Best Begin"

**House Education
SB2136**

March 10, 2021

Chairman Owens and members of the committee, my name is Wayde Sick, State Director of the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am submitting testimony in support of SB2136.

The Department of Career and Technical Education supports SB2136, specifically Section 1, Subsection 2.a. which provides requirement options to the math courses that are necessary for the Career and Technical Education scholarship. This gives the options of integrated math II and integrated math III to be an option Algebra II. This is not a lowering the standard to the math requirement. Integrated math II and III are still rigorous math courses that may align with a student's career pathway, specifically if they were pursuing a Career and Technical Education Pathway. This also maintains Algebra II as an option if a school district does not offer Integrated math II and III.

NDCTE also supports SB2136 due to Section 3 of the bill. Section 3 would amend statute, that would allow students to use the scholarship towards programming outside of traditional post-secondary programs. Section 3 would allow students to use their scholarship for private career schools that are approved by the State Board for Career and Technical Education. Examples of a private career school are Lynnes Welding and Emerging Digital Academy.

This concludes my testimony and I am here to answer any questions.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY ON SB 2196
House Education Committee
March 9, 2021
by Ann Ellefson, Director of Academic Support
(701) 328-2488
Department of Public Instruction

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

My name is Ann Ellefson, Director of the Office of Academic Support of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). I am here today representing NDDPI to provide supportive testimony for SB 2196, which provides for the establishment of a North Dakota learning continuum, local district mastery framework, and provides flexibility regarding the requirements for instructional time.

When SB 2186 was passed by the legislative assembly in 2017, I had the honor to work with a cross department team in the development, rollout, and support of the innovative education programming bill. Also, during the 2016-2017 school year, the state began working with the KnowledgeWorks Foundation—a well-known, established organization supporting competency-based education, with over twenty years of experience in supporting education reform and transforming educational systems. Together, the NDDPI and KnowledgeWorks secured a five-year commitment of philanthropic dollars to support transformational systems change in North Dakota. This opportunity, referred to as North Dakota Personalized, Competency-Based Education (ND PCBL), was open to all districts throughout the

state and today, three years later, we continue to work with four districts on innovative change. I have enclosed a full list of districts operating under the Innovative Education Program flexibility as well as those who have submitted formal inquiries (Attachment A).

As the department lead for the personalized, competency-based education work in North Dakota, I am honored to work so closely with these districts. It has provided the state education department great insight on the complexity and logistics of transforming educational systems and informed our practices moving forward.

When the legendary SB 2186 was passed by the 2017 legislative assembly, the intent was to provide local school districts the flexibility to “do school differently.” Then, as advocates for educational change, we would examine those common best practices or barriers and seek to adjust the ND Century Code accordingly. Today, SB 2196 does just that. The department strongly believes that personalized, competency-based learning systems are a way for North Dakota schools and districts to better meet student needs by addressing each students’ unique learning styles and personal strengths.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Attachment A

List of schools requesting Innovative Education Program

School	Date Submitted	Short Description	Response on Planning Proposal (PP)	Response on Implementation Plan (IP)	NDCC Waived
Bismarck – Career Academy	October 7, 2019	CBE in CTE	Approved October 2019	Approved April 2020	15.1-21 HS Grad 15.1-18 TQ 15.1-20 HS Time
Center for Distance Education	August 21, 2018	CBE in virtual classes	Approved September 2018	Approved December 2018	15.1-20 HS Time
Northern Cass	May 2017	Career <u>Exploration</u> (Jaguar Academy) PCBL w/ KW	Approved August 2017 Working with KnowledgeWorks	Approved July 2017	15.1-20 Instructional Calendar Time 15.1-18 TQ
Northern Cass	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	15.1-20 HS Time
Northern Cass	Spring 2019	1x a month shortened high school day, 5.5 hrs instead of 6 hrs		Approved April 2019	15.1-20 Time
Northern Cass	February 2020	State Scholarship		Approved March 2020	15.1-21 Scholarship
Oakes	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	15.1-20 HS Time
West Fargo	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	N/A
West Fargo	Spring 2019	Hybrid Courses at Sheyenne HS		Approved April 2019	15.1-20 Time
New Rockford-Sheyenne	Spring 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	N/A
New Rockford-Sheyenne	Spring 2019	Flex-Mod Schedule			15.1-20 HS Time
YCC	Summer 2018	PCBL	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	Approved-PCBL w/ KW	15.1-20 HS Time
YCC	Spring 2019	4-day School Week		Approved April 2019	N/A

IP – Implementation Plan
PP – Planning Proposal
HS – High School

CBE – Competency-Based Education
PCBL – Personalized Competency-Based Learning
KW – KnowledgeWorks

Schools Expressing Interest – Contact and additional information was provided

1. Bismarck – Simile Middle School (January 2019)
2. Bismarck – Bismarck High school (January)
3. Beach & Home on the Range (April 2019)
4. Dunseith (November 2018)
5. Ellendale (March 2018)
6. Grand Forks (October 2018)
7. Larimore – Kal Triplet
8. Midway (May 2019)
9. Milnor (March 2018)

Beulah Public Schools
Mr. Travis Jordan – District Superintendent

1 Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2021, 2:30PM

2 To: North Dakota House Education Committee

3 From: Travis Jordan, District Superintendent, Beulah Public Schools

4 Re: Support for SB 2196

5 Good Morning Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee. I am Travis
6 Jordan, District Superintendent at Beulah Public Schools. Today I speak to you in support of SB
7 2196.

8 For years now, you've likely heard talk about personalizing education; individualizing instruction to
9 meet the unique learning needs of each of our learners. It's certainly refreshing to hear, but have we
10 actually truly seen it? We talk about it all throughout a learner's school career, but at the end of the
11 day, when they walk across the stage to graduate – all learners must fit into the same box for a
12 diploma. All learners must have met the same criteria to indeed graduate. I don't call that
13 personalization. The bill before you gives our school districts the ability to truly personalize a
14 pathway to graduation that meets the unique learning needs and desires of our learners, all the while
15 ensuring mastering of necessary content skills.

16 Just a few years back in 2018 I was afforded the opportunity to attend the National Forum on
17 Education in Washington, DC where I heard a presentation that will stick with me forever. Gallup
18 Education had surveyed businesses and industries throughout our nation and found that just 11% of
19 them indicated our learners coming from high schools, colleges, and universities were ready for the
20 jobs they were hired for. This means 89% of our businesses and industries thought otherwise.

21 Up until this past summer, I would venture to say that the education community and the world of
22 work have never truly come together to discuss what skills are necessary for our learners to be
23 successful as they venture out after high school and post-secondary schooling. That indeed
24 happened this summer however, at which time the groundwork was laid for this particular bill.

25 My colleagues will touch more on what a competency-based system of education looks like (and I
26 can certainly answer questions to that as well), but I'd like to talk more on what you don't actually
27 see with your eyes or likely process in your mind as you read this bill and hear other testimony.

28 Since a dark day in the Fall of 2010 when a student of mine decided to take her own life – my
29 thoughts on how we educate students changed. I missed an opportunity to help this person just
30 hours before she decided she couldn't face the world anymore. It was in the moments and days
31 after that I realized education has to be different. We cannot just simply educate the mind without

Beulah Public Schools
Mr. Travis Jordan – District Superintendent

educating the heart. Quite honestly, educating the heart first provides for a nourished mind that is ripe for learning.

You might ask, how does one educate the heart. It's quite simple – give every single child the one thing they need to be successful – connection. When a child is connected to someone or something it gives them purpose. Purpose then turns to passion and with passion one has the ability to change the world.

How does that tie into this bill? We must allow our learners to engage in real and relevant curriculum that they are interested in and passionate about. All too often in education we cast our curriculum (like one would cast a net to catch fish) over our learners and they get trapped. We must allow our learners to swim outside of the net. Instead of throwing our curriculum out and hoping it sticks with our learners, let's allow our learners to wrap their passions around the curriculum or better yet let's allow them to help create it. Too many of our learners feel like they are trapped in the net. They are limited and confined in a learning space that doesn't allow them to truly grow and follow their passions. Let's bring the world of work in and marriage their needs with the passions and interests of our learners. We simply cannot expect to grow living in silos.

When we allow our businesses and industries to partner with our schools to provide real and relevant learning opportunities, we not only grow our learners, we grow the world of work as well.

One bill, SB 2196 has the power to enrich our learners like we have never done before. It has the power to curb the mental health crisis that continues to grow at a faster and faster rate across the world, as it connects learner interest and passion with real and relevant work. It has the ability for small town and large town North Dakota to grow their cities by providing work opportunities for our learners. Subsequently, we will begin to close the gap that exists between what the world of work needs and what schools are producing. And finally, it allows our learners to swim outside of the net to find endless possibilities to connect their passion to their future positions in a world that is thirsting for that right now.

Thank you, Chairman Owens and members of the committee, for allowing me to share my passion with you here today. I'll yield to any questions you may have.

Travis Jordan, District Superintendent, Beulah Public Schools.

SB 2196

Tuesday, March 9th, 2021

The Honorable Mark Owens, Chairman

The Honorable Cynthia Schreiber-Beck, Vice Chairman

North Dakota House Education Committee

Testimony in support of SB 2196

Submitted by: Kraig Steinhoff, Superintendent of Oakes Public Schools

Chairman Owens and members of the committee: I am Kraig Steinhoff, Superintendent of Oakes Public Schools. Oakes Public Schools serves 500 students PK-12 and is in Dickey County, approximately 55 miles south of Valley City. This year is my fifteenth year as an administrator in Oakes. I was the assistant director of the Southeast Region Career & Technology Center for ten years and am in my fifth year as superintendent. I am here today representing my district in support of SB 2196.

Oakes is in the third year of transitioning to personalized competency-based learning. We are fortunate to partner with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, West Fargo, Marmont School, Northern Cass, and KnowledgeWorks. We believe all students deserve to be at their fullest potential upon graduation and be college, career, or military ready.

SB 2196 will allow the establishment and certification of a North Dakota learning continuum and qualify for our students' personalization of graduation requirements. We want our students to have agency in their learning. However, under the current law we can't allow for the personalization of their graduation requirements. We're able to personalize their education from K-12 but must still force all students into the same requirements for graduation. This bill will allow for personalization and provide our students more opportunities to meet the current graduation requirements and have the autonomy to pursue their passions and find fulfillment in education. As a former CTE teacher and administrator, students' challenge to fit in the classes they desire with the courses they are required has been a long-standing hurdle. I believe that SB 2196 can help with this hurdle by allowing more flexibility for our students to be in classes that align with their passions while earning the required credits established by law.

The work on the learning continuum is already scheduled for this summer. Twenty-six districts were invited along with the Regional Education Associations. The twenty-six districts were selected because of their previous work on North Dakota priority standards. Learning continuums will be written for Math, ELA, Social Studies, and Science. Our educators will do the work in North Dakota in collaboration with KnowledgeWorks.

Our moral imperative is to prepare our students for their futures and not force them to follow the requirements that prepared former graduates for their futures. Thank you for considering my testimony supporting SB 2196, and I am happy to answer questions.

1 Tuesday, March 9, 2021

2 Beth Slette, Superintendent, West Fargo Public Schools

3 Support for SB 2196

4 Good afternoon, Chairman Owens members of the House Education Committee. My name is Beth Slette
5 and I am the Superintendent at West Fargo Public Schools. I am here today to speak to you in support of
6 Senate Bill 2196.

7 In 2018, my first year as Superintendent in West Fargo, our district was one of four districts accepted
8 into the pilot to lead the state in personalized, competency-based learning (PCBL). More than two and a
9 half years later, our district has taken great strides to put systems in place to ensure that every child,
10 regardless of the neighborhood they live in, school they attend, principal at the school, or teacher in the
11 classroom, has equal access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum that is aligned to the North Dakota
12 State standards while personalizing instruction for each learner. While I see evidence every day that we
13 have taken great strides, we are not there yet. Senate Bill 2196 would provide the flexibility for districts
14 that choose to make PCBL a reality for the students they serve.

15 Through this work, our district has identified seven belief statements that we feel are critical in
16 providing our students with a comprehensive educational experience that truly personalizes instruction
17 for our learners. This may sound like a simple step, but it was not. As adults, we have all attended
18 school, and we all have an opinion about what it should look like. Please allow me to share these beliefs
19 with you. As you listen, please think about what you believe about teaching and learning.

20 One, we believe that teaching is both an art and a science. We utilize research and study best practices
21 to determine our instructional practices. This means that we have defined a rigorous progression of
22 learning and proficiency scales to articulate student competencies aligned to the standards at each
23 grading period. We believe that the guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) needs to be on a cycle of
24 continuous improvement and needs to be created at the local level, collaboratively with district
25 leaders and educators. In short, our district has a plan, and we don't leave our instructional practices
26 to chance.

27 Two, we believe that learning is social and requires humans to interact with other humans. We
28 encourage active student engagement in the learning process keeping in mind that the person doing
29 the work is doing the learning. This will be supported by engaging students in higher levels of depth of
30 knowledge and more creation. In short, we don't believe students should spend the majority of their
31 learning on a technology device. Students need hands-on activities and engagement with their
32 teachers and peers.

33 Three, we believe in social-emotional learning, and that our students need explicit instruction in order to
34 build and practice skills for their mental wellbeing, beginning when they first enter our schools. This is
35 supported by fostering the development of the key dispositions outlined in our district's Profile of a
36 Graduate: collaboration, communication, compassion, creativity, critical thinking, reflection, resilience,
37 and responsibility. In short, interpersonal skills are critical for a student to be successful in tomorrow's
38 world.

1 Four, we believe in foundational knowledge and understanding, and the use of a variety of instructional
2 models, modeling the thinking and learning process and guiding our learners through practice as they
3 move toward independence. This means that students have a voice and choice in their learning, by
4 making a more deliberate connection to the authentic purpose of learning. In short, students that
5 have the opportunity to explore their passions are more engaged, motivated, and successful.

6 Five, we believe reflection and building self-efficacy are critical components of the learning process. This
7 means that learners are asked to set goals at a developmentally appropriate level and regularly reflect
8 on their learning growth to determine next steps. In short, students that set goals and work hard to
9 achieve them are building self-efficacy and are motivated to achieve their goals.

10 Six, we believe in personalized (competency-based) learning that focuses on understanding where
11 students are in their learning and supports what they need to move forward through various levels of
12 instruction including whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction. We will utilize formative
13 assessments to help determine student needs in the classroom. Students can demonstrate their
14 learning in multiple ways and are provided with opportunities to seek advanced knowledge and
15 understanding. In short, don't throw the baby out with the bath water. There is a time and place for
16 various instructional models.

17 Seven, we believe providing targeted learner supports to help ensure that students are receiving the
18 supports they need through the use of a comprehensive assessment system. This is supported by
19 utilizing instructional strategies and technology to simplify (not replace) the teaching and learning
20 process. In short, we must know where students are in order to know where they need to go.

21 As you reach into your purse or pocket, you are all carrying a personal cell phone that has settings set
22 to your personal preferences. When you leave this room, many of you will get into a car that will
23 automatically adjust your seat, steering wheel, and mirrors to you as the driver. Some of you will
24 spend time reading the local paper this evening. Maybe you will have ink on your hands, while others
25 will bring out their laptop to make the font extra-large because you cannot see as well as you used to,
26 and others will pull it up on their phones because you have excellent vision. Our world has become
27 more personalized, yet we still see many schools across the country sitting in rows and counting the
28 minutes a student is sitting in a seat to determine whether they will graduate from high school. To be
29 clear, I am not here to speak against teaching the rigorous North Dakota State Standards. Nor am I
30 opposed to assigning credits for graduation. With Senate bill 2196, schools will have more flexibility to
31 teach the competencies aligned to the state standards in a way that is more meaningful and relevant,
32 and then use authentic assessments to measure these competencies.

33 Thank you for allowing me to testify this afternoon. I will now stand for questions if there are any at
34 this time.



March 9, 2021

Chairman Owens and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Carrie O'Rourke and I represent **yes. every kid.** We are dedicated to creating an environment where every student receives an individualized education. I am providing written testimony in support of **SB 2196 – Establishment of North Dakota Competency Framework.**

We applaud the efforts this body has taken to embrace bold and positive reforms for students and families which propels North Dakota forward by empowering school leaders with the flexibility to implement innovative programs and learning models. To succeed in today's dynamic global economy, young people need different skills that the current system was not designed to foster.

This legislation will enable North Dakota students to receive an education that is responsive and flexible to their individual learning styles and needs. Rather than confining students to a one-size-fits-all system, North Dakota families will be able to ensure their children receive an education that's customized and adaptable. If we've learned anything from the learning disruptions that families, student and educators have faced in the last year, it is the need to lean in and embrace student-centric solutions that celebrate the diversity of our student population.

SB 2196 will provide the opportunity for a wide variety of experiences and educational methods that has the potential to transform a student's life – allowing all students to realize their full potential to discover, develop, and apply their innate gifts to maximize their ability to contribute to society.

I appreciate the opportunity to address this committee, and most of all, I want to close by again applauding you, this body, and this state for putting the needs of students first and reimagining what is possible. This legislation will guarantee North Dakota is national leader in creating an education system built around the needs of every student.



Carrie O'Rourke
Regional Director
c: 850-510-5399
yeseverykid.com



Monday, March 8, 2021

The Honorable, Mark Owens, Chairman
North Dakota House Education Committee

Testimony in Support of SB 2196, the establishment of a North Dakota competency framework and to waive instructional time requirements.

Submitted By: Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, KnowledgeWorks

Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee, I am Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for KnowledgeWorks. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 2196, which would establish a North Dakota Competency framework to guide student mastery in place of traditional instructional time requirements.

KnowledgeWorks is a nonprofit organization with 20 years of experience exploring the future of learning, growing educator impact and working with state and federal policymakers to advance personalized, competency-based education systems. We are especially proud of our partnership with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Personalized Competency-Based Learning (PCBL) Cohort, a group of four districts - Northern Cass, Oakes, West Fargo, and the Marmot School within the Youth Correctional Facility – that are pioneering a five-year vision to transform student-centered teaching and learning.

The guiding vision for these districts is a strong commitment to personalized, competency-based learning systems that elevate student voice and emphasize mastery of academic knowledge and skills over time-based structures that make acceleration challenging, or worse, allow many students to advance with significant learning gaps that widen over time.

Thanks to the forward-thinking educators in these districts, along with community partners, business leaders, and postsecondary institutions, North Dakota is receiving national recognition for its vision to create a more student-centered education system. This was fueled by passage of SB 2186 in 2017 to create an innovative education program and continues today thanks to the ongoing support and visionary leadership of North Dakota's policymakers.

By establishing a North Dakota Competency Framework and enabling districts to emphasize student mastery in lieu of traditional instructional hours, SB 2196 is an important next step in this work. Stakeholders across the education system would have access to a learning continuum with a transparent set of grade level expectations aligned to state standards and critical skills.

This emphasis on mastery of essential knowledge and skills would give North Dakota graduates a strategic advantage in today's rapidly changing economy. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, most students graduate without the career readiness competencies that employers deem necessary for success. For example, just 56% of graduates nationwide are proficient in problem solving, 43% in work ethic, and 42% in communication.

To this end, a growing number of North Dakota stakeholders recently collaborated to identify seven essential attributes for North Dakota graduates. These include valuable skills such as critical thinking, perseverance, empathy, collaboration and a learner's mindset. SB 2196 would build on this important work, providing every district access to a competency framework for integration into K-12 classrooms and learning environments.

In addition to elevating essential knowledge and skills, SB 2196 would remove the seat-time barrier around the state's instructional hours requirement. This policy change would help participating districts elevate the goal of mastery over time-based policies that restrict learning innovation by moving students through the education system at the same pace. This not only empowers educators to design authentic learning experiences that may occur outside the classroom with business leaders and community partners, but also gives educators greater opportunity to personalize learning supports through acceleration or additional time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many challenges with our nation's education system, but it also presents an opportunity to revisit what high-quality instruction and learning look like, including how we deliver it, how much time it takes, and how credit is awarded. North Dakota should seize this moment to pass legislation that empowers districts to design high-quality student-centered learning experiences.

The state is well positioned to take this step because of the strong foundation and leadership of the North Dakota PCBL Cohort. These educators are ready to serve as a learning network to support other interested districts. As a partner in this work, KnowledgeWorks is also committed to the growth and sustainability of high-quality practice across North Dakota.

I encourage the committee to pass SB 2196 and thank you for your time.



Tuesday, March 9, 2021

The Honorable Mark Owens, Chairman
North Dakota House Education Committee

Testimony in Support of S.B. 2196, the establishment of a North Dakota competency framework and to waive instructional time requirements.

Submitted By: Lori Phillips, Director of Teaching and Learning, KnowledgeWorks

Chairman Owens, and members of the committee:

My name is Lori Phillips, Director of Teaching and Learning for KnowledgeWorks. I am here today representing KnowledgeWorks to provide supportive testimony for *SB 2196*, which would establish a North Dakota competency framework to guide student mastery in place of traditional instructional time requirements.

During the legislative assembly in 2017, SB 2186 set the stage for innovative education practices to occur across North Dakota, including personalized, competency-based learning. The flexibility provided under this statute, along with the strong relationship between KnowledgeWorks and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, established the North Dakota Personalized, Competency-Based Learning cohort in 2018. West Fargo, Oakes, Northern Cass and The Marmot School within the Youth Correctional Center committed to a five-year partnership designed to support systems change and build capacity at the local level to scale personalized, competency-based learning statewide. The cohort districts intentionally represent diverse systems with unique experiences and needs, inspiring other districts in the state to learn from these pioneers.

- West Fargo representing a large district with 11,500 students, 70 leaders and 1200 staff spread throughout 21 school buildings and counting
- Oakes and Northern Cass representing medium districts, comprised of 500-660 learners, 3-4 leaders and 45-50 staff contained in one school building
- The Marmot School within the Youth Correctional center representing at-risk learners from across the state, their staff of less than 10 working to impact the whole child in the weeks, months, or years they have with each student contained in one school building

The cohort spent the first two years building trusting relationships, creating a local vision, deepening their understanding of personalized, competency-based learning and developing action plans to set goals, collect data and monitor progress. In year three the districts are establishing a collaborative network, strengthening leadership skills, increasing levels of transparent communication, and changing their systems to meet the needs of all learners.

A critical component of this work is embedding a culture of continuous improvement. Each district participates in Fall and Spring site visits from our National evaluation partner WestEd. WestEd, based in San Francisco, is tasked with collecting data through surveys, classroom walkthroughs and focus groups. Due to the pandemic, the Spring and Fall site visits were completed virtually. District specific data is shared individually, while cohort-wide patterns and trends are shared collectively. According to the Fall 2020 site visits,

- Districts with a clear vision are seeing higher levels of implementation
- Educators credit personalized, competency-based learning with helping them adapt to hybrid and remote learning models
- Several districts report increased student engagement with personalized, competency-based learning practices

As the cohort transitions from visioning and planning to implementation, it is critical to engage educators in the process. Between February and May, three learning opportunities, focused on personalized, competency-based learning basics, instruction, and assessment, will take place. Cohort members, representatives from the Department of Public Instruction and interested leaders and educators from the cohort districts will collaboratively learn, apply what they are learning and reflect on success and challenges. The goals are that leaders and educators will form a sustainable network of learning and collaboration that can serve as a model across the state.

For districts to fully transform to personalized, competency-based systems, the state's K-12 education system must begin to integrate engaging learning experiences that give learners the opportunity to master academic content and essential skills aligned to their postsecondary, career and military interests. SB 2196 is intended to offer flexibility in how learners choose to access and engage in learning as well as ensuring they demonstrate mastery of academic and 21st century skills.

A competency framework, consisting of a learning continuum and clear guidance for implementation, can serve as the foundation for competency-based systems, communicating common, high-level expectations for all learners. A learning continuum is a transparent document containing a progression of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (academic and 21st century skills), aligned to college- and career-ready pathways. Establishing a learning continuum, that is accessible to all members of the learning community (families, learners, educators, board members, community, etc.), creates an environment for learners to engage fully in the learning process and make decisions based on their needs, preferences and goals for the future.

KnowledgeWorks partnered with the Utah Department of Education in 2020 to convene stakeholders from K-12, post-secondary, business, and community to design a state level learning continuum. The continuum consists of PreK-Post-secondary, grade-banded competencies aligned to their portrait of a graduate. Example provided in Attachment A. I have also provided an example of work done in Farmington, MN focused on academic competencies (Attachment B)

The design of a state level learning continuum for North Dakota, including academic and 21st century skill competencies, will take place in June and July, with a draft completed by Fall of 2021. Twenty-six K-12 districts and eighteen higher education institutions (listed in Attachments C,D) as well as the Regional Educational Associations have been invited to participate in competency design committees as well as review councils; two introductory webinars, outlining the components of a learning continuum as well as the design process, were hosted by KnowledgeWorks and NDDPI last November. Access to the slides and recorded session can be found in Attachment E. The inclusion of diverse stakeholders and Native voice will be critical to the success of the learning continuum design and implementation.

The learning continuum may be adopted and implemented locally by ND districts who are interested in pursuing a personalized, competency-based system or utilized as a resource for districts to develop their own using local context. This transparent progression of learning expectations will support learner voice in how they access, engage, and express their learning.

Now more than ever there is a National urgency to rethink education, providing personalized opportunities that meet the needs of every learner. North Dakota can be a leader in this movement. We urge the committee to pass SB 2196.

That concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.

Attachment A: Example of Utah Portrait of a Graduate Competencies



WELLNESS

Develop self-awareness, self-advocacy skills and the knowledge to maintain healthy lifestyles that provide balance in life and improve physical, mental and social-emotional well-being.

Pre-K	K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	Postsecondary
Students will be able to identify emotions, recognize physical and social needs, ask for help and participate in guided wellness activities.	Students will be able to explore self-awareness, participate in wellness activities and develop self-advocacy skills to express physical and social-emotional needs appropriately with trusted adults.	Students will be able to develop self-awareness, participate in wellness routines and practice self-advocacy skills by asking for help with mental, physical and social-emotional needs from trusted relationships.	Students will be able to practice self-awareness and self-advocacy, set goals and build routines towards balance through mental, physical and social-emotional wellness.	Students will be able to apply self-awareness to assess and monitor needs, set goals and routines and self-advocate for the supports they need to develop balance through mental, physical and social-emotional wellness.	Lifelong learners will be able to evaluate and adjust self-awareness and self-advocacy skills, be adept in achieving goals, maintain wellness habits and seek out supports to create lifelong balance through mental, physical and social-emotional well-being.

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Attachment B: Example of Farmington Area Public Schools (MN) Science Academic Competencies

Academic Example: Farmington High School

Science: Questioning

The ability to generate and use questioning to investigate relevant phenomena.

K-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
Learners will be able to ask questions that will help them guide and design investigations, test ideas, and provide evidence to support their learning.	Learners will be able to generate questions which leads to development and use of models to represent their understanding of phenomena.	Learners will be able to plan and carry out investigations to answer student-driven questions about phenomena.	Learners will be able to design and conduct investigations, using appropriate technologies, to collect and organize data to evaluate ideas, answer questions, and explore phenomena.

Attachment C: ND Districts invited to participate in Learning Continuum Design and Review

Beulah	Marmot School: Youth Correctional Center
Bismarck	Midway
Dakota Prairie	Minot
Devil's Lake	Minto
Dickinson	Northern Cass
Fargo	Northwood
Grafton	Oakes
Grand Forks	Rugby
Hillsboro	Solon-Cannonball
Jamestown	Tate Topa
Langdon	West Fargo
Mandan	Williston
Manvel	Wilton

Attachment D: ND Public, Private and Tribal Higher Education Institutions invited to participate in the Learning Continuum Design and Review

Bismarck State College	Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
Cankdeska Cikana Community College	Sitting Bull College
Dakota College at Bottineau	Turtle Mountain Community College
Dickinson State University	United Tribes Technical College
Lake Region State College	University of Jamestown
Mayville State University	University of Mary
Minot State University	University of North Dakota
North Dakota State College of Science	Valley City State University
North Dakota State University	Williston State College

Attachment E: Introductory Learning Continuum Webinar Slides and Recording

- [Webinar Slides](#)
- [Webinar Recording](#)

2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2196
3/10/2021

Relating to the duties of the kindergarten through grade twelve education coordination council; relating to the establishment of a ND learning continuum and to instructional time and unit requirements

10:32 AM

Chairman Owens called the hearing to order. Present: Reps. Owens, Schreiber-Beck, Heinert, Hoverson, D. Johnson, M. Johnson, Longmuir, Marschall, Richter, Zubke, Guggisberg and Hager present. Absent: Rep Pyle

Representative Schreiber-Beck moved a **Do Pass**, seconded by **Rep Zubke**.

Roll call vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Mark S. Owens	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Ron Guggisberg	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Jeff A. Hoverson	Y
Representative Dennis Johnson	Y
Representative Mary Johnson	Y
Representative Donald Longmuir	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Brandy Pyle	AB
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Denton Zubke	Y

Motion carried. 12 – 0 – 1 Rep Schreiber-Beck is carrier.

10:35 am hearing closed.

Bev Monroe, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2196, as engrossed: Education Committee (Rep. Owens, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2196 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.