

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2289
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

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**By: Jim Upgren, Assistant Director, Office of School Approval and Opportunity
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Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Upgren, Assistant Director in the Office of School Approval and Opportunity with the Department of Public Instruction. I am here on behalf of the department to speak in support of SB 2289.

When the North Dakota Academic and CTE Scholarship program was established in 2009, the requirements of each scholarship were tied to the goal of students being college ready. While there have been minor revisions to the requirements over the years, the qualifications for the scholarship remain much as they were in 2009- a checklist of items related to preparation for college. Schools and students have planned class schedules and testing around meeting the scholarship requirements. A lot has changed in the past decade since 2009. We now understand that high schools must prepare students for a variety of paths and a variety of career choices they have in life. The proposed scholarship requirements in Section 3 of this bill are aligned to the requirements for a student to be considered “Choice Ready.”

Before I continue regarding the proposed requirements of the bill, I will briefly describe Choice Ready and how it works. Part of the North Dakota K-12 Strategic

Vision is for each student to graduate Choice Ready. In short, a Choice Ready student is one that is qualified to pursue the choice of more than one path after high school. I have included in my electronic testimony a copy of the Choice Ready chart for your reference. Students must meet 4 of the 8 Essential Skills at the top of the chart (in blue). At the bottom of the chart are the 3 Choice Ready components: Post-Secondary Ready (on the left side of the chart in green), Workforce Ready (in the middle of the chart in pink), and Military Ready (on the right side of the chart in orange). Students that meet the requirements of 2 of those 3 components are considered to be Choice Ready, preparing students for multiple options after graduating from high school.

The proposed North Dakota Scholarship requirements listed in Section 3 of the bill are aligned to the Choice Ready requirements. Because this is a scholarship program intended to incentivize and reward students who work hard, the proposed requirements go above the basic requirements for a student to be considered Choice Ready. Students who earn the scholarship will also be Choice Ready, meeting the goal North Dakota has set forth as its K-12 vision. This bill will ensure that, when schools are planning class schedules, testing, and other activities to help students qualify for the scholarship, they will also be working towards helping students to graduate Choice Ready. If preparing students for multiple careers and choices is what

we say we value and want schools and students to strive for, we should align it with the state scholarship to incentivize students to work towards it.

The proposed scholarship requirements in Section 3 of the bill are aligned to the requirements for a student to be Choice Ready, with six adjustments to allow for the same level of rigor in the current scholarship requirements. First, students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Second, to meet the post-secondary ready requirement, students must have an ACT score of 24 or higher, equivalent to what is currently required for the Academic Scholarship. Third, the proposed scholarship requirements remove the option of having CREAM/CLEM college remediation courses count in the post-secondary or workforce ready column. Fourth, to meet the workforce ready requirement, students must complete four credits of career and technical education courses with two of those credits in the same coordinated plan of study, equivalent to what is currently required for the CTE Scholarship. Fifth, to meet the workforce ready requirement, students must receive either a 24 on the ACT or scores of 5 or higher on each of the three WorkKeys assessments, equivalent to what is currently required for the CTE Scholarship. And finally, to meet the military ready requirement, a student must score 85 or higher on the ASVAB assessment, unless the student has completed basic training, in which case a score of 31 as required for Choice Ready would be sufficient. We believe that these modifications to the Choice Ready framework will ensure that there is still the same level of rigor required to earn

the scholarship, while at the same time ensuring that all scholarship recipients will also meet the goal of graduating Choice Ready.

If SB 2289 passes, the timeline for students earning the scholarship will be as follows: students graduating in 2021 will be evaluated for the scholarship using the current Academic/CTE Scholarship requirements; students graduating in 2022, 2023, or 2024 will have the option of using either the current requirements or the proposed new requirements in this bill, and starting with the graduating class of 2025, all students would be evaluated for the North Dakota Scholarship using the proposed scholarship requirements in Section 3 of this bill.

NDDPI fully supports SB 2289 as a way to align scholarship requirements that schools and students will plan for with the K-12 Strategic Vision of students graduating Choice Ready. We support SB 2289, and we also stand willing to assist committee members in drafting any amendments that may further strengthen the bill.

Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee that concludes my prepared testimony and I will stand for any questions that you may have.



NORTH DAKOTA CHOICE READY

The North Dakota **CHOICE READY** framework is a tool to assist educators to ensure all students successfully depart high school possessing the **ESSENTIAL SKILLS** necessary to be ready for life. The journey begins by ensuring students leave having the **ESSENTIAL SKILLS** to be successful for whichever path they choose. Students shall then strive to be **POST-SECONDARY READY**, **WORKFORCE READY**, and/or **MILITARY READY**.



ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Earn a **North Dakota high school diploma**

Complete a **9-week Career Education Course/Individual Counseling** (15.1-21-18), **Financial Literacy** (15.1-21-21), and pass **ND Civics Test** (15.1-21-27) and **four or more additional indicators**:

- 25 hours of Community Service
- 95% Attendance (not counting school related absences)
- Career Exploration Experience
- Two or more years in organized Co-Curricular Activities
- Two or more years in organized Extra-Curricular Activities
- Successfully complete a Capstone Project
- Successfully complete an on-line learning course
- Demonstrate competency in 21st Century Skills

Students shall then complete **two or more** of the **CHOICE READY** components below.



POST-SECONDARY READY

Complete a **Four-Year Rolling Career Plan**, and earn a **2.8 GPA or greater**, and complete one academic indicator set below:

ACT / SAT minimum or subsection scores:	
ACT English—18	SAT Reading/Writing—480
ACT Reading—22	SAT Math—530
ACT Math—21	
ACT Science—23	

or

Two or more additional indicators:

- Advanced Placement Course (A, B or C) (1, 2, or 3)
- Dual Credit Course (English or Math) (A, B or C) or (1, 2, or 3)
- Algebra II (A, B or C) or (1, 2, or 3)
- Advanced Placement Exam (3+)
- International Baccalaureate Exam (4+)
- 3.0 GPA in core course requirement for NDUS admission
- CLEM/CREAM (Eng./Math) Course (70% or greater)



WORKFORCE READY

Complete a **Four-Year Rolling Career Plan**, and complete two or more additional indicators:

- Complete three CTE courses or more (A, B, or C) or (1, 2, or 3)
- Complete Career Ready Practices (3.0)
- Dual Credit Course (A, B or C) or (1, 2, or 3)
- WorkKeys (Gold or Silver)
- Technical Assessment / Industry Credential
- Workplace Learning Experience (40 hrs.)
- Work-based Learning Experience (Perkins V) (40 hrs.)
- CLEM/CREAM (Eng./Math) Course (70% or greater)
- NDSA (Reading/Math) Level 3 or greater or (ACT for Accountability: English 19/Mathematics 22)



MILITARY READY

Complete a **Four-Year Rolling Career Plan**, **ASVAB score of 31 or greater** (as determined by branch), or acceptance into the military.

Quality Citizenship (No Expulsions/Suspensions), **Physically Fit** (Students who have successfully completed required PE courses (A, B, or C) or (1, 2, or 3)

Complete **two or more additional indicators** from the **Post-Secondary** or **Workforce** options.