

January 24, 2025

HB 1013 Testimony

Presented by Dr. Alyssa Martin, NDCDE State Director

Chair Nathe and distinguished members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Division Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My previous testimony outlined the core work, strategic priorities, and general resource needs for NDCDE. Today, I aim to provide updates based on last week's discussion and your requests.

Legislative Updates

Both HB 1105 and HB 1172 have had their initial hearings, and we expect amendments to at least one, potentially both. NDCDE opposed HB 1172 due to the limits it would place on students and families and the instability it would create in terms of staffing, curricular offerings, and our budget.

I have reviewed all bills introduced on public charters and educational savings accounts (ESAs). However, I cannot yet forecast how these bills might impact NDCDE. I plan to analyze these further and consult with colleagues in states with similar legislation to better understand their implications for virtual schools.

Updates on Optional Decision Packages

Last week, I presented decision packages to the committee. While doing so, I also highlighted concerns about compression and equity in retaining a dynamic leadership team. Based on your suggestion, I conducted an equity analysis and incorporated it into my budget request with only a slight total increase of \$252.

To accommodate this equity package, I reviewed our original decision packages and made the following adjustments:

1. **Reduced the FTE request by one**, resulting in a cost savings of \$120,000 based on an annual salary of \$50,000 for this position and benefits.

- 2. Reduced the tuition package request by \$300,000, leaving \$213,000 to waive military program course costs and fund curriculum development. We anticipate that some form of ESAs will be available to students after this session, which will reduce the need for a tuition allocation for homeschooled students in our budget—an original part of this decision package.
- 3. Reduced the enterprise resource planning (ERP) software migration package by \$275,000, as operational restructuring will likely delay this project until the second year of the biennium. This adjustment removes system maintenance costs for this biennium, which will instead be necessary in 2027 and beyond.

Equity and Compression Analysis

To conduct the equity analysis, I reviewed current salary data provided by our HR director and compared it with data collected annually by DPI. NDCDE is projected to serve an annual headcount comparable to Minot Public Schools (7,500+ students) by the end of this biennium while operating on an annual budget similar to Park River School District, which serves approximately 450 students. Given our growth and the number of students served, I thought it was fair to compare our salaries to the top seven largest districts in the state despite our lean budget.

Our teacher salaries average \$1,500 higher than those in large districts, thanks to equity adjustments made in the last biennium. This has allowed us to recruit and retain high-quality educators. However, leadership salaries at NDCDE lag significantly, ranging from \$40,000 to \$97,000 below their counterparts in large districts.

While NDCDE's unique mission reduces the demands typically associated with physical facilities, special education services, meals, and transportation, this disparity in leadership salaries puts us at risk of losing key leaders to higher-paying roles elsewhere.

The proposed equity package includes:

- A 28% average salary increase for leadership roles to address disparities and compression issues.
- **Total biennium salary increases of \$375,000**, with \$120,000 for associated benefits, reflecting TFFR participation for many team members.

I have attached a spreadsheet with my testimony, providing a detailed breakdown of how these funds would be allocated, addressing both equity and severe compression at the senior leadership level.

Budget Breakdown

Salaries and Benefits

- Base Adjustments: A .8 FTE position was moved from our base budget into a decision package. If the FTE requests are denied, this position must be restored to the base budget as we plan to fill it next month.
- **Temporary Salaries:** Increased significantly to hire adjuncts in response to enrollment demands. Adjuncts are paid hourly and only when they have enrollments, ensuring these funds align with actual demand. This line also allows for potential increases to adjunct pay (currently averaging \$28/hour) and additional temporary hires to support areas like our help desk and LMS team.
- **Fringe Benefits:** Adjusted to account for TFFR requirements for adjuncts, a change implemented this biennium, and for proposed leadership equity increases.

IT and Curriculum

- **ERP Migration:** The optional \$275,000 allocation reflects an ERP migration project during FY27. Base IT software spending reflects reductions based on current and past budgets.
- **Curriculum Licensing Fees:** Projected at \$1.9 million, reflecting 27,000 enrollments and vendor inflationary costs.
- **Military Program Development:** The optional \$192,000 allocation supports the development and delivery of free military program courses to at least 400 students over the biennium.
- **IT Equipment:** Increased to \$70,000 to cover peripherals such as docks, monitors, and adaptive devices for teachers and students. These devices are critical to delivering quality online education.

Operating Fees and Consulting Costs

- Operating Fees: Increased by 14% to account for anticipated credit card processing fee
- Professional Services: Moved to the optional column due to variability. This line covers
 enrollment processing staff hired through Kelly Services during peak periods and

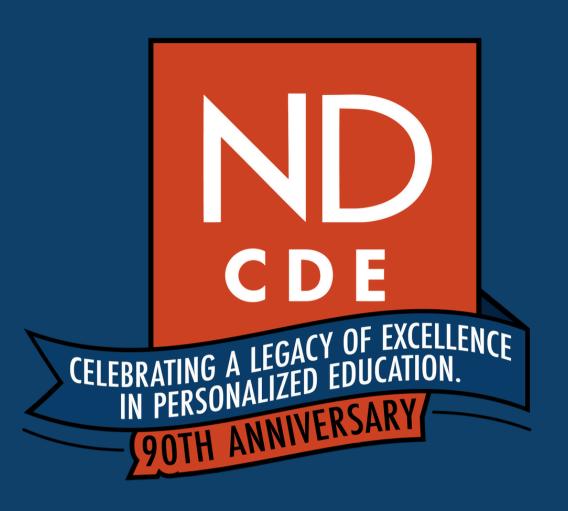
consultant costs for ERP repairs, which are required regularly due to system malfunctions.

Summary of Budget Changes

Overall, NDCDE is requesting a **\$1.3 million increase** to the general fund appropriation. The remaining increases are projected to be covered by tuition revenue, which is only expended once earned.

Special funds and revenue fluctuations mean that NDCDE's general fund must first cover salaries and benefits across all budget categories during the first and part of the second year of the biennium. While past data has yet to provide reliable enrollment projections due to factors such as the pandemic and legal changes regarding tuition requirements, we remain committed to aligning resources with actual needs and project based on demand and stakeholder satisfaction that our enrollments will remain high.

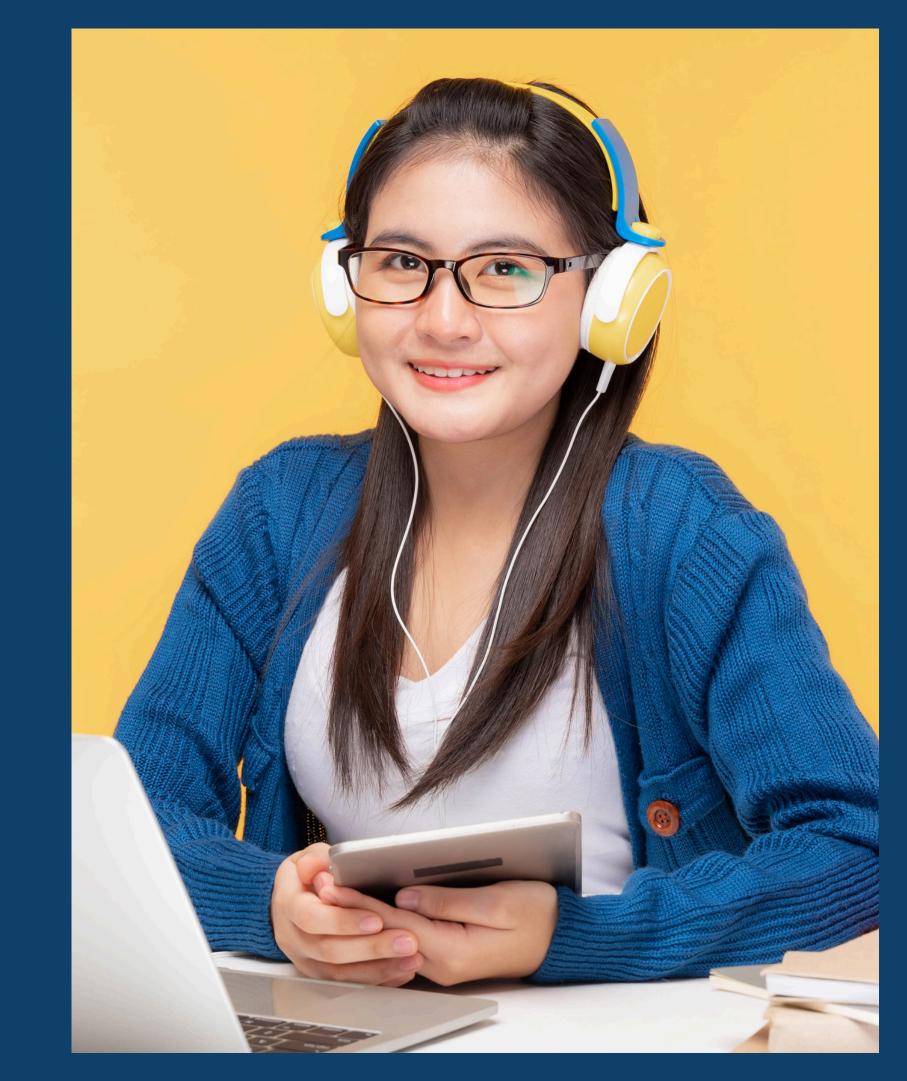
Thank you for the opportunity to present these updates and budget changes.



NORTH DAKOTA CENTER FOR DISTANCE ED

BUDGET

REQUEST





LEGISLATION FINANICALLY IMPACTING US



HB 1105

Establishes parameters on when students can participate in virtual education, including requiring students to pay the cost of virtual courses if they fail. The bill is forecasted to reduce NDCDE enrollments, but there is not an accurate method for estimating the impact.



HB 1172

Requires parents to pay the cost of NDCDE courses with limited exceptions. If passed, this is forecasted to result in a substantial reduction in our enrollments.



OTHER PROPOSALS ON VOUCHERS & CHARTERS

Additional laws on school vouchers and public charter schools, if passed, will create a new marketplace of virtual education options for students. NDCDE supports expanding virtual options for students but is uncertain of the impact on our enrollments. HB 1358, HB 1540, HB 1507, HB 1607, SB 2241and SB 2303

DECISION PACKAGE OVERIVEW



#1 INCREASED SPENDING AUTHORITY

Amount: \$2,042,187 (Special Fund)



#2 ADDITIONAL FTES (2.2)

Amount: \$489,628 (General Fund, salaries and benefits)



#3 TUITION PROGRAMS

Amount: \$513,793 (General Fund)



Equity wasn't included in our budget but may warrant legislative consideration due to compression



#4 New LMS: Changed to New **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)**

system: \$350K (General Fund)

Agency: Ce	enter for Distance Education	Agency No: 20400					
Account	Description	2023-25 Biennium	2025-27 Base	2025-27 Optional	2025-27 Total		
	·	Appropriations	Budget Request	Budget Changes	Budget Request		
511000	Salaries - Permanent	\$4,716,300.00	\$4,644,788.00	\$306,340.00	\$4,951,128.0		
512000	Salaries - Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300,000	\$300,00		
513000	Temporary Salaries	\$1,950,574.00	\$2,212,093.00	\$1,617,020.00	\$3,829,113.0		
516000	Fringe Benefits	\$2,081,680.00	\$2,199,220.00	\$183,288.00	\$2,382,508.0		
521000	Travel	\$57,762.00	\$96,591.00	\$15,000.00	\$111,591.0		
531000	Supplies - IT Software	\$370,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$400,000.00	\$600,000.0		
532000	Supply/Material - Professional	\$9,625.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.0		
536000	Office Supplies	\$1,319,743.00	\$1,972,399.00	\$222,711.00	\$2,195,110.0		
541000	Postage	\$4,600.00	\$5,500.00	\$0.00	\$5,500.0		
542000	Printing	\$2,750.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.0		
551000	IT Equipment under \$5,000	\$30,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$175,000.0		
552000	Other Equipment under \$5,000	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.0		
561000	Utilities	\$7,150.00	\$6,500.00	\$0.00	\$6,500.0		
571000	Insurance	\$16,536.00	\$16,200.00	\$0.00	\$16,200.0		
581000	Rentals/Leases-Equipment&Other	\$6,063.00	\$4,500.00	\$0.00	\$4,500.0		
582000	Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	\$202,854.00	\$215,000.00	\$0.00	\$215,000.0		
591000	Repairs	\$13,702.00	\$16,000.00	\$0.00	\$16,000.00		
601000	IT - Data Processing	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.0		
602000	IT - Communications	\$110,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$0.00	\$90,000.0		
603000	IT Contractual Services and Re	\$100,000.00	\$65,000.00	\$0.00	\$65,000.0		
611000	Professional Development	\$79,500.00	\$80,100.00	\$0.00	\$80,100.0		
621000	Operating Fees and Services	\$80,000.00	\$125,000.00	\$19,500.00	\$144,500.0		
Professional Fees and Services		\$182,800.00	\$44,500.00	\$256,750.00	\$301,250.00		
TOTALS		\$11,368,639.00	\$12,127,391.00	\$3,395,609.00	\$15,523,000.0		
General		\$6,797,980.00	\$7,570,328.00	\$1,353,421.00	\$8,923,750.0		
Federal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.0		
Special		\$4,570,659.00	\$4,557,063.00	\$2,042,188.00	\$6,599,250.0		

Salaries (Permanent)

- Base: Reduced because .8 FTE moved to a decision package to be converted to 1 FTE
- **Decision Package 2 (GF):** 3 FTEs requested, Convert .8 to 1 FTE, Convert two FTTs to 2 FTEs; salaries average \$51k per year

Salaries Other (SF, Decision Package 1): \$300k, department head stipends, curriculum development/reviews, and hybrid teaching stipends

Salaries Temporary (Primarily SF, Decision Package 1):

Base: \$261k to base

Decision Package 1 (SF): \$1.4m to cover adjuncts and FTTs for increased enrollments

Decision Package 3 (GF): 1500 homeschool and Military Program enrollments (GF, \$210k)

Travel:

- **Base:** \$37,829 to accommodate annual staff planning meetings and increased national commitments
- Decision Package 3 (GF): \$15k, Military Program

IT Software:

- Base: Decrease to reflect current spending
- Decision Packages 3 and 4 (GF): ERP (\$350k) and software for Military Program (\$50k)

Office Supplies (Curriculum Supplies):

Base: \$642k increase based on projected enrollments

Decision Package 3: \$222k, 1500 homeschool and Military Program enrollments (GF)

IT Equipment Under \$5k

- Base: \$70k increase, docks and monitors for new laptops
- **Decision Package 1 (SF):** \$75k increase, peripherals for teachers and students, adaptive technology, and additional academic integrity safeguards

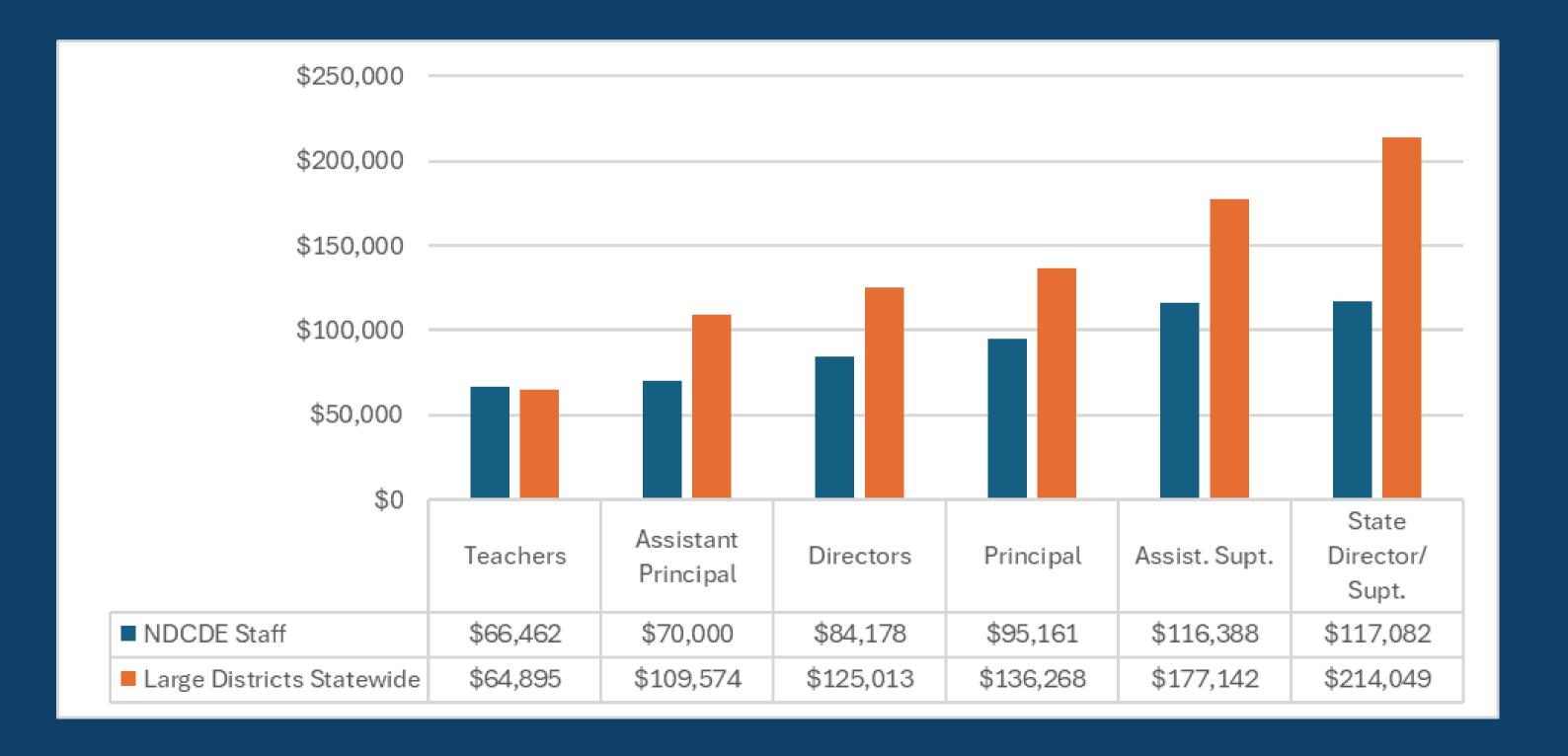
Operating Fees

- Base: Increase in credit card processing costs
- Decision Package 1 (SF): Additional 13.5% to cover increase in credit card merchant fees

Professional Fees and Services

- Base: Decrease
- Decision Package 1 (SF): Increase due to consulting software transition, temp services for enrollment, potential need for marketing consultant

Equity Need



Equity Request

Asking for an average increase of 28% in salaries for each member of the leadership team

\$375k in salaries & \$120k in benefits, recommended reduction to decision packages

Decision Package 1: -\$120k

Remove 1FTE, \$100k salary, and \$20K benefits

Decision Package 3: -\$300k

Remove tuition waivers and reduce program development spending

Decision Package 4: -\$75k

ERP transition begins in 2026

REVISED DECISION PACKAGES (REVISED)



#1 INCREASED SPENDING AUTHORITY

Amount: \$2,042,187 (Special Fund)



#2 ADDITIONAL FTES (1.2)

Amount: \$369,628 (General Fund, salaries and benefits)



#3 TUITION PROGRAMS

Amount: \$213,793 (General Fund)



#4 New Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system: \$275K (General Fund)



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511000	Salaries - Permanent	\$4,716,300.00	\$4,644,788.00	\$581,592,00	\$4,951,128.00	
512000	Salaries - Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300,000	\$300,00	
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Agency: Center for Distance Education

Salaries (Permanent)

Agency No: 20400

- Base: Reduced because .8 FTE moved to a decision package to be converted to 1 FTE
- Decision Package 2 &5 (GF): 3 2 FTEs requested, Convert .8 to 1 FTE, Convert one FTT to one FTE @\$206,340k two FTTs to 2 FTEs; salaries average \$51k per year; \$375k equity

Salaries Other (SF, Decision Package 1): \$300k, department head stipends, curriculum development/reviews, and hybrid teaching stipends

Salaries Temporary (Primarily SF, Decision Package 1):

Base: \$261k to base (SF)

Decision Package 1 (SF): \$1.4m to cover adjuncts and FTTs for increased enrollments

Decision Package 3 (GF): 1500 homeschool and Military Program enrollments (GF, \$210k)

Fringes (GF): \$100K in base; \$303K FTE increase and equity (decision packages 2 and 5).

Travel:

- Base: \$37,829 to accommodate annual staff planning meetings and increased national commitments (SF)
- Decision Package 3 (GF): \$15k, Military Program

IT Software:

- Base: Decrease to reflect current spending
- Decision Packages 3 and 4 (GF): ERP (\$350k_\$275k) and software for Military Program (\$50k)

Office Supplies (Curriculum Supplies):

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IT Equipment Under \$5k

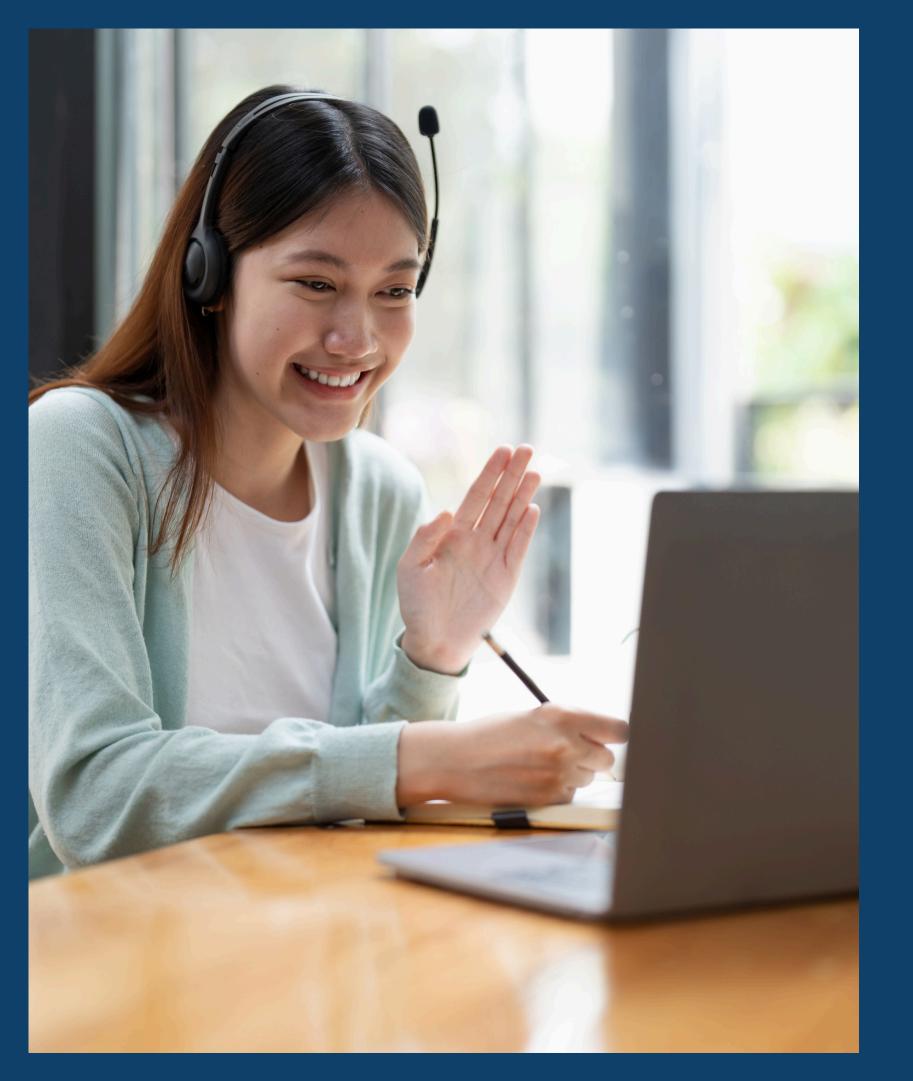
- Base: \$70k increase, docks and monitors for new laptops (SF)
- **Decision Package 1 (SF):** \$75k increase, peripherals for teachers and students, adaptive technology, and additional academic integrity safeguards

Operating Fees

- Base: \$45k increase in credit card processing costs (SF)
- Decision Package 1 (SF): Additional 13.5% to cover increase in credit card merchant fees

Professional Fees and Services

- Base: Decrease due spending projections and shift to optional package
- Decision Package 1 (SF): Increase due to consulting software transition, temp services for enrollment, potential need for marketing consultant



Thank you!

ALYSSA.MARTIN@K12.ND.US

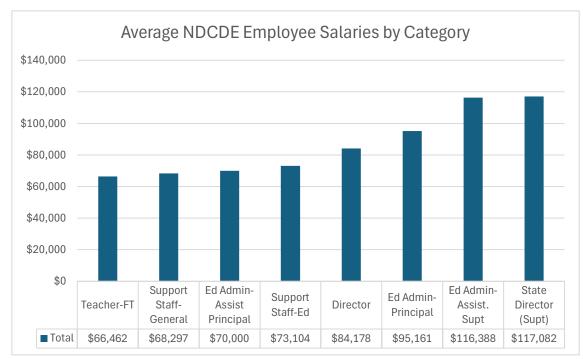


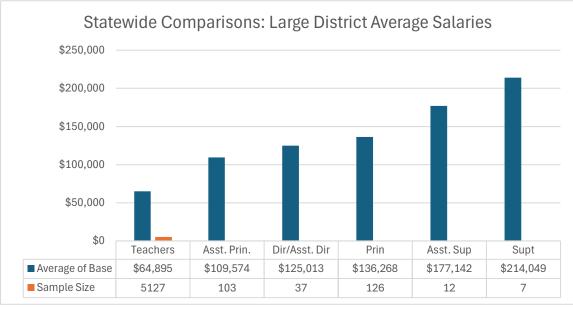


Distance Education NDCDE STAFF SALARIES

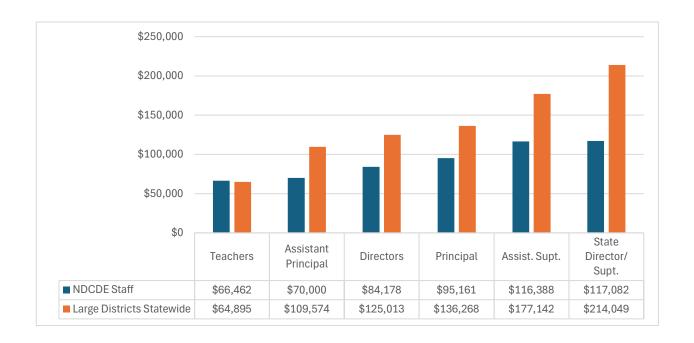
Unit	Dept ID	Name	Job Cod Job Type	Job Title	Comp Pata (Monthly)	mp Rate Annual (FT Comp	Fre FTE Dept ID	Job Cod Reg/Temp
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20400	204	Alissa Martin	SC0005 Support Staff-Gene		5565.600000	\$66,787.20 M	1.000000 204	SC0005 R
20400	204	Alyssa Martin	SC9003 State Director	Manager III	9756.810000	\$117,081.72 M	1.000000 204	SC9003 R
20400	204	Andrew Gilbertson	SC3005 Director	Education Svcs V	7131.240000	\$85,574.88 M	1.000000 204	SC3005 R
20400	204	Annette Marchand	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	6100.370000	\$73,204.44 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Aubrey Day	SC3004 Support Staff-Ed	Education Svcs IV	5315.400000	\$63,784.80 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Dirk Schumacher	• •	era Information Svcs III	5513.950000	\$66,167.40 M	1.000000 204	SC8003 R
20400	204	Emily Grace Schaefer	SC3003 Ed Admin-Assist Pr	incEducation Svcs III	5833.350000	\$70,000.20 M	1.000000 204	SC3003 R
20400	204	Eric Benson	SC8003 Support Staff-Ed	Information Svcs III	5303.860000	\$63,646.32 M	1.000000 204	SC8003 R
20400	204	Heather Moser	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	5190.470000	\$62,285.64 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Jessica Enderson	SC3006 Ed Admin-Assist. S	up Education Svcs VI	9699.000000	\$116,388.00 M	1.000000 204	SC3006 R
20400	204	Jocelyn Kolle	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	6748.580000	\$80,982.96 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Kaitlyn Allen	SC3005 Director	Education Svcs V	6514.000000	\$78,168.00 M	1.000000 204	SC3005 R
20400	204	Kari Klingsporn Hitterdal	SC3003 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs III	4815.260000	\$57,783.12 M	1.000000 204	SC3003 R
20400	204	Kari Sova	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	5779.020000	\$69,348.24 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Kasey Bitz	SC3003 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs III	4944.940000	\$59,339.28 M	1.000000 204	SC3003 R
20400	204	Kayla Christopherson	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	5796.260000	\$69,555.12 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Kirstin Girard	SC9002 Ed Admin-Principal	l Manager II	7930.120000	\$95,161.44 M	1.000000 204	SC9002 R
20400	204	Laurie Tuma	SC1302 Director	Professional Svcs II	7399.260000	\$88,791.12 M	1.000000 204	SC1302 R
20400	204	Michelle Thielen	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	5779.020000	\$69,348.24 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Miranda Streifel	SC3003 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs III	4500.000000	\$54,000.00 M	1.000000 204	SC3003 R
20400	204	Ole Thomassen	SC8004 Support Staff-Ed	Information Svcs IV	7679.690000	\$92,156.28 M	1.000000 204	SC8004 R
20400	204	Paul Monson	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	5678.148000	\$68,137.78 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Peter Fritz	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	5775.000000	\$69,300.00 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Ryan Moran	SC8004 Support Staff-Ed	Information Svcs IV	6068.950000	\$72,827.40 M	1.000000 204	SC8004 R
20400	204	Sean Day	' '	era Information Svcs III	4958.140000	\$59,497.68 M	1.000000 204	SC8003 R
20400	204	Shannay Witte	SC3004 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs IV	4600.000000	\$55,200.00 M	1.000000 204	SC3004 R
20400	204	Shannon Dillman	SC3003 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs III	6149.980000	\$73,799.76 M	1.000000 204	SC3003 R
20400	204	Stacia Wright	SC3003 Teacher-FT	Education Svcs III	5682.130000	\$68,185.56 M	1.000000 204	SC3003 R
20400	204	Steven Ring	SC6005 Support Staff-Gene		6727.960000	\$80,735.52 M	1.000000 204	SC6005 R
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NDCDE V. LARGE DISTRICT SALARY COMPARISONS





Category	NDCDE Staff	Large Districts	% Difference	Difference	
		Statewide		between large	
				district & CDE	
Teachers	\$66,462	\$64,895	2.40%	\$1,567	
Assistant Principal	\$70,000	\$109,574	44.10%	-\$39,574	
Directors	\$84,178	\$125,013	39.00%	-\$40,835	
Principal	\$95,161	\$136,268	35.50%	-\$41,107	
Assist. Supt.	\$116,388	\$177,142	41.40%	-\$60,754	
State Director/ Supt.	\$117,082	\$214,049	58.60%	-\$96,967	





NDCDE EQUITY INCREASE RECOMMENDATIONS

Unit	Dept ID	Name	Job Code	Job Type	Job Title	Current Annual Salary	Biennial Salary	Annual Salary with Equity Recommendation	% Annual Increase		Addt'l Salary Cost to State	% Below State Averages with Equity
20400	204	Alyssa Martin	SC9003	State Director	Manager III	\$117,082	\$234,163	\$157,000	34%	\$314,000	\$79,837	26.7%
20400	204	Andrew Gilbertson	SC3005	Director	Education Svcs V	\$85,575	\$171,150	\$105,000	23%	\$210,000	\$38,850	16.0%
20400	204	Emily Grace Schaefer	SC3003	Assist Principal	Education Svcs III	\$70,000	\$140,000	\$95,000	36%	\$190,000	\$50,000	13.3%
20400	204	Jessica Enderson	SC3006	Assist. Supt	Education Svcs VI	\$116,388	\$232,776	\$143,000	23%	\$286,000	\$53,224	19.3%
20400	204	Kaitlyn Allen	SC3005	Director	Education Svcs V	\$78,168	\$156,336	\$90,000	15%	\$180,000	\$23,664	28.0%
20400	204	Business Manager (Vacant)		Director-Finance &	Manager II	\$95,000	\$190,000	\$130,000		\$260,000	\$70,000	Data not available
				Operations					37%			
20400	204	Kirstin Girard	SC9002	Principal	Manager II	\$95,161	\$190,323	\$125,000	31%	\$250,000	\$59,677	8.3%
					Totals	\$657,374	\$1,314,748	\$845,000	28%	\$1,690,000	\$375,252	18.6%