



SB 2141 – ACT Vendor References

NDCEL Testimony in support with requests for considerations

Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Aimee Copas and I serve as the Executive Director for NDCEL. I come today in general support for this concept of removing vendor names from century code and providing local flexibility. That being said, I also to share some concerns with the 2000 version of the bill as shared by secondary school principals in our state.

In the amended version, the funding that provided for the ACT or Workkeys test (one or the other) to be taken at no cost to the schools or families has been removed. This causes concern in the field. Yesterday, I surveyed the ND Secondary School Principals to seek their input. In 24 hours, I heard from about 50% of the districts. Here were the general themes that resonated:

- 63% of the principals shared concern about having the funding removed.
  - Their chief concern was parents who may wish for their son or daughter to take the test, and if it is not the test the school uses for accountability through ESSA, the cost of the test would be shifted to either the school or the family.
    - Some families from lower socio-economic background cannot afford the additional cost of the test. This was large-in-part why the state began paying for it from the beginning.
    - The contract with ACT reduced the cost vs. the non-contracted price that schools and families would now pay. That contract also covered every student in ND – ensuring home school and non-public school students had the opportunity to take it as well. That was not an additional cost – rather it was part of the contract.
  - Furthering that concern would be putting potential undue challenges on students based on affordability to compete for the state scholarship.
  - Choice Ready requirements in the state do indicate the need to perform on the ACT test.
  - Principals would prefer to have the contract in place with flexibility – meaning that not all students would be “required” to take the test – only those who wished to take it would need to take advantage of the ACT or Workkeys opportunity.
- Regarding the interim assessment removal – the majority of principals were not concerned about this. Furthermore, the majority would continue to do interim assessments.

Again, NDCEL believes the language in this bill has some positive pieces. We would recommend a strong consideration of putting the funding back in place for the test, however. Thank you.