

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.