



Classlink Testimony for House Bill 1021 - NDI Budget

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Courtney Voorheis, and I am the Director of Data & Integrated Systems Management for Williston Basin School District #7. I am hereby submitting my testimony in support of including ClassLink in the upcoming biennial NDI budget.

If you were to ask someone in our district “What’s ClassLink?” they might not be able to tell you. But, if you were to ask, “What’s Coyonet?”, everyone from a Second grader to our Superintendent knows what Coyonet is. When you go to our ClassLink login page, it is designed and branded to WBSD7. We were able to make it our own. How do you get to your email? Coyonet. How do you find a Field Trip Bus request form? Coyonet. Where do you take that iReady test? Coyonet.

ClassLink is firmly embedded in our district culture as our one stop shop for students and staff alike. In the three years that we have been utilizing ClassLink’s services, I have found the following to be indispensable in our district’s day-to-day lives:

1. SSO (Single Sign On)

This is the first thing people think of when ClassLink is brought up, and we can attest to the hundreds of help desk tickets we no longer receive regarding forgotten passwords or out-of-date bookmarked pages. Not to mention the safety issues of password sharing are almost a thing of the past, as they are no longer needed.

The Launchpad, which is like the “Homepage” of ClassLink is where you see all of the applications. It is fully customizable so students and staff only see what they should. This is great at a district admin level, because we are continuously finding ways to efficiently group together applications in organized folders that make sense, like library, curriculum, and staff resources. But, ClassLink is really so much more than just a great product for SSO.

2. Rostering

Our Powerschool classes are synced nightly into the variety of curriculum programs we utilize, all without manual entry or concern for the security of the data being shared. This is all because of ClassLink’s RosterServer which uses a OneRoster API connection.

OneRoster is an industry standard format for the exchange of Student Information System data, in our case, PowerSchool. This means that if an issue is found, it can be traced directly back to PowerSchool and corrected in a timely manner. The flexibility within this connection allows us to securely send just the needed data to each of our vendors. Compared to previous ways of connecting, which were clunky and restrictive, ClassLink’s RosterServer has been an innovative tool.



3. Data Analytics

ClassLink's Analytic tool has proven to be extremely helpful in budgetary and classroom technology reviews. We can see the engagement overall by day, week, and month. These analytics go far beyond how many people login per day or month. We can drill a review down to see which school, classroom, and individual student uses a particular application and for how long.

We are now adding in the costs of applications we use into the system, so it will be easy for us to see if an application is adding classroom value or what is the underdog application that could use more investment.

4. Customizations

If we need a user-friendly way for staff or students to access a specific website or document—for example our IT Help Desk, Warehouse Supplies catalog or the North Dakota State Library—we can create our own "App" with just a few clicks. This includes the icon image as well. Once it is completed, it looks like every other app. We routinely create these customized apps for new and improved resources.

5. Customer Service

I purposely list ClassLink's Customer Service last not because it lacks anything, but because when we need to reach out to them, their support is fantastic. We have discovered that a few of their specialists have in fact worked for some of these vendors to whom we are sending data. This inside insight helps them address issues quickly. When they reach out to these same vendors for assistance, they know exactly what needs updating. I also have to acknowledge the timeliness and quality of their responses. I have never waited over a day from my initial question for a response and they are quick to hop on a call for guidance, instead of solely back and forth via email.

Thank you for your valuable time and this opportunity to provide testimony in support of including ClassLink in the NDIT budget. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have and look forward to any discussion.

Sincerely,

Courtney Voorheis