

Testimony on House Bill 1404
Presented by Kaitlyn Allen, Director of Curriculum, NDCDE
March 12, 2025

Chair Beard, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Kaitlyn Allen, and I serve as the Director of Curriculum at the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE). I am here to provide testimony regarding House Bill 1404 and to highlight the importance of this legislation in furthering military career readiness opportunities for North Dakota students.

Traditionally, the North Dakota scholarship has aligned with the Choice Ready framework, ensuring students are prepared for post-secondary education, the workforce, or the military. The recent update from the ESSA Committee has formally incorporated the Military Pathway into this framework, providing students with a structured and high-quality option for pursuing careers in military service. My role today is to outline what this program will look like, ensuring a clear understanding of its quality, scope, and the benefits it provides to students and the state.

Context and Development of the Military Preparation Program

The foundation for this initiative began with North Dakota's Choice Ready framework, which ensures that students graduate with a well-defined path toward post-secondary education, the workforce, or military service. As part of our ongoing commitment to expanding student options, we explored models in other states and identified Virtual Arkansas' Military Preparation Program as an innovative approach that could serve as a reference point. Inspired by this program, we developed North Dakota's own Military Preparation Program to provide a structured, high-quality curriculum that prepares students for military careers while integrating with existing Choice Ready indicators.

This program was built in collaboration with the North Dakota National Guard, ensuring alignment with military career expectations and post-secondary options. Our goal is to create a seamless transition for students considering military service while maintaining academic rigor and career readiness.

Overview of the Military Preparation Program

The Military Preparation Program consists of five courses with two required units (four courses) within an approved sequence designed to prepare students for success in military service. These courses provide foundational knowledge, skill-building, and real-world applications aligned with military expectations.

Course Sequence and Learning Outcomes:

- **Introduction to Military Careers** – Provides an overview of military branches, career pathways, rank structures, and core responsibilities of service members.
 - What students gain: A foundational understanding of military culture, career options, and expectations to make informed decisions about service.
- **ASVAB Essentials: Skills for Military Success** (Prerequisite: Introduction to Military Careers) – Strengthens skills in arithmetic reasoning, word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, and mechanical understanding to prepare students for the ASVAB exam.
 - What students gain: Improved test-taking strategies and subject-matter expertise to achieve qualifying ASVAB scores.
- **Military Health & Fitness** – Covers physical fitness standards required for military service, including strength training, endurance exercises, and mental resilience.
 - What students gain: Physical conditioning, self-discipline, and resilience to meet or exceed military readiness standards.
- **Career Foundations in Military Leadership** (Prerequisite: ASVAB Essentials) – Focuses on leadership principles, teamwork, and ethical decision-making in military contexts.
 - What students gain: Leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills essential for both military and civilian careers.
- **Military Leadership Capstone** (Prerequisite: Completion of three other Military Preparation Program courses) – A culminating experience where students apply learned concepts through project-based activities, job shadowing, or mentorship with military personnel.
 - What students gain: Practical experience and networking opportunities to enhance career readiness.

This state-developed curriculum is unique—no comparable program currently exists in North Dakota. By embedding this coursework into our educational system, we are ensuring students gain exposure to military career options while developing essential leadership and workforce skills.

Current Implementation & Funding Request

- The first course in the program, Introduction to Military Careers, has already launched with 36 students enrolled—a strong indication of interest.
- NDCDE is seeking an appropriation to waive program costs for 100 students, ensuring equitable access for all North Dakota students interested in military careers.
- To date, we have \$192,000 allocated in our 25-27 budget for this initiative and have presented our budget request to the House.

Additionally, we are continuing to advocate for the North Dakota National Guard to secure the necessary Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff required to support program implementation effectively. This additional staffing is essential for ensuring long-term sustainability, student engagement, and program success.

Key Benefits & Addressing Common Questions

1. Why offer a scholarship if students already receive financial benefits from the Guard?

- This program ensures that students who wish to pursue post-secondary education or military careers have flexible pathways available.
- The scholarship removes financial barriers and encourages students to explore military careers with structured, high-quality coursework.

2. What recruitment strategies will be used to engage students?

- Finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the North Dakota National Guard to align recruitment efforts.
- Utilizing existing Guard outreach strategies to ensure seamless access for interested students.
- Partnering with North Dakota schools and counselors to increase awareness of the program statewide.

3. How does this program align with broader education and workforce goals?

- Military recruiters have identified "limited familiarity with the military in the general population" as a recruitment challenge—this program directly addresses that gap.
- We have aligned program competencies with DPI and military standards, ensuring students gain relevant, applicable knowledge.
- The curriculum supports workforce development by reinforcing leadership, discipline, and career planning—critical skills for military and civilian careers.

Conclusion

House Bill 1404 represents a critical investment in expanding educational and career opportunities for North Dakota students. By integrating the Military Preparation Program into the Choice Ready framework, we are equipping students with essential skills and knowledge while strengthening North Dakota's leadership in military career preparation.

We urge your support of this bill to ensure that students have access to high-quality, no-cost military education pathways, and that the program is adequately staffed for sustainable success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will stand for any questions you may have.

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HB 1404 Presentation



Program's Mission

The Virtual Military Pathway Program is designed to prepare students for careers in military service and fulfill requirements under the North Dakota Choice-Ready Framework. With the recent ESSA Committee update, this program now fully integrates into the Choice Ready framework to support scholarship eligibility. The program provides structured, high-quality courses that enhance students' knowledge and skills in military-related areas, preparing them for future careers.



The North Dakota National Guard has been a key partner in the development of the Military Pathway Program. Their involvement includes:

- **Standards Review:** Providing expertise to ensure program standards align with real-world military expectations and career readiness goals.
- **Course Development Support:** Assisting with course content reviews to maintain relevance and accuracy in military education.
- **Learning Coach Roles:** The Guard will be Serving as mentors and learning coaches, offering guidance, support, and real-world insights to students pursuing the Military Pathway.

This collaboration ensures the program equips students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to succeed in military service and beyond.



NORTH DAKOTA CHOICE READY

The North Dakota **CHOICE READY** framework is a tool to assist educators to ensure all students successfully depart high school possessing the **ESSENTIAL SKILLS** necessary to be ready for life. The journey begins by ensuring students leave having the **ESSENTIAL SKILLS** to be successful for whichever path they choose. Students shall then strive to be **POST-SECONDARY READY, WORKFORCE READY, and/or MILITARY READY.**



ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Earn a North Dakota high school diploma

Complete a 9-week Career Education Course/Individual Counseling (15.1-21-18), Financial Literacy (15.1-21-21), and pass ND Civics Test (15.1-21-27), Computer Science/Cybersecurity Requirement (15.1-21-02.2), and four or more additional indicators:

- 25 hours of Community Service
- Two or More Years in Organized Extra-Curricular Activities
- 95% Attendance (not counting school-related absences)
- Successfully Complete a Capstone Project
- Career Exploration Experience
- Successfully Complete an Online Learning Course
- Two or More Years in Organized Co-Curricular Activities
- Demonstrate Competency in 21st Century Skills
- Multicultural Awareness

Students shall then complete two or more of the **CHOICE READY** components below.



POST-SECONDARY READY

Complete a **Four-Year Rolling Career Plan**, and earn a **2.8 GPA or greater**, and complete one academic indicator set below:

ACT / SAT minimum or subsections scores:

ACT English – 18
ACT Reading – 22 SAT Reading/Writing – 480
ACT Math – 21 SAT Math – 530
ACT Science – 23

or

Two or more additional indicators:

- Advanced Placement Course (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- Dual Credit Course (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- Algebra II (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- Advanced Placement Exam (3+)
- International Baccalaureate Exam (4+)
- 3.0 GPA in core course requirement for NDUS admission
- CREAM (Eng./Math) Course (70% or greater)
- Complete three Fine Arts Courses (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)



WORKFORCE READY

Complete a **Four-Year Rolling Career Plan**, and complete two or more additional indicators:

- Complete three CTE courses or more (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- Complete Career Ready Practices (3.0)
- Dual Credit Course (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- WorkKeys (Gold or Silver)
- Technical Assessment/Industry Credential
- Workplace Learning Experience (40 hrs.)
- Work-based Learning Experience (Perkins V) (40hrs)
- NDSA (Reading/Math) Level 3 or greater or (ACT for Accountability: English – 19/Math – 22)
- Complete three World Language Courses (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)

MILITARY READY

Complete a **Four-Year Rolling Career Plan**, **ASVAB score of 31 or greater** (as determined by branch), or acceptance into the military.

Quality Citizenship (No Expulsions/Suspensions)

Physically Fit - Successfully complete required PE courses (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)

and

Complete **two or more** additional indicators from the **Post-Secondary** or **Workforce** options.

or

Complete two credits of JROTC or Civil Air Patrol

or

Complete two credits in the Military Pathway Program, selecting from the following courses:

- Introduction to Military Careers (1/2 credit)
- ASVAB Essentials: Skills for Military Success (1/2 credit, pre-req Introduction to Military Careers)
- Military Health & Fitness (1/2 credit)
- Career Foundations in Military Leadership (1/2 credit, pre-req ASVAB Essentials)
- Military Leadership Capstone (1/2 credit, pre-req complete three other military pathway courses)

Under the **Military Ready** portion of the framework, students can demonstrate readiness by completing the following:

- **Baseline Requirements:**
 - ASVAB score of 31 or greater or military acceptance.
 - Quality citizenship with no expulsions or suspensions.
 - Physical fitness, evidenced by successful completion of PE courses (grade A, B, or C).
- **Program-Specific Coursework:** In addition to the baseline requirements, students would now have the option to complete two credits in the Military Pathway Program, which includes:
 - Introduction to Military Careers (0.5 credit)
 - ASVAB Essentials: Skills for Military Success (0.5 credit, prerequisite: Introduction to Military Careers)
 - Military Health & Fitness (0.5 credit)
 - Career Foundations in Military Leadership (0.5 credit, prerequisite: ASVAB Essentials)
 - Military Leadership Capstone (0.5 credit, prerequisite: three other Military Pathway courses)
- **Additional Indicators Remain:** Students can still meet Military Ready requirements by completing in lieu of pursuing the military pathway program:
 - Two or more credits in JROTC or Civil Air Patrol.
 - Two or more additional indicators from the Post-Secondary or Workforce pathways.

PROGRAM STANDARDS:

See all standards: [Link](#)



STANDARD ONE MILITARY CONTEXT

Key competencies:

- Understanding military history and its role in national security.
- Acquire knowledge of modern military missions and organizational structures.

STANDARD TWO HOLISTIC PERSONAL MILITARY READINESS

Key competencies:

- Leadership within military units.
- Ethical decision-making aligned with military values.
- Physical and mental readiness for military service.
- Leading diverse teams effectively and promoting unit cohesion by respecting cultural differences.

STANDARD THREE MILITARY CAREER READINESS

Key competencies:

- Preparing for military careers, including working with recruiters and passing the ASVAB.
- Understanding military benefits and career advancement opportunities.

STANDARD FOUR MILITARY CRITICAL & DIGITAL SKILLS (21ST CENTURY SKILLS)

Key competencies:

- Applying critical thinking and problem-solving in military settings.
- Using digital tools and demonstrating cybersecurity awareness.
- Collaborating and communicating effectively in diverse military teams.

Introduction to Military Careers (MIS03 15045)

(1/2 credit)

ASVAB Essentials: Skills for Military Success (MIS03 15046)

(1/2 credit, Pre-req: Introduction to Military Careers)

Military Health & Fitness (MIS03 15047)

(1/2 credit)

Career Foundations in Military Leadership (MIS03 TBD)

(1/2 credit, Pre-req: ASVAB Essentials)

Military Leadership Capstone: Skills for Success (MIS03 TBD)

(1/2 credit, Pre-req: Completed three other MPP courses)

Total Credits: 2.5

Program Details

- **Students must complete two credits or any combination of the following Military Pathway courses:**
 - **Introduction to Military Careers**
 - **ASVAB Essentials: Skills for Military Success**
 - **Military Health & Fitness**
 - **Career Foundations in Military Leadership**
 - **Military Leadership Capstone**
- **Some courses have prerequisites:**
 - **ASVAB Essentials: Prerequisite: Introduction to Military Careers.**
 - **Career Foundations in Military Leadership: Prerequisite: ASVAB Essentials.**
 - **Military Leadership Capstone: Requires completion of three other MPP courses; includes in-person job shadowing opportunities.**

DPI HAS CREATED NEW MIS03 CODES FOR COURSES IN THE MILITARY PROGRAM

Introduction to Military Careers and Service

Course Overview

This course introduces students to diverse military career pathways across branches of service. Through detailed units, students explore career-specific skills and responsibilities, while engaging in activities that connect them with real-world military experiences and the ND National Guard.

<div>UNIT ONE</div> <div>WELCOME TO THE MILITARY</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the missions and history of U.S. military branches.• Learn about service requirements and how the military fits within the government.</div>	<div>UNIT TWO</div> <div>MILITARY AVIATION CAREERS</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore career paths in aviation, including pilots and aviation support roles.• Understand relationships between aviators and support teams.</div>	<div>UNIT THREE</div> <div>LOGISTICS, SUPPLY, & TRANSPORTATION CAREERS</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discover the backbone careers that enable military missions.• Analyze the impact of logistics on soldier success.</div>	<div>UNIT FOUR</div> <div>LAW & ORDER IN A UNIFORM</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study military legal systems and career tracks.• Learn how military law differs from civilian systems.</div>
<div>UNIT FIVE</div> <div>BOOTS ON THE GROUND: COMBAT OPERATIONS CAREERS</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the missions and history of U.S. military branches.• Learn about service requirements and how the military fits within the government.</div>	<div>UNIT SIX</div> <div>MILITARY BRAINS: TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, INTELLIGENCE</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore career paths in aviation, including pilots and aviation support roles.• Understand relationships between aviators and support teams.</div>	<div>UNIT SEVEN</div> <div>MILITARY BEHIND THE SCENES</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discover the backbone careers that enable military missions.• Analyze the impact of logistics on soldier success.</div>	<div>UNIT EIGHT</div> <div>MILITARY MEDICAL SERVICES</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study military legal systems and career tracks.• Learn how military law differs from civilian systems.</div>

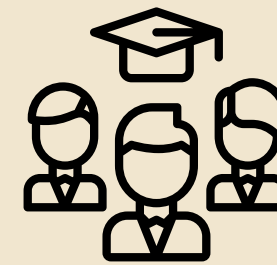
Key Insights



Why offer scholarships alongside Guard incentives?

Students may still choose to pursue secondary education alongside military service. Additionally, while the Guard provides financial incentives for enlistment, the scholarship is designed to support broader educational opportunities, ensuring students have multiple pathways to achieve their career goals. This allows for flexibility in career planning, enabling students to explore additional education and training that can enhance their long-term success both within and beyond military service.

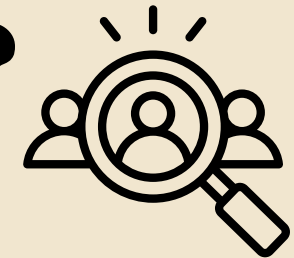
How many students can the program support?



The program is well-prepared to support up to 1,500 enrollments at no cost* to students or schools. Through strategic marketing and partnerships, we aim to fully subsidize this number.

*Subject to NDCDE receiving its appropriations request

What recruitment strategies will be used?



We are finalizing an MOU with the ND National Guard to align recruitment efforts.

We plan to Utilize the same recruitment pathways the Guard uses to engage students in the Military Program.

Questions?



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