

Testimony in Favor of Senate Bill 2234

Dear Senate Education Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2234 and North Dakota's Choice Ready initiative. The bill provides for additional funding to build on its successes by enhancing its implementation through additional investment. As a critical framework guiding our state's high school graduation requirements, Choice Ready equips students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in their post-secondary endeavors, whether they pursue higher education, enter the workforce, or join the military.

Choice Ready is more than a set of graduation requirements; it is a comprehensive approach that prioritizes individualized learning pathways, ensuring that each student can graduate prepared for success in life beyond high school. By emphasizing academic readiness, career readiness, and life skills, the initiative aligns with the diverse aspirations and needs of North Dakota's student population. This holistic approach fosters not only academic achievement but also practical, real-world competencies that contribute to a stronger workforce and community resilience.

One of the most compelling aspects of Choice Ready is its ability to adapt to the unique challenges and opportunities present in our state. For example, North Dakota's rural and agricultural heritage requires graduates who are prepared for a variety of roles in agriculture, energy, technology, and healthcare—industries critical to our economy. Through Choice Ready, students are exposed to career and technical education, internships, and dual-credit courses that provide direct pathways to these essential fields. This connection between education and economic development is vital for our state's continued prosperity.

Despite the successes of Choice Ready, its full potential can only be achieved with adequate funding. Additional resources are necessary too:

1. **Expand Career and Technical Education (CTE):** Increased funding will allow schools to develop and sustain high-quality CTE programs, giving students access to hands-on training and industry certifications that make them workforce-ready upon graduation.
2. **Enhance Professional Development for Educators:** Teachers and school counselors play a pivotal role in guiding students along their Choice Ready pathways. Investments in professional development ensure that educators are equipped with the tools and knowledge to support individualized learning plans effectively.
3. **Improve Access to Dual-Credit and Advanced Placement (AP) Courses:** Many students face financial and logistical barriers to participating in dual-credit and AP courses. Additional funding can help offset costs and provide equitable access to these opportunities, particularly for students in rural and underserved communities.
4. **Bolster Student Support Services:** Addressing the academic, emotional, and social needs of students is critical for their success. Funding for mental health services, career

counseling, and mentorship programs will ensure that every student has the support needed to meet their Choice Ready goals.

5. **Leverage Technology for Personalized Learning:** In an increasingly digital world, technology is a powerful tool for tailoring education to individual student needs. Enhanced funding can help schools invest in modern technology and resources to provide personalized learning experiences that align with the Choice Ready framework.

By investing in these areas, we not only strengthen the Choice Ready initiative but also affirm our commitment to the future of North Dakota's students and communities. These efforts will produce graduates who are not only prepared to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy but also capable of contributing to the civic and cultural fabric of our state.

In conclusion, the Choice Ready initiative represents a forward-thinking vision for education in North Dakota. However, its success depends on our willingness to provide the necessary resources to support its goals. I urge you to continue your commitment to this vital program by allocating the funding needed to ensure that every North Dakota student graduates ready to achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Senator Kyle Davison
District 41 Fargo