

SB Bill 2196

Chairman Owen and Committee Members, Good Afternoon! My name is Dale Hoerauf. I am the Director of Career and Technical Education/Adult Learning Center for Bismarck Public Schools and Director of the Bismarck Public School Career Academy. I am also the Director of Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (virtual center). I am here today representing Bismarck Public School and testifying in favor of Senate Bill 2196.

A competency-based approach is one that focuses on what students learn, is standards-driven, and not about the time spent sitting in their seats. The structure depends on the individual learner. Authentic learning means the focus is on real- work learning. Meaningful projects, Career and Technical pathways, Capstone programs, internships, learning trips and other educational opportunities that allow students to explore. One of the strongest outcomes of a competency- based learning approach is student engagement.

Since this approach is flexible, the structure depends on the individual learner. Self paced, the focus is on gathering evidence of learning along the way and the final outcome. We have seen the success of this approach first hand at the Bismarck Public Schools Career Academy. The Department of Public Instruction approved a waiver for the Bismarck Public Schools to allow students in our Innovational Pathway to waive “seat time” in core subject areas such as English, Math, and Social Studies. This freed students to adjust their daily schedules and enable them to take advantage of the Innovation Pathway. Students have a voice and a choice in how, when, and where they complete projects and assessments. Students have opportunities to work in the community on projects and developing partnerships. Student personalization in the Innovation Pathway is anchored in standards-based curriculum and learning data is used to ensure mastery of the standard.

A parent of one of our Pathway students was at a recent presentation for the Bismarck/Mandan Chamber of Commerce on our Innovation Pathway and spoke about her son. He is a junior enrolled at the Career Academy and is concurrently receiving English credit while pursuing an aviation career pathway. She said, “My son talked about the English standards he was learning for a half an hour the other night at the dinner table. He has never talked about English before.”

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome you to tour the Career Academy or you can contact me at 323 4341. I will stand for any questions you may have at this time.