

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

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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




Last updated January 12, 2021

**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



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**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)