

TESTIMONY ON HB 1098
SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 6, 2025

By: Jim Upgren, Assistant Director, Office of School Approval and Opportunity
701-328-2244

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

Chairman Wobbema and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Upgren, Legislative Liaison and Assistant Director in the Office of School Approval and Opportunity with the Department of Public Instruction. I am here on behalf of the department to speak in support of HB 1098.

The North Dakota Scholarship is a \$6000 college scholarship awarded to students based on requirements met while in high school. Any student that meets all the requirements of the scholarship gets a scholarship, regardless of how many students qualify. The current North Dakota Scholarship replaces the former Academic Scholarship and CTE Scholarship, and the Class of 2025 is the first class that must use the new set of scholarship requirements. The North Dakota Scholarship requirements are aligned with North Dakota's Choice Ready high school accountability and quality metrics, but they are written with rigorous expectations above and beyond what is required for the basic Choice Ready baseline graduation requirements. Every student that qualifies for the scholarship will graduate Choice Ready, but not necessarily every student that graduates Choice Ready will qualify for the scholarship.

We created the North Dakota Scholarship chart because this is the best way to illustrate the scholarship requirements for schools, students, and parents, and I have included a copy of the chart with my testimony for your reference. To have a chance to qualify for the scholarship, students must first meet four of the eight Essential Skills at the top of the chart in the yellow section. At the bottom of the chart are three pathways in blue: Post-Secondary Ready (on the left), Workforce Ready (in the middle), and Military Ready (on the right). Students who have a 3.0 grade-point-average and have met the Essentials Skills section at the top of the chart, and then meet the requirements of at least two of the three pathways at the bottom of the chart qualify for the North Dakota Scholarship.

HB 1098 specifically addresses the Workforce Ready pathway, which is found on page 3, lines 3 through 14 of the bill. Currently, students must have either four credits of Career and Technical Education (CTE) with at least two of those credits from the same CTE Coordinated Plan of Study, or have three credits of the same world language, indigenous language, or sign language to meet the coursework component of the Workforce Ready pathway. This bill would provide students with a third option of completing courses relating to the profession of teaching. The former Academic and CTE Scholarships had a coursework option that consisted of courses relating to the profession of teaching, and HB 1098 would add that option to the North Dakota

Scholarship under the Workforce Ready pathway, and can be found on page 3, lines 10 through 14 of the bill.

NDDPI fully supports HB 1098 to allow students preparing for a career in teaching to use that coursework towards qualifying for the North Dakota Scholarship. I request that the committee give HB 1098 a “Do Pass” recommendation to support students pursuing a career in education.

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