

**2025 HOUSE EDUCATION**

**HB 1105**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1105  
1/14/2025

Relating to a school district's virtual learning policies.
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9:42 a.m. Chairman Heinert opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

### Discussion Topics:

- Restrictions of Virtual Learning
- Cost of Virtual Learning
- Statics on Virtual learning

9:42 a.m. Representative Jonas Introduced the Bill.

9:55 a.m. Dr. Pam Cronin, Principle of West Fargo Horace, testified in favor and submitted testimon #28963

10:03 a.m. Dr. Jeff Fastancht, BPS Focus Group, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #28682

10:08 a.m. Steve Madler, Principle of Century High, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #28860

10:23 a.m. Mike Heilman, ND Small Organized Schools, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #28917

10:25 a.m. Kevin Hoherz, ND Council of Education Leaders, NDCEL, testified in favor.

10:34 a.m. Lexi Bergstrom, Staff Attorney ND School Boards Association, testified in favor.

10:35 a.m. Dr. Alyssa Martin, ND Center for Distance Education, testified in opposition and submitted testimony. #28922

### Additional written testimony:

Amiee Copas, Executive Director NDCEL, submitted testimony in favor. #28782

Robert Shaw, Partnerships Director Modern Classrooms Project, submitted testimony in favor. #28817

Leslie Bieber, Superintendent Alexander Public Schools, submitted testimony in favor. #28851

Shannay Witte, Teacher NDCDE, submitted testimony in opposition. #28924

Kaitlyn Allen, Director of Curriculum, NDCDE, submitted testimony in opposition. #28928

Emily Schaefer, Assistant Principal NDCD, submitted testimony in opposition. #28929

11:29 a.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

1 HB1105 – Virtual Learning – by Dr. Jeff Fastnacht, Superintendent, Bismarck  
2 Public School District.

3 I am here today, providing testimony in support of HB 1105. If I may provide a short  
4 history lesson to the members of the committee. Long before my present position I  
5 had the privilege of chairing the Education Technology Council (ETC). The ETC  
6 was the governing board for the ND Center for Distance Education. During that time  
7 I watched the NDCDE transform from a paper-pencil and packet school to one that  
8 embraced online learning.

9 The NDCDE then transitioned to be led by the ND Department of Career and  
10 Technical Education, which I also was part of as a member of the board and  
11 eventually the president. Again, we watched the NDCDE grow and provide learning  
12 opportunities to children in North Dakota and around the country. Our rural schools  
13 and schools like Bismarck Public School District, whom I represent now, all  
14 benefitted from the services NDCDE provided.

15 During the 2023 Legislative Session, I genuinely believe the legislature passed a bill  
16 to expand NDCDE programming reasonably and responsibly to all children within  
17 the great state of North Dakota. However, the rules that were desired to expand  
18 access to students and families disregarded the vital role of educators in molding and  
19 guiding the learning experience of our children. The guardrails that had existed in  
20 many schools were abruptly disbanded, leaving open the opportunities to game the  
21 system, cheat with little recourse, and put the burden of those follies on districts that  
22 were already strapped to provide the same brick & mortar courses in their school  
23 buildings.



1 Before this legislation, BPS allowed students to engage in virtual instruction through  
2 Edgenuity or other platforms at the district's cost. Many students also engaged in  
3 NDCDE coursework, but the parents paid for it. Commonly, this was for health or  
4 fitness classes, which freed up students' schedules. With the change in legislation in  
5 FY 2023, the district paid NDCDE \$0.00 for tuition. That increased to \$292,158.84  
6 in FY 2024. This year, we have spent \$98,847 on CDE tuition as of 11/30/2024. The  
7 removal of the guardrails for NDCDE has cost BPS resources that could have been  
8 used for nursing, which the district cut three nurses last year, or other equally needed  
9 programs.

10 I believe you have testimony submitted from Mr. Steve Madler, Principal for  
11 Century High School. He is the expert on the impact of this legislation on students,  
12 families, and our educators. I would ask you to strongly consider his words. I trust  
13 him and his team to make sound educational decisions for our students each and  
14 every day. Before the legislation, CHS and all high schools within BPS were  
15 providing opportunities for students to engage with NDCDE.



## NDCEL Testimony in Support HB 1105 – Virtual Learning Policies

Chairman Heinert and Members of the Committee - Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1105, which amends Section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code to grant school districts greater authority over their virtual learning policies. This is important for a number of reasons – for the well-being of the student, for appropriate fiscal stewardship of tax dollars, for the financial control of their local budget, for assurance of the student being in their best placement for learning, among others.

Currently, districts are required to fund virtual courses even when equivalent in-person instruction is offered locally. The local district has no authority to have influence when a student wishes to drop a course at whatever time for whatever reason and to wish to switch to a virtual course most often being the NDCDE. Having been involved in the adjustment to this language last session, we do not believe the end interpretation of the bill was the intention of the conference committee. This double payment system has strained district budgets, diverting resources from other educational priorities. HB 1105 addresses this issue by allowing districts to establish reasonable policies for virtual instruction that ensure efficient use of taxpayer dollars while supporting student learning. To be clear – last session NDCEL supported the intent of the legislature which was that if a district did not offer a course the student wanted to take that the district would cover the cost of that course. Further, at times a district formally would elect to cover a course to provide schedule flexibility for a student to ensure they could take the coursework locally they otherwise would not be able to. However, this past biennium the interpretation of this bill has not resulted in positive outcomes – we’ve had an inordinate amount of money spent in the double payment of courses – in the millions.

This bill allows districts to:

- Set eligibility criteria and time restrictions for virtual course enrollment.

- Require families to pay for a virtual course if the student does not earn credit.

- Cover the cost of virtual courses only when the district does not offer the course and it is essential for timely graduation.

These provisions empower school boards to make informed, context-specific decisions that balance student choice with fiscal responsibility. By prioritizing local instruction when available, the bill also reinforces the vital role of North Dakota educators in student success.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 1105 to promote responsible educational policy and ensure that district resources are used effectively to meet student needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

*NDCEL is the strongest unifying voice representing and supporting administrators and educational leaders in pursuit of quality education for all students in North Dakota.*

*Executive Director: Aimee Copas-----Government Lead and Special Projects: Kevin Hoferz*

# Modern Classrooms Project

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January 13, 2025

North Dakota House Education Committee:

The Modern Classrooms Project (MCP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing equitable, effective, and student-centered learning environments through blended, self-paced, and mastery-based instructional models. We are writing in support of House Bill No. 1105, which seeks to amend and reenact Section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code, pertaining to virtual learning policies.

## **The Importance of Virtual Learning Policies**

This bill addresses a pressing need to ensure that all North Dakota students have equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities, regardless of geographic location, economic status, or individual learning needs. The proposed amendments offer flexibility for school districts while maintaining necessary safeguards to ensure the quality and accountability of virtual learning programs.

## **Key Benefits of HB 1105:**

### **1. Expanding Access to Education**

By prohibiting resident school districts from denying open enrollment to approved virtual schools, the bill removes barriers for students seeking tailored learning experiences. This provision is critical for students in rural or underserved areas where certain courses or advanced programs may not be offered in traditional settings.

### **2. Equity in Course Availability**

Requiring school districts to pay for virtual courses that they do not offer ensures that all students can access the credits they need to graduate on time. This policy directly supports the statewide goal of fostering equitable educational outcomes.

### **3. Clear Accountability Measures**

The bill's requirements for annual reports on virtual instruction outcomes ensure transparency and data-driven decision-making. Comparing the performance of virtual learners to their peers will provide valuable insights for improving instructional practices.

### **4. Flexibility for District Implementation**

Allowing districts to set eligibility criteria, time restrictions, and cost-recovery measures for virtual courses ensures that local needs and priorities are respected while maintaining student success as the central focus.

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## **Conclusion**

House Bill No. 1105 is a vital step toward modernizing education in North Dakota and preparing students for the demands of a rapidly changing world. We urge the committee to support this bill and its potential to transform learning opportunities for students across the state.

Respectfully submitted,

- *Bob Shaw*

Robert W Shaw  
Partnerships Director  
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HB 1105

Chairman Heinert and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Leslie Bieber and I am the Superintendent of Alexander School District No. 2 in Alexander, ND. I am here in support of HB 1105.

House Bill 1105 addresses virtual learning policies in our schools. Currently, when students choose an online course instead of a locally offered equivalent, our district must pay for it. Unfortunately, the choice is usually due to a student's dislike of a teacher's expectations or distaste for the teacher. This practice unfairly burdens taxpayers and undermines fiscal responsibility.

Our job is to assist parents in preparing students for adult life. We do not get to opt out of a job on someone else's dime because we do not care for a personality or job duty. I think most of us can tell a story of that one person that made/makes our work life interesting!

The state's Choice Ready framework is focused on preparing our students to be ready for post-secondary school, the work force, and/or the military. Adapting to different styles and personalities are vital life skills emphasized for success in all three of those components.

HB 1105 offers a fair solution by allowing districts to restrict taxpayer-funded virtual courses when a local option exists, placing the cost on families instead. This ensures responsible spending while fostering essential skills in students.

Thank you for your consideration.

January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Re: HB 1105; Support

Members of the Education Committee:

The forthcoming dialogue is a response in support of HB 1105. My name is Steve Madler and I am currently the Principal at Century High School within the Bismarck Public School district. The rationale behind my testimony is founded in the experiences I have had with students accessing virtual instruction through NDCDE prior to the passing of HB 1376 from the 68<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly and thereafter.

Prior to August of 2023, a number of students in our building enrolled in NDCDE courses. In a typical year, we would have roughly 90 students take 130 courses. In most of these instances, students were accessing these courses to provide greater flexibility in their personalized 4-year plan. Although underlying reasons for enrollment varied amongst students, one thing was absolute in that these plans were founded in having an academic purpose and successful completion was almost guaranteed. I wish I could stand in front of you today and share that the same purpose and outcomes have withstood implementation of HB 1376, but, unfortunately, that is not the case.

When schools received guidance for implementation in August of 2023, there was essentially one requirement/restriction that schools could put in place. We could require the student to engage in their virtual class while being in attendance to a monitored classroom in the building. As a building leader, this became quite the dilemma. I anticipated an increase in participation due to the shift from self-pay to district responsible at the same time the fiscal year budget was finalized and all my current staff had full responsibilities for in-person services. Subsequently, we relied on the learning coaches (parents in most instances) to become the supporting collaborator for student participation and success.

Needless to say, even if we had additional funds to host a room, the increase experienced became greater than a room would hold. For the first semester in calendar year 23-24, we ended up with 118 students taking 191 courses and for the second semester we had 185 students taking 268 courses. Within this 4 x's increase, we experienced several situations where the academic purpose was lacking, academic integrity was compromised and successful completion was grossly inferior to our historical in-person student performance. I want the record to be very clear that this is not and should not be construed to say the NDCDE product nor work of their teachers was inferior. I say this to underscore the notion that guidelines which provide limited judgment and influence from the local team perpetuates unintended consequences.

In relation to unintended consequences, we found very quickly that a large number of students were not engaging for long periods of time in their online environment. Subsequently, we started collecting performance and participation data. When you have 459 unique enrollments, you start to see some trends while outliers limit the influence to your data. In example, we had 444 course completions in calendar year 23-24(15 withdrawals/drops). 356 of these enrollments resulted in a passing grade. The average number of days these students actively engaged in the 140 day enrollment window was 29 days. In other words, they logged on and engaged in the virtual environment. If we look at the 88 failing grades, the average engagement was half as much being around 15 days. Even more granular is to look at the total accumulated hours of participation. Those who received a passing completion spent an average of 24.4 hours on their coursework whereas those who failed spent an average of 11.2 hours. I share this only to offer a snapshot of insight into the performance of students engaging in virtual

instruction against students not participating in virtual instruction. The 5-year average of failure rates at Century High School is 3%. The failure rate of NDCDE courses in 23-24 for CHS was as stark difference at 21%. Within the 88 failures, greater than 85% of these enrollments were tagged as 'not school endorsed'. To iterate, in relationship to 'endorsed or not', we did not have the ability to restrict enrollment for these students or courses. The tag 'not school endorsed' only indicates that the school team did not feel the course or the notion of enrolling in a virtual environment was in the best academic interest of the student.

At the risk of losing the room due to number pontification, I want to close my testimony with the benefit the proposed amendments will have on local districts. In relationship to page 1, line 19 bullet 'a', I don't have concern with the language of that statement but only offer that the 'rules' be developed as a collaborative agreement between a representative group from the field, NDCDE, and DPI. Same page, Line 20 and 21 (bullet 'b') has positive implications for schools and NDCDE staff and probably requires added clarity on the term 'open enrollment'. Whether intended or not, open enrollment became synonymous with a student can decide when they want to enroll in an NDCDE class and the local district cannot deny. Subsequently, we had many enrollments (60%) which came more than a week after the student began the school year with no initial plan for virtual learning. The reasons were wide and varied but resulted in several occurrences where a student dropped an in-person class to enroll virtual because they didn't like their grade or course expectations several weeks into the term or as way to avoid Tier II and III interventions. Another complication which manifested had to deal with NDCDE classes being 20 weeks in length and our terms being 18 weeks. Not a big deal mid-year if the student is passing the course, but if they are an October add and result in a failure in March, we have no viable way to respond to the student who is now credit deficient. Lastly, we have varying graduation timelines in the spring semester so the ability to put a restrictive timeline to align with our graduation ceremonies is imperative. I firmly believe this also provides a benefit to the NDCDE instructors as they would not experience the revolving door of adds to the class cohorts they are working with. Likewise, bullet 'c' on page 1, lines 22 and 23 provides benefit to the local district and NDCDE instructors as well as our taxpayers. As mentioned before, the local team has insights into the skills and behaviors students exhibit which lend themselves to be successful in a virtual environment. When students are not employing the skills yet have unlimited access to this environment, it creates system strain on the local district and the NDCDE teachers. To restate, we experienced years of high success where pursuits were founded on academic purpose and fit for one's academic pathway. When we as adults know this is not going to be a good fit and can predict with a high level of accuracy an unsuccessful outcome, the fiscally sound practice would be to limit the blanket eligibility practice. I see Bullet 'd' on page 2 lines 1 and 2 as a means to incentivize engagement and performance. Given the numbers shared in the prior paragraph, this would have saved our building roughly \$25,000 last year if we received 100% compliance in reimbursement. I state it this way because getting reimbursement after the fact is not always successful. The reverse of that, self pay and get reimbursed by the district for successful completion would be far preferable from a district perspective. The last bullet 'e' on page 2 lines 3-6 has significant implications for districts. The first part of this is very straightforward that a district is responsible for the cost of the course if they do not offer that course. We support that language. The conjunctive part of that sentence (obtaining the course credit would contribute to the student meeting high school graduation requirements in time to graduate within the usual time frame) deserves to have some examples for context. As it stands now, a student could be in their senior year, take 3 classes in person (needed for graduation) and 2 elective classes through NDCDE. The 2 elective classes are not needed to graduate but fulfill a local requirement to be a fulltime student and could very well be credits above the 24 minimum requirement in BPS. This begs the question of should a district/taxpayers be funding coursework which is not needed for graduation while giving students autonomy to be done with

a fulltime day by 11:00 am? As an educator, parent, and taxpayer, I have a believe and stance on the answer and it is safe to say it is why I am supportive of the way it is written.

In closing, virtual learning has and will continue to be a mode of offering in our district and those around the state. The primary reason for support of this bill is to return the efficacy of decisions to local teams which support students in their pursuit of success. Doing so will produce more successful outcomes while being financially prudent.

Steve Madler  
Principal – Century High School





# North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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## Testimony in Support of HB 1105

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. The North Dakota Center for Distance Education (ND CDE) is a critical partner for NDSOS members and for all schools in North Dakota. NDCDE has a long history of providing quality service to school districts and their students. I stand in support of ND CDE and this legislation. This legislation is needed to ensure that school districts are involved with students and parents when making educational choices.

HB 1105 also clarifies what most believed was the intent of legislation passed in the 2023 legislative session by avoiding unnecessary duplication and associated cost of taking virtual courses, especially when the course is offered by the local school district. HB 1105 also allows schools to develop policy that may place fiscal responsibility on the student and parent for costs of virtual instruction when classes are failed, and yet requires the school pay for virtual instruction if the district does not offer a course that would contribute to on time graduation.

NDSOS supports this legislation and believe it address what was the intent of the legislation passed during the 2023 session.

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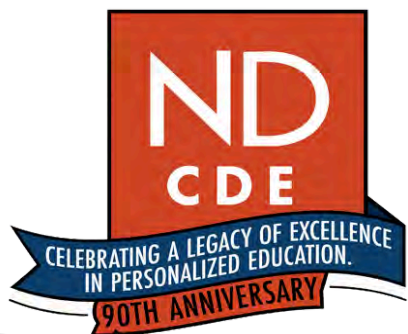
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**The mission of NDSOS is to provide leadership for the small/rural schools in North Dakota and to support legislation favorable to their philosophy while opposing legislation that is harmful.**



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Date: 1/14/2025

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1105

House Education Committee

Chair Heinert and distinguished members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Dr. Alyssa Martin, and I am the state director for the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE or CDE). I have served in this role for two and a half years, following my previous work as the assistant vice president for academic affairs at the University of Mary for six years and the director of policy services for the North Dakota School Boards Association for a decade prior to my time in higher education. Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to ensuring North Dakota students have access to the highest quality education, from advising school boards on improving student learning environments to leading continuous improvement efforts at NDCDE to provide a nationally recognized education for North Dakota students.

I begin my testimony with this personal commitment because, during a time when families are demanding more educational choices, virtual education and the work of NDCDE has faced unwarranted attacks. The dedication of our 104 remarkable educators and staff has been reduced to generalizations about a lack of rigor and insufficient safeguards for academic integrity. These claims have led to legislation with unintended consequences, that may ultimately harm students and limit equitable access to educational options across the state.

As state director, I have carefully examined past and present concerns about NDCDE, meeting with stakeholders such as North Dakota Small Organized Schools (NDSOS) and large districts like Bismarck Public Schools to devise solutions. Through these conversations and together with a courageous team of educational leaders, NDCDE has acknowledged areas for growth and made significant improvements in just two years—progress I am eager to share today. However, I must first explain why we stand in opposition to HB 1105.

HB 1105 had some good general aims—ensuring that students responsibly engage in virtual education, but with some unintended consequences. The bill amends NDCC 15.1-07-25.4 and impacts not only students taking courses through NDCDE but also those enrolled in virtual academies. Unlike most students who take virtual courses supplementally, virtual academy students receive all or most of their instruction online through their school district. The district selects the virtual provider, which may be NDCDE, another provider, or even their own teachers delivering online instruction. This bill includes language permitting districts to require a legal guardian to pay for a virtual course if the student fails to earn credit. This is deeply concerning, particularly for virtual academy students who complete nearly all their education online. Imagine if a similar "pay if you fail" policy were applied in traditional schools—stakeholders from all persuasions would loudly

vocalize opposition at the mere suggestion of financially penalties, as education is fundamentally about learning from mistakes and having multiple opportunities to master concepts, especially in K-12. The consequences for struggling in a course are a grade or score reflecting that performance—they should not a fee.

Knowing the opposition that would occur if this arrangement was proposed within a traditional school, why then should the learning modality change that principle—especially when certain students have no choice but to learn virtually? Many of these students face challenges such as chronic illness, the need to catch up academically, transient living situations due to homelessness or foster care, or mental health concerns heightened by bullying in their school environment. Often, they are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, where academic struggles can be common. Yet under HB 1105, they would face financial penalties for simply seeking what is sometimes the only educational option available to them—virtual learning. This law would foreclose on any remaining hope for many such students. It would prevent happy endings such as the following parent’s story: “During a time of struggling with attending a physical school, NDCDE was an option for online education that changed the trajectory of my son's life. We went from thinking he would drop out of school to being able to graduate a year early--changed our lives in the best way possible.”

The teachers and staff at NDCDE celebrate student success like the above testimonial regularly—something we’ve proudly done since our founding in 1935. Today, I want to provide this committee with an overview of NDCDE’s work, particularly in response to concerns you’ve likely heard from local schools. I aim to demonstrate the nationally recognized work happening within NDCDE, the only publicly-funded statewide virtual school, and highlight why virtual education matters, that it can—and is—being delivered with exceptional quality, and why it remains a critical option for North Dakota students.

As I present this information and data, I want to emphasize that NDCDE values collaboration with local schools. We’ve consistently sought partnerships that support policies and safeguards ensuring our services are used with fidelity, resulting in genuine learning gains for students. We firmly believe schools have the authority to implement such standards through district policy—without the need for legislation to direct this activity to take place.

At the same time, we acknowledge that we are a work in progress. Many of the initiatives I will highlight today were launched within the last two years. They will need continued refinement, expansion, and, most importantly, the support of local districts and the legislature to fully succeed.

- **Slide 3:** This year, NDCDE celebrates its 90th anniversary. As part of this milestone, we’re recognizing the thousands of alumni who have completed courses or earned a diploma through our school. We’re also working to learn more about their post-graduation successes and the role NDCDE played in shaping their futures. Our roots began as a correspondence school, and today we provide 100% virtual, self-paced education. Students can enroll anytime and progress at their own pace within a 20-week completion window. As a supplemental education provider, our mission is to complement—not replace—the work of local schools. Most students who enroll in NDCDE courses remain district-enrolled, typically taking one or two courses through us. Even our diploma-seeking students are classified as homeschooled. However, the supplemental model presents challenges in how we measure

student outcomes. Since students take state assessments through their home districts rather than NDCDE, our ability to directly track student performance is limited. This limitation was a key factor in our recent shift toward competency-based education, a significant initiative I will explain further, as it directly ties to one of our major accountability goals for the future.

- **Slide 4:** The next slide features a short video designed to introduce stakeholders to the services offered by NDCDE.
- **Slide 5:** Throughout my presentation, I'll avoid as much education jargon as possible, but there are a few terms worth clarifying. One key term is *learning coach*. As you saw in the video, a learning coach acts as a proctor and guide, providing students with accountability and support in ways we simply cannot as a fully virtual school. NDCDE has established policies on learning coaches, including recommendations for districts on selecting appropriate individuals for this role to help maintain academic integrity—generally advising against the use of parents. A brief video explaining the learning coach role can be accessed via the QR code provided.

Learning coaches are responsible for safeguarding exam passcodes, entering them directly into the learning management system only when a student is ready to take a test. While these passcodes change frequently, a primary cause of academic integrity issues arises when coaches share the codes with students, who may then pass them along to peers—leading to rapid, unearned test completion. We've begun implementing safeguards to detect and prevent this, including a weekly rapid progress report analyzed in-depth by our dean of students.

Another important term on this slide is *competency-based education*. This approach measures student progress based on their ability to demonstrate mastery of specific skills and concepts, rather than simply completing coursework or spending a set amount of time on tasks. It allows students to focus more time on areas where they need additional support while advancing once they've proven proficiency. NDCDE is transitioning to this model across all courses while continuing to report both percentage grades and student proficiency by standard, using pre- and post-assessments to show learning growth.

- **Slide 6:** NDCDE currently offers 307 courses for grades K-12, covering all subjects required by NDCC Chapter 15.1-21: Curriculum and Testing. Our courses span the traditional categories of core academics, electives, and career and technical education (CTE). Each course we offer undergoes a careful vetting and evaluation process. This typically begins with a stakeholder request for a new course. NDCDE then researches online curriculum vendors offering content in that subject area and arranges demos for our content experts. A subject-matter expert (NDCDE teacher) then conducts a detailed review, aligning the course to North Dakota state standards and customizing the content as needed. One of the key ways we are currently enhancing courses is by replacing multiple-choice and

fill-in-the-blank exams with project-based, authentic assignments to promote deeper learning and deter cheating.

- **Slide 7:** During the 2023-25 biennium, NDCDE has served 8,803 students with 24,500 enrollments, including 8,350 North Dakota students. This reach reflects the agency's strong presence across the state, serving 305 unique public and private schools during this period. The demand for virtual education has continued to grow significantly. NDCDE saw a 25.4% increase in enrollments from the previous biennium, rising from 19,539 enrollments in 2021-23 to 24,500 enrollments in 2023-25. This growth highlights both the expanding interest in virtual education and the agency's ability to meet evolving educational needs across the state.

NDCDE is also proud to have awarded 51 diplomas to self-pay homeschooled students, providing a pathway for students seeking a flexible, high-quality education while meeting graduation requirements.

This success is supported by a dedicated team of 104 employees, including 29 full-time staff (13 permanent teachers), 11 full-time temporary teachers hired to assist with growth, and 64 part-time adjunct instructors who are essential in ensuring personalized instruction and support for all students. Together, these figures reflect NDCDE's continued commitment to expanding educational access, ensuring quality instruction, and meeting the needs of North Dakota's diverse student population.

- **Slides 8-9:** NDCDE is partially state-funded and partially tuition-funded, with NDCC Ch. 15-19 authorizing the agency to charge a fee for its courses. In 2023, it undertook a comprehensive review of its tuition rates at the request of lawmakers and state-level stakeholders. Utilizing national benchmarking data from the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA), we adjusted our tuition rates, resulting in a 37% increase in our baseline course price. NDCDE provides districts with far more than just access to curriculum—its tuition covers a comprehensive, high-quality educational service designed to support student success and meet the needs of North Dakota schools. Every student enrolled at NDCDE is assigned a North Dakota-licensed teacher employed by NDCDE. These teachers provide personalized instruction, monitor progress, hold virtual meetings with students, offer timely feedback on all assignments, and manage both classroom engagement and ongoing curricular review. This live instructional component ensures students receive direct, qualified support—not just access to self-paced material. Additionally, NDCDE maintains the technology infrastructure necessary to operate a fully online school. This includes a dedicated learning management system, a student information system, and an e-commerce platform for course registration—all maintained by a four-member IT team help desk to assist students, families, and districts with technical issues. NDCDE also prioritizes student support services to ensure that all learners have access to the resources they need. A licensed school counselor works to connect students with academic support, manages IEPs and 504 plans, and ensures accommodations are properly communicated to teachers. A dean of students actively monitors academic risk and student conduct, collaborating with local districts to implement interventions when needed.

At a cost per enrollment of \$229-\$259 to schools, districts receive a complete, student-centered educational service—not just curriculum, but certified instruction, technical support, and student services that reflect the full spectrum of what it takes to deliver quality virtual education. This comprehensive approach ensures that students have access to the tools and support necessary for meaningful academic progress, while districts benefit from a reliable, standards-aligned educational partner.

- **Slide10:** The next set of slides highlights NDCDE’s significant accomplishments over the past two years, showcasing both our remarkable growth and the intentional steps we’ve taken to maintain and improve quality during this expansion. As enrollment surged, we made a concerted effort to measure educational quality carefully, ensuring that our standards remained high even as the number of students we served increased dramatically. This section also emphasizes the major initiatives we’ve implemented as part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement—guided by data analysis and direct feedback from stakeholders—to better serve North Dakota students and schools.
- **Slides 11-12:** As this slide illustrates, NDCDE's enrollment has grown significantly in recent years. The data displayed reflects enrollment figures over the same set of dates across five years, along with the percentage increases or decreases from the previous year. Notably, in just the last few days alone, our enrollments have surged to **13,464**—an increase of over **1,300 enrollments** from last Friday when I originally captured the data for this presentation.

The question is: *What is driving this growth?*

- A key factor is HB 1376, passed by the 68th Legislative Assembly, which expanded access to NDCDE by allowing parents to enroll their district-enrolled students in our courses, with the district covering the cost. This legislation removed financial barriers that had previously prevented some families from considering virtual education.
- However, our data suggests that free access alone is not the primary reason families are turning to NDCDE. To date, 825 parents, learning coaches, and students have responded to our online engagement survey, with the top reason for enrollment being that courses were not available locally. The second most common reason cited was scheduling conflicts, ranging from students wanting to take additional courses to those prioritizing core subjects in school while exploring electives in their free time.
- The third reason families choose NDCDE is due to local school challenges, including bullying and mismatches between a student's learning style and a teacher’s instructional approach.
- Some school officials have suggested that families are choosing NDCDE because they believe the courses are easier. However, in our survey of 317 student respondents, only one student cited lower rigor as a reason for enrolling. While it’s reasonable to consider that some students may not fully disclose this motivation, the perception of academic challenge is reinforced not only by our anonymous end-of-course student surveys but also by data from both our parent and teacher surveys, which will be reviewed in more detail on an upcoming slide.

- **Slides 13-14:** NDCDE’s financial impact under HB 1376 has been widely misunderstood. The reality is that the majority of districts are not paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to NDCDE. As shown in the data, the average total spending per district for FY 24 and FY 25 combined is just \$28,024, with smaller districts averaging as little as \$7,801 for the biennium. Even the largest districts, many of which operate their own virtual academies while receiving foundation aid for those enrollments, have spent an average of just \$349,920 over two years—a fraction of their nine figure budgets.

These costs are far from excessive, especially given the comprehensive value provided for the \$259 per course tuition, which covers state-certified teachers, instructional support, technology infrastructure, and student services—not simply course content.

The truth is, NDCDE is not profiting from HB 1376. The revenue generated through tuition has been reinvested directly into managing the increasing enrollments, ensuring students receive the highest quality education possible. This reinvestment has included hiring additional staff, adjusting teacher workloads, and expanding student support services.

When HB 1376 expanded access, no additional state funding was provided. NDCDE responded with internal efficiency measures and tuition revenue, not general fund appropriations. This included strategic course reductions, workload adjustments, and a \$2.5 million Emergency Commission request, funded primarily through \$1.9 million in tuition revenue and \$600,000 from a grant.

Districts have an opportunity to collaborate strategically with NDCDE by monitoring enrollment trends and leveraging its services where it makes sense to phase out duplicative offerings. By working together, districts can take advantage of the affordable, high-quality educational support NDCDE provides, ensuring students have access to expanded learning opportunities while protecting local resources. This partnership approach allows schools to focus on core priorities while relying on NDCDE’s established infrastructure and instructional expertise to meet diverse student needs.

- **Slides 15-17:** NDCDE closely monitors student performance to ensure both rigor and quality remain central to its educational model, even as enrollment has grown significantly. The data presented highlights how NDCDE balances academic challenge with appropriate support, using grade distribution trends, feedback surveys, and predictive tools for continuous improvement. Notably, only 38% of students earned an A, indicating that NDCDE's courses are designed with high standards, avoiding the trend of grade inflation often seen in less rigorous virtual models. To maintain this level of rigor while improving outcomes, NDCDE uses real-time dashboards within its learning management system (LMS) to monitor student progress closely. These tools help identify struggling students early, enabling intervention strategies that balance high expectations with necessary academic support.

While NDCDE values maintaining academic standards, it is committed to reducing failure rates through proactive strategies in the next biennium, including:

- Enhanced dashboards and predictive analytics to identify at-risk students earlier; and
- AI tutoring tools designed to offer immediate, personalized assistance when students struggle.



NDCDE's competency-based education (CBE) dashboards offer a powerful tool for tracking and improving student learning. Already in use for elementary math, these dashboards provide real-time insights into student performance by standard, clearly showing where students are excelling and where additional support is needed.

The dashboards serve multiple purposes:

- **Identify Learning Gaps:** By displaying student proficiency by standard, the dashboards help pinpoint areas where curricular adjustments may be needed.
- **Support Personalized Learning:** Teachers can use the data to tailor instruction and provide targeted interventions based on individual student needs.
- **Guide Data-Driven Decisions:** School leaders can use aggregated proficiency data to monitor trends, ensuring continuous instructional improvement across grade levels and subjects.

Leading this transformative shift is NDCDE's Assistant Superintendent, an internationally recognized consultant on competency-based education, who has guided schools worldwide through the transition to CBE. She is at the forefront of this effort at NDCDE, working directly with teachers to help them understand and implement CBE principles while also advising the instructional technology team on how to integrate and report CBE data effectively within NDCDE's systems. To expand the impact of these tools, NDCDE's in-house developer is actively integrating the CBE dashboards with its student information system (SIS), Genius. This integration will allow proficiency data to be reported directly to parents, students, and schools, providing transparent insights into student progress. Notably, NDCDE is the first virtual school using Genius to achieve this type of CBE reporting. Once finalized, the development code will be available nationwide, giving other virtual schools the ability to adopt and report competency-based education for the first time. These efforts reinforce NDCDE's commitment to high standards, instructional excellence, and continuous improvement, ensuring all stakeholders have the tools and information necessary to support student success.

NDCDE requires students to complete an end-of-course survey in each course. Student feedback continues to offer valuable insight into the quality and rigor of NDCDE courses. Based on 11,137 student responses from the end-of-course survey, results show that the challenge of NDCDE courses averaged 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, reflecting an appropriate challenge level to foster growth without causing frustration due to rigor. Core academic courses align with expectations for rigor, while Physical Education, Career & Technical Education (CTE), and elective courses scored lower, which is consistent with trends seen in both virtual and in-person settings where these courses often emphasize skill-building and creativity rather than academic complexity.

A key indicator of student and family confidence in NDCDE's services is its high rate of returning students, a major factor contributing to sustained growth, specifically over this biennium to date:

- 60% of students enrolled in at least two courses.
- 36% enrolled in three or more courses.

- 15% enrolled in five or more courses.

These return rates demonstrate positive student experiences and continued trust in NDCDE as a reliable, high-quality educational partner.

- **Slide 18:** Feedback from both parents and NDCDE teachers aligns with student responses, further validating that courses maintain high expectations while identifying areas for continued improvement.
  - Parent Feedback (n=508): Parents agree that NDCDE teachers uphold high expectations for learning (4.1/5), and instructional quality and overall satisfaction both rated 4.2/5.
  - Teacher Feedback (n=48): NDCDE teachers rate expectations for learning at 4.6/5 and highlight active engagement, problem-solving, and assigned work completion as the top classroom observations.

Teacher characterization of the type of student activities taking place at NDCDE align with research-based best practices for online instruction, which emphasize active participation, problem-solving, and timely feedback through tools like rubrics and one-on-one conversations.

- **Slide 19:** NDCDE has made significant strides over the past two years across multiple areas of its operations. These accomplishments, detailed further in the NDCDE Major Accomplishments Report, Innovation Waiver, and One-Page Accomplishments Summary included with this testimony, demonstrate a clear focus on quality, accountability, and student success. (Please note that the figures in the Major Accomplishments Report, written in July 2024, have since been surpassed as NDCDE continues to make progress.)
  - Competency-Based Education (CBE): NDCDE has shifted toward a mastery-based model, aligning 25% of courses with priority state standards, with a goal of reaching 70% by June 2025 and full implementation by Fall 2026. Expanded teacher training and enhanced technology infrastructure continue to support this transition.
  - Academic Integrity Safeguards: To reinforce academic integrity, NDCDE has implemented a Dean of Students-led monitoring system, TurnItIn plagiarism detection, locked-down exam passcodes, and structured violation reporting. New policies on AI use and academic integrity have also been introduced, along with a required virtual onboarding course to clarify expectations upfront.
  - Operational Improvements: NDCDE has undergone strategic restructuring, clarifying staff roles, expanding staffing for increased enrollments, and adjusting tuition rates while maintaining high teacher satisfaction. Teacher workload models were revised, and NDCDE now outperforms state averages in 9 of 13 Gallup Survey measures--an instrument used by the State of ND to benchmark employee satisfaction across agencies.
  - Curricular Changes: A detailed quality review led to the phasing out of 62 courses and aligning remaining content with state priority standards. Authentic assessments have been expanded, and the Curriculum Committee now reviews all new courses for content quality, industry relevance, and assessment rigor. The Military Pathway Program and cybersecurity and computer programming courses have also been added, emphasizing career readiness and state standard alignment.

- New Partnerships: NDCDE has established key collaborations with the ND State Library, National Guard, EduTech, and Home on the Range, focusing on expanding educational access, professional development, and curriculum innovation.

These accomplishments reflect NDCDE's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, data-driven decision-making, and providing high-quality virtual education to North Dakota students.

- **Slide 20:** NDCDE's commitment to quality improvement has garnered both state and national recognition. The organization has been frequently invited to present on topics ranging from curricular reform to competency-based education by leading national virtual education organizations, including the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA) and the Digital Learning Collaborative (DLC). Notably, Assistant Superintendent Enderson received the DLC's top individual honor last year for her leadership in competency-based education. NDCDE's impact extends beyond its leadership team. NDCDE teachers have earned state-level awards and serve on committees and boards that influence North Dakota's educational policies and priorities. The organization is also establishing itself as a state leader in course design and program development, with its Military Pathway Program recently being added to the Choice Ready Framework for military readiness. This slide highlights the many ways NDCDE is making a statewide and national impact, advancing the field of virtual education through innovation, collaboration, and leadership.
- **Slide 21:** With all this momentum, the NDCDE leadership team has devised a comprehensive strategic plan to help the organization continue to evolve. This short video outlines this plan, with our additional priorities for the biennium, the resources needed to support them, and the possible barriers to our success and hence the ability to extend more quality virtual education opportunities to students outlined in the slides that follow.
- **Slides 22-24:** NDCDE's 25-27 biennium priorities and budget are strategically aligned to ensure continued quality, growth, and equitable access to virtual education across North Dakota. As previously demonstrated, there is a genuine demand for virtual learning, and NDCDE has responded with continuous improvement, expanded course offerings, and proactive measures to maintain academic rigor. However, proposed legislation like HB 1105 and HB 1172 poses a significant risk to sustaining this progress.

NDCDE operates on a tuition-contingent budget, reinvesting revenue directly into the continued innovation and improvement of its services. Key areas supported by this funding include:

- Hiring more adjunct teachers to meet growing demand and maintain low student-teacher ratios.
- Curricular expansion and modernization, including new CTE, Military Pathway, and cybersecurity courses.
- Technology investments, such as AI tutoring tools, expanded competency-based dashboards, and additional technology-based academic integrity safeguards.

The budget request reflects both fiscal responsibility and student-centered priorities, with targeted investments in teacher training, curriculum quality, and personalized learning tools to ensure long-term success.

## Closing

The progress NDCDE has made—detailed further in the Major Accomplishments Report, Innovation Waiver, and One-Page Department Summaries—clearly shows that the agency is not only meeting current needs but also preparing for the future of education in North Dakota. To continue providing high-quality, equitable virtual education, sustained support and a stable tuition model are essential.

NDCDE is not just a curriculum provider—it is a comprehensive educational service, uniquely positioned to support districts with certified teachers, instructional oversight, and technical infrastructure. The proposed legislative changes risk limiting student access to quality education options while disrupting an operational model that has proven successful.

To close, I want to share a powerful testimonial from a parent whose words reflect the life-changing impact of NDCDE:

*“I am a parent of a NDCDE graduate. My child graduated this past fall with both a high school diploma from NDCDE and an associate degree from Dakota College—a year early—thanks to the flexibility of self-paced online courses.*

*My child had previously attended public school but faced emotional struggles, including anxiety, depression, and bullying related to Tourette’s syndrome. Online learning through NDCDE provided the opportunity for her to thrive. The courses were challenging and relevant, fully preparing her for college success. Teachers responded quickly, graded promptly, and offered detailed feedback. The counselor ensured she stayed on track for graduation, even while balancing dual credit courses.*

*Online learning isn’t the easy way out. It takes discipline, independence, and active parental involvement. I’m thankful for the opportunities NDCDE provided and hope more students can benefit from this program.”*

This story is just one of several included in the written testimony submitted for your consideration. These testimonials emphasize that NDCDE’s model works—not just for a few, but for a wide range of students who need flexible, high-quality educational options tailored to their circumstances.

HB 1105 threatens to limit these life-changing opportunities by imposing financial barriers that would reduce access to virtual learning, despite its proven success. NDCDE has demonstrated it can deliver quality education, continuous improvement, and fiscal responsibility while meeting the diverse needs of North Dakota students. I urge you to oppose HB 1105 and protect equitable access to virtual education for all North Dakota students. Thank you.



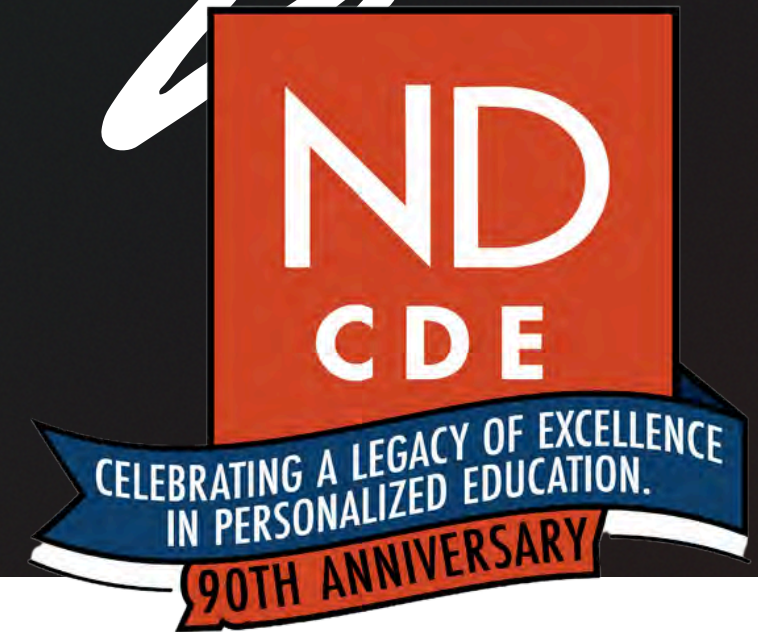
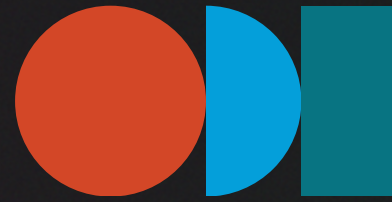
# OVERVIEW OF SERVICES: IN RESPONSE TO VIRTUAL EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**Presented by:** Alyssa Martin,  
NDCDE State Director

**Date:** January 16, 2025



# AGENDA



01. Agency Overview

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02. 2023-25 Data & Outcomes

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03. 2025-27 Priotities

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04.

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05.



Use this QR Code or [link](#)  
to watch presentation  
videos and click on urls.



<https://www.cde.nd.gov/>





# INTRODUCTION

## 90 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN PERSONALIZED LEARNING!

- Founded in 1935
- **Mission:** Supporting K-12 schools by delivering quality education that helps students achieve their goals and reach their potential.
- **Legacy of Innovation:** A pioneer in virtual education, continuously adapting to meet student needs and state priorities.

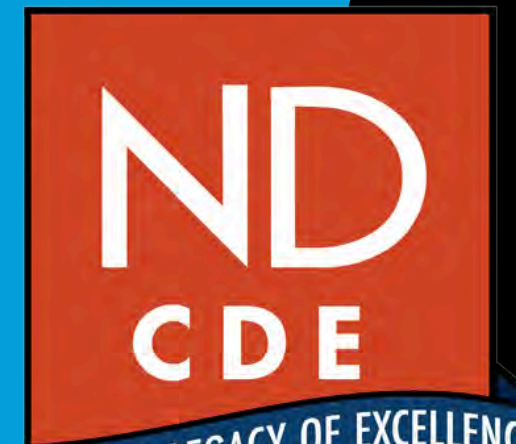
## DELIVERY FORMAT

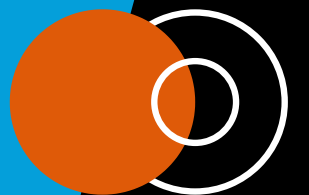
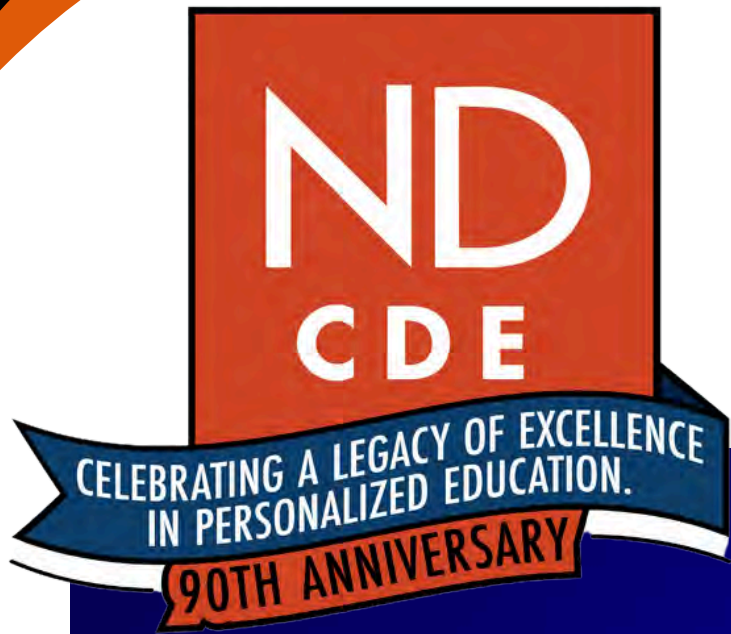
With origins as a correspondence school, NDCDE is now 100%:

- Virtual, self-paced

Each student is assigned a North Dakota teacher who monitors progress, provides feedback, and offers virtual meetings.

NDCDE is a supplemental educational provider.





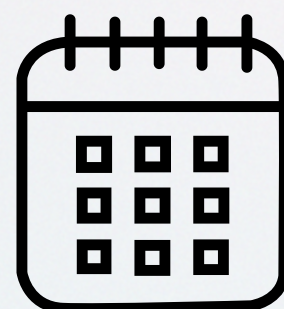


# TERMINOLOGY



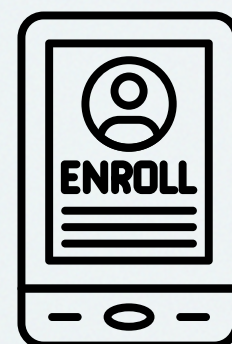
## LEARNING COACH (LC)

On the ground proctor and educational support provider to a student. Learn more by scanning the QR Code.



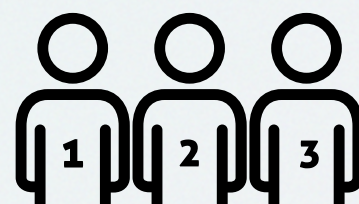
## ROLLING ENROLLMENT

Students can start courses at any time throughout the year, rather than following a fixed semester schedule. This flexibility is critical in a virtual setting where we support students on an individual learning timeline, often supplementing their local school coursework.



## ENROLLMENT

Represent the total number of courses students are enrolled in. If a student takes three courses, that's three enrollments, even though it's just one student.



## HEADCOUNT

Represent the number of unique students served. If a student takes multiple courses, they are still counted as just one headcount.



## LMS: LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The virtual classroom where all teaching and learning take place in a virtual school. It's where students access their courses, complete assignments, receive feedback, and track their progress.



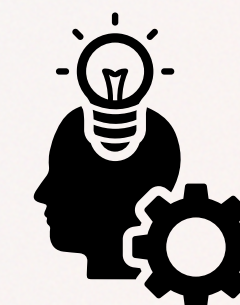
## SIS: STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

The platform we use to manage and track student data, including course enrollments, grades, attendance, and communication. It's essential for keeping records organized, ensuring accurate reporting, and supporting the management of a virtual school.



## ASYNCHRONOUS

Students can access their coursework and complete assignments on their own schedule, rather than attending live, scheduled classes.



## COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

Students progress by mastering specific skills and knowledge rather than simply completing coursework or spending a set amount of time in class.

Because NDCDE plans course-by-course, enrollments are the more accurate measure for staffing and resource planning than headcount.





# COURSE OFFERINGS



## CORE

Offer all courses required by state law in grades K-12, including core subject areas: Math, English, PE, Science & Social Studies. Often, CDE's advanced courses in areas such as math are unavailable in rural schools.



## ELECTIVES

Students in middle and high school can take courses ranging from music to coding.



## CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

A wide-variety of CTE courses are offered in fields such as health science, business, and technology.



## EVER EXPANDING

We strive to find curricular opportunities for students not found in their local schools.



# BY THE NUMBERS

No	Category	Description
51	Diplomas Awarded	Self-pay homeschooled students
90	Years of Service	NDCDE has operated since 1935
104	Employees	29 FTEs (1.8 currently vacant; 3 new FTEs added in 2023-25), 11 FTTs (9 teachers), 64 PTTs (adjuncts)
305	ND Schools Served, 23-25	Unique <u>schools</u> (private and public), Based on 730 days
307	Courses Offered	28.3% elementary, 12.7% middle school, 59% high school
8803	Students Served, 23-25*	24,500 enrollments, 8350 North Dakota Students, based on 730 days
25.4%	Enrollment Increase (21-23) v. (23-25)	19,539 (21-23) to 24,500 (23-25), Based on 730 days





Effective Augst 1, 2023:

# 23-25 Tuition Rates

STANDARD	SOS* DISCOUNT	OUT OF STATE (OS)
<div>\$259 /Course</div> <div> <div> <div>✓</div> <div> <div>Paid by ND homeschool families and ND private and public schools, unless eligible for an NDSOS discount.</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>✓</div> <div> <div>Standard rate across all K-12 classes, except AG, EmpowerU, &amp; certifications.</div> </div> </div> </div>	<div>\$229 /Course</div> <div> <div> <div>✓</div> <div> <div>Must be a current member of ND Small Organized Schools and have fewer than 3,500 students.</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>✓</div> <div> <div>Price break intended to reduce access barriers.</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>SOS: ND Small Organized Schools</div> </div> </div>	<div>\$349 /Course</div> <div> <div> <div>✓</div> <div> <div>Paid by out-of-state families and schools.</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>✓</div> <div> <div>Subsidizes CDE revenue.</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>✓</div> <div> <div>Standard OS rate across all K-12 classes, except AG, EmpowerU, and certifications.</div> </div> </div> </div>

## Benchmarking

State Virtual School	Tuition Charged Per Course
MT Digital (Peer)	\$123
MI Virtual (Aspirational)	\$335
National Average	\$219

### 21-23 NDCDE Tuition Rates:

- \$159 to \$189 in-state
- \$259 out-of-state



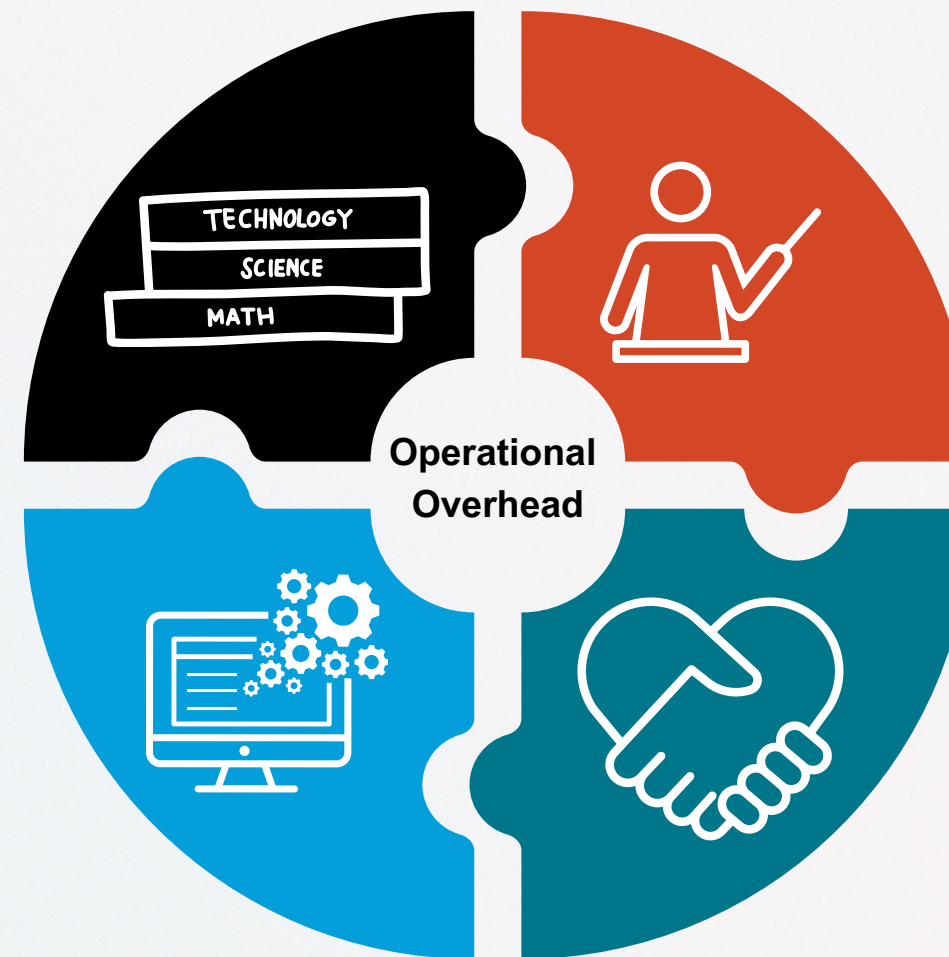
# WHAT IS INCLUDED IN NDCDE'S TUITION?

## Curriculum

Vendor purchased, aligned to state standards by NDCDE staff, integrated into NDCDE learning management system, nearly 98% digital.

## Technology & Help Desk

NDCDE has a number of systems unique to it and needed to run an online school from an E-commerce platform to a learning management system that serves as our virtual classroom space. Four IT staff service all NDCDE technology infrastructure and a help desk.



## ND Licensed Teachers

An NDCDE employed, North Dakota licensed teacher is assigned to every NDCDE student. The teacher is asked to monitor progress, hold student meetings, provide individual instruction, and give timely feedback on all assignments. Teachers are also responsible for classroom management and curricular review.

## Student Support

NDCDE employs a licensed counselor to help connect students with resources to complement their learning and to ensure that IEPs/504s are on file and shared with teachers. A dean of students monitors academic risks and student conduct issues working with local schools to implement needed interventions.

**NDCDE cost per enrollment: \$469, State portion: 26% to 51%**  
**\*Based on spending and enrollments over 18 months of this biennium**



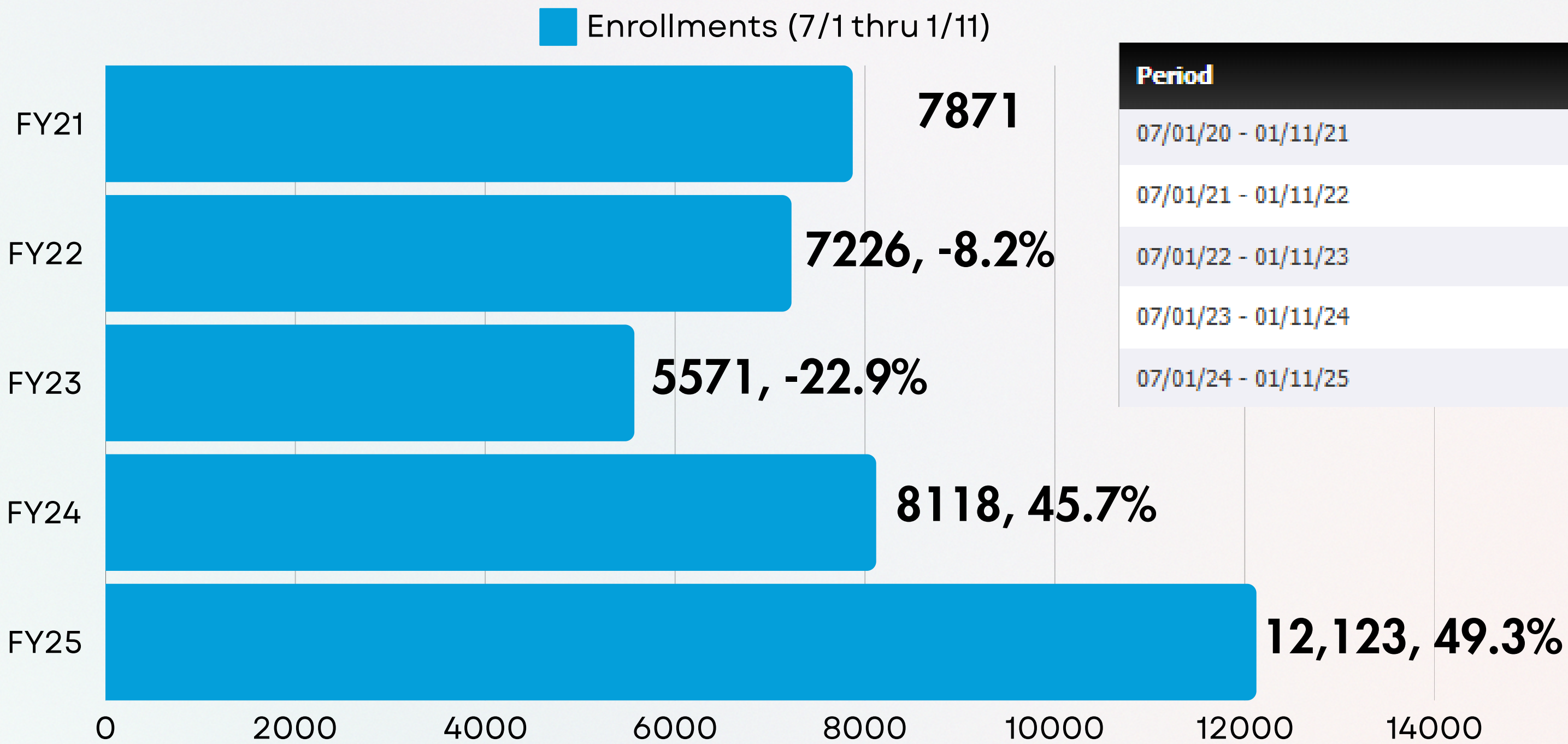
# 2023-25 OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

- Record Growth and Stakeholder Satisfaction
- Competency-Based Education
- Academic Integrity Safeguards
- Operational Improvements
- Cybersecurity Education, Curricular Reform, and Other New Courses
- New Partnerships





# RAPID GROWTH, CONTINUED



Period	Enrollments
07/01/20 - 01/11/21	7871
07/01/21 - 01/11/22	7226
07/01/22 - 01/11/23	5571
07/01/23 - 01/11/24	8118
07/01/24 - 01/11/25	12123



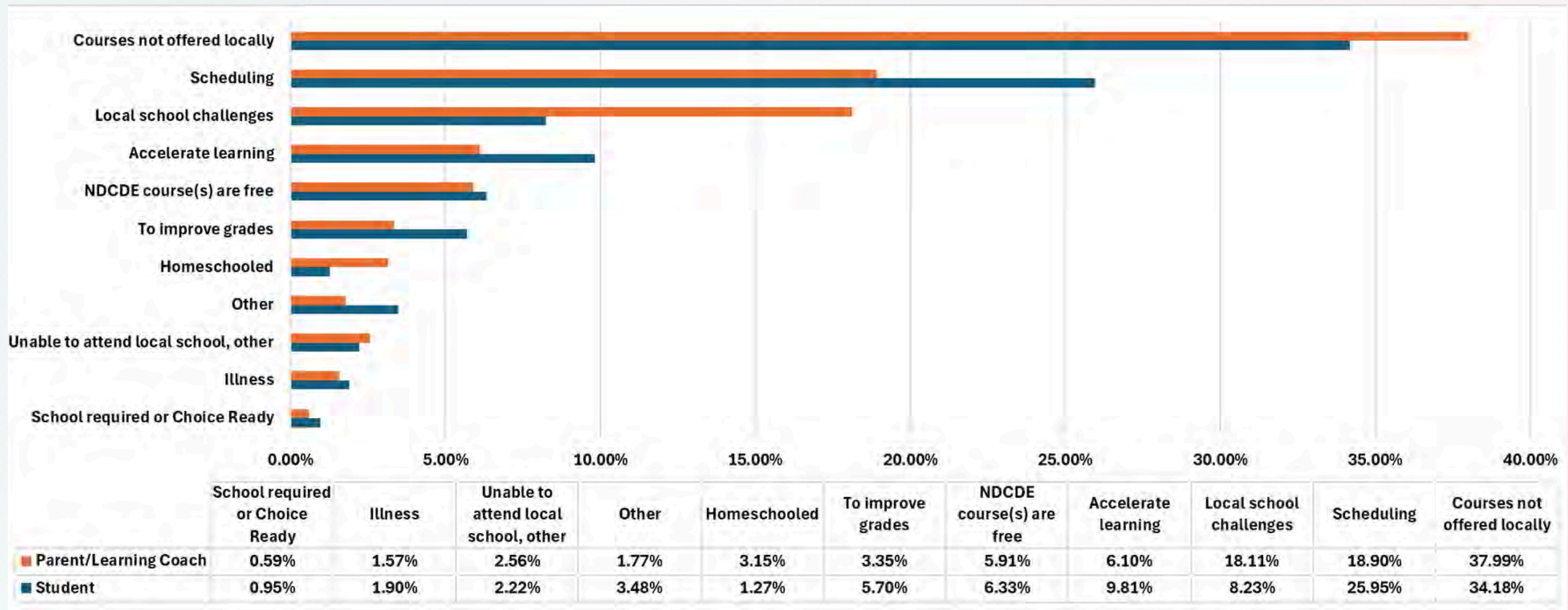
See  
testimonials

# RAPID GROWTH AT NDCDE



## REASONS

- HB 1376 (68th Session)
- Parent and Student Need for Choice (See Survey Results, n=825, 508 parents/lcs and 317 students)





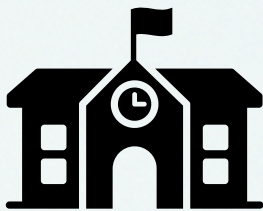
# RAPID GROWTH, CONTINUED

## FINANCIAL IMPACT



### Impact on State

- \$0 in General Fund
- \$2.5m Emergency Commission Request Made in Fall 2024 with \$1.9m from tuition revenue and \$600k from a grant



### Impact on ND Schools

- 129 Districts Sent NDCDE Students
- 38 Districts Sent No Students to NDCDE
- Average expenditure by district size shown; districts with virtual academies included

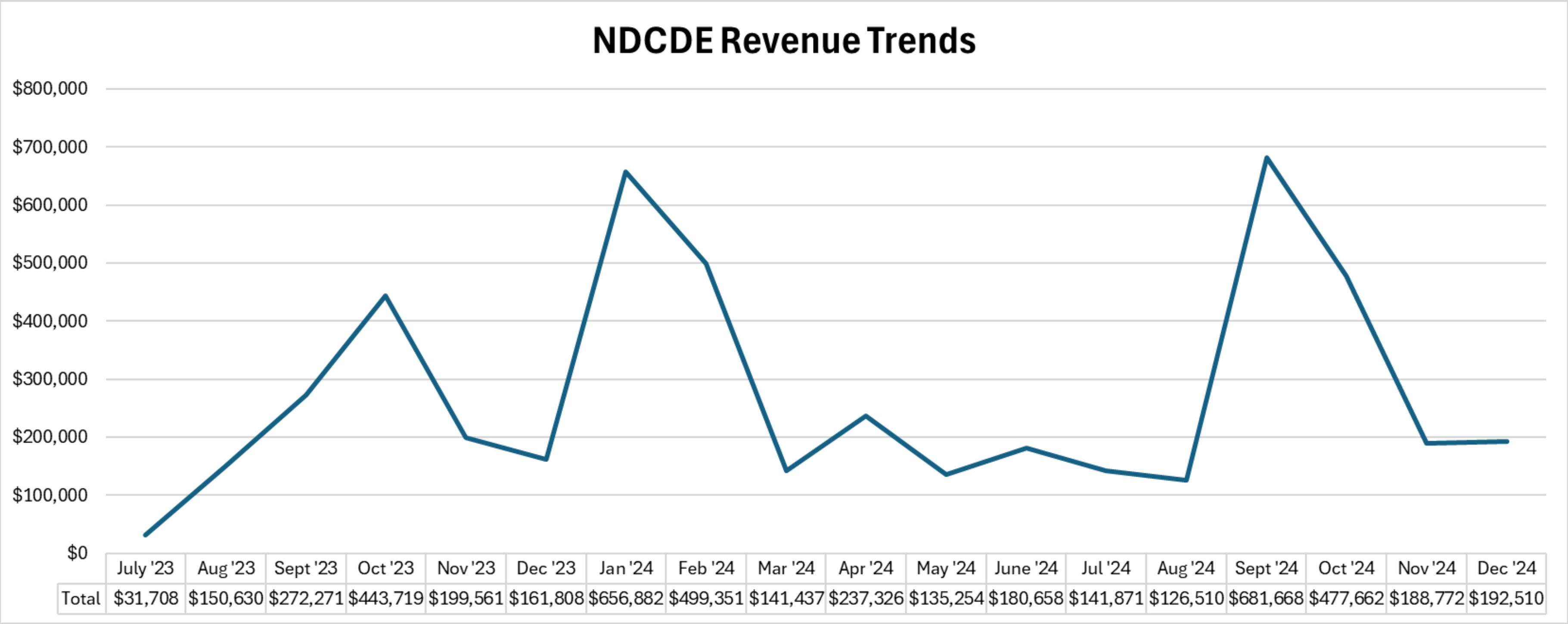
### Impact on ND Schools

District Size Groups	Average NDCDE Spending FY 24	Average NDCDE Spending FY 25 (6 months remaining)	Average Total
<200 students	\$5,494	\$2,974	\$7,801
200-500 students	\$9,160	\$5,392	\$14,099
501-2000 students	\$10,698	\$6,456	\$16,525
2001-6000 students	\$67,564	\$39,529	\$107,093
>6000 students	\$232,823	\$117,098	\$349,920
Overall Average	\$18,960	\$10,447	\$28,024



# RAPID GROWTH, CONTINUED

## FINANCIAL IMPACT: \$4.9m earned in 18 months

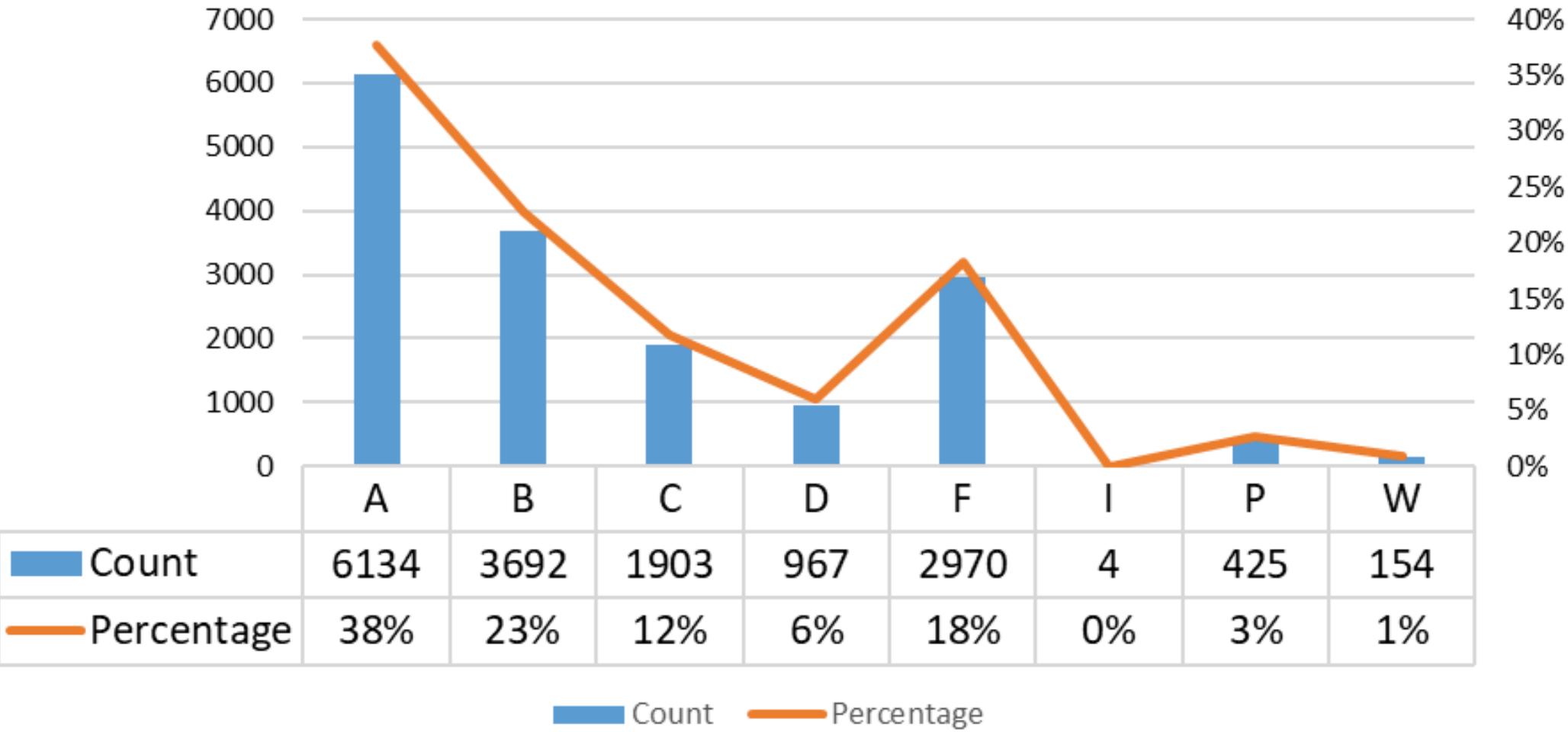




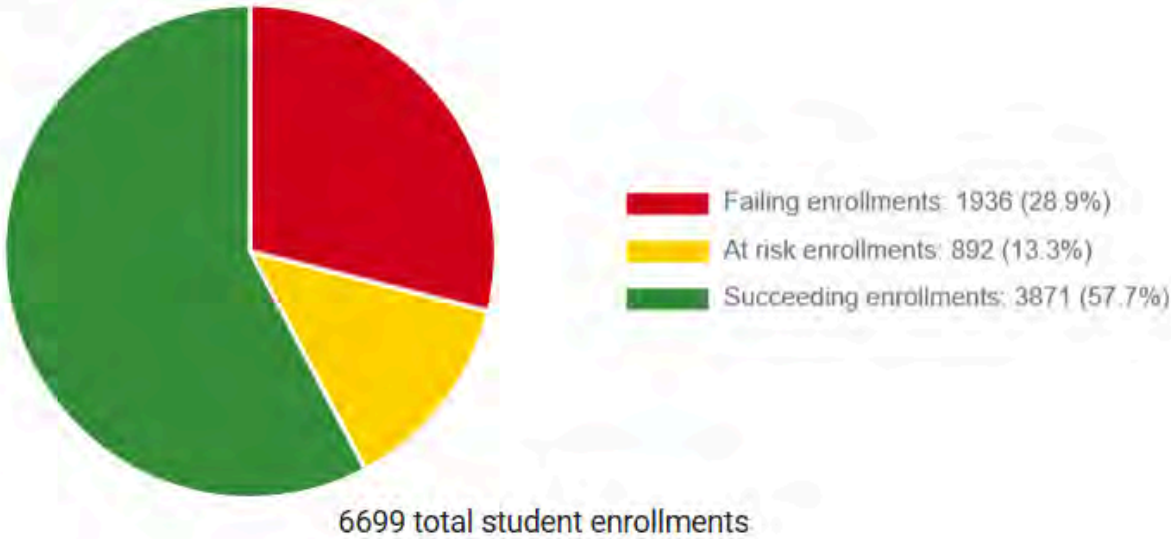
# RAPID GROWTH, CONTINUED

## Quality & Satisfaction

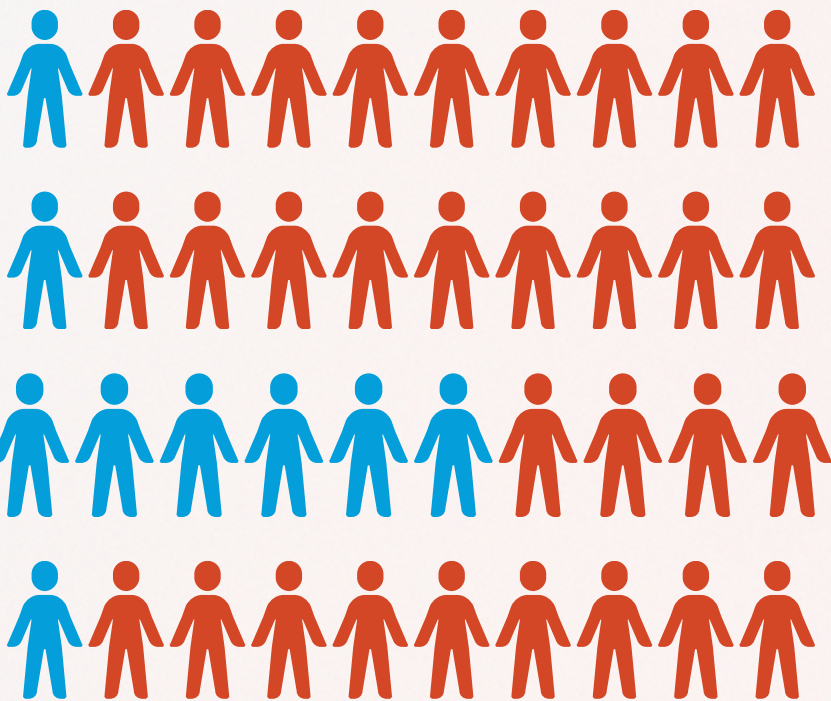
NDCDE Grade Distribution FY 24-25



Active enrollment summary



Of students enrolling from 7/23 to 12/24:



13% active

7% dropped

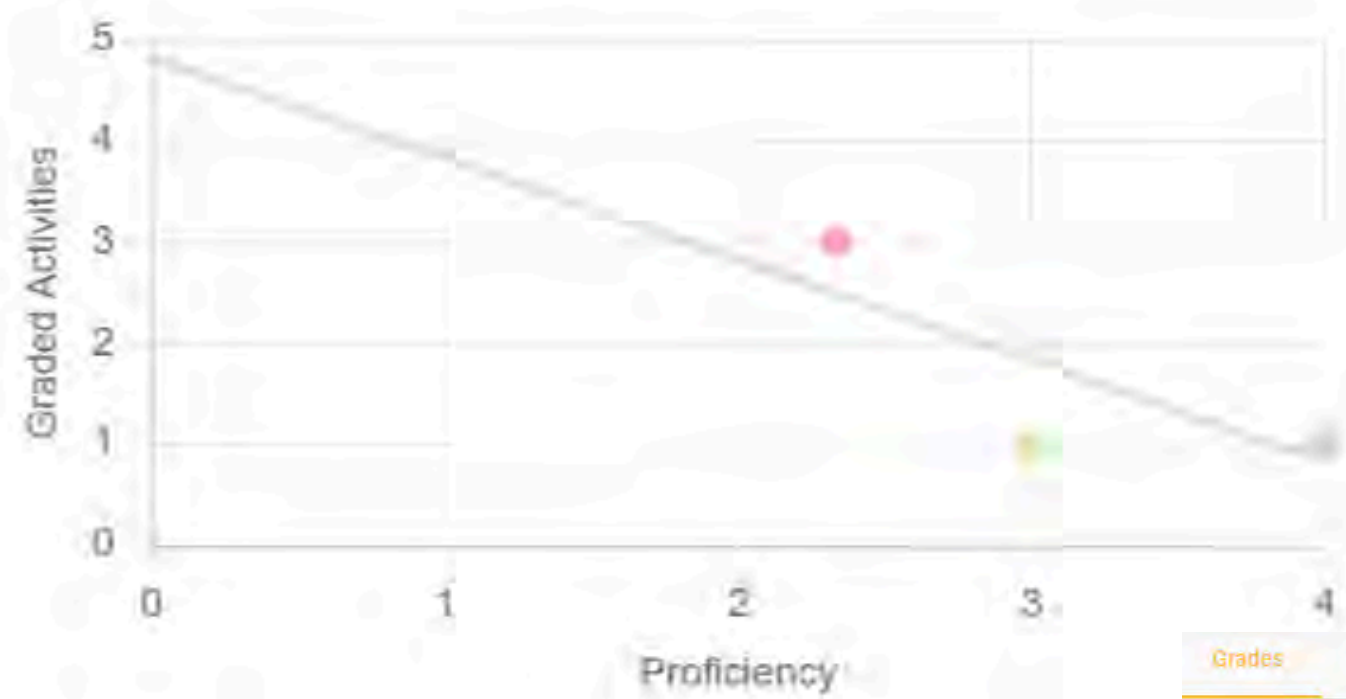
65% passed

15% failed



# NDCDE QUALITY: STUDENT OUTCOMES

**5.NO.NBT.6:** Find whole-number quotients and remainders with up to four-digit dividends and two-digit divisors using place value strategies. Show and justify the calculation by using equations, rectangular arrays, and/or area models. Clarification: Division procedures, including the algorithm, are included in sixth grade.



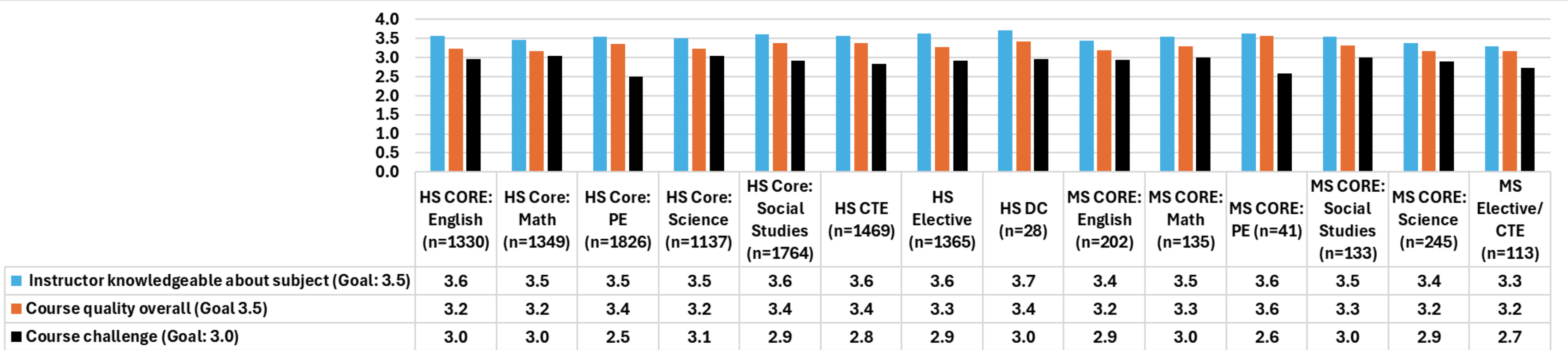
GradesTrendsUnit SummaryFor Me											
<input type="checkbox"/> Name		Proficiency	3.AR.OA...	3.AR.OA...	3.AR.OA...	3.NO.NB...	3.AR.OA...	3.GM.M...	3-5.MA.P: Learners can develop ...		
			Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
<input type="checkbox"/> Moser (CDE Staff...		0 of 5									
<input type="checkbox"/> Schaefer (CDE St...		0 of 5									
<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Brad		0 of 5	2	2.5	2.5						
<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Clifton		0 of 5									
<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Fred		1 of 5	2	2	3				2	2	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Marjorie		5 of 5	3	3	4				3	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Trial		3 of 5	3	3	3						



# RAPID GROWTH, CONTINUED

## Quality & Satisfaction

Student Ratings on Course Quality, 4.0 Scale, n= 11,137



### Returning Student Data: FY 24-25

- 60% of students enrolled in at least two courses
- 36% of students enrolled in at least three courses
- 15% of students were enrolled in at least five courses



# RAPID GROWTH, CONTINUED

## Quality & Satisfaction

### Parent Feedback (5.0 point scale, n=508)

- Teachers have high expectations for learning: 4.1
- Courses prepare students for the future: 4.1
- Overall instructional quality: 4.2
- Overall satisfaction: 4.2



### NDCDE Teacher Feedback (5.0 scale, n=48)

- Teachers uphold high expectations for learning: 4.6
- All NDCDE staff know and perform their jobs well: 4.6
- NDCDE provides a learning environment where all learners thrive: 4.2
- Top activities someone would observe in our online classrooms:
  - **Learners actively engage with teachers about content (n=14)**
  - **Learners solve problems (n=13)**
  - **Learners complete assigned work (n=13)**
- Top four words associated with teachers monitoring student progress:
  - **Grading (n=44)**
  - **Use of rubrics (n=33)**
  - **Have learners demonstrate progress (n=25)**
  - **One-on-one conversations (n=23)**



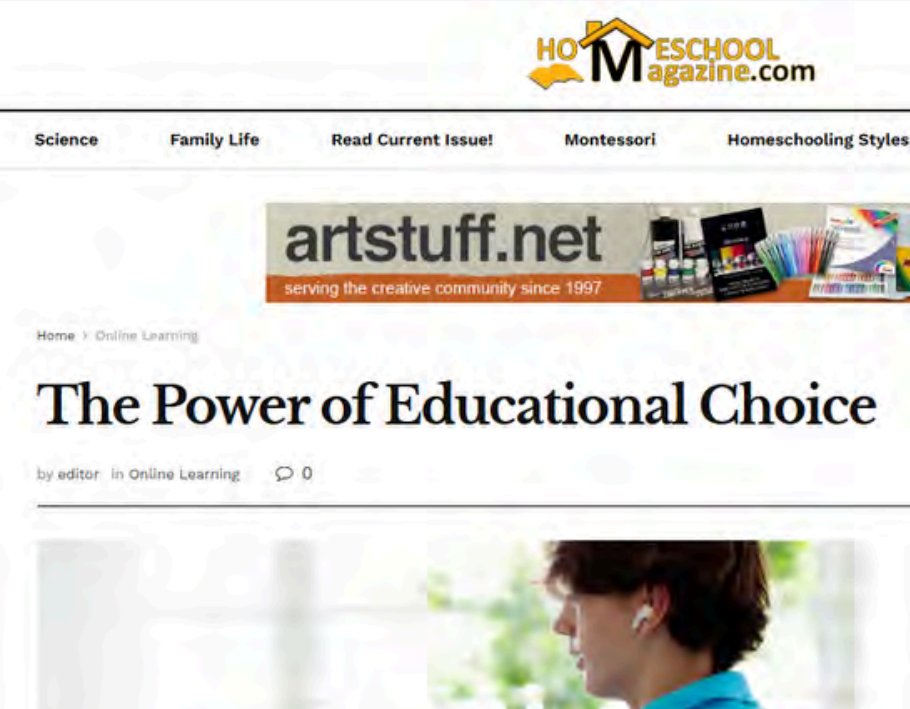
# ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Area	Description
Competency-Based Education (CBE)	A model focusing on student mastery of skills rather than time spent in class. To make this shift, NDCDE aligned 25% of courses with state priority standards, with a goal of 70% by June 2025. We have and continue to expand teacher training and technology infrastructure to support personalized, proficiency-based learning, aiming for full implementation by Fall 2026.
Academic Integrity Safeguards	NDCDE has implemented a comprehensive academic integrity protocol that includes a Dean of Students to oversee weekly monitoring, a structured reporting system for violations, and the use of technology tools like TurnItIn and locked-down exam passwords. New guidelines for AI use and authentic assessments were introduced to deter cheating and a new virtual onboarding course is required to ensure students are informed of these requirements.
Operational Improvements	Significant organizational restructuring has improved efficiency, including the development of a strategic plan, staff role clarifications, and a focus on data-driven decision-making. The school expanded staffing to meet increased enrollments, adjusted tuition rates, and enhanced communication channels while phasing out underperforming programs to better allocate resources. Teacher workload models were changed to accommodate growth while maintaining high teacher satisfaction and NDCDE has seen significant improvements in employee satisfaction on the Gallup Survey, ranking higher than the state in 9/13 of the questions asked.
Curricular Changes	NDCDE has phased out approximately 62 courses after a detailed quality review, aligning remaining courses with state priority standards and adding authentic assessments. The new Curriculum Committee ensures that all new courses meet standards for content quality, industry relevance, and assessment rigor. The Military Pathway Program was added with a focus on increasing student interest in a specific branch and career aligned to ASVAB results. Additionally, a comprehensive evaluation of CTE courses has led to enhanced quality standards, including authentic assessments and the customization of vendor curriculum to align with state standards. NDCDE has also led in developing and offering cybersecurity and computer programming courses statewide in partnership with eduTech.
New Partnerships	NDCDE has established partnerships with the North Dakota State Library, the National Guard, EduTech, and Home on the Range. These collaborations focus on expanding access to educational resources, professional development, and curriculum enhancements






# QUALITY: STATEWIDE & NATIONALLY



**Recording from Today's Data-Driven Strategic Planning Meeting**  
Posted by Cindy Hamblin on Oct 17, 2024

 Today's topical meeting on data-driven strategic planning was excellent! I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Jamey Fitzpatrick and Scott Watkins from Michigan Virtual, as well as Alyssa Martin from the North Dakota Center for Distance Education, for sharing their expertise with the VLLA membership.

For those who would like to revisit the insights shared, or for those unable to attend, the meeting recording and passcode are provided below, along with the two slide decks from today's presentations.

**Zoom Recording:**  
**Passcode: q%8dl!=#**

[Michigan Virtual's Slide Deck](#)

[North Dakota CDE Slide Deck](#)

Thanks again to our presenters, and I hope everyone found the session as valuable!

Cindy

**Press**


NEWS LOCAL

## NDCDE partners with Digital Learning Collaborative to enhance online education

New partnership aims to enhance digital education in North Dakota, providing educators and students with cutting-edge resources and support.

by Alyssa Martin, Ph.D., NDCDE

On behalf of the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE) as you prepare for the upcoming school year. As homeschool families often difficult decisions about curricula, delivery methods, daily schedule requirements, and finding opportunities to connect your students to community activities in your community. I can relate-I often assisted my mother in educating my youngest brother. Through this direct experience, I gained the power of educational choice.



Approximately 30% of participating parents found it difficult to help their children use technology for educational purposes, according to Power Homeschool. JURGITA VAICIKIENIENE/vejaa - stock.adobe.com

VLLA CONFERENCE AGENDA					
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH 2024					
7:00-7:45 BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION <small>SPOOFER'S STONE</small>					
8:00 - 9:30 CONFERENCE OPENING <small>SPOOFER'S STONE</small>					
9:45-10:35 BREAKOUT SESSION 1	TITLE	BRODIE PAYNE 1	BRODIE PAYNE 2	BRODIE PAYNE 3	BRODIE PAYNE 4
	PRESENTER	Shaping the Future through Organizational Transformation: NDCDE's Journey to Competency-Based Education Kirstin Girard N Dakota Center for Distance Ed	Beyond Chat: AI in the Classroom at Virtual Arkansas Kyle Yancy Virtual Arkansas	Tiered Support Update: Data Talks. What is it saying? Steve Blair ACCESS Virtual Learning	Empowering Educator through the GALS Student Success Coaching Initiative Erin Ly Hill Georgia Virtual Learning
2:15-3:05 BREAKOUT SESSION 5	TITLE	We Can Do Better: Removing Cookie Cutter Tech for Innovative Remote Solutions Christy O'Glen Class Technologies	The Big Pivot: Interventions That Work? Dr. Nichole Lemmon Launch Virtual Learning	Customizing Assessments for Authentic Learning: Bridging Vendor Curriculum & SME Customized Learning Opportunities Kaitlyn Allen N Dakota Center for Distance Ed	Virtual ESL Education: Innovative Approaches to Support Learners Larissa Zompole Wisconsin Virtual School
	PRESENTER				
ROUNDTABLE TRAMMEL					
Want to Be More Flexible? Stop In For An Alignment First Jennifer Hobbes N Carolina Virtual Public School					



### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RETREAT AGENDA


October 28 and 29, 2024

Hyatt Regency Phoenix - 122 N 2nd St, Phoenix, AZ 85004

1:50 - 2:45 pm - Facilitated Table Talk Breakouts (Third Set)

Topics/Facilitators - Deliverables for DLAC

- [Policy \(Alyssa Martin & Allison Powell\)](#) - Regency C
- [Research \(Joe Freidhoff & Chris Voelker\)](#) - Regency B
- [Practice \(Kim Loomis & Katie Allison\)](#) - Regency A



**ESSA Implementation Committee Meeting**  
December 16, 2024, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM CT  
[Microsoft Teams](#)

AGENDA

Agenda Items:

1:00 PM Welcome - Superintendent Baesler

Updates/Overview of Meeting - Laurie Matzke

Presentations:

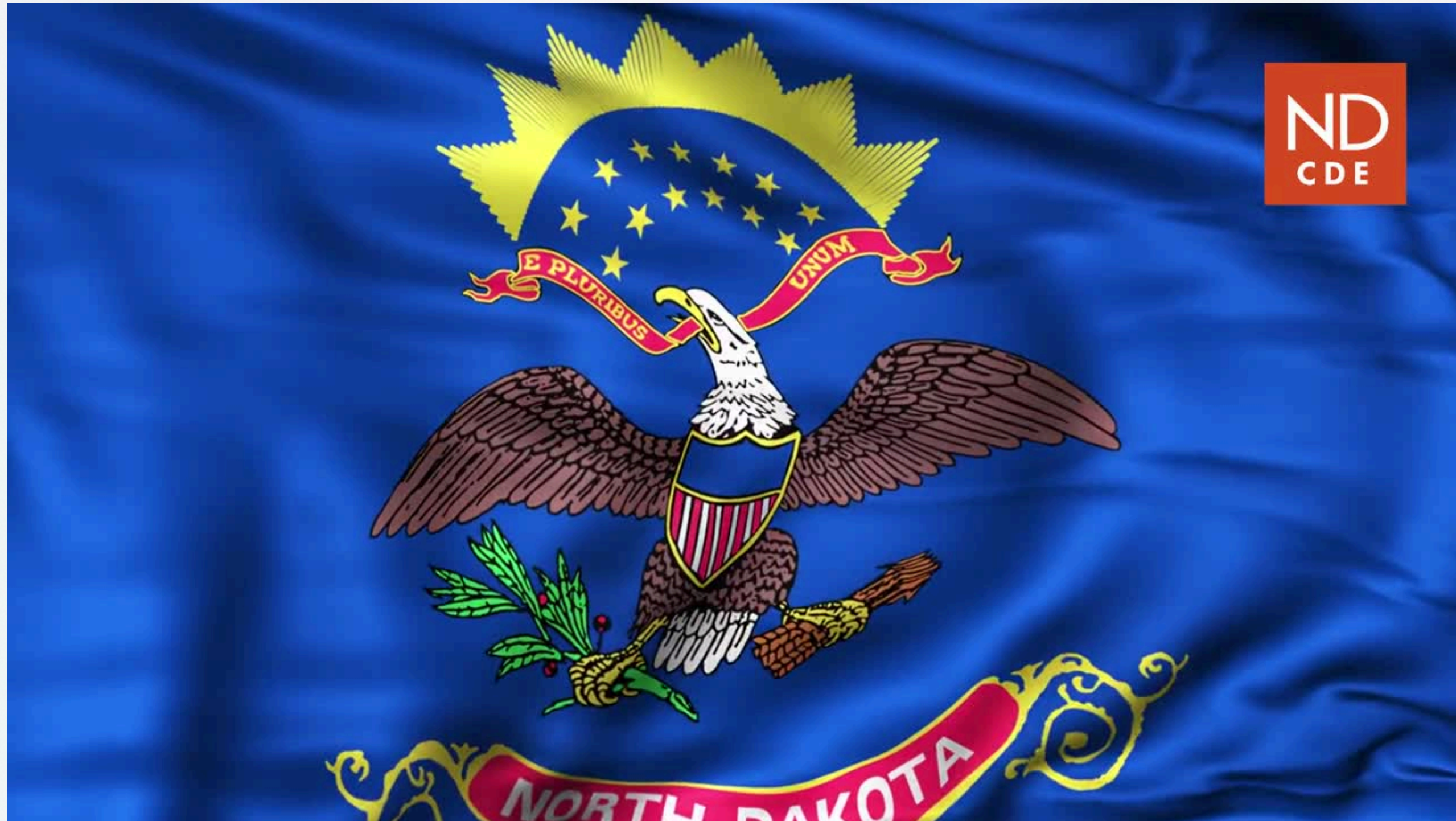
- Student Growth for 2025 Accountability - Stan Schauer
- Reports on Subcommittee work
  - ✓ Unique Schools - Amanda Peterson
  - ✓ Elementary/Middle School Accountability - Amanda Peterson
  - ✓ Choice Ready/Military - Kaitlyn Allen and CW4 Jess Willard



lee



# 2025-27 PRIORITIES







# LEGISLATION FINANICALLY IMPACTING US



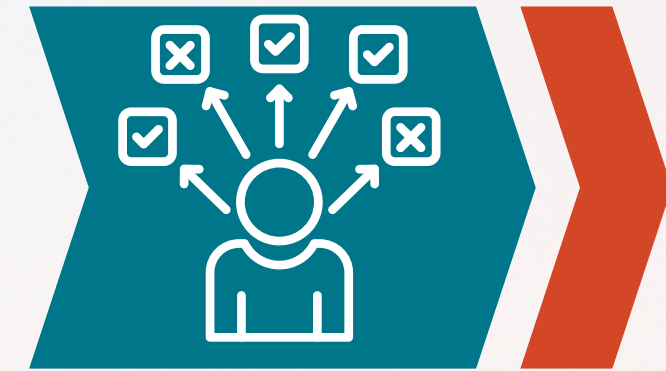
## HB 1105

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

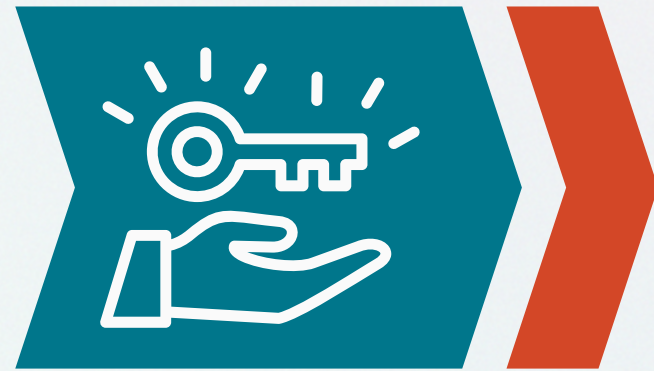
Additional laws on school vouchers and public charter schools, if passed, will create a new marketplace of virtual education options for students. NDCDE supports expanding virtual options for students but is uncertain of the impact on our enrollments. With these bills yet to be released, we are unable to evaluate the scope and possible duplication of these services, preventing market analysis.







# 2025-27 PRIORITIES



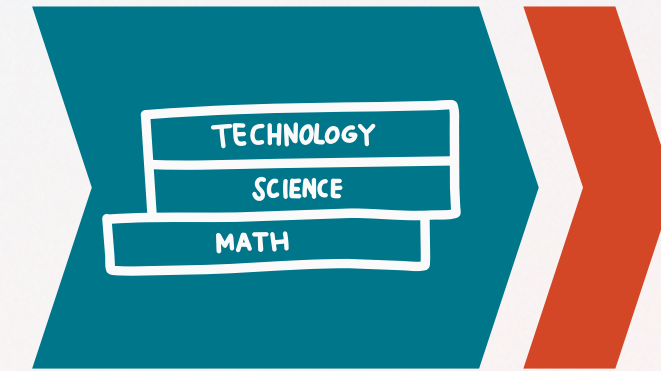
## Ensure Students Have Accessible, Equitable Choice & Educational Access

By shifting the financial responsibility to districts, the 68th ND legislature allowed parents to choose NDCDE courses without direct financial barriers, ensuring greater equity in educational choice. To sustain this access, NDCDE will continue to advocate for students to take NDCDE courses with no out-of-pocket costs. We also seek to expand spending authority and tuition waivers to further remove barriers for homeschool and Military Program students while maintaining operational capacity through adequate staffing.



## Accountability: CBE, Continuous Improvement & Assessment Outcomes

NDCDE is advancing CBE by focusing on student mastery of standards rather than seat time. We continue to strengthen instructional design, teacher training, and student data reporting systems to ensure personalized learning, assessment accuracy, and continuous quality improvement. We hope to bridge a connection to the state student reporting system to draw correlations between learning at NDCDE and state assessment results. We aim to improve our e-Comemrce site for families and schools.



## Expand Curriculum to Align with State & Student Needs While Fostering Success

NDCDE has expanded its curriculum to meet state priorities, including the launch of the Military Program and cybersecurity courses. We have phased out approximately 17% of underperforming courses, while new content has been carefully selected and customized to align with state standards and incorporate authentic assessments. Additional staff capacity will support ongoing curriculum development and the scaling of specialized programs like the Military Program and courses in areas like technology, restorative justice, and innovative approaches to teaching the core, doubling down on student support through automated tutoring and predictive analytics.





Agency: Center for Distance Education				Agency No: 20400	
Account	Description	2023-25 Biennium Appropriations	2025-27 Base Budget Request	2025-27 Optional Budget Changes	2025-27 Total Budget Request
511000	Salaries - Permanent	\$4,716,300.00	\$4,644,788.00	\$306,340.00	\$4,951,128.00
512000	Salaries - Other	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300,000	\$300,000
513000	Temporary Salaries	\$1,950,574.00	\$2,212,093.00	\$1,617,020.00	\$3,829,113.00
516000	Fringe Benefits	\$2,081,680.00	\$2,199,220.00	\$183,288.00	\$2,382,508.00
521000	Travel	\$57,762.00	\$96,591.00	\$15,000.00	\$111,591.00
531000	Supplies - IT Software	\$370,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$400,000.00	\$600,000.00
532000	Supply/Material - Professional	\$9,625.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
536000	Office Supplies	\$1,319,743.00	\$1,972,399.00	\$222,711.00	\$2,195,110.00
541000	Postage	\$4,600.00	\$5,500.00	\$0.00	\$5,500.00
542000	Printing	\$2,750.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
551000	IT Equipment under \$5,000	\$30,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$175,000.00
552000	Other Equipment under \$5,000	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
561000	Utilities	\$7,150.00	\$6,500.00	\$0.00	\$6,500.00
571000	Insurance	\$16,536.00	\$16,200.00	\$0.00	\$16,200.00
581000	Rentals/Leases-Equipment&Other	\$6,063.00	\$4,500.00	\$0.00	\$4,500.00
582000	Rentals/Leases - Bldg/Land	\$202,854.00	\$215,000.00	\$0.00	\$215,000.00
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	\$25,000.00
602000	IT - Communications	\$110,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$0.00	\$90,000.00
603000	IT Contractual Services and Re	\$100,000.00	\$65,000.00	\$0.00	\$65,000.00
611000	Professional Development	\$79,500.00	\$80,100.00	\$0.00	\$80,100.00
621000	Operating Fees and Services	\$80,000.00	\$125,000.00	\$19,500.00	\$144,500.00
623000	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	\$15,523,000.00
General		\$6,797,980.00	\$7,570,328.00	\$1,353,421.00	\$8,923,750.00
Federal		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Special		\$4,570,659.00	\$4,557,063.00	\$2,042,188.00	\$6,599,250.00

Salaries (Permanent)

- **Base:** Reduced because .8 FTE moved to a decision package to be converted to 1 FTE
- **Decision Package 2:** 3 FTEs requested, Convert .8 to 1 FTE, Convert two FTTs to 2 FTEs

**Salaries** (Temporary and Other): Adjuncts for 27,000 general enrollments, 1500 homeschool and Military Program enrollments, stipend for department heads and hybrid teachers

Travel:

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

IT Software:

- **Base:** Decrease to fixed costs
- **Decision Packages 3 and 4:** ERP (\$350k) and software for Military Program (\$50k)

**Office Supplies (Curriculum Supplies):** 27,000 general enrollments and 1500 homeschool and Military Program enrollments, new curricular products for students (AI tutoring add-on in LMS)

IT Equipment Under \$5k

- **Base:** \$70k increase, docks and monitors for new laptops
- **Decision Package 1:** \$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:** Additional 13.5% to cover increase in credit card merchant fees

Professional Fees and Services

- **Base:** Shifted from GF to special spending
- **Decision Package 4:** Increase due to consulting for ERP transition, potential need for marketing consultant



**ND  
CDE**

CELEBRATING A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE  
IN PERSONALIZED EDUCATION.

90TH ANNIVERSARY



# Thank you for your support of NDCDE for 90 years!



**Alyssa Martin, Ph.D.**  
NDCDE State Director  
alyssa.martin@k12.nd.us  
701-630-1234

<https://www.cde.nd.gov/>



# PARENT TESTIMONIALS

“

**My son's scores fell on NDA+, so we enrolled him in Math and English. His scores immediately rose.**  
**-Kerry Azure**



”

**I have two children: one struggled in high school and took NDCDE classes to avoid the distractions in in-person classes; the other child is advanced and wanted to accelerate her learning. In both cases, my children were able to succeed in the classes at NDCDE in ways that were not possible at their local high school. I'm a former online college instructor, and distance education director for the NDUS. I can confidently say-from both a personal and professional standpoint-that the North Dakota is lucky to have the NDCDE, and I implore you to continue funding this opportunity for our children.**

**-Dr. Tonya Spilovoy**

“

**During a time of struggling with attending a physical school, NDCDE was an option for online education that changed the trajectory of my son's life. We went from thinking he would drop out of school to being able to graduate a year early. Changed our lives in the best way possible.**  
**-Mary Mauch**





# PARENT TESTIMONIALS

“

**My son was bullied starting his 9th-grade year at a public school. His grades declined to a failing student. I couldn't stand by. Thanks to a coworker, I was referred to NDCDE. My son was a B honor roll student after 1st year of enrolling. Thank you for this option NDCDE.**



”

**I have recommended NDCDE to everyone that will listen. My daughter was bullied at school and needed to learn in a different space. This is her first semester, but she's starting to excel again in academics. Her teachers are amazing. They support her and me and will do anything, any time to help. The curriculum is challenging but fun. I'm so thankful to have this option for her.**

**-Dr. Heather Kvilvang, Valley State University, School of Education**

“

**My experience with NDCDE has been absolutely wonderful! Everyone along the way has been very accommodating about learning how to use the online system from enrolling and purchasing classes to monitoring students. Administration has been amazing about communicating with us when we needed information and had questions. Teachers are very great at communicating with students! Monitoring students is very easy to do as an E-mentor. Just an overall great option for students!**

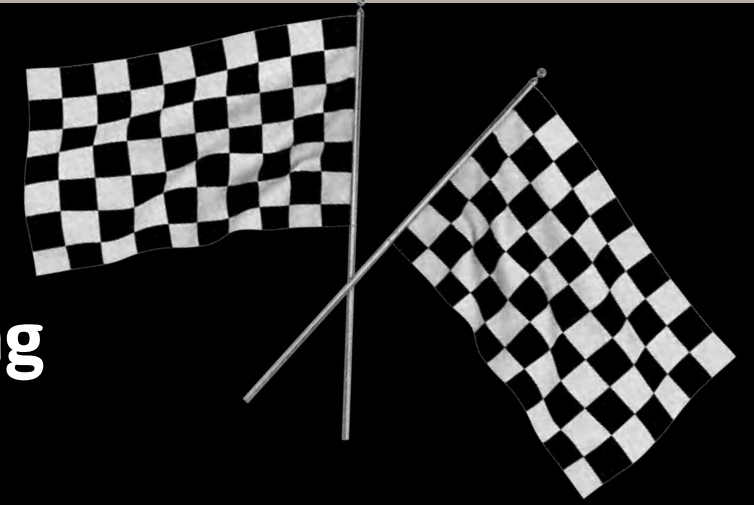
**-Heather Botha**



# STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

“

**I race sprint cars and late models. I have been racing for 12 years. I raced 9 years in a go karts starting when I was 5 years old, and this will be my 3rd year racing sprint cars. I am a third-generation driver, and I currently drive for my family owned race team. It has always been a passion of mine and am thankful for programs like NDCDE that allow me to do what I love every weekend!**



”



**Last year I did not like gym class at all. I dreaded going to it every day. This year I asked my counselor for some alternative options and she recommended online gym. I decided to enroll, and after the first week I knew I had made a very good decision. I got to do the type of workouts I wanted to do on a schedule that worked for me. I will be taking online gym next year as well, and I will be recommending it to friends and siblings.**

“

**My astronomy class was a strong preparation for my now college astronomy class. I learned valuable skills about navigating new platforms to learn online that have carried over into my college courses and other online course work. Thank you, NDCDE!**





# STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



**I have taken many courses from NDCDE and have had a great experience with each one. I have had wonderful teachers for each one. I appreciate the quick responses and efficient feedback. It's great to be able to access courses I'm interested in and that will benefit my future that aren't offered to me at my school.**



**I have taken three courses through NDCDE. I needed these courses to get credits in order to be set to graduate high school. I had to take them through NDCDE because they either weren't offered through my school, or I couldn't get anymore classes to fit in my schedule so I had to take it as an eighth class in my free time. Taking eight classes can be a load, especially when in other school activities and groups, but NDCDE had the assignments timed out and I never fell behind. The teachers were helpful and made sure I was understanding the material. NDCDE has been extremely successful for me and such a positive experience.**



**I have always had great experiences with my teachers through NDCDE. They are always so positive and helpful, which has helped me succeed a lot more than in my usual classes.**







# Major Accomplishments

2023-2024

ND  
CDE

# OVERVIEW OF MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1

Competency-Based Education

2

Record Enrollments  
& Stakeholder  
Satisfaction

3

4

Organizational  
Restructuring

Enhanced  
Oversight

5

Cybersecurity &  
Computer Science  
Education

NORTH  
**Dakota**  
Be Legendary.™

Center for  
Distance Education

**NOTE:** All attachments referred to in this document are in uploaded in the OMB Budget System under the Agency Narrative (2900) section.

# MA-1: Competency-Based Education

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is an educational approach that focuses on students' mastery of specific skills and knowledge, known as competencies, rather than time spent in class. Students progress through their coursework at their own pace, advancing only when they have demonstrated proficiency in the required competencies, allowing for a more personalized learning experience where students can focus on areas where they need improvement while advancing quickly through material they already understand. Because NDCDE serves as a supplementary educational provider to North Dakota students, it educates most students in only one or two courses. As a result, students do not take standardized tests through NDCDE. For accountability and assessment purposes, NDCDE consequently needed to measure student learning at the course level, identifying CBE as the best data collection method.

During the 2023-24 school year, NDCDE made remarkable progress in transitioning to a competency-based education (CBE) framework. Key accomplishments include:

- **Teacher Training and Curriculum Alignment:** Under the direction of a new professional development coordinator, NDCDE delivered extensive training focused on aligning course content with state priority standards. This effort has resulted in 25% of NDCDE courses now being aligned with these standards, with a goal of achieving 70% alignment by June 2025. Additionally, NDCDE provided 12 micro-courses and webinars to help teachers customize curriculum and authentically measure student learning, leading to updates in 98 courses.
- **Enhanced Student Outcomes Measurement:** NDCDE conducted a comprehensive inventory of current measures of student success, identifying gaps and setting goals for enhancing the student information system (SIS). The aim is to report on student proficiency at the standards level, ensuring more personalized and effective education.
- **Vision and Strategic Planning:** NDCDE updated its vision statement to emphasize a standards-aligned curriculum and personalized learning. The organization now has a clear vision for CBE, focusing on personalized, self-paced learning that allows students to progress based on proficiency.
- **Infrastructure and Resource Planning:** The review and development of necessary technology infrastructure to support CBE functionalities are underway. This includes integrating state priority standards into the learning management system (LMS) and enhancing the student information system (SIS) to track and report student outcomes by standard.

NDCDE is committed to fully operating under a CBE framework by Fall 2026, ensuring that students receive personalized, proficiency-based instruction. The ongoing dedication to professional development, policy updates, and strategic resource allocation will support this transition, maintaining high standards of education delivery and positioning NDCDE as a leader in virtual education. A full report outlining our CBE-related accomplishments is included in the attachments, labeled NDCDE 2023-24 Innovation Waiver.

# MA-2: Record Enrollments & Stakeholder Satisfaction

In response to House Bill 1376 (2023), which empowers parents and students to enroll in virtual courses at their discretion, with local districts covering the costs, NDCDE has experienced significant enrollment growth. There has been nearly a 49% increase from the last fiscal year and over an 11% increase from the height of the pandemic, marking a notable surge in demand for our virtual education offerings.

To accommodate this increased demand, NDCDE has proactively expanded its teaching staff, adding 14 new full and part-time temporary teachers during the 2023-24 fiscal year and finalizing hiring 3 additional teachers and 4 staff positions for the upcoming school year. Enrollment increases have been broad-based, spanning all NDCDE courses except for middle school electives, with growth rates ranging from 15% to 405%. Core high school courses have attracted the most students. This expansion underscores the budget implications detailed further under our critical issues section and will likely result in the need for NDCDE to seek Emergency Commission approval to spend more of the revenue it has raised this year to cover these additional staff.

With this growth, NDCDE has been conscious of the potential impact on our educational quality and sent out stakeholder surveys this spring to help assess it. These surveys helped strengthen our understanding of which students are taking classes through NDCDE and helped us understand what factors contributed to their satisfaction with them. Results from these surveys are included as an attachment labeled Virtual School Choice Report.

To summarize a few key metrics, of the three stakeholder groups surveyed (n=351), an average of 87% were satisfied to highly satisfied with their overall experience at NDCDE, and 81.5% rated the quality of instruction as excellent to good. Several parents chose to share their students' stories when completing the surveys, and a few of these are highlighted on page three of the Virtual School Choice Report, showing the substantial impact that NDCDE has on the lives and educational pursuits of K-12 students.

NDCDE is committed to using stakeholder feedback to continuously improve our courses and address unmet educational needs across the state. By leveraging this data, we aim to enhance our offerings and ensure that every student in North Dakota has access to high-quality, flexible virtual education that supports their academic and personal growth.

**Enrollment growth rates in NDCDE courses ranged from 15% to 405% in 23-24.**



# MA-3: Enhanced Financial Oversight and Strategic Budget Management

37%

Increase in NDCDE  
Baseline Course Prices

Emergency Commission:

Despite a 49% enrollment growth from the previous year, NDCDE is spending at the amount anticipated for the 2023-24 fiscal year, but in Fall 2024, NDCDE will likely seek Emergency Commission approval to spend more of the tuition revenue it raised.

27000

Projected Enrollments  
for 25-27

Equity Increases:

The generous equity package and merit increases appropriated by the legislature have enabled us to offer competitive salaries to our teachers, enhancing our ability to attract and retain top talent. An infographic highlighting our salary benchmarking efforts is included in the attachments, labeled 2024-25 Merit Increase Infographic.

With the transition of NDCDE under the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI) following HB 1156 (2023), we have embraced enhanced financial oversight responsibilities. This shift has empowered NDCDE to better align its resources with organizational needs and respond effectively to stakeholder demands in both revenue generation and expenditure management.

**Revenue:** Nearly 40% of NDCDE's budget is derived from tuition revenue, amounting to over \$4.5 million for the 2023-25 biennium. To ensure this revenue aligns with our projected expenditures, NDCDE undertook a comprehensive review of its tuition rates at the request of lawmakers and state-level stakeholders. Utilizing national benchmarking data from the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA), we adjusted our tuition rates, resulting in a 37% increase in our baseline course price. Our tuition schedule is included as an attachment.

Proactive engagement with stakeholder groups ensured smooth communication of these changes before implementation. This strategic adjustment, coupled with record enrollments, generated nearly \$3.18 million in revenue in the first half of the 2023-25 biennium alone. Based on enrollment projections, we anticipate earning approximately \$6.4 million in tuition over the entire biennium. For the upcoming 2025-27 biennium, we project 27,000 enrollments, equating to about 5% of North Dakota students participating in our programs on a supplementary basis and revenue projections of nearly \$6.6m.

**Expenditures:** Salaries represent the largest expenditure for NDCDE, with nearly 80 full- and part-time instructional staff members. To optimize instructional workload management, the administrative team has implemented new policies and procedures for monitoring enrollments, consolidating course sections, and assigning workloads.

These measures include:

- Weekly enrollment monitoring
- Establishing thresholds for enrollments and teacher preps
- Streamlining course section assignments and enrollment capping
- Tracking adjunct hours to comply with Affordable Care Act and TFFR retiree thresholds

These initiatives have led to a more manageable workload for our teachers and a strategic shift towards hiring full-time temporary (FTT) teachers over adjuncts for better planning and stability. Consequently, we have hired 8 FTT teachers for the next fiscal year, significantly reducing our reliance on adjuncts and helping control costs.



# MA-4: Organizational Restructuring and Visioning

In the past year, NDCDE has undertaken significant organizational restructuring and strategic visioning to enhance its operational efficiency, increase employee engagement, and successfully transition under the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI). Key initiatives include the development of the CDE Playbook and strategic plan (Cognia Strategy Map), restructuring roles and decision-making processes, fostering a data-informed culture, phasing out unsustainable programs, and improving organizational communication to increase clarity of expectations and transparency. These measures have positioned NDCDE as a forward-thinking virtual education leader committed to continuous improvement and responsiveness to legislative changes and stakeholder expectations.

**Playbook and Strategic Plan:** To ensure a unified understanding of CDE's mission, values, and goals, the leadership team developed the CDE Playbook, a living document inspired by Patrick Lencioni's "The Advantage" that is reviewed and updated regularly. Embedded throughout our organization, it is referenced in planning documents, policies, job descriptions, and employee evaluations, fostering a cohesive approach to our objectives.

To prepare for our upcoming accreditation review through Cognia, the leadership team has also developed and met the goals outlined in our strategic plan, the Cognia Strategy Map. Key accomplishments under last year's plan include:

- Revising all employee job descriptions and creating a new performance evaluation process.
- Establishing strategic partnerships with the ND State Library, EduTech, Home on the Range, and Bismarck State College.
- Progressing significantly in our transition to competency-based education (CBE).
- Implementing ongoing professional development for teachers.
- Developing an employee engagement plan based on state-conducted Gallup surveys.

Our 2024-25 Cognia Strategy Map, the outcome of an all-staff planning retreat, is included as an attachment. Efforts are well underway to meet this year's goals.

**Role and Decision-Making Restructuring:** Upon assuming leadership, the current NDCDE director recognized the need for a more integrated and cooperative work environment. The director restructured departments and decision-making processes to foster collaboration and end role confusion. Key changes include:

- Creating the Teaching and Learning Division, comprising three departments: Curriculum and LMS, Teaching and Learning, and Student Support.
- Merging Operations and Office Departments into the Operations Support Services Department.
- Adding new roles to the IT Department to ensure fair workload allocation and create internal mobility opportunities.

This restructuring has resulted in a unified culture with an administrative team committed to meeting organizational goals and providing North Dakota students with the best online learning experience possible. 2022 and 2024 organization charts are included for comparison purposes.

# MA-4: Organizational Restructuring and Visioning, cont.

## DATA-INFORMED CULTURE

NDCDE is becoming a data-driven organization by leveraging existing data, building new data collection mechanisms, and identifying key performance indicators (KPIs). Our data-informed initiatives include:

- Using student performance data for teacher evaluations and goal-setting.
- Conducting a year-end staff retreat where student performance and other organizational efficiency data are analyzed for purposes of strategic planning
- Adjusting our teacher hiring process based on workload analysis and curricular needs.
- Refining end-of-course student surveys for reliability and validity.
- Developing new end-of-course surveys for elementary students.
- Informing major technology decisions, such as phasing out cell phones for adjuncts.

## DATA-INFORMED CULTURE, cont.

- Reviewing our CTE courses and receiving stakeholder feedback to ensure they are of high quality: This work was done partly in response to a K-12 Coordination Council report on these NDCDE CTE courses. NDCDE concluded that its CTE courses met or exceeded quality standards and are needed by students who are otherwise unable to participate in CTE courses due to scheduling, their rural location, or unique personal circumstances. It prepared a report on these findings, which is available upon request.

As we look to the future of becoming a data-informed culture, student proficiency data will drive our instructional and curricular goals, and we will strive visualize these data and make them available to administrators and teachers on demand.

## IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

Based on staff feedback, the leadership team has improved communication mechanisms to enhance understanding organizational expectations and initiatives. Efforts include better leveraging Microsoft Teams and SharePoint, developing a new policy manual, and hiring a dean of students to serve as a conduit to North Dakota schools. These actions have led to a stronger sense of community, buy-in, and compliance among staff. NDCDE will continue refining communication strategies in the upcoming biennium to ensure adequate information dissemination to students and external stakeholders.

## PHASING OUT UNSUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING

NDCDE has identified and eliminated organizational inefficiencies to save staff time and financial resources. For example, we phased out the SmartLab program in 2023 due to its heavy staff travel demands, an unresponsive vendor, and the challenges participating school districts faced in keeping labs current with evolving technology. We provided schools with alternative vendor and SmartLab curricular options to support their labs independently. With this same focus on organizational efficiency, we closely evaluate course enrollments, phasing out those with sustained low interest to allow capacity for high-demand and emerging content areas.

# MA-5: Serving as a Statewide Leader in Computer Science and Cybersecurity Education

In 2023, the North Dakota legislature enacted HB 1398, mandating cybersecurity and computer science education for all students. Recognizing that many school districts needed time to find appropriate curricula and train teachers, NDCDE was entrusted to lead the implementation of this important initiative.

In response, NDCDE added nine new courses (see attached Technology Courses) and hired a full-time temporary teacher to handle middle and high school classes. We proactively communicated with North Dakota schools about these new offerings and, thanks to a grant from DPI, offered them at a discounted rate. Additionally, we developed an integration plan (attached) to demonstrate how the cybersecurity and computer science standards are incorporated across our curriculum, providing a valuable resource and integration option for school districts as they identify how to cover the new standards.

These efforts have yielded impressive results. Enrollments in high school computer courses have surged by 343%, with 126 students enrolled this year. While demand at the elementary and middle school levels has been lower, with 10 elementary and 19 middle school students participating, we anticipate growth as awareness and interest increase.

NDCDE's proactive and comprehensive approach to implementing HB 1398 underscores our commitment to equipping North Dakota students with essential skills in computer science and cybersecurity, positioning them for success in a digital world.

343%

Increase in high school computer education

9

New computer education courses

80%

Of state, computer science and cybersecurity standards are covered in NDCDE courses.



NORTH  
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Center for  
Distance Education

### Teacher Load

With seven months left in the biennium, NDCDE enrollments have reached 18,690, a 5.4% increase from 17,728 in the entire 2021-23 biennium, with workloads remaining steady through efficient management.

	Unique Enrollments Per FTE		Unique Students Per FTE
21-23	139.73	21-23	434.51
23-25	149.88	23-25	372.89

- Seven months of the 23-25 biennium remain

### Impact of Equity & Merit Increases

#### Full-Time Teachers

With merit increases, the average salary for full-time teacher I and IIs at NDCDE is \$66,348, which is 4.6% below the national average but nearly 17% above the state average for teacher pay.\* Source: NEA Educator Pay Data 2024



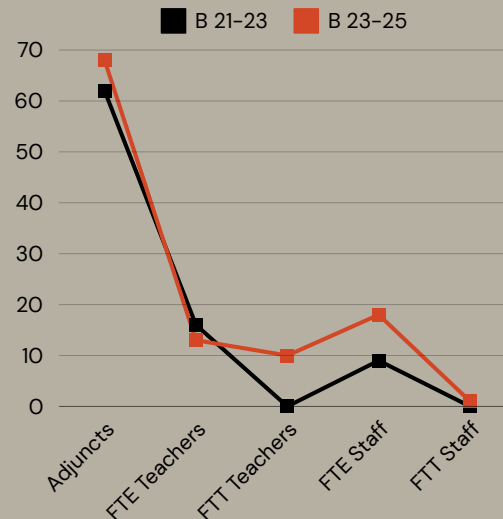
#### Employee Salary Grades

The average NDCDE salary is \$75,664.20 in 2024. While CDE pays above the state average (\$69,326), 56.7% of permanent employees are between their minimum and first quartile, and 36.7% are between their first and median quartile based on the state salary schedule, with 93% below the median overall.



### Employee Growth

This graph shows staffing increases, hired in response to HB 1376 and agency growth.



### HR Accomplishments

During the 23-25 biennium, NDCDE:

- Adopted a policy manual tailored to its dual mission as a state agency and public school
- Launched a unified SharePoint and Teams Channel for improved transparency
- Developed a robust onboarding process for new hires
- Streamlined the teacher workload model to balance growth, quality, and capacity
- Implemented an Employee Engagement Plan featuring:
  - Transparent communication channels
  - PD opportunities for growth
  - Committees providing regular feedback to ensure transparency and organizational buy-in

### Employee Satisfaction Ratings

Based on Gallup Data, between 2023 and 2024, response rates increased by 103%, and employee satisfaction rose 13% on average.





# Learning Department

## Rigorous and Relevant Online Teaching and Learning:

NDCDE emphasizes best instructional strategies to deliver high-quality, student-centered learning experiences aligned with North Dakota standards. Teachers ensure curriculum rigor and relevance by integrating competency-based practices into lesson design and assessment. One-on-one meetings with students foster personalized support, enabling teachers to address individual needs, monitor progress, and build meaningful connections. Additionally, NDCDE leverages advanced technology tools, including document cameras and writing tablets, to create dynamic and interactive learning environments. These tools enhance instructional delivery, facilitate collaboration, and support diverse learning styles, ensuring students receive a comprehensive and engaging virtual education.



## Professional Development:

The NDCDE 2024-2025 Professional Development Plan outlines various professional learning opportunities aligned with the Cognia Strategy Map to enhance teaching effectiveness and organizational wellness. It includes webinars and professional learning communities focused on integrating AI, learner engagement strategies, curriculum adaptation, and competency-based education. Additionally, the plan incorporates a wellness initiative promoting physical and mental health through activities like walking challenges. These offerings support strategic themes such as responding to internal and external needs, ensuring rigorous and relevant learning, and fostering a balanced work-life culture, with a total of 15 hours allocated per semester. One college credit is available each semester (fall, spring, summer) through the University of Mary.



## Teacher Evaluation Tool Developed by NDCDE:

The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model is a research-based framework grounded in publications like What Works in Schools (2003), Classroom Instruction That Works (2001), and The Art and Science of Teaching (2007), among others, all recognized as best practices for teaching and learning. The model includes four domains: Classroom Strategies and Behaviors, Planning and Preparing, Reflecting on Teaching, and Collegiality and Professionalism. Widely adopted across states, districts, and schools, NDCDE has tailored this model for the virtual environment to support teacher growth, student-centered learning, and continuous improvement. It aligns with our Cognia Strategy Map - Strategic Theme 3: Effectively Responding to Internal and External Needs and Expectations.





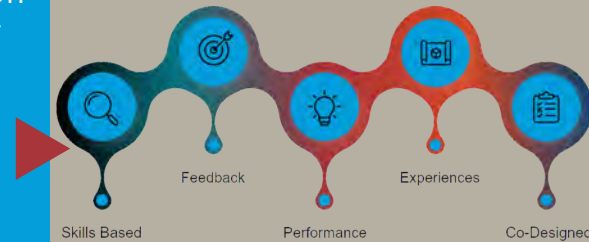


# Competency Based Education

**What is Competency Based Education (CBE)?** CBE focuses on ensuring students master specific skills or competencies rather than progressing based on time spent in a class.

## Key Features:

- Personalized learning tailored to each student's skills.
- Clear learning objectives that emphasize mastery.
- Flexibility to meet diverse learner needs.



## Grade Level Timeline

- **Fall 2024-K-5 Math Courses**
- **Spring 2025-Expanded Elementary Courses**
- **Fall 2025-Middle School Courses**
- **Spring/Fall 2026-High School Courses**

## Why CBE Matter for North Dakota Students

1. **Equity for All:** CBE ensures personalized support for students from diverse rural, urban, and tribal communities, enabling everyone to succeed.
2. **Workforce Readiness:** Prepares learners for careers in key ND industries like technology, agriculture, and healthcare.
3. **Student Empowerment:** Encourages ownership of learning through goal setting & critical thinking.
4. **Relevance:** Connects learning to practical, real-life applications, making education meaningful.
5. **Lifelong Learning:** Prepares students to adapt and grow in a changing world.
6. **State Goals:** Supports North Dakota's vision for improved outcomes, workforce preparation, & innovation.

## How NDCDE Implements CBE:

- **Proficiency-Based Dashboards:** Students & families can track progress toward proficiency of standards instead of relying on traditional grades.
- **Flexible Learning:** Students advance as they demonstrate mastery, ensuring no one is held back or pushed ahead without readiness.
- **Teacher Support:** Targeted feedback & interventions to help every student succeed.

**At NDCDE, we are transforming education to ensure that every learner has the tools & opportunities to succeed. Competency-Based Education is not just a method - it's a commitment to the future of North Dakota.**



For more information, please feel free to reach out to our Assistant Superintendent, Jessica Enderson: [Jessica.Enderson@k12.nd.us](mailto:Jessica.Enderson@k12.nd.us) or visit our website at <https://www.cde.nd.gov/>



# Student Support Services

**Academic Integrity:** At NDCDE, academic integrity ensures achievements reflect effort and critical thinking. Policies like the Academic Honor Code and Student Conduct foster respect, honesty, and accountability, creating a fair and supportive learning environment. Upholding integrity empowers students with skills and values for lifelong learning and ethical decision-making.

**AI Guidelines:** NDCDE promotes responsible AI use for brainstorming, idea refinement, grammar checks, translations, image searches, and study support. Improper use can violate our Honor Code, so we educate students and stakeholders on appropriate practices. Our guidelines ensure AI enhances learning while upholding academic integrity.



**Counselor:** NDCDE's counselor, Jocelyn Kolle, supports academic integrity and student success by addressing mental health, special education needs, and collaborating with parents, students, and teachers. She also leads student concern meetings to help struggling students overcome challenges.

## **Weekly Student Success Reports:**

NDCDE uses weekly reports to support student success and maintain academic integrity. The **Inactivity Report** identifies students who have been enrolled for eight days without completing an assignment, prompting outreach to address barriers and encourage engagement. The **Rapid Progression Report** flags students completing 25% or more of assignments in a week, allowing teachers to review work quality and communicate concerns with school districts if needed. These reports are vital for ensuring course integrity and fostering meaningful learning experiences.

**Student Conduct Referral:** NDCDE's referral system allows teachers to report conduct violations, reviewed by the Dean of Students in collaboration with learning coaches, school officials, and students to ensure fair and informed decisions. Its primary goal is to help students learn from mistakes and make better choices, emphasizing the importance of communication, transparency, and strong relationships in supporting student growth and accountability.

**State-Wide Collaboration:** At NDCDE, we believe that fostering strong relationships with educational professionals across the state is essential to ensuring student success and upholding academic integrity. Since our students are often also their students, we value the insights and connections school officials have built with them. Collaborating with those who know our students best helps us address challenges, tailor support, and provide consistent guidance that benefits all learners.





# Military Pathway

**Learning Coaches:** Learning coaches are essential in supporting students' progress through the Military Pathway Program. Coaches should assist students in meeting program requirements, such as ASVAB preparation, leadership development, and completing the required community service hours. Learning coaches can include National Guardsmen, who bring valuable experience and mentorship to the program. It is recommended that learning coaches be adults outside the student's immediate household to foster independence and accountability. [Learning Coach Expectations](#)

**District Designated Site Administrator:** Ensure there is a district support representative that the NDCDE Dean of Students can work directly with on a weekly basis to monitor grades, pacing, and academic honesty. As site administrator, you will have access to view all students and enrollments within the SIS, Genius.



**Courseload:** We recommend students start with "Introduction to Military Careers" before progressing to other courses in the Military Pathway. This sequence helps students build foundational knowledge and skills essential for success in subsequent courses, including "ASVAB Essentials" and the "Military Leadership Capstone." Schools are encouraged to stagger course start dates to ensure manageable workloads for students. [Course Loads / Holds and Extensions](#)

**Course Drop/Withdrawal, Hold, and Extension Policy:** We suggest creating a policy that provides guidelines for handling student inactivity or lack of engagement. This policy should allow the school district to drop or withdraw students who are not engaging. Additionally, consider including options for partial refunds from NDCDE within specified timeframes, as well as provisions for parental reimbursement when students fail to meet course expectations. A review of NDCDE's policy on this topic is encouraged. (Linked above)

**Learning Management System (LMS) / SIS:** NDCDE uses its own platform, Buzz and Genius, so familiarize students with how to navigate the system by enrolling them in the NDCDE Introduction to Virtual Learning Course. Encourage students to complete this course before beginning any other NDCDE course work.

**Technology:** NDCDE recommends that for virtual academy students, the district provide a laptop or tablet, ensure that the student has access to WIFI, It is imperative that the student has their technology prior to the start date of their course.





# Innovation Waiver Report

**ND**  
CDE

2023-24



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# Executive Summary

The North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE) has successfully concluded its initial five-year Innovation Waiver cycle. Despite initial delays due to the pandemic and leadership changes, NDCDE used the 2023–24 school year to establish a robust foundation for delivering competency-based education (CBE).

## Key accomplishments include:

- **Teacher Training and Standards Alignment:** Under the direction of a new professional development coordinator, NDCDE provided extensive professional development on aligning standards with course content and assessments. As a result, 25% of NDCDE courses are now aligned to state priority standards, with a goal to complete alignment for 70% of courses by June 2025.
- **Student Outcomes Measurement:** NDCDE conducted an inventory of current measures of student success, identifying gaps and setting goals for enhancing the student information system (SIS) to report on student proficiency at the standards level.
- **Customized Curriculum and Authentic Assessment:** As teachers began to identify gaps in the curriculum through standards alignment work, NDCDE offered professional development on tools to customize curriculum and measure student learning authentically. This training spurred updates to 98 courses.
- **Update to Vision Statement:** NDCDE updated its vision statement to reflect a more mature organizational direction, emphasizing a standards-aligned curriculum and personalized learning.

NDCDE seeks the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) authorization to continue our Innovation Waiver based on all the progress made to date and our long-term vision for transition to CBE. The following pages contain our responses to DPI's questions to help support this renewal request.

# Response to DPI Innovation Waiver Questions

## Question Set One: Renewal

Q

**What significant milestones has your school achieved throughout this process?**

A

Last year, NDCDE submitted its [2022-23 Innovation Waiver Report](#) to DPI, requesting continuation of approval to pursue competency-based education (CBE) and waiving requirements for student seat time found in NDCC 15.1-21-03. We made this latter request to allow students to move through our courses at their own pace and based on their level of proficiency in the course's standards, assuring DPI that our courses fulfilled traditional seat time requirements and would continue to do so as we transitioned. In our Innovation Waiver Report, we explained that NDCDE's initial efforts, beginning in 2019, to shift to CBE were delayed due to the pandemic and leadership changes. We consequently planned to use this school year to establish the foundation necessary for delivering CBE. Below, we have listed our specific 2023-24 goals related to CBE and summarized our progress under them.

***Establish and implement teacher training on aligning standards to course content assessments and establish a cycle for reviewing all curriculum and aligning it to state standards:***

Under the direction of NDCDE's professional development coordinator, who was hired in July 2023 and has since been promoted to director of learning, NDCDE planned, developed, and delivered extensive professional development on standards alignment. Training included micro-courses and webinars on aligning standards with content and assessments, how to unpack state priority standards, and work sessions to help teachers begin the alignment process. At the end of each training, teachers evaluated the impact to help inform NDCDE administrators on future areas to target CBE-related professional development. These data are available in [Appendix A](#). NDCDE also created a standards alignment plan, identifying the grade levels and courses in which teachers and administrators would focus their efforts for the 2023-24 school year, [Appendix B](#). As a result of these efforts, 25% of NDCDE courses are now aligned to state priority standards, moving us closer to beginning to measure student proficiency in them. Our [2024-25 Cognia Strategy Map](#) has new goals for completing the standards alignment process for 70% of our courses by June 30, 2025.

## Question Set One, cont.

***Establish a new set of policies and processes for vetting new curricula and amending existing curricula to be used by the new curriculum committee.*** NDCDE has a new policy on curricular review that will go into effect this fall. Teachers, staff, and administration reviewed it, and the policy explicitly addresses standard alignment with the following requirements:

When reviewing and selecting educational materials, NDCDE aims to meet the following standards: Curricula must be aligned to the state standards. If priority standards are missing, reviewers must ascertain methods for incorporation of these standards and assessments of them through NDCDE in-house development of content . . . All NDCDE curricula must be aligned to North Dakota K-12 priority standards. The director of curriculum maintains and monitors a schedule for completing this alignment work. Content experts complete the priority standards alignment worksheet to document alignment. These worksheets are posted with the accompanying course in the NDCDE store and the learning management system. Standards alignment is reviewed and updated anytime a course is updated or revised.

[Appendix C](#) includes the entire policy. The new NDCDE Curriculum Committee, which convened its first meeting in May 2024, oversees the implementation of this policy led by our new director of curriculum, helping ensure that both new and existing courses contain content and assessments aligned to state priority standards.

IN 2023-24,

25%

OF NDCDE  
CURRICULA WAS  
ALIGNED TO  
STATE PRIORITY  
STANDARDS BY  
OUR TEACHERS

**Inventory our current measures of student learning, identify what aspects of student learning we are currently not measuring, and how to begin collecting these data to help strengthen the curriculum review process.**

As part of NDCDE's first annual staff planning retreat, held in May 2024, the NDCDE state director thoroughly reviewed all data currently collected on student learning, compiling these data into a presentation to guide strategic planning (the presentation is available upon request). This exercise helped further support the need for NDCDE to fully transition to CBE, with our current data providing general indicators of where the organization can improve student learning but not yielding specific data on content areas and learning gaps where NDCDE needs to dedicate its efforts to increase student proficiency. Consequently, our [2024-25 Cognia Strategy Map](#) includes a goal related to enhancing our student information system to begin housing and reporting data on student proficiency in courses where teachers will start assessing students at the standards level.



# Question Set One, cont.

**Supply teachers with the knowledge and tools necessary to customize the curriculum in the LMS and authentically measure student learning.** As part of the 2023–24 NDCDE professional development plan, we devoted 12 micro–courses and webinars to these topics, understanding that with standards alignment work ongoing, teachers were likely to uncover priority standards that are missing from our courses and will need to develop or refine content and assessments to integrate the standards. Outcome data from these trainings are included in [Appendix A](#). Over this past fiscal year, NDCDE teachers have updated or customized content in 98 courses, spurred by standards alignment work and our dedication to continue enhancing curricular quality.

Notably, last year’s [Innovation Waiver Report](#) referenced two goals not directly tied to CBE —adding more Choice Ready options to our diploma program and soliciting stakeholder input on which courses we offer at NDCDE. We continue to pursue these goals, which are ancillary to our focus on CBE.

In addition to these goals, to help NDCDE shift to CBE, we regularly reviewed our [Cognia Strategy Map](#) to keep the transition to this framework at the forefront of our work. To accomplish this, each month, the NDCDE leadership team is required to report on progress under the Cognia Strategy Map as part of preparing a leadership team brief. We furthermore continue to dedicate resources to CBE implementation, including funding and personnel. In fact, during 23–24, we have doubled down on these efforts, expanding the number of administrators and staff who assist with teacher professional development and curriculum, including adding a director of curriculum LMS content designer and expanding one assistant principal’s job description to include professional development work—all needs identified through our efforts to migrate to CBE this year.

## 2023-24 NDCDE CBE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Over 16 Teacher Trainings Delivered** ✓

### COGNIA STRATEGY GOALS

**100% CBE-Related Goals Met** ✓

### STUDENT DATA

**All Outcome Data Inventoried** ✓

### CURRICULAR CUSTOMIZATION

**98 Courses Customized** ✓

### POLICY

**New Curricular Review Policy Develeped** ✓

## Question Set One, cont.



### What would you have done differently if you had the opportunity?

As we began to introduce CBE to our teachers, we learned that previous NDCDE administration had required them to complete a book study on this topic, which led several of them to conclude that revising policies, processes, and assessing student proficiency using a CBE framework occurred within a very short interval of time. This prior professional development made some teachers question why only some of the necessary changes needed to operate under a CBE framework were in place. Once the administration uncovered this misconception, it began to educate our teachers on the timeline for CBE implementation and all the steps involved. Before launching another initiative of this scale, we have learned to conduct a pre-assessment to gauge levels of understanding and prior exposure to what we're attempting to introduce and collect as many questions as possible to help proactively address and educate on the steps involved with proper implementation.



### What were the significant changes did you make to your program?

Our shift to CBE is still underway, with a quarter of courses aligned to state priority standards. Work is underway in our LMS to incorporate these standards into elementary courses to measure student proficiency. We plan to have standards-alignment work completed in 70% of courses by next summer and will build the standards into most of our courses by fall 2025 and begin measuring student proficiency in them. We simultaneously work to put into place the needed infrastructure to operate under a CBE framework, including policy on areas such as reporting student outcomes and grades, enhancements to our student information system to ensure we can report out student proficiency by standard, and beginning efforts to develop education for our stakeholders on this transition to help them understand the myriad of positive benefits associated with NDCDE shifting to CBE, including the ability to clearly understand their students' specific strengths and areas where they can target growth. We evaluated our teachers using a Marzano framework adapted to our virtual modality, which, for the first time, required our teachers to review data on student outcomes and their instructional effectiveness and set goals based, in part, on this information.



## Question Set One, cont.

If you are proceeding with the Innovative Program, what growth do you see in your Innovative Program? NDCDE aims to fully operate under a CBE framework by no later than fall 2026.

Lastly, do you plan on moving forward with the Innovative Program? Yes.

## Question Set Two: Rationale/Vision

**Q** Did the rationale/vision change during this year of implementation, and if so, how?

**A** During our strategic planning cycle this year, NDCDE updated its vision statement. The original and revised versions of the vision statement are below. The revisions to the vision reflect organizational maturity as we begin to understand better the direction we aim to take NDCDE. We are undoubtedly informed, but not exclusively driven, by our efforts to move to CBE. The ten-year plan required by the ND governor’s office as part of spring 2024 state agency planning meetings, in which NDCDE took part, had a significant influence on these revisions, as did the progress we made regarding CBE implementation.

2023 Vision Statement	2024 Vision Statement
<p>NDCDE aims to be a state and national leader in virtual education. It will do so by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. offering a high-quality, state-aligned curriculum that responds to the educational and industry needs of today and tomorrow</li><li>2. equipping NDCDE personnel with the knowledge and tools to maximize student learning and engagement in a virtual modality</li><li>3. fostering students’ online learning aptitude and academic progress.</li></ol>	<p>Our vision is to transform education in North Dakota and beyond by providing a flexible, high-quality virtual learning experience.</p> <p>We aim to do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empowering Students: Providing a comprehensive and high-quality education that integrates a state-aligned curriculum, personalized learning experiences, and 21st-Century skill development to equip students as lifelong learners who are workforce-ready.</li><li>• Supporting Schools: Anticipating and fulfilling the evolving needs of North Dakota schools by providing cutting-edge curricula.</li><li>• Leading in Virtual Education: Positioning North Dakota as a national leader in virtual learning by adopting innovative, research-based practices that maximize student engagement and academic success.</li><li>• Investing in Staff: Ensuring our staff are resourced and empowered to deliver exceptional education and foster a dynamic, engaging virtual learning environment.</li></ul>

## Question Set Two, cont.

**Did the activities and implementation align with the vision and mission of the district; if so, how?**

Yes. This year, we have focused heavily on aligning our curricula to state priority standards. With significant progress on this stage of the CBE transition, we are now beginning to focus our efforts on providing students personalized learning experiences by incorporating priority standards into our LMS and then measuring student proficiency in the standards, exempting them from those in which they are already proficient, and focusing our efforts on areas where they have learning gaps.

**Is the district considering any changes in the vision and mission for next year; if yes, why?**

We may update our mission statement slightly next year based on a suggestion from the leadership team to ensure that it best reflects the guidance on mission statements contained in Patrick Lencioni's *The Advantage*, a resource that serves as a foundation for our leadership team's work. Specifically, we aim to make the mission statement shorter and more memorable to help ensure all our staff can easily recall it and keep it at the forefront of their work. The central ideas and purpose in the mission statement are unlikely to change.



### NDCDE's Mission Statement

The Center for Distance Education's (CDE) mission is to provide virtual education to support North Dakota's K-12 schools. It offers all students access to extensive educational opportunities, allowing them to achieve their personal goals and reach their full potential. CDE is innovative and quality-focused in its approach to educational delivery and its scope of services to foster the strength of North Dakota's future.



## Question Set Three: Stakeholder Engagement

Describe how the stakeholders are engaged in the implementation of the plan. Narrative can include a list of specific stakeholders and how their input was used to inform the implementation of the education program (i.e., How are students involved and engaged? Did students have a voice and choice? Explain. How were parents/businesses/community members involved and engaged?) Were additional stakeholders added to the plan? If so, who and why? Will additional stakeholders be included next year? If so, who and why?

### 1 NDCDE Teachers

To launch CBE, we needed to concentrate our efforts in 2023–24 on educating teachers on its fundamental aspects, such as standards alignment. With this foundation now in place, likely needing continued reinforcement through professional development, the number of stakeholders involved in this organizational transformation is already expanding.

### 2 NDCDE Staff

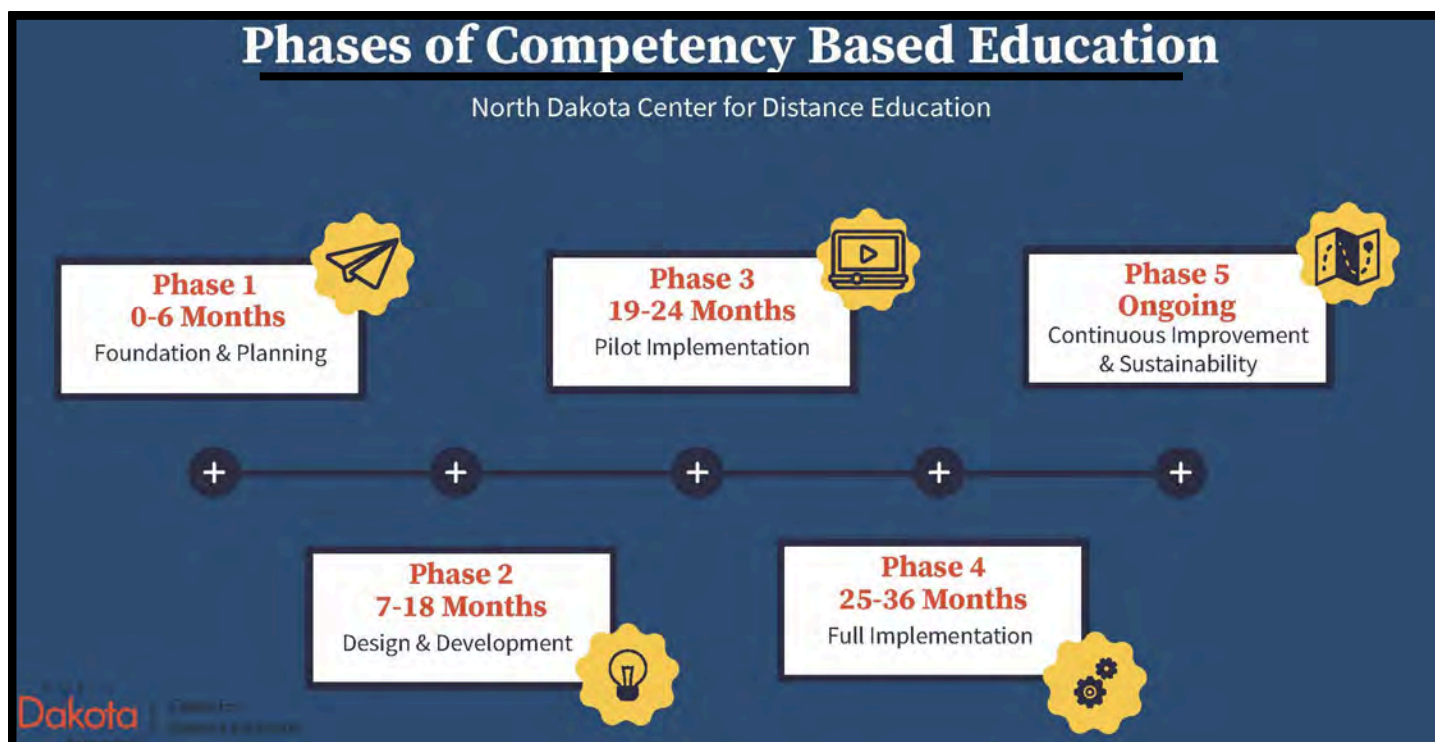
Our IT team is now exploring how to bring standards into our student information system (SIS) and report student proficiency to parents, students, learning coaches, and schools. We will also need to educate non-instructional staff about this framework to help them understand the philosophy behind why specific policies, such as grading, have changed to equip them to answer stakeholder questions and assist with the additional technology and organizational changes needed to move to CBE whole scale.

### 3 Parents, Students, & Schools

As we solidify how we will report student outcomes and continue to educate our staff, we are aware of the need to start educating those utilizing our services about CBE. This upcoming school year, we will begin to devise resources and a strategy for sharing the basics of CBE, primarily with our elementary students and parents, to help them understand the powerful impact of measuring learning at a more granular level, allowing for a more targeted and individualized learning experience for students assessed under this method. By starting with this small group, we'll be able to evaluate our communication efforts and scale them to a broader audience as we begin to embed the CBE framework into upper-level courses.

## Question Set Four: Implementation Plan

Provide details on implementing this plan. What were the highest priorities in implementation for this year, and were these priorities met? Below is an infographic on our planned timeline for CBE implementation that was presented to our teachers. As described above, NDCDE has achieved most of the key milestones under phase one and is beginning to implement the measures needed to execute phase two. A complete description of all the phases is included in [Appendix D](#).



Our highest priorities this year were executing all the steps under phase one, as shown on the timeline above, which included the following:

- **Vision and Culture Development:**
  - *Define CBE Vision: Craft a clear, compelling vision for CBE that aligns with NDCDE's mission and values. This vision should focus on personalized, self-paced learning that allows students to progress upon proficiency.* As evidenced by the [CDE Cognia Strategy Map](#), [NDCDE Playbook](#), and the above timeline, NDCDE has established a clear vision for CBE. It has used multiple methods to share this vision with teachers, including professional development and regular review of different aspects of this new organizational vision with teachers at the monthly Teacher Process Meeting. With this foundation in place, our aim in the upcoming school year is to increase understanding of this vision across the organization and ensure understanding and buy-in from all staff.
  - *Cultural Alignment: Foster a CBE mindset among all stakeholders through PD and collaboration:* The tremendous strides made this year regarding standards alignment work show our teachers' understanding of and commitment to the CBE vision. We know that continued reinforcement of this vision, regular status updates, and celebration of achieving critical milestones under the CBE timeline will be necessary to sustain this momentum.



## Question Set Four, cont.

- **Infrastructure and Resource Assessment:**
  - *Technology Review:* Assess existing digital platforms and tools to ensure they support CBE functionalities like tracking individual progress and CBE gradebook structure. We have partially accomplished this goal, with the review of CBE capabilities in our learning management system (LMS) now complete. We now shift our focus to evaluating and developing the features necessary in our SIS to track and report on student outcomes by standard and assisting our teachers with preparing our courses to use a CBE framework by incorporating state priority standards. We have allocated funding within our budget for this and future years to cover the cost of needed technology customization (See [Question Set Eight](#) for more details).
  - *Resource Planning:* Identify needs for additional resources such as CBE training materials and software enhancements. The Teaching and Learning Division continues to incorporate CBE into our professional development plan for the upcoming school year (see [Question Set Five](#) for more details), and we now expand our focus to developing training resources for those who utilize our services at CDE, namely students, parents, learning coaches, and schools. We have hired a dean of students and a new director of learning who will both serve as liaisons to North Dakota schools, likely playing a key role in communicating with them about CBE.

### Q: Address North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) 15.1-06-08.2:

**A:** Our Innovation Waiver touches on each potential impact described in this law. By implementing CBE, we have completely revised our teacher evaluation process, ensured that our curriculum is aligned to state priority standards, aligned our budget with our vision of becoming a fully CBE school, and brought new critical positions to CDE, such as an instructional designer and professional development coordinator—all changes that have undoubtedly elevated the caliber of the education and services that we deliver at CDE.

By measuring students' skills at the standards level, we will gain particular insight into each student's learning gaps and strengths, allowing us and the student's local school to better individualize instruction for them. CBE also promises to increase educational opportunities for students simply by allowing them to progress through curriculum based on their own needs, not spending time on what they know and can already do, but instead focusing on areas where they have a knowledge or skills gap, and staying focused on these areas until they have achieved proficiency, which allows for more seamless progression to more advanced learning and higher levels of confidence as they take the next step academically or professionally. NDCDE can leverage aggregate trends from the data we collect on student proficiency to enhance and expand our curriculum, better responding to statewide student needs and allowing students to receive instruction in areas where local schools may not have the time or resources to dedicate attention.

## Question Set Four, cont.

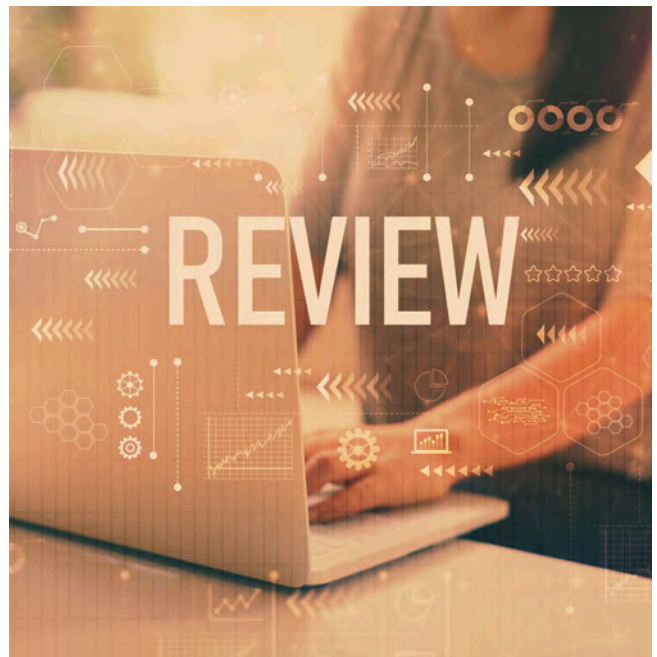
**Provide details on any teams formed to assist with the implementation and the plan. How often did team(s) meet, and what were the meeting outcomes?**

CBE efforts have been spearheaded by Assistant Superintendent Jessica Enderson, Director of Learning Kirstin Girard, and Director of Curriculum Kaitlyn Allen. This team meets weekly to continue their work and provide updates on their progress under CBE. To help ensure that we remain committed to our implementation timeline and achieving our goals associated with CBE, the NDCDE state director requires this team to provide an update on their progress concerning CBE goals each month when submitting their leadership team brief.



**Describe any unforeseen changes made in the implementation of the plan.**

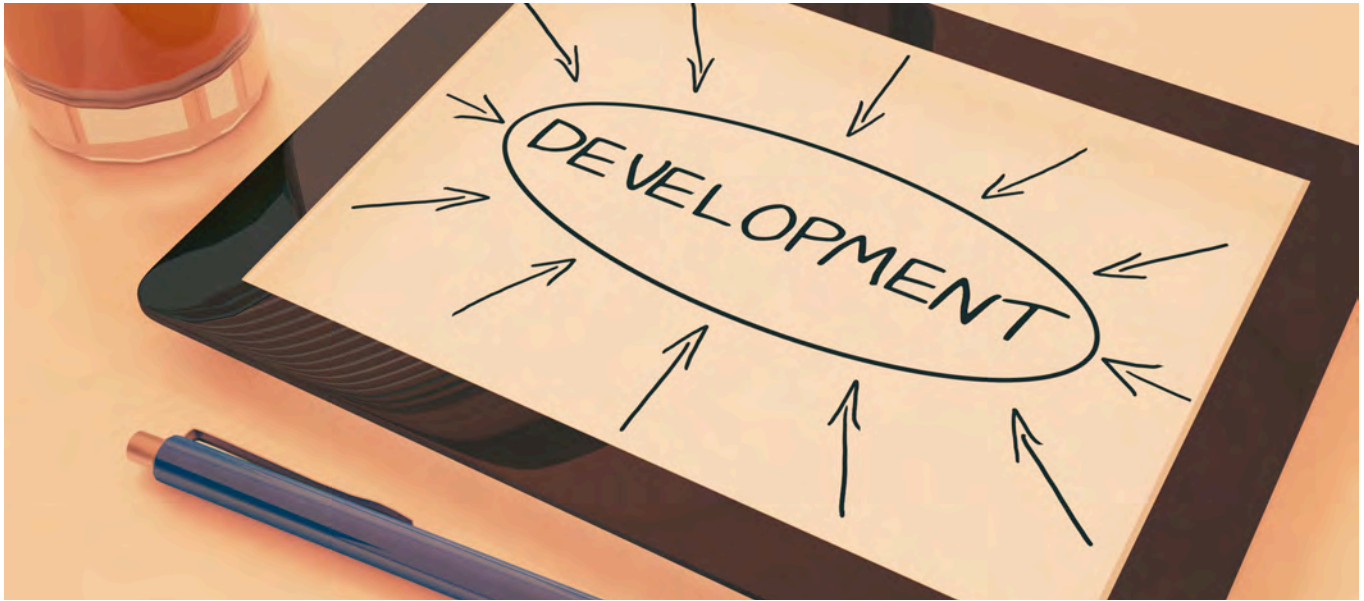
At this time, we do not see the need to make any significant changes to our CBE implementation timeline. The timeline is, however, contingent on how quickly we can customize our SIS to begin reporting student outcomes by standard and how quickly our team can incorporate state priority standards into our LMS to start assessing students on them, given that CDE continues to experience record enrollments in tandem with implementing our Innovation Waiver.





## Question Set Five: Professional Development

Provide details on the PD that was provided, how it aligned to the plan, participants, and how the PD was monitored to assure it made a difference in the implementation plan. Provide information on PD that will be or is being considered for next year. Describe how it aligns with the implementation plan.



### 2023–24 TRAINING

Please see our response to [Question Set One](#) for a summary of the professional development that NDCDE provided to teachers on CBE-related topics in 2023–24. Outcome data from these training sessions are included in [Appendix A](#).

### FUTURE PLANS

NDCDE utilizes an ongoing, data-driven, three-year planning cycle for its professional development. For the 2024–2025 school year, NDCDE professional development will focus on developing our teachers' skills in Artificial Intelligence, professional learning communities (PLCs), and competency-based reporting, as these are pivotal in achieving our vision of a CBE-based system within a virtual environment.

By integrating AI, educators can personalize learning experiences, providing targeted support and adaptive assessments that meet individual students' needs. Professional learning communities foster collaboration and shared best practices, enabling educators to implement CBE-based strategies and continuously improve their teaching methods effectively. CBE-based reporting ensures transparent tracking of student progress within our LMS and SIS, emphasizing proficiency or competency of skills over traditional grading. Together, these elements, along with our continuous planning cycle, create a cohesive, innovative approach to education, making NDCDE a national leader in a virtual learning environment for the students we serve.

## Question Sets Six & Seven: Continuous Improvement & Evaluation

### **Describe discussions on continuous improvement and how it was addressed.**

After learning of the teachers' confusion concerning the timeline for CBE, we began providing more direction in this regard, developing the implementation timeline shown in response to [Question Set Four](#). We also learned of the need to continually collect feedback from those who will ultimately implement CBE to measure their understanding of it and identify new questions and training needs that have emerged.

**What strategies were implemented to ensure continuous improvement is addressed?** To help with this data collection, we have and will continue to incorporate fast feedback and short assessment surveys into regular staff meetings. As we begin to involve other stakeholders in CBE (students, parents, learning coaches, and schools), we will identify similar methods to collect and respond to their questions and educational needs associated with CBE.

**Provide information and data being collected that can be used to measure success. Include baseline data in the narrative.** We are measuring our initial success by the number of courses in which our teachers have completed standards alignment and, this upcoming school year, by the number of courses that have been updated to incorporate the standards and in which teachers assess student proficiency at the standards level.

To date, 25% of NDCDE courses are aligned to state priority standards, not including current summer alignment work, 100% of our courses are aligned to the state cybersecurity standards, and this fall, at minimum, two of our elementary courses will shift to CBE, with state priority standards incorporated, and students assessed based upon them. Our [Cognia Strategy Map](#) sets a goal of 70% courses, except courses instructed by a vendor (Nelson Ag, EmpowerU), aligned to state priority standards by the end of next fiscal year, and 60% of our courses will be reworked to incorporate and measure CBE in our LMS within this same timeframe.

### **Provide details on how the district is analyzing the data and the results of this research.**

Our aim is to shift our focus to student learning, developing a baseline understanding of student proficiency in each state priority standard and then set goals associated with learning gaps. This baseline will be set in Fall 2025. Until then, we will monitor progress on CBE through monthly updates provided in leadership team meeting briefs, and we will assess and respond to staff educational needs through ongoing review of professional development feedback, utilizing it to inform additional training needs. Based on professional development feedback that [we collected in 2023-24](#), teachers' level of comfort with core concepts associated with CBE, such as standards alignment, averages a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. The professional development plan described in response to [Question Set Five](#) is designed to further increase this level of confidence. 67



# Question Set Eight: Sustainability

**Describe policies and procedures that were put into place to sustain the plan.** We have started to incorporate the CBE framework into our policies, as demonstrated by the curricular review policy in [Appendix C](#). As we move beyond setting the foundations in place for CBE, more of our policies will be updated to reflect this shift, including pacing, course length, and grading. These policy updates will take place during the 2024–25 school year under the direction of our new NDCDE Policy Committee.

**Describe what resources will be reallocated to support the sustainability of the plan.** We have added key leadership and staff positions to help ensure that we can sustain CBE once it is implemented, including a director of curriculum, instructional designer, LMS designer, and professional development duties now expanded to be shared by our director of learning and an assistant principal. We have allocated funds to cover the technology costs associated with moving to CBE and continue to earmark the resources necessary to offer professional development on CBE—all shown in our budget summary below. NDCDE remains fully committed to moving to CBE. We are excited by the progress made and look forward to continuing our implementation plan, subject to DPI’s approval.

## CBE 2025–27 Planned Budgetary Allocations

→	Professional Development & Stakeholder Education	\$63,250
→	Technology & Curriculum*	\$198,000
→	Staff	\$1.5M

\*30–50% of this spending may occur in the 23–25 biennium, using higher-than-estimated tuition revenue to cover this cost.

# Conclusion

This year, NDCDE has made significant strides in transitioning to a competency-based education framework. The comprehensive professional development, new curriculum review policies, and standards alignment work demonstrate a strong commitment to this innovative educational model. The organization's updated vision aligns with these efforts, aiming to provide a high-quality, flexible virtual learning experience.

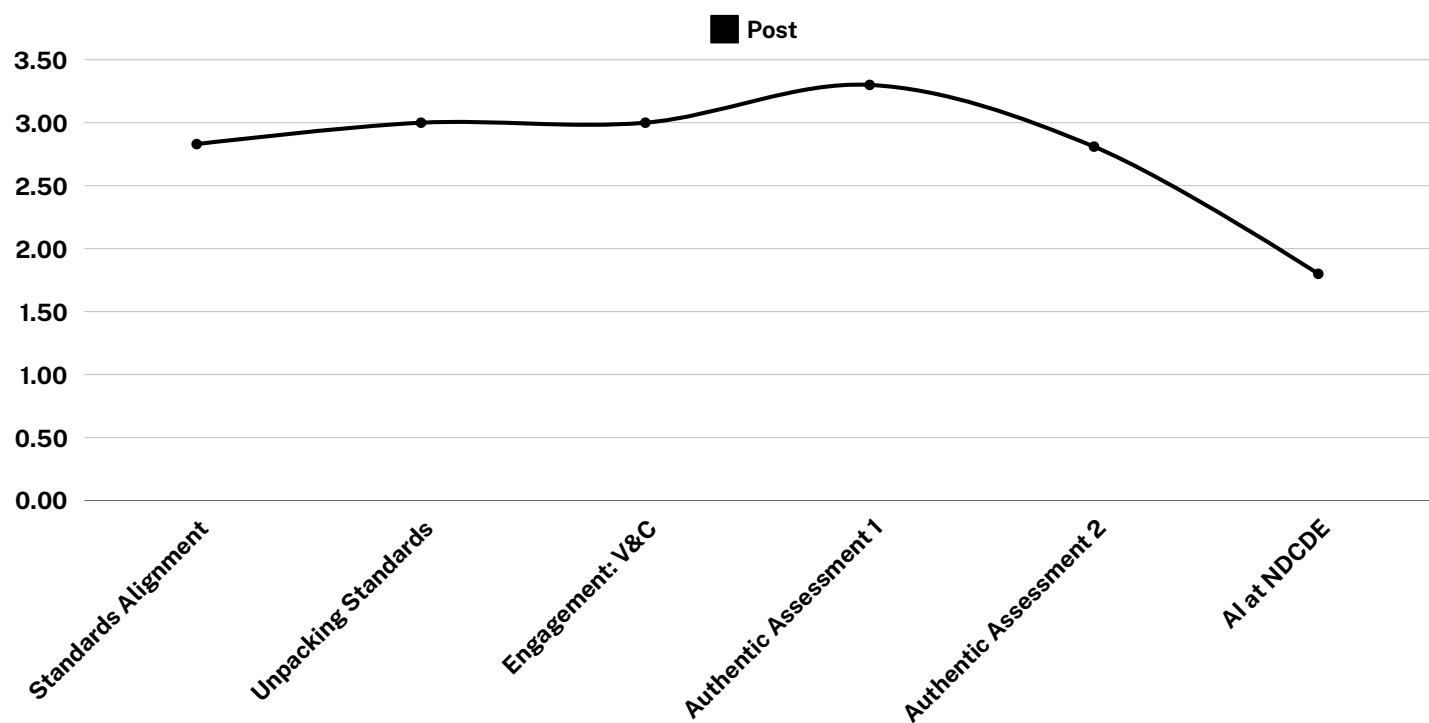
Moving forward, NDCDE plans to sustain and build on these achievements by aligning more courses with state priority standards, developing technology infrastructure to support CBE, expanding stakeholder engagement, and dedicating the staffing and resources needed to bring our vision for CBE to fruition. The organization is fully committed to operating under a CBE framework by Fall 2026, ensuring students receive personalized, proficiency-based instruction. The ongoing dedication to professional development, policy updates, and resource allocation will support this transition and help maintain the high standards of education delivery at NDCDE. With all this evidence, and to help support ushering in CBE statewide, we respectfully request DPI's approval to renew the NCDE Innovation Waiver and waive requirements for student seat time found in NDCC 15.1-21-03.





# Appendix A: Professional Development Outcome Data

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FEEDBACK: 2023-2024, TEACHER COMFORT LEVEL



# Appendix B: 2023-24 Standards Alignment Plan

Teacher	Course(s)	Standards Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Standards Alignment Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
<b>ELEMENTARY</b>					
Girard/Allen	K-5 Language Arts	Y	Y	Y	Y
Moser/Schaefer	K-5 Math	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>WORLD LANGUAGES</b>					
Sami Tschetter	German 1 First Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y
	German 1 Second Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shilah Marks	French 1 First Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y
	French 1 Second Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>CTE/ELECTIVES</b>					
Callie Girodat	Guitar 1A	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Guitar 1B	Y	Y	Y	Y
<b>SCIENCE</b>					
Kaitlyn Allen	Biology 1st Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Biology 2nd Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kaitlyn Allen	Physics 1st Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Physics 2nd Semester	Y	Y	Y	Y

Teacher	Course(s)	Standards Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Standards Alignment Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
<b>ART</b>					
	Middle School Career Exploration (Annette does not teach this)				
	Middle School Beginning Painting				
	Middle School Digital Art and Design (First Semester)				
Annette Marchand	Basic Drawing	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
<b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH</b>					
	Finish Sports Officiating				
	Walking Fitness				
Kasey Bitz	Strength Training	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
	Middle School Fitness Basics				
Hannah Williams	Walking Fitness	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
	Health Science Foundations 1a:				
Jessica Mehthoff	Introduction	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Andrea Benson	Medical Terminology 1b, Second Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	Y
<b>MATH</b>					
	General Math A				
	General Math B				
	Trigonometry				
	College Algebra				
Kayla Christopherson	Pre Algebra A				
	Pre Algebra B	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	Y
	Algebra 1a				
	Algebra 1b				
Stacey Wright	Algebra 2a	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	



# Appendix B, cont.

Teacher	Course(s)	Standards Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Standards Alignment Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
Jenny Bladow	Semester Middle School North Dakota Studies	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
Jessica Skarperud	Middle School Math 6, First Semester				
Joe Sobolik	Middle School Math 6, Second Semester	N	No Response		
	Geometry, Second Semester	N	Not Participating		
Casey Ferguson	Precalculus, First Semester				
	Precalculus, Second Semester	N	Not Participating		
<b>LANGUAGE ARTS</b>					
	Language Arts 10, First Semester				
	Language Arts 10, Second Semester				
Sarah Tezel	Language Arts 11, First Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
	LA 12 A				
	LA 12 B				
	LA 10 A				
Nicole	LA 10 B				
Marciann Wagner	English 120	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
	Creative Writing				
Shelby Brotherton	Middle School LA 7, First Semester				
	Middle School LA 7, Second Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
	LA 11, First Semester				
Stacey Sagar	LA 11, Second Semester	N	Not Participating		
	Middle School Language Arts 8, First Semester				
	Middle School Language Arts 8, Second Semester				
Rebecca Young	Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		

Teacher	Course(s)	Standards Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Standards Alignment Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
Kari Klingsporn-Hitterda hl	Language Arts 9, Second Semester				
	Language Arts 6, First Semester				
	Language Arts 6, Second Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
Stacy Warzecha	LA 12 A				
	LA 12 B				
	Public Speaking 1a				
Shannon Dillman	Language Arts 10, First Semester				
	Language Arts 10, Second Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	Y
<b>HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES</b>					
	Spanish 1A				
	Spanish 2 Fourth Semester				
	MS World History A				
	MS World History B				
Peter Fritz	English Fundamentals Writing	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
	World History A and B				
	American History A				
Eddie Wagner	American History B	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Not Participating	Y	
	Introduction to Sociology				
	Careers in Criminal Justice				
	US Government				
	Criminology				
Kari Sova	Law and Order	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
Eric Evenson	World History, First Semester	N	Not Participating		
	Human Geography				
	Sociology I				
	Sociology II				
Paul Monson	Economics with Financial Literacy	Y-Not yet sent	Y	Y	

# Appendix B, cont.

Teacher	Course(s)	Standards Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Standards Alignment Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
<b>ELEMENTARY</b>					
Heather Moser	Elementary Social Studies	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Emily G. Schaefer	Elementary Social Studies	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
	Fifth Grade Technology				
	First Grade Technology				
	Fourth Grade Technology				
	Kindergarten Technology				
	Middle School Fitness Basics II				
	Middle School Health				
	Second Grade Technology				
Stephanie Johnson	Third Grade Technology	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
<b>WORLD LANGUAGES</b>					
	Spanish 1, Second Semester				
Jessica Roth	Spanish 2, Third Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28			
Nichole Parker (DeSaurel)	American Sign Language 1b: Learn to Sign				
	American Sign Language 2b: Advancing Communication Skills	N	Not Participating	N/A	
	Latin I, First Semester				
	Latin I, Second Semester				
	Latin II, First Semester				
	Latin II, Second Semester				
Shana Johnson	MS United States History, Second Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28			
	Sign Language I				
Jodi Connell	Sign Language II	N	Not Participating	N/A	

Teacher	Course(s)	Standards Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Alignment Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
<b>WORLD LANGUAGES</b>					
	Spanish 1, Second Semester				
Jessica Roth	Spanish 2, Third Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28			
Nichole Parker (DeSaurel)	American Sign Language 1b: Learn to Sign				
	American Sign Language 2b: Advancing Communication Skills	N	Not Participating	N/A	
	Latin I, First Semester				
	Latin I, Second Semester				
	Latin II, First Semester				
	Latin II, Second Semester				
Shana Johnson	MS United States History, Second Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28			
	Sign Language I				
Jodi Connell	Sign Language II	N	Not Participating	N/A	
<b>CTE/ELECTIVES</b>					
	Introduction to Cybersecurity A				
	Introduction to Cybersecurity B				
	Foundations of Programming				
	Programming 2b				
Shannay Witte	Consumer Math A	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
	E-Sports				
	Workplace and Internship Readiness				
Jocci Kolle	Personal Psychology I				
	Intro to Psychology (Dual Credit)	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	Y
Beth Walters	Nutrition				
	Culinary Arts	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
	Family Living and Healthy Relationship				
	MS Life Skills				
Sarah Kallock	Real World Parenting	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Joyell Binstock	Personal Financial Literacy				



# Appendix B, cont.

Teacher	Course(s)	Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
Megan Wald	Marketing Foundations IA Marketing Foundations IB		Not Participating	N/A	
Kate Gardner	Intro to Nursing I Intro to Nursing II	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Dave Gravdahl	Aerospace I Aerospace II Building Maintenance Technology I Building Maintenance Technology II	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	Y
Jamie Moen	Entrepreneurship 1A Excel: Office Fundamental Series Principles of IT 1a Principles of IT 1b	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	
Reann Enderson	Accounting I Accounting II Sports and Entertainment Marketing	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Allison Mack	Introduction to Business Middle School Exploring Information Technology	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Jason Horner	Concepts of Engineering and Technology	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Kaitlyn Allen	Intro to Education (Edu 250 Dual Credit) Applying Technology II Applying Technology III & IV Introduction to Programming 1a: Introduction Introduction to Programming 1b: Problem solving through Programming Middle School Coding 1a: Introduction Middle School Learning in a Digital World: Digital Citizenship	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		

Teacher	Course(s)	Standards Alignment Notebook Set Up	Teacher Course Confirmation Y/N	Standards Alignment Tutorial Complete (Y/N)	Standards Alignment Complete Y/N
<b>SCIENCE</b>					
Danielle Schmidt	Chemistry A Chemistry B Middle School Earth and Space Science, First Semester	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Not Participating		
Matthew Klamian	Middle School Earth and Space Science, Second Semester Biology, Second Semester Anatomy and Physiology IA	N	Not Participating		
Jill Wold	Anatomy and Physiology IB	N	Not Participating		
Shane Alderman	Introduction to Forestry and Natural Resources Introduction to Renewable Technologies	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Harvey Kruckenberg	Astronomy 1a: Introduction Astronomy 1b: Exploring the Universe Marine Science 1a: Introduction Middle School Life Science, First Semester	N	Not Participating		
Melissa Rames	Middle School Life Science, Second Semester Anatomy and Physiology IA	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y		
Micki Thielen	Anatomy and Physiology IB	Y-Notebook Sent 4/28	Y	Y	

# Appendix C: Selection and Revision of Curricular Content Policy (E3.v01)

NDCDE purchases the majority of its curricular content from third-party vendors. As a Cognia accredited institution, when selecting this content it acknowledges this accrediting body's recommendations on third-party curriculum and assessment, including: "the responsibility to validate that the curriculum and assessments meet the educational requirements of the institution, align with the appropriate standards, and meet the institution's mission and purpose."

## Selection Criteria

When reviewing and selecting educational materials, NDCDE aims to meet the following standards:

1. Curricula must be aligned to the state standards. If priority standards are missing, reviewers must ascertain methods for incorporation of these standards and assessments of them through NDCDE in-house development of content.
2. Curricula must be accurate and contain up-to-date content that provide for the needs of a wide range of learners.
3. Curricula should allow sequential growth and continuity from level to level.
4. Curricula must provide a fair representation of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our country and world. There will be no discrimination or bias or prejudice on the basis of sex, race, religion, marital status, age, disability, national origin, color, or other class protected by law.
5. Curricula will present a balance of opposing sides of controversial issues so that students may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical thinking.
6. Courses should have a variety of assessment methods to allow learners choice in how to demonstrate learning. They must be aligned to content and course learning outcomes.
7. Courses must be engaging and easy to navigate; they should be reviewed for overall aesthetic quality, navigation and functionality, and incorporation of audio, images, and video.
8. Courses must be accessible and incorporate principles of universal design.
9. Course offerings must reflect the breadth and depth of courses needed and desired by learners across the state and beyond to promote educational access and choice. NDCDE shall ensure it offers all curricula required by NDCC Chapter 15.1-21.
10. Consideration will be given to readability and levels of difficulty, appropriateness of content, skills or prior learning required of students, skills or professional development required of teachers, and provisions for ascertaining mastery of content by students.

## Selection Process

Overseen by the curriculum committee, NDCDE adopts new curricula based on internal needs assessments, input from stakeholders, and vendor updates. Selection is guided by the above criteria.



# Appendix C, cont.

he director of curriculum typically spearheads the exploration of new curricula, and once potential vendors and courses are identified, a teacher who is a content expert is selected to review the course, completing a course evaluation checklist. If the course meets NDCDE standards, the director of curriculum receives the approval of the curriculum committee; consults the assistant superintendent and state director, who shall ensure NDCDE has the resources needed to deliver the course with fidelity; and then is authorized to purchase the course. The director of curriculum then coordinates work with instructional, LMS, and IT staff to prepare the course for deployment, and the new course is then placed in the NDCDE store for purchase.

## **Review**

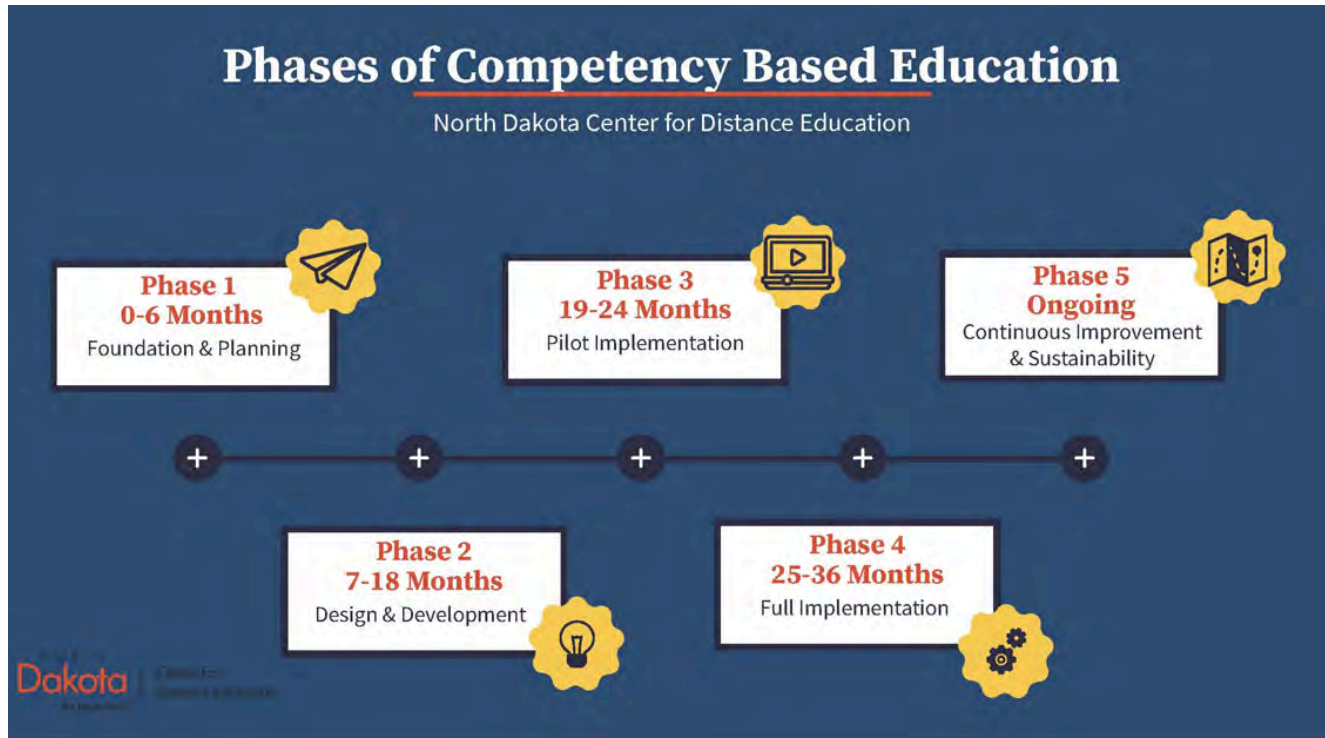
The NDCDE curriculum committee is responsible for ongoing review of curriculum based on the above criteria and on data NDCDE collects on student outcomes and parent, school, student, and instructor feedback. Courses with vendor updates also undergo reviews before updates are deployed. All courses subject to a review are placed on the NDCDE's course review schedule, and a content expert is assigned to complete these analyses using the NDCDE course review rubric. The content expert is responsible for recommending needed improvements, implementation of updates, and/or sunsetting the course. These recommendations are issued to the director of curriculum, who shares these recommendations with the curriculum committee for input and then works with the assistant superintendent to act on the recommendation, including identifying an internal content expert to improve the courses if this is the identified needed action.

## **Standards Alignment**

All NDCDE curricula must be aligned to North Dakota K-12 priority standards. The director of curriculum maintains and monitors a schedule for completing this alignment work. Content experts complete the priority standards alignment worksheet to document alignment. These worksheets are posted with the accompanying course in the NDCDE store and in the learning management system. Standards alignment is reviewed and updated anytime a course is updated or revised.

## **End of policy**

# Appendix D: NDCDE Phases of CBE



## Phase 1

### Vision and Culture Development

- **Define CBE Vision:** Craft a clear, compelling vision for CBE that aligns with NDCDE's mission and values. This vision should focus on personalized, self-paced learning that allows students to progress upon proficiency.
- **Cultural Alignment:** Foster a CBE mindset among all stakeholders through PD and collaboration.

### Infrastructure and Resource Assessment

- **Technology Review:** Assess existing digital platforms and tools to ensure they support CBE functionalities like tracking individual progress and CBE gradebook structure.
- **Resource Planning:** Identify needs for additional resources such as CBE training materials and software enhancements.



# Appendix D, cont.

## Phase 2

### Curriculum Design

- **Develop/Align Competency Frameworks:** Identify and define key competencies (state standards) for each subject area that students must achieve, tailored to asynchronous learning needs and align first with course assessments, followed by each module and/or learning activity.
- **Adapt Curriculum:** Redesign courses as needed to be competency-based, allowing students to progress based on proficiency (could include pre-assessments).

### Professional Development

- **Virtual Training:** Roll out comprehensive, on-demand professional development courses and training based on CBE principles, assessment methods, and digital tool utilization.
- **Support Networks:** Establish support teams and mentorship opportunities for teachers transitioning to CBE.

## Phase 3

### Pilot Launch

- **Implement Pilot Courses:** Begin with a select number of courses or grade levels to trial CBE, gathering initial data on student engagement and progress.
- **Adjust Based on Feedback:** Use feedback from students, parents, and educators to refine processes, resources, etc.

### Data Collection and Analysis

- **Monitor Student Progress:** Utilize LMS to track student achievement against set competencies.
- **Evaluate Pilot Success:** Analyze data to determine the effectiveness of the pilot, making necessary adjustments before wider implementation.

# Appendix D, cont.

## Phase 4

### **Expand CBE Implementation**

- **Broaden CBE Courses:** Gradually introduce more courses into the CBE framework based on the pilot's success.
- **Enhance Technological Capabilities:** Upgrade digital platforms as needed to support an asynchronous, competency-based model.

### **Ongoing Professional Development and Support**

- **Continuous Learning Opportunities:** Offer regular updates to resources and new strategies for engaging students in an asynchronous environment.
- **Peer Collaboration:** Encourage ongoing collaboration and sharing of best practices among staff through virtual meetings and shared digital resources.

## Phase 5

### **Policy and Advocacy**

- **Develop Supportive Policies:** Advocate for state and NDCDE level policies that recognize and support competency-based education.

### **Stakeholder Engagement and Data Utilization**

- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Keep staff & stakeholders engaged through regular updates and opportunities to provide feedback on the transition to CBE.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Use data analytics to continually assess and improve offerings, outcomes and the learning experience.



## HB1105 – Virtual Learning

Submitted by Shannay Witte

I am providing testimony to oppose HB 1105.

I was a classroom teacher in a brick-and-mortar school from 1989 to 2023. I started working for NDCDE as an adjunct in 2007 and transitioned to full time in August of 2023. I have had 35 years of face-to-face teaching experience and 17 years of online teaching experience.

One of the changes I oppose is that students may need to meet eligibility requirements to take NDCDE courses. I have had many students who, because of being able to take online courses in subjects their school could not offer, have gone on to very lucrative and exciting careers in those areas. Online education opens doors to subjects that students often do not have access to due to limitations at their school or on their time. No student should be denied access to opportunities that could be life changing. If the eligibility requirements are based on their level of achievement in other subject areas, it is not necessarily indicative of their ability to excel in a course they are passionate about.

The second change that I oppose is that schools can require legal guardians to pay for their student's enrollment if they should fail the course. I feel that this action will not increase students' propensity to successfully complete courses as much as it would discriminate against families with limited financial ability who would be unwilling to risk that possible financial burden. Many of our students are those who have struggled in the regular classroom and need the options that online courses provide and the deterrent of possibly having to pay for a course only compounds the multifaceted problems these students face.

Having worked in a rural school district for 34 years, I understand the struggles that schools face with allocating education funds equitably, but paying for NDCDE courses is a direct educational benefit to students, not an auxiliary function or frivolity. Providing equitable opportunities to all students regardless of their past achievements or financial ability is an important part of providing quality education for all students in our state. NDCDE provides high quality, rigorous curriculum that is taught by experienced, qualified teachers to meet students' needs regardless of their background or location. NDCDE strives to supplement students' learning and be partners with the local schools in making education in all subjects accessible for every student.

## Testimony House Bill 1105 - In Opposition

January 13, 2025

Chair Heinert, members of the committee, and fellow stakeholders:

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony opposing House Bill 1105. This bill seeks to amend section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code, and while well-intentioned, it risks compromising the quality and accessibility of virtual education in our state. I am Kaitlyn Allen, the Curriculum Director at the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE), and I am writing to emphasize the importance of preserving the current policies that have successfully fostered rigorous and equitable virtual learning.

As Curriculum Director at NDCDE, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact of virtual learning on students across diverse communities. My background includes over a decade as a classroom teacher, during which I taught students with varying needs. I have also worked as a curriculum designer, building resources to engage learners and support teachers in delivering high-quality education. These experiences have given me a deep appreciation for the challenges students and educators face and the importance of accessible, rigorous educational opportunities.

At NDCDE, we utilize vendor-provided courses that are carefully reviewed and adapted to align with North Dakota Content Standards. In addition, our team provides in-house enhancements to tailor these courses to the specific needs of our students. This ensures that every learner has access to relevant, engaging, and high-quality educational content.

**Intentional Course Design:** Every course undergoes a thorough vetting process to ensure it delivers not only academic depth but also opportunities for practical application. For instance, project-based assignments in math and science allow students to develop critical thinking skills while tackling real-world challenges.

**Student-Centered Learning:** Our virtual learning model prioritizes flexibility and personalization. Students have opportunities to work at their own pace, supported by tools like scaffolding and interactive content. In our elementary competency-based education (CBE) initiatives, students' progress is measured by demonstrating mastery of standards, ensuring they build a strong foundation before moving forward. This thoughtful design helps meet the diverse needs of our learners and empowers them to take ownership of their education.



**Qualified Educators:** Our courses are supported by North Dakota-certified teachers who bring a wealth of expertise and experience to their roles. These educators provide direct support to students, ensuring that virtual learning is interactive and meaningful.

Unfortunately, HB 1105 threatens to disrupt these effective practices. Specifically:

- **Barriers to Access:** The proposed changes could create new obstacles for students, particularly those in rural or underserved areas who depend on the flexibility that current virtual learning policies provide. Limiting these options diminishes opportunities for equitable access to high-quality education.
- **Inconsistent Standards:** The bill's provisions could lead to variations in how virtual education is managed across districts, weakening the accountability and consistency that are hallmarks of programs like NDCDE. A strong statewide framework is crucial to maintaining quality and ensuring all students benefit equally.

Virtual learning is not a shortcut; it is a pathway to meaningful opportunities for students. Programs like NDCDE have demonstrated their ability to provide rigorous, flexible, and effective education. Introducing policies that undermine these efforts risks harming the very students we aim to serve.

I respectfully urge the committee to vote against House Bill 1105. By preserving the current policies, we can continue to support equitable and high-quality virtual learning opportunities for all North Dakota students.

Thank you for considering this testimony. I am available to provide further information or answer questions as needed.

Kaitlyn Allen

Director of Curriculum

North Dakota Center for Distance Education

**Emily G. Schaefer**

**Assistant Principal and Professional Development Coordinator**

**North Dakota Center for Distance Education.**

**HB 1105- In opposition**

Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

I am here to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1105. I would like to introduce myself. I am Emily Schaefer, from Langdon, ND, originally from Walhalla, ND. I am currently the Assistant Principal and Professional Development Coordinator at NDCDE. Prior to that I was a full-time elementary teacher with NDCDE, a part-time elementary teacher with NDCDE, and before that a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in Cavalier, ND. My roots in North Dakota are strong and my passion for the students in this state runs deep.

I am lucky enough to be employed by NDCDE. It was a happenstance situation where in 2020, I saw a part-time job opening for an elementary teacher. Since then, my career with NDCDE has evolved and most recently into a leadership role. I have seen NDCDE through major growth with the pandemic and then the legislative session of 2023. I have taught countless students who have come to online learning for different reasons. My passion and focus until recently was our elementary program, and I had families tell me they couldn't "thank me enough" for this option. Families and children going through illness (child or parent), moves, hardships, mental health struggles who were able to have access to a quality education through NDCDE without "red tape" tied to it. As of yesterday evening, we had over 13,000 enrollments for the year. Each one of those with different stories. Last year, I had a student who had severe health issues, she needed a complicated surgery and was unable to attend school or leave her house due to exposure to illness. I was able to provide her with a quality education, regardless. Her parents financially could never have afforded NDCDE. They both worked multiple jobs and had medical bills to pay. The young girl ended up doing ok in her courses, but she was close to failing math at points. If her parents had had the burden of covering the costs, I don't know what they would have done.

Sometimes we are students last option, when every teacher or building has given up or deemed them too difficult (academically, behaviorally or emotionally), they are brought to us. Parents are given hope for another way for their child to be educated. If HB 1105 passed, that option leaves our students and now puts the burden on families, when often times, districts push these students to us.

My personal background is that of a rural ND girl. In Walhalla or a small town like it, I did not have the chance to take Interior Design, Education Methodologies, Agriculture courses, Gothic Literature, and many other courses offered at NDCDE. My parents most certainly would not have afforded to pay for it either. For generations, my family was never granted these opportunities, and I wish that we had been. My sons now will have the opportunity to take



courses that our local district cannot offer, and even if they could, they could not afford or find a teacher for it in our rural area.

I ask you to consider opposing this bill, as it will take educational opportunities away from our North Dakota students. North Dakota strives to better the place we live, and providing access to all forms of education to our children should be a priority.

Emily G. Schaefer

[Emily.g.schaefer@k12.nd.us](mailto:Emily.g.schaefer@k12.nd.us)

701.515.1282

1 Tuesday, January 14, 2025

2 Pamela Cronin, Principal, West Fargo Horace High School

3 Support for HB 1105

4 Good Morning Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

5 My name is Pam Cronin, and I am the Principal of West Fargo Horace High School. I am here today to  
6 testify in support of House Bill 1105.

7 Under the current legislation, any student can take an online course simply by submitting a request.  
8 While this provision may seem beneficial on the surface, it has caused significant challenges for high  
9 schools. At our school, for instance, we have approximately 50 students out of 750 requesting to take an  
10 online class in subjects such as PE, social studies, English, and math. The reasons for these requests  
11 range from legitimate requests such as "it wouldn't otherwise fit in my schedule" to less compelling  
12 reasons like "it will be easier" or "I just want an open period".

13 While online courses can be a practical option if a course doesn't fit into a student's schedule or the  
14 school is unable to offer it, this is not always the case. For example, 1<sup>st</sup> semester, we had approximately  
15 five students who genuinely needed to take an online course due to a scheduling conflict. The other 50  
16 students requested online classes for varying reasons, many without a clear or pressing need.  
17 Unfortunately, of those 50 students, approximately 15% did not pass their courses. This has left these  
18 students in a situation where they are now off track for graduation, creating significant challenges for  
19 both the students and the school.

20 This situation creates serious scheduling difficulties and imposes additional costs on school districts.  
21 While we firmly believe that school districts should provide opportunities for students when the courses  
22 they request are unavailable, this should be a measured and practical process. West Fargo has always  
23 prioritized accommodating students in such cases. For example, we've supported students who face  
24 conflicts with courses offered only at one time like AP Calculus, music, or Spanish II to allow them to  
25 take an online course at our expense.

26 The amendments proposed address these challenges and help maintain the integrity and efficiency of  
27 our school systems without the unintended consequences that we have discovered over the last two  
28 years. I urge you to consider these changes for the benefit of our students and school districts.

29 Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1105  
2/12/2025

Relating to a school district's virtual learning policies.
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2:50 p.m. Chairman Heinert called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

2:56 p.m. Representative Jonas Moved to adopt amendment 25.0640.01002. #37455

2:56 p.m. Representative Hauck Seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion carried 14-0-0

2:58 p.m. Representative Jonas moved a Do Pass as amended.

2:58 p.m. Representative Longmuir seconded the motion.

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion carried: 14-0-0

Bill carrier: Representative Jonas

3:00 p.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*



Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1105**

Introduced by

Representatives Jonas, Christy, Hager, Longmuir, Murphy

Senator Davison

2-12-25  
J3 1063

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century  
2 Code, relating to a school district's virtual learning policies.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6 **15.1-07-25.4. Virtual learning - School district policy - Report to legislative**  
7 **management and legislative assembly.**

- 8 1. The board of a school district or governing board of a nonpublic school that operates a  
9 physical school plant may adopt a policy to allow students to engage in virtual  
10 instruction and in the case of a school district, qualify for average daily membership in  
11 the district.
- 12 2. A resident school district may not deny open enrollment to an approved virtual school.
- 13 ~~2.3.~~ A student or a student's family member may not receive any item, service, or thing of  
14 value not given in exchange for fair market consideration from a vendor providing  
15 instruction or support under this section.
- 16 ~~3.4.~~ The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules governing policies under this  
17 section.
- 18 5. A policy adopted by a school district under this section ~~must comply:~~
- 19 a. Must comply with the rules adopted by the superintendent of public instruction.

JS 2 of 3

- 1           b. ~~May restrict student access to~~require registration for virtual instruction to certain  
2           ~~time periods and impose time duration limitations to coincide with the school~~  
3           ~~district course registration schedule and deadlines.~~
- 4           c. ~~May impose eligibility requirements for students to qualify to enroll in~~require that  
5           ~~students meet prerequisites to ensure readiness for sequential virtual~~  
6           ~~instruction courses.~~
- 7           d. ~~May require a student's legal guardian to pay for a virtual instruction course if the~~  
8           ~~student fails to obtain credit for the virtual instruction course.~~
- 9           ~~e.~~ Must require the school district to pay for a virtual instruction course if the school  
10           district does not offer the course and obtaining the course credit would contribute  
11           to the student meeting high school graduation requirements in time to graduate  
12           within the usual time frame.
- 13           e. May establish the minimum number of courses a student is required to take  
14           onsite, whether virtual or in person. The policy may not unreasonably restrict  
15           student access to virtual school options and must comply with laws and  
16           administrative rules applicable to onsite students, as distinguished from virtual  
17           academy students.
- 18           f. May grant discretion to the school district to determine whether to pay for a virtual  
19           instruction course retake.

20       4.6. The superintendent of public instruction shall provide an annual report to either the  
21       legislative management or the legislative assembly. In odd-numbered years, the report  
22       must be made to the legislative assembly. In even-numbered years, the report must be  
23       made to the legislative management. The annual report must:

- 24           a. Contain a comparison of the academic performance of students participating in  
25           virtual instruction against students not participating in virtual instruction under this  
26           section; and
- 27           b. Use the statewide prekindergarten through grade twelve strategic vision  
28           framework goals.

29       5.7. If the superintendent of public instruction does not have access to academic  
30       performance reports of a school district's virtual instruction subgroup because of the



- 1 low group size, the district shall provide the annual report required under this section
- 2 for the district's comparison data.
- 3 ~~6-8.~~ Students enrolled in an approved virtual school do not generate school district sized
- 4 weighting factors pursuant to section 15.1-27-03.2.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
HB 1105**

**Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0640.01002](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1105 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.



25.0640.01002  
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council  
staff for Representative Jonas  
February 7, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

### HOUSE BILL NO. 1105

Introduced by

Representatives Jonas, Christy, Hager, Longmuir, Murphy

Senator Davison

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century  
2 Code, relating to a school district's virtual learning policies.

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4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6 **15.1-07-25.4. Virtual learning - School district policy - Report to legislative**  
7 **management and legislative assembly.**

8 1. The board of a school district or governing board of a nonpublic school that operates a  
9 physical school plant may adopt a policy to allow students to engage in virtual  
10 instruction and in the case of a school district, qualify for average daily membership in  
11 the district.

12 2. A resident school district may not deny open enrollment to an approved virtual school.

13 2-3. A student or a student's family member may not receive any item, service, or thing of  
14 value not given in exchange for fair market consideration from a vendor providing  
15 instruction or support under this section.

16 3-4. The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules governing policies under this  
17 section.

18 5. A policy adopted by a school district under this section ~~must comply~~.

19 a. Must comply with the rules adopted by the superintendent of public instruction.

- b. May ~~restrict student access to~~ require registration for virtual instruction ~~to certain time periods and impose time duration limitations~~ to coincide with the school district course registration schedule and deadlines.
- c. May ~~impose eligibility requirements for students to qualify to enroll in~~ require that students meet prerequisites to ensure readiness for sequential virtual instruction courses.
- d. ~~May require a student's legal guardian to pay for a virtual instruction course if the student fails to obtain credit for the virtual instruction course.~~
- e. Must require the school district to pay for a virtual instruction course if the school district does not offer the course and obtaining the course credit would contribute to the student meeting high school graduation requirements in time to graduate within the usual time frame.
- e. May establish the minimum number of courses a student is required to take onsite, whether virtual or in person. The policy may not unreasonably restrict student access to virtual school options and must comply with laws and administrative rules applicable to onsite students, as distinguished from virtual academy students.
- f. May grant discretion to the school district to determine whether to pay for a virtual instruction course retake.

4.6. The superintendent of public instruction shall provide an annual report to either the legislative management or the legislative assembly. In odd-numbered years, the report must be made to the legislative assembly. In even-numbered years, the report must be made to the legislative management. The annual report must:

- a. Contain a comparison of the academic performance of students participating in virtual instruction against students not participating in virtual instruction under this section; and
- b. Use the statewide prekindergarten through grade twelve strategic vision framework goals.

5.7. If the superintendent of public instruction does not have access to academic performance reports of a school district's virtual instruction subgroup because of the



Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly

- 1 low group size, the district shall provide the annual report required under this section
- 2 for the district's comparison data.
- 3 ~~6.8.~~ Students enrolled in an approved virtual school do not generate school district sized
- 4 weighting factors pursuant to section 15.1-27-03.2.

**2025 SENATE EDUCATION**

**HB 1105**



# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Education Committee**  
Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1105  
3/10/2025

Relating to a school district's virtual learning policies.
--

9:00 a.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee and Gerhardt.

Members Absent: Senator Wobbema

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Medical reasons
- Behavioral/disciplinary reasons
- Establish guidelines and structure
- Establish safeguards
- Open enrollment

9:00 a.m. Representative Jonas, District #13, introduced the bill.

9:08 a.m. Dr. Alyssa Martin, State Director ND Center, Distance Education, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39778.

9:37 a.m. Dr. Jeff Fastnacht, Superintendent Bismarck Public Schools, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39684.

9:42 a.m. Michael Heilman, Executive Director ND Small Organized Schools, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39774.

9:45 a.m. Amy De Kok, Executive Director ND School Boards Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39832.

9:46 a.m. Kevin Hoherz, Legislative Relations ND Council of Educational Leaders, testified in favor.

9:49 a.m. Leslie Bieber, Superintendent Alexander Public School, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39596.

## **Additional written testimony:**

Aimee Copas, Executive Director ND Council of Educational Leaders, submitted testimony in favor #39829.

Senate Education Committee

HB 1105

3/10/2025

Page 2

9:55 a.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*



Chairman Beard and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Leslie Bieber, and I am the Superintendent of Alexander School District No. 2 in Alexander, ND. As a teacher, I taught Spanish for 10 years at both the high school and collegiate level via ITV, virtually. I am here in support of HB 1105.

House Bill 1105 provides necessary structure to virtual learning policies, ensuring they serve students' academic needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The bill addresses significant gaps in the current system, which has allowed students to bypass in-person courses for reasons other than academic necessity. This misuse of virtual learning placed a financial misuse of taxpayer dollars and of a well-rounded education.

HB 1105 establishes important safeguards to ensure virtual learning remains an effective and responsible option:

- Adherence to registration schedules and deadlines is essential for planning and budgeting. Schools operate on structured timelines, and virtual courses should align with those same expectations to ensure consistency in student learning.
- Prerequisites for sequential courses are critical. If students enroll in courses without the necessary foundational knowledge, we are setting them up for failure. Just as we wouldn't allow a student to take Algebra II without passing Algebra I, virtual courses must follow an appropriate academic sequence.
- School districts should only be responsible for paying for a virtual course if the course is not offered locally and if the credit is required for the student to graduate on time. This ensures that virtual learning supplements, rather than replaces, in-person instruction when necessary.
- Districts should have the ability to establish a minimum number of required in-person courses. While virtual learning is valuable, excessive reliance on it can limit critical face-to-face interactions with educators and peers. Having the flexibility will allow schools to make decisions based on student needs because sometimes, student circumstances need all virtual or a balance.
- Discretion to pay for a retake should be based on individual student circumstances because we all know that life simply has extenuating circumstances. Districts should have the flexibility to make appropriate decisions based on the circumstances rather than blanket decision for all.

These policies are not about limiting student choice. They are about responsible education and preparation for life beyond high school. Our role as educators is to partner with parents in preparing students for the workforce, post-secondary education, or the military. In all of these paths, individuals must learn to adapt to different expectations, work with a variety of personalities, and meet deadlines. In the real world, we do not get to opt out of responsibilities or choose a different supervisor and have someone else pay for it.

The Choice Ready framework emphasizes adaptability and accountability, and HB 1105 aligns with these principles. Virtual learning should be an opportunity for students to expand their education, not an escape route from challenges they would face in any workplace or college classroom.

HB 1105 ensures fiscal responsibility, student accountability, and a commitment to meaningful education. It protects the integrity of both virtual and in-person learning by balancing flexibility with structure. I urge your support for this bill to provide necessary safeguards for our students and our schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

1 HB1105 – Virtual Learning – by Dr. Jeff Fastnacht, Superintendent, Bismarck  
2 Public School District.

3 I am here today to provide continued support for HB 1105. Long before my present  
4 position I had the privilege of chairing the Education Technology Council (ETC).  
5 The ETC was the governing board for the ND Center for Distance Education. During  
6 that time I watched the NDCDE transform from a paper-pencil and packet school to  
7 one that embraced online learning. The NDCDE then transitioned to be led by the  
8 ND Department of Career and Technical Education, which I also was part of as a  
9 member of the board and eventually their president. Again, I watched the NDCDE  
10 grow and provide learning opportunities to children in North Dakota and around the  
11 country. Our rural schools and schools like Bismarck Public School District, which  
12 I represent now, all benefitted from the services NDCDE provided.

13 During the 2023 Legislative Session, I watched the legislature pass a law to expand  
14 NDCDE programming reasonably and responsibly to all children. However, the  
15 rules implemented to expand access to students and families have caused great  
16 concern to educators and school leaders for the past two years. That is why I testified  
17 in support of HB 1105 on the House side and am again here today.

18 Let me begin by having you look back upon the testimony of Mr. Steve Madler,  
19 Principal of Century High School, Bismarck Public Schools. His testimony is in the  
20 record. I am quoting Mr. Madler “*we had 444 course completions in calendar year*  
21 *23-24(15 withdrawals/drops). 356 of these enrollments resulted in a passing grade.*  
22 *The average number of days these students actively engaged in the 140 day*  
23 *enrollment window was 29 days.*” This means they only took 29 days, on average,  
24 to complete an entire semester course. This made him, and our team within BPS



1 raise a skeptical eye. The BPS team has also raised concerns about registration  
2 timelines that allowed any student to add or drop at any time. This rule has resulted  
3 in some instances of teacher shopping—challenging rules associated with course  
4 selection and no pre-requisite restrictions. We shared concerns about challenges  
5 supervising courses and instances of academic dishonesty. I fully support CHOICE  
6 for families and students to access NDCDE coursework but like many things in our  
7 world, we need guardrails. We impose volumes of laws and rules that put guardrails  
8 on everything from how we drive, mowing our lawns, when we can hunt, and even  
9 on sports. *BTW – Bismarck Public Schools did really well at WDA this past weekend.*  
10 *(CHS B&G, BHS B, and LHS G)*

11 I am here today to also acknowledge the work and partnership of Dr. Alyssa Martin  
12 and her team to address many of our concerns. This bill has helped drive changes to  
13 the rules implemented after last session, and BPS has been working with her, DPI,  
14 and legislators including **Rep. Heinert, Rep. Schrieber-Beck, and Rep. Jonas** to  
15 craft policy guidance for schools that are aligned with HB 1105, which would  
16 reinstate reasonable guardrails. I would ask for passage of HB 1105, reasonable  
17 administrative rule change built upon this legislation, and policy guidance provided  
18 to schools to ensure implementation.

19 *Note: Bismarck Public Schools in FY 2023, the district paid NDCDE \$0.00 for*  
20 *tuition. That increased to \$292,158.84 in FY 2024. This year, we have spent \$98,847*  
21 *on CDE tuition as of 11/30/2024.*



# North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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## Testimony in Support of HB 1105

Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee. The North Dakota Center for Distance Education (ND CDE) is a critical partner for NDSOS members and for all schools in North Dakota. NDCDE has a long history of providing quality service to school districts and their students. I stand in support of ND CDE and this legislation. This legislation is needed to ensure that school districts are involved and work in concert the ND CDE to best serve students and parents when making educational choices.

HB 1105 also clarifies what most believed was the intent of legislation passed in the 2023 legislative session by avoiding unnecessary duplication and associated cost of taking virtual courses, especially when the course is offered by the local school district. HB 1105 also allows schools to develop policy that may place fiscal responsibility on the student and parent for costs of virtual instruction when classes are failed, and yet requires the school pay for virtual instruction if the district does not offer a course that would contribute to on time graduation.

NDSOS supports this legislation and believes it address what was the intent of the legislation passed during the 2023 session.

Mr. Michael Heilman – Executive Director  
North Dakota Small Organized Schools  
[mheilmanndsos@gmail.com](mailto:mheilmanndsos@gmail.com)  
701.527.4621

### Board of Directors

#### Region 1

Mr. Tim Holte, Supt. Stanley  
Mr. Kris Kuehn, Supt. Ray

#### Region 2

Dr. Kelly Peters, Supt. Lakota  
Mr. Steven Heim, Anamoose & Drake

#### Region 3

Dr. Frank Schill, Supt. Edmore  
Mr. David Wheeler, Supt. Manvel

#### Region 4

Mr. Brian Christopherson, Supt. New Salem  
Mr. Russ Ziegler, Supt. Elgin-New Leipzig

#### Region 5

Mr. Rick Diegel, Supt. Kidder Co.  
Mr. Brandt Dick, Supt. Burleigh County

#### Region 6

Mr. Mitch Carlson, Supt. LaMoure  
Dr. Steven Johnson, Supt. Ft. Ransom

**The mission of NDSOS is to provide leadership for the small/rural schools in North Dakota and to support legislation favorable to their philosophy while opposing legislation that is harmful.**

25.0640.02000

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## FIRST ENGROSSMENT

### ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1105

Introduced by

Representatives Jonas, Christy, Hager, Longmuir, Murphy

Senator Davison

- 1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century  
2 Code, relating to a school district's virtual learning policies.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

- 4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6 **15.1-07-25.4. Virtual learning - School district policy - Report to legislative**  
7 **management and legislative assembly.**

- 8 1. The board of a school district or governing board of a nonpublic school that operates a  
9 physical school plant may adopt a policy to allow students to engage in virtual  
10 instruction and in the case of a school district, qualify for average daily membership in  
11 the district.
- 12 2. A resident school district may not deny open enrollment to an approved virtual school.
- 13 2-3. A student or a student's family member may not receive any item, service, or thing of  
14 value not given in exchange for fair market consideration from a vendor providing  
15 instruction or support under this section.
- 16 3-4. The superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules governing policies under this  
17 section.
- 18 5. A policy adopted by a school district under this section ~~must comply~~:
- 19 a. Must comply with the rules adopted by the superintendent of public instruction.
- 20 b. May require registration for virtual instruction to coincide with the school district  
21 course registration schedule and deadlines.



- 1           c. May require that students meet prerequisites to ensure readiness for sequential
- 2           virtual courses.
- 3           d. Must require the school district to pay for a virtual instruction course if the school
- 4           district does not offer the course and obtaining the course credit would contribute
- 5           to the student meeting high school graduation requirements in time to graduate
- 6           within the usual time frame.
- 7           e. May establish the minimum number of courses a student is required to take
- 8           onsite, whether virtual or in person. The policy may not unreasonably restrict
- 9           student access to virtual school options and must comply with laws and
- 10          administrative rules applicable to onsite students, as distinguished from virtual
- 11          academy students.
- 12          f. May grant discretion to the school district to determine whether to pay for a virtual
- 13          instruction course retake.

14    ~~4.6.~~   The superintendent of public instruction shall provide an annual report to either the  
15           legislative management or the legislative assembly. In odd-numbered years, the report  
16           must be made to the legislative assembly. In even-numbered years, the report must be  
17           made to the legislative management. The annual report must:

- 18          a.   Contain a comparison of the academic performance of students participating in
- 19               virtual instruction against students not participating in virtual instruction under this
- 20               section; and
- 21          b.   Use the statewide prekindergarten through grade twelve strategic vision
- 22               framework goals.

23    ~~5.7.~~   If the superintendent of public instruction does not have access to academic  
24           performance reports of a school district's virtual instruction subgroup because of the  
25           low group size, the district shall provide the annual report required under this section  
26           for the district's comparison data.

27    ~~6.8.~~   Students enrolled in an approved virtual school do not generate school district sized  
28           weighting factors pursuant to section 15.1-27-03.2.



NDCEL Testimony in Support HB 1105 – Virtual Learning Policies

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1105, which amends Section 15.1-07-25.4 of the North Dakota Century Code to grant school districts greater authority over their virtual learning policies. This is important for a number of reasons – for the well-being of the student, for appropriate fiscal stewardship of tax dollars, for the financial control of their local budget, for assurance of the student being in their best placement for learning, among others.

Currently, districts are required to fund virtual courses even when equivalent in-person instruction is offered locally. The local district has no authority to have influence when a student wishes to drop a course at whatever time for whatever reason and to wish to switch to a virtual course most often being the NDCDE. Having been involved in the adjustment to this language last session, we do not believe the end interpretation of the bill was the intention of the conference committee. This double payment system has strained district budgets, diverting resources from other educational priorities. HB 1105 addresses this issue by allowing districts to establish reasonable policies for virtual instruction that ensure efficient use of taxpayer dollars while supporting student learning. To be clear – last session NDCEL supported the intent of the legislature which was that if a district did not offer a course the student wanted to take that the district would cover the cost of that course. Further, at times a district formally would elect to cover a course to provide schedule flexibility for a student to ensure they could take the coursework locally they otherwise would not be able to. However, this past biennium the interpretation of this bill has not resulted in positive outcomes – we’ve had an inordinate amount of money spent in the double payment of courses – in the millions.

While in the house, the bill was amended based on agreed upon middle ground between the field and NDCDE and we believe that what is represented here is reasonable.

These provisions empower school boards to make informed, context-specific decisions that balance student choice with fiscal responsibility. By prioritizing local instruction when available, the bill also reinforces the vital role of North Dakota educators in student success.

I respectfully urge your support for HB 1105 to promote responsible educational policy and ensure that district resources are used effectively to meet student needs.

Thank you for your consideration.



**NDSBA**  
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**HB 1105**  
**Testimony of Amy De Kok**  
**Senate Education Committee**  
**March 10, 2025**

Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Amy De Kok, and I am the Executive Director for the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA). NDSBA represents all 168 public school districts and their governing boards. I am here today to express our support for HB 1105. This bill provides important clarity and safeguards regarding virtual instruction policies while ensuring that school districts maintain an appropriate role in overseeing student enrollment in virtual courses.

NDSBA acknowledges the value of virtual learning opportunities, particularly those offered through the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE). However, we also recognize the necessity of ensuring that such opportunities do not inadvertently create financial or administrative burdens on local school districts or open the door for misuse of the system. The House Education Committee's amendments to HB 1105 strike an appropriate balance by preserving student choice while reinforcing the district's ability to manage and support effective virtual learning policies.

**Key Amendments and Their Impact**

1. **Ensuring District Oversight and Planning:** The bill now clarifies that school districts may require registration for virtual instruction to align with their existing course registration schedules and deadlines. This amendment prevents last-minute enrollments that could disrupt instructional planning and ensures students are making informed decisions regarding their coursework.
2. **Academic Readiness for Sequential Virtual Courses:** Districts may establish prerequisites for virtual courses that build on prior knowledge, ensuring that students are adequately prepared. This helps maintain academic integrity and student success by preventing enrollment in courses for which students lack foundational knowledge.
3. **Financial Responsibility and Course Access:** A critical amendment ensures that a school district must cover the cost of a virtual course only if the district does not offer the course and the credit is necessary for timely graduation. This provision ensures that virtual instruction serves as a



supplement rather than a financial loophole that could lead to an unnecessary transfer of educational costs from families to districts.

4. **Minimum Onsite Course Requirements:** The bill allows school districts to establish a minimum number of onsite courses students must take, whether in person or virtually. However, such policies cannot be used to unreasonably restrict student access to virtual options. This provision allows school boards to maintain student engagement with their home district while preventing abuse of virtual programs as a way to avoid in-person attendance entirely.
5. **Guidance on Virtual Course Retakes:** The amendments grant discretion to districts in determining whether they will pay for a student to retake a virtual course. This ensures that districts are not financially responsible for repeated coursework due to lack of student effort or accountability.

These amendments reflect a thoughtful approach that acknowledges the growing role of virtual education while preserving school district authority and responsibility. NDSBA supports HB 1105 in its current form, as it ensures that virtual instruction remains a valuable tool for student learning without becoming an undue burden on local schools.

I respectfully urge this committee to pass HB 1105 as amended and appreciate your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

HB 1105  
3/11/2025

Relating to a school district's virtual learning policies.
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9:28 a.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Beard; Vice-Chairman Lemm; Senators: Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt and Wobbema.

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

9:28 a.m. Senator Axtman moved Do Pass.

9:28 a.m. Senator Boschee seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y

Motion Passed 6-0-0

Senator Axtman will carry the bill.

9:31 a.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
ENGROSSED HB 1105 ([25.0640.02000](#))**

**Education Committee (Sen. Beard, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1105 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.