

**2025 SENATE EDUCATION**

**SB 2234**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Education Committee**  
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2234  
1/27/2025

To provide appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

2:15 p.m. Chairman Beard called the meeting to order.

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

Members Absent: Senator Wobbema

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Students acquire essential skills
- High school graduation requirements
- Choice ready framework

2:15 p.m. Senator Davison, District 41, testified in favor and submitted testimony #31796.

2:24 p.m. Laure Matzke, Assistant State Superintendent ND Department of Instruction, testified in favor and submitted testimony #31842, #31843 and 31844.

2:46 p.m. Brian Christopherson, Superintendent New Salem-Almont School District, testified in favor and submitted testimony #31845.

2:52 p.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

2:55 p.m. Chairman Beard adjourned the meeting.

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*

## Testimony in Favor of Senate Bill 2234

Dear Senate Education Members,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Senator Kyle Davison  
District 41 Fargo

# Choice Ready State Trend

**2023-2024: 71%**

**2022-2023: 66%**

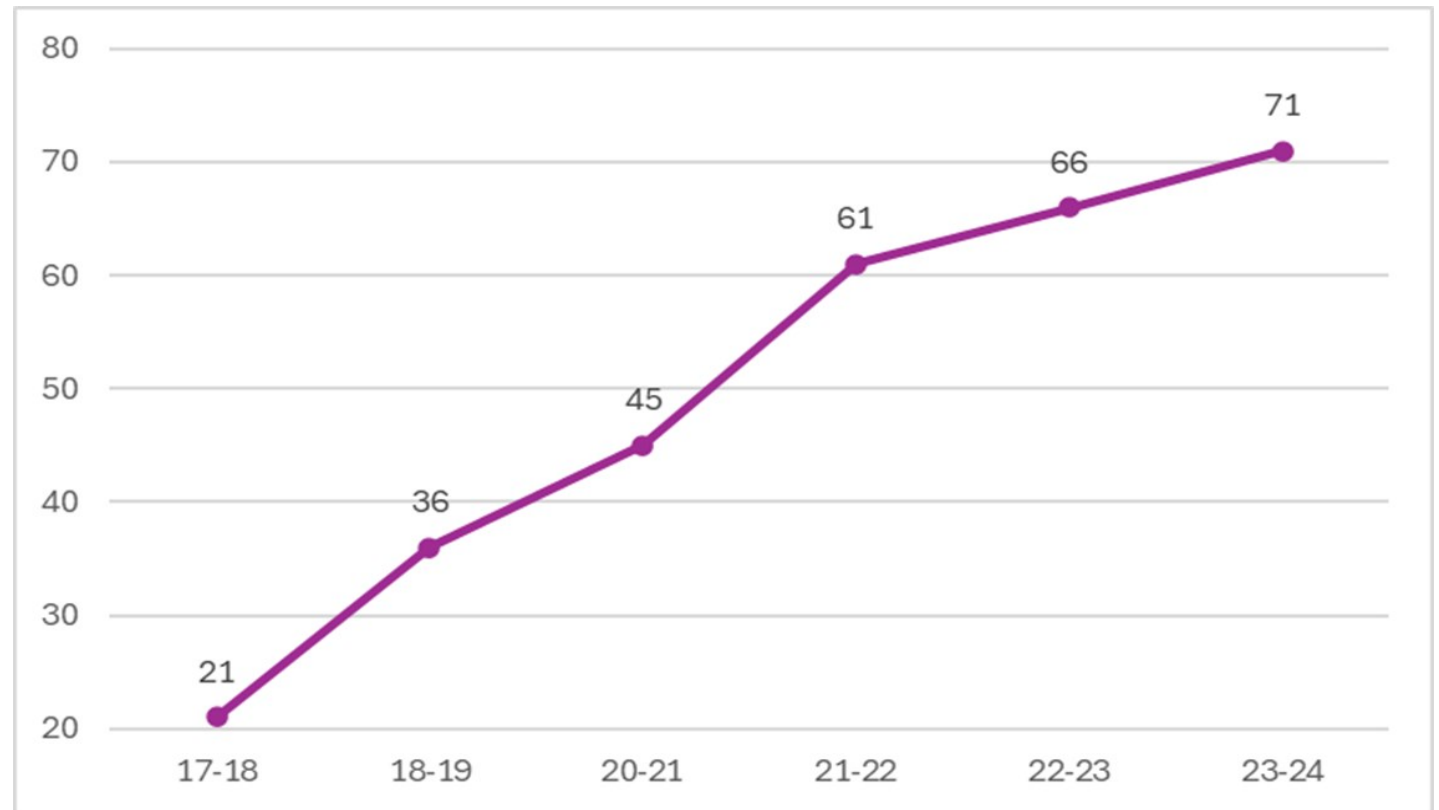
**2021-2022: 61%**

**2020-2021: 45%**

**2019-2020: NA**

**2018-2019: 36%**

**2017-2018: 21%**



**TESTIMONY ON SB 2234**  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**January 27, 2025**  
**By: Laurie Matzke, Assistant State Superintendent**  
**701-328-2284**  
**North Dakota Department of Public Instruction**

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Chairman Beard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Laurie Matzke, the Assistant State Superintendent for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). I am here on behalf of the department to speak in support of Senate Bill 2234.

Choice Ready is a key metric in the North Dakota accountability system and part of our statewide PK-12 strategic vision. This vision states, “All students will graduate Choice Ready with the knowledge, skills and disposition to be successful.” Choice Ready is designed to prepare students for success upon graduation and is intended to measure the growth a school has made in the number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who graduate Choice Ready. Attached is a visual of the Choice Ready Framework.

When the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed in 2015, all states were required to develop and submit a State ESSA accountability plan to the U.S. Department of Education. The North Dakota educators and stakeholders serving on the statewide ESSA Planning Committee created the Choice Ready Framework to serve as the growth measure for high schools. In our elementary schools, we measure growth on the state assessment. As outlined on the Choice

Ready Framework, the Essential Skills category lists North Dakota's expectations for all graduates, such as learning about financial literacy and passing the ND Civics Test. The overarching Essential Skills section is designed to provide students with the skills needed for work and life and can be critical in helping them be successful in whatever they choose to do in their life.

The framework then outlines three pathways: Post-secondary Ready, Workforce Ready, and Military Ready. Ideally, students would graduate ready in all three pathways; however, the ESSA Planning Committee has determined that in order to graduate Choice Ready, students must meet the Essential Skills section and two of the three pathways.

Over the past three years, NDDPI has provided high schools, Career and Technical Education Centers, and Special Education Units with the opportunity to apply for Choice Ready grants using ESSER dollars. The grants' purpose was to provide students with experiences to help them graduate Choice Ready.

Every North Dakota high school student attending a public school has a Choice Ready report in the STARS EdPortal. Counselors or other adults work with all students in grades 9-12 to fill out their reports as they complete activities and work toward choice readiness. This is particularly important, as the ND State Scholarship is now aligned to Choice Ready, making it critical to complete the reports accurately.

All across the nation, educators are making it a priority to grow our workforce and prepare students to be successful upon graduation. On all levels, state-district-schools, we are consistently encouraged to find programs that work and then continue doing them. In my 30-plus years in education, never have I seen a program show such tremendous and consistent growth as Choice Ready. Our Choice Ready rate when we started in 2016 was 21% and indicated on the graph I've shared, has consistently grown every year. Our Choice Ready rate for 2024 was 71%. Our goal is for our Choice Ready rate to match our graduation rate, which hovers around 90%. Continuation of the Choice Ready grants would provide critical resources to our high schools to help prepare students for a successful future.

NDDPI fully supports SB 2234 to provide grants to school districts so all students in ND can graduate Choice Ready. We request that the committee give SB 2234 a "Do Pass" recommendation.

Chairman Beard and Members of the Committee, this concludes my prepared testimony, and I will stand for any question that you may have.





## NORTH DAKOTA CHOICE READY

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



### ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Earn a North Dakota high school diploma

Complete a 9-week Career Education Course/Individual Counseling (15.1-21-18), Financial Literacy (15.1-21-21), and pass ND Civics Test (15.1-21-27), Computer Science/Cybersecurity Requirement (15.1-21-02.2), and **four or more additional indicators**:

- 25 hours of Community Service
- Two or More Years in Organized Extra-Curricular Activities
- 95% Attendance (not counting school-related absences)
- Successfully Complete a Capstone Project
- Career Exploration Experience
- Successfully Complete an Online Learning Course
- Two or More Years in Organized Co-Curricular Activities
- Demonstrate Competency in 21st Century Skills
- Multicultural Awareness

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



### POST-SECONDARY READY

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

ACT / SAT minimum or subsections scores:

ACT English – 18

ACT Reading – 22

ACT Math – 21

ACT Science – 23

SAT Reading/Writing – 480

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or

**Two or more** additional indicators:

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



### WORKFORCE READY

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

- Complete three CTE courses or more (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- Complete Career Ready Practices (3.0)
- Dual Credit Course (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- WorkKeys (Gold or Silver)
- Technical Assessment/Industry Credential
- Workplace Learning Experience (40 hrs.)
- Work-based Learning Experience (Perkins V) (40hrs)
- NDSA (Reading/Math) Level 3 or greater
- Complete three World Language Courses (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)



### MILITARY READY

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

**Quality Citizenship** (No Expulsions/Suspensions)

**Physically Fit** (Successfully complete required PE courses (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2))

and

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

or

Complete two credits of JROTC or Civil Air Patrol

or

Complete **two credits** in the Military Pathway Program, selecting from the following 1/2 credit courses:

- Intro to Military Careers
- Military Health & Fitness
- ASVAB Essentials
- Career Foundations in Military Leadership
- Military Leadership Capstone

Senator Beard and members of the committee:

I will be speaking on behalf of New Salem-Almont Schools and Small Schools Association in support of SB2234 as well as concerns regarding the **Choice Ready Grant Bill**

**SB2234.** On the surface, this is a great bill for our students, however the recent changes to the requirements for the Choice Ready Grant, particularly with the late roll-out of these changes in August 2024 created significant challenges for schools, including the scope of eligibility and impact on budgets. We are not sure if this is a legislative issue but want to bring up our concerns.

The primary concerns are as follows:

**1. Impact on Eligibility**

Schools often build schedules to ensure a logical progression for students between semesters. For example, a 10th-grade student enrolled in an online course during the first semester typically continues with another online course in the second semester. Under the new 2024-2025 grant requirements, these students are now ineligible since their online course enrollment began in the fall of 2024, and the requirements are for new students in the spring 2025 and/or summer 2025.

**2. Dual Credit Course Exemptions**

All of our students who take a dual credit course, start in the fall semester. Under the latest requirements, this excludes them from grant eligibility, as the grant now applies only to students beginning dual credit courses in spring or summer 2025. This is a significant departure from the previous years.

**3. Limitations of Online Course Vendors**

We have also noticed that C.D.E. is the only online vendor recognized under the grant. This poses a challenge for schools like ours, where some students pursuing the N.D. Scholarship need additional C.T.E. coursework. C.R.A.C.T., which offers a hands-on component, has proven to be a more suitable option for some students in these cases. Expanding vendor options to include C.R.A.C.T. and similar providers would better align with the diverse needs of schools across North Dakota.

**Recommendations**

To better support schools and ensure the grant is accessible and impactful, we respectfully request the following considerations:

- Add language in the bill to include fall semester activities for new students.
- Expand the list of approved vendors to include all in-state vendors.

This bill is designed to benefit students; however, without modifications to the current requirements, it will not achieve the intended positive impact for North Dakota students that aligns with the bill's purpose.

Sincerely,

Brian Christopherson, Superintendent  
New Salem-Almont School District

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Education Committee**  
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2234  
2/3/2025

To provide appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

11:42 a.m. Chairman Beard called the hearing to order.

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

**Discussion Topics:**

- Program Success

11:42 a.m. Committee discussion

11:49 a.m. Senator Wobbema moved a Do Pass and Rerefer to Appropriations.

11:49 a.m. Senator Axtman 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 Boschee will carry the bill.

11:54 a.m. Chairman Beard closed the hearing.

*Susan Helbling, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**SB 2234 ([25.1169.01000](#))**

**Education Committee (Sen. Beard, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** and **BE REREFERRED** to the **Appropriations Committee** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2234 was rereferred to the **Appropriations Committee**. This bill does not affect workforce development.

**2025 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS**

**SB 2234**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations Committee Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2234  
2/6/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

2:22 p.m. Chairman Bekkedahl opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Bekkedahl, Vice-Chairman Erbele, and Senators Burckhard, Cleary, Conley, Davison, Dever, Dwyer, Magrum, Mathern, Meyer, Schaible, Sickler, Sorvaag, Thomas, Wanzek.

### Discussion Topics:

- Choice Ready State Trend
- Committee Action

2:23 p.m. Senator Davison introduced the bill, testified in favor, and submitted testimony #36025.

2:25 p.m. Senator Davison moved a Do Pass.

2:25 p.m. Senator Mathern seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Donald Schaible	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Y
Senator Paul J. Thomas	Y
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y

Motion Passed 16-0-0.

Senator Boschee will carry the bill.

Senate Appropriations Committee

SB 2234

02/06/2025

Page 2

2:28 p.m. Chairman Bekkedahl closed the hearing.

*Elizabeth Reiten, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**SB 2234 ([25.1169.01000](#))**

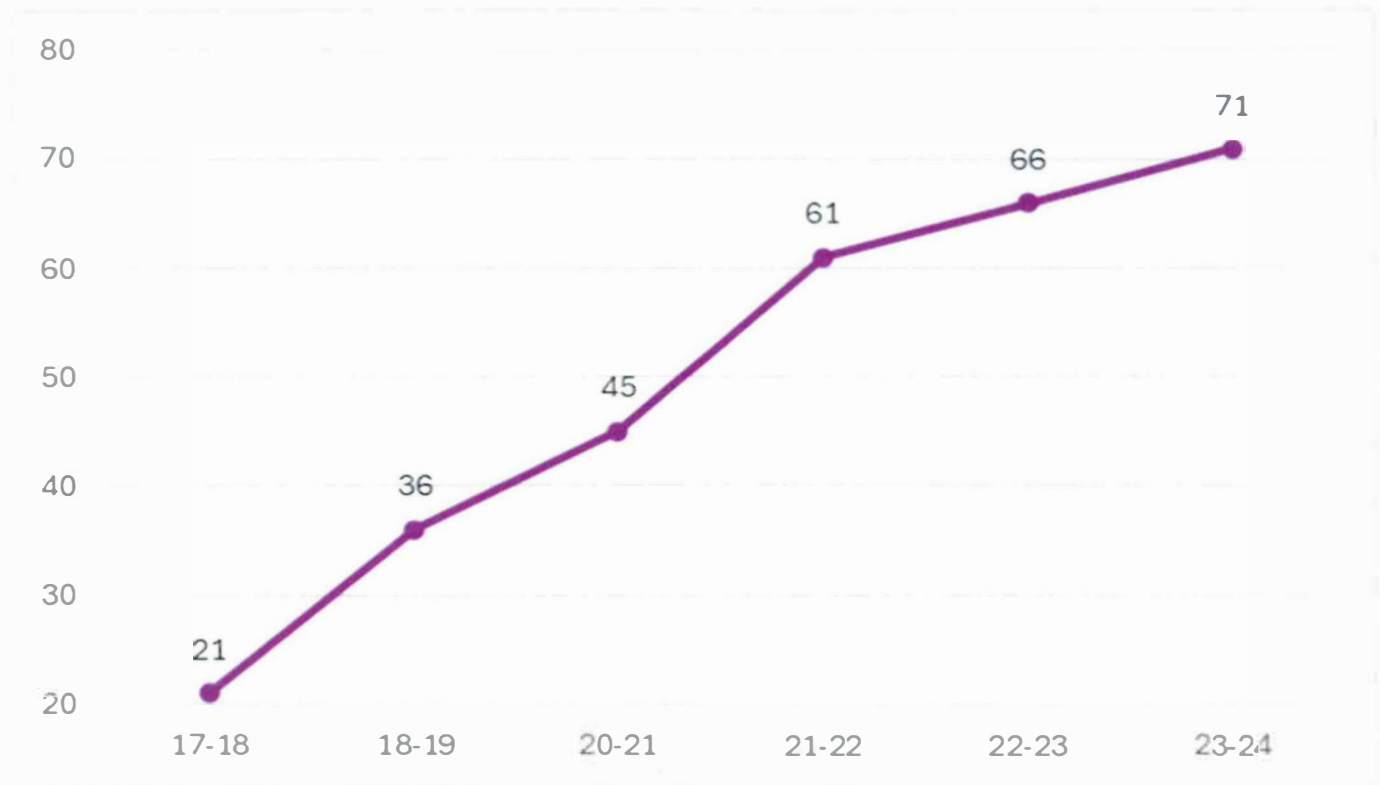
**Appropriations Committee (Sen. Bekkedahl, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (16 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2234 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.



SB 2234

2-6-25 Dawson

# Choice Ready State Trend

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- Military Health & Fitness
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**2025 HOUSE EDUCATION**

**SB 2234**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Education Committee**  
Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2234  
3/5/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

2:30 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:**

- Choice Ready grants
- Post secondary ready pathway
- Workforce ready pathway
- Military ready pathway
- ESSER funding

2:32 p.m. Jim Upgren, Legislative Liaison Department of Public instruction, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #38871 #38872 #38873

2:47 p.m. Andrea Pfennig, Greater ND Chamber, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #39019

## **Additional written testimony:**

Cale Dunwoody, FMWF Chamber of Commerce, submitted testimony in favor. #38883

2:48 p.m. Chairman Heinert adjourned the meeting.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

**TESTIMONY ON SB 2234**  
**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**  
**March 5, 2025**  
**By: Jim Upgren, Legislative Liaison**  
**701-328-2244**  
**North Dakota Department of Public Instruction**

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Chairman Heinert and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Upgren, Legislative Liaison for the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). I am here on behalf of the department to speak in support of Senate Bill 2234.

Choice Ready is a key metric in the North Dakota accountability system and part of our statewide PK-12 strategic vision. This vision states, “All students will graduate Choice Ready with the knowledge, skills and disposition to be successful.” Choice Ready is designed to prepare students for success upon graduation and is intended to measure the growth a school has made in the number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who graduate Choice Ready. Attached is a visual of the Choice Ready Framework.

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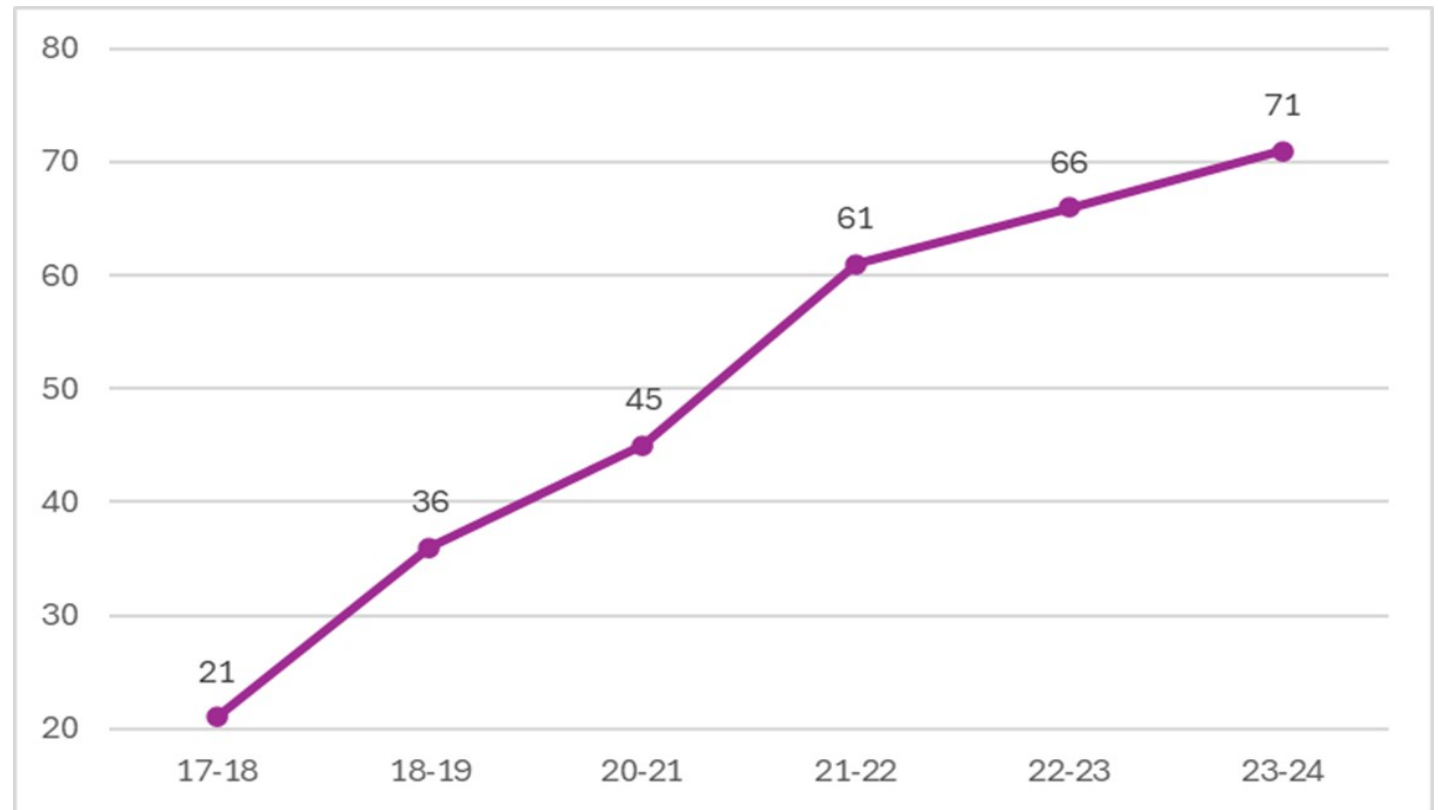
**2021-2022: 61%**

**2020-2021: 45%**

**2019-2020: NA**

**2018-2019: 36%**

**2017-2018: 21%**





### Letter of Support – SB 2234

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of SB 2234.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Workforce shortages remain one of the most pressing challenges for North Dakota's economy. Currently, North Dakota has only 30 available workers for every 100 open jobs, compared to the national average of 83 available workers per 100 open jobs. Additionally, according to Job Service North Dakota, the state consistently reports over 30,000 job openings, with critical shortages in healthcare, skilled trades, and advanced manufacturing. These gaps highlight the urgent need to better prepare students for the workforce and ensure they have access to high-demand career pathways.

Choice Ready grants will provide school districts with essential resources to equip students with the skills and competencies needed for success after high school while addressing the demands of our growing economy. The Choice Ready educational model ensures students graduate prepared to enter post-secondary education, the workforce, or the military—equipped with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for success. Through this framework, students gain exposure to career exploration opportunities, workplace learning experiences, and accelerated coursework (AP and Dual Credit), establishing vital pathways to meet the diverse needs of North Dakota's economy.

Investing in workforce-aligned programs, such as Choice Ready, is essential to strengthening North Dakota's talent pipeline and sustaining the state's economic growth. We respectfully urge this committee to give SB 2234 a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody  
Vice President of Public Policy  
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce



GREATER NORTH DAKOTA CHAMBER  
SB 2234  
House Education Committee  
Chair Pat Heinert  
March 5, 2025

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Andrea Pfennig, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **support** of Senate Bill 2234.

In our 2024 ND Economics and Employer Survey of our membership, 70% of respondents indicated they were having trouble hiring employees. Labor availability has been identified as the top business concern facing companies in North Dakota.

Because of this, our members support resources for the implementation of career exploration programs. We feel that funding for Choice Ready grants will be a valuable resource that will enable schools to position students for success.

We hope that you will strengthen North Dakota's business climate by investing in workforce development strategies. Thank you for your consideration.

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2234  
3/18/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

2:49 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

2:53 p.m. Representative Heilman proposed changing 2 million to 1 million dollars.

2:53 p.m. Representative Hauck seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	N
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	N
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: 11-3-0

2:54 p.m. Representative Heilman moved a Do Pass as Amended and rereferred to the Appropriations committee.

2:55 p.m. Representative Conmy 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	N
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

Motion carried: 13-1-0

Bill Carrier: Representative Novak

2:58 p.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

*Bill was rereferred to appropriations during floor session*

March 18, 2025

VC 3/18/25  
1 of 1

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

### SENATE BILL NO. 2234

Introduced by

Senator Davison

Representatives Conmy, Sanford, Schreiber-Beck

- 1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice  
2 ready grants to school districts.

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

4 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION - CHOICE**

5 **READY GRANTS.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state  
6 treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of ~~\$2,000,000~~ \$1,000,000, or so much of the sum  
7 as may be necessary, to the department of public instruction for the purpose of providing  
8 competitive choice ready grants to school districts to assist high school students in meeting the  
9 requirements of the state's choice ready framework, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025,  
10 and ending June 30, 2027. The state's choice ready framework must align to the state's  
11 prekindergarten through grade twelve strategic vision that all students will graduate with the  
12 knowledge, skills, and disposition needed to be successful. The ~~department~~ superintendent of  
13 public instruction shall create an application and develop selection criteria for grant awards. To  
14 be eligible for a choice ready grant, school districts shall complete a grant application and  
15 include information regarding how grant funds will provide opportunities for students to acquire  
16 essential skills and meet the postsecondary ready, workforce ready, or military ready pathway  
17 requirements of the choice ready framework. School districts may not use choice ready grant  
18 funds for general supplies or equipment. Grant funds must be used to provide students with  
19 experiences to ensure success after high school.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
SB 2234**

**Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1169.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2234 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

**2025 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS**

**SB 2234**



# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## **Appropriations Committee** Roughrider Room, State Capitol

SB 2234  
4/3/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

9:55 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa opened the meeting.

Members present: Chairman Vigesaa, Vice Chairman Kempenich, Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Mitskog, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Sanford, Stemen, Wagner

Member absent: Swiontek

### **Discussion Topics:**

- Choice Ready Grants
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds

9:55 a.m. Representative Heinert introduced the bill.

9:58 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa closed the meeting.

*Krystal Eberle, Committee Clerk*

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations - Education and Environment Division Prairie Room, State Capitol

SB 2234  
4/4/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

8:48 a.m. Chairman Nathe opened the meeting.

Members present: Chairman Nathe, Vice Chairman Swiontek, Representatives Louser, Hanson, Martinson, Richter and Sanford.

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action
- Science of Math
- Science of Reading
- Choice Ready Grants
- ASVAB Testing
- ACT Preparation

8:48 a.m. Senator Davison introduced the bill In Favor.

8:57 a.m. Jim Upgren, Director, ND Department of Instruction (DPI), testified In Favor #44666.

9:13 a.m. Representative Sanford moved to amend by removing the funding.

9:14 a.m. Representative Louser seconded the motion.

9:17 a.m. Roll Call Vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	AB
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y

9:17 a.m. Motion passed 6-0-1.

9:17 a.m. Representative Sanford moved a Do Pass as Amended.

9:18 a.m. Representative Swiontek seconded the motion.

9:18 a.m. Roll Call Vote

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	AB
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y

9:18 a.m. Motion passed 6-0-1.

9:18 a.m. Chairman Nathe closed the meeting.

*Krystal Eberle for Steven Riehl, Committee Clerk*



## NORTH DAKOTA CHOICE READY

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



### ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Earn a North Dakota high school diploma

Complete a 9-week **Career Education Course/Individual Counseling** (15.1-21-18), **Financial Literacy** (15.1-21-21), and pass **ND Civics Test** (15.1-21-27), **Computer Science/Cybersecurity Requirement** (15.1-21-02.2), and **four or more additional indicators**:

- 25 hours of Community Service
- Two or More Years in Organized Extra-Curricular Activities
- 95% Attendance (not counting school-related absences)
- Successfully Complete a Capstone Project
- Career Exploration Experience
- Successfully Complete an Online Learning Course
- Two or More Years in Organized Co-Curricular Activities
- Demonstrate Competency in 21st Century Skills
- Multicultural Awareness

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



### POST-SECONDARY READY

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

ACT / SAT minimum or subsections scores:

ACT English – 18

ACT Reading – 22

ACT Math – 21

ACT Science – 23

SAT Reading/Writing – 480

SAT Math – 530

or

**Two or more** additional indicators:

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



### WORKFORCE READY

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

- Complete three CTE courses or more (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- Complete Career Ready Practices (3.0)
- Dual Credit Course (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)
- WorkKeys (Gold or Silver)
- Technical Assessment/Industry Credential
- Workplace Learning Experience (40 hrs.)
- Work-based Learning Experience (Perkins V) (40hrs)
- NDSA (Reading/Math) Level 3 or greater
- Complete three World Language Courses (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2)



### MILITARY READY

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

**Quality Citizenship** (No Expulsions/Suspensions)

**Physically Fit** (Successfully complete required PE courses (A, B, or C) or (4, 3, or 2))

and

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

or

Complete two credits of JROTC or Civil Air Patrol

or

Complete **two credits** in the Military Pathway Program, selecting from the following 1/2 credit courses:

- Intro to Military Careers
- Military Health & Fitness
- ASVAB Essentials
- Career Foundations in Military Leadership
- Military Leadership Capstone

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

SB 2234  
4/7/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of public instruction for choice ready grants to school districts.

11:40 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa opened the meeting.

Members present: Chairman Vigesaa, Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Sanford, Stemen, Swiontek, Wagner

Members absent: Vice Chairman Kempenich, Representatives: Mitskog, J. Nelson

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

11:40 a.m. Representative Nathe introduced Amendment LC #25.1169.01002, #44738.

11:45 a.m. Representative Nathe moved Amendment LC #25.1169.01002.

11:45 a.m. Representative Stemen seconded the motion.

11:46 a.m. Roll Call Vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	AB
Representative Bert Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Berg	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	Y
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	Y
Representative Alisa Mitskog	AB
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Jon O. Nelson	AB
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Y
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y

Representative Gregory Stemen	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y

11:46 a.m. Motion passed 20-0-3.

11:47 a.m. Representative Nathe moved Do Pass as Amended.

11:47 a.m. Representative Pyle seconded the motion.

11:47 a.m. Roll Call Vote

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	AB
Representative Bert Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Berg	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	Y
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	Y
Representative Alisa Mitskog	AB
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Jon O. Nelson	AB
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Y
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	Y
Representative Gregory Stemen	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y

11:47 a.m. Motion passed 20-0-3.

11:47 a.m. Representative Sanford will carry the bill.

11:48 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa adjourned the meeting.

*Krystal Eberle, Committee Clerk*



April 4, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO**

VC 4/7/25  
1 of 2

**SENATE BILL NO. 2234**

Introduced by

Senator Davison

Representatives Conmy, Sanford, Schreiber-Beck

*In place of the amendments (25.1169.01001) adopted by the House, Senate Bill No. 2234 is amended by amendment (25.1169.01002) as follows:*

1 A BILL for an Act to provide ~~an appropriation to the department of public instruction for a~~  
2 statement of legislative intent regarding choice ready grants to school districts.

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

4 **SECTION 1. ~~APPROPRIATION~~ LEGISLATIVE INTENT - DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC**  
5 **INSTRUCTION - CHOICE READY GRANTS.** ~~There is appropriated out of any moneys in the~~  
6 ~~general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$2,000,000, or so~~  
7 ~~much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of public instruction for the purpose of~~  
8 ~~providing competitive choice ready grants to school districts to assist high school students in~~  
9 ~~meeting the requirements of the state's choice ready framework, for the biennium beginning~~  
10 ~~July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. It is the intent of the sixty-ninth legislative assembly~~  
11 that the superintendent of public instruction seek federal funds or other grant opportunities to  
12 continue to provide competitive choice ready grants to school districts to assist high school  
13 students in meeting the requirements of the state's choice ready framework. It is further the  
14 intent of the sixty-ninth legislative assembly that:

15 1. The state's choice ready framework ~~must~~ align to the state's prekindergarten through  
16 grade twelve strategic vision that all students will graduate with the knowledge, skills,  
17 and disposition needed to be successful.

18 2. The ~~department~~ superintendent of public instruction ~~shall~~ create an application and  
19 develop selection criteria for grant awards.

- 1     3. To be eligible for a choice ready grant, school districts ~~shall~~ complete a grant
- 2                   application and include information regarding how grant funds will provide
- 3                   opportunities for students to acquire essential skills and meet the postsecondary
- 4                   ready, workforce ready, or military ready pathway requirements of the choice ready
- 5                   framework.
- 6     4. School districts ~~may~~ not use choice ready grant funds for general supplies or
- 7                   equipment.
- 8     5. Grant funds ~~must~~ be used to provide students with experiences to ensure success
- 9                   after high school.



**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
AMENDED SB 2234**

**Appropriations Committee (Rep. Vigesaa, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1169.01002](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (20 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 3 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2234, as amended, was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

25.1169.01002  
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council  
staff for House Appropriations -  
Education and Environment Division  
Committee

April 4, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

### SENATE BILL NO. 2234

Introduced by

Senator Davison

Representatives Conmy, Sanford, Schreiber-Beck

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4 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION LEGISLATIVE INTENT - DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC**  
5 **INSTRUCTION - CHOICE READY GRANTS.** ~~There is appropriated out of any moneys in the~~  
6 ~~general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$2,000,000, or so~~  
7 ~~much of the sum as may be necessary, to the department of public instruction for the purpose of~~  
8 ~~providing competitive choice ready grants to school districts to assist high school students in~~  
9 ~~meeting the requirements of the state's choice ready framework, for the biennium beginning~~  
10 ~~July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. It is the intent of the sixty-ninth legislative assembly~~  
11 ~~that the superintendent of public instruction seek federal funds or other grant opportunities to~~  
12 ~~continue to provide competitive choice ready grants to school districts to assist high school~~  
13 ~~students in meeting the requirements of the state's choice ready framework. It is further the~~  
14 ~~intent of the sixty-ninth legislative assembly that:~~

15 1. The state's choice ready framework ~~must~~ align to the state's prekindergarten through  
16 grade twelve strategic vision that all students will graduate with the knowledge, skills,  
17 and disposition needed to be successful.

18 2. The ~~department~~ superintendent of public instruction ~~shall~~ create an application and  
19 develop selection criteria for grant awards.

- 1     3. To be eligible for a choice ready grant, school districts ~~shall~~ complete a grant  
2           application and include information regarding how grant funds will provide  
3           opportunities for students to acquire essential skills and meet the postsecondary  
4           ready, workforce ready, or military ready pathway requirements of the choice ready  
5           framework.
- 6     4. School districts ~~may~~ not use choice ready grant funds for general supplies or  
7           equipment.
- 8     5. Grant funds ~~must~~ be used to provide students with experiences to ensure success  
9           after high school.