

## **Funding Ideas for Choice Ready**

### Section 1

Choice Ready is a component within the North Dakota accountability system to measure whether our high schools produce students who are ready for success upon graduation.

The metrics outlined within the Choice Ready initiative are intended to measure growth for North Dakota high schools, as indicated by student readiness upon high school graduation.

The metrics within the Choice Ready initiative measure student readiness in multiple areas:

- Possessing Essential Skills
  - Post-Secondary Ready
  - Workforce Ready
  - Military Ready

The Choice Ready initiative provides an opportunity for:

- Schools to fare well in accountability determinations.
- Students to graduate high school Choice Ready for their chosen path, or plan to be explored later in life.
- Parents to have their students take credit-bearing courses at a college or university, saving time and money.

On April 20, 2021, Governor Burgum signed SB 2289 into law. This bill redefines the requirements for the state scholarship program and aligns the requirements to Choice Ready. Starting with the Class of 2025, only the new requirements can be used to determine eligibility for the state scholarship. Therefore, it is even more critical to get all students to graduate Choice Ready.

## Section II

The activities outlined below are certainly not inclusive of all but provide ideas on ways to get more students to meet the Choice Ready expectations:

Pay for students to take CPR/CAN/EMR training	Purchase Life Skills curriculum for Alternate Choice Ready students	Provide tutoring for ACT/SAT/AP Exams
Fund a Choice Ready coordinator	Pay OSHA/CAN/COL certification fees	Pay for students to take WorkKeys
Fund a CREAM liaison	Pay for dual credit courses	Pay for students to attend career fairs
Pay AP exam fees	Pay for CDE courses	Building Tomorrow's Leaders program for 21st Century Skills and Capstone
Pay for ACT prep courses	Partner to offer a career day	Expanded extra-curricular activities
Fund a Community Service Organizer	Attendance Incentives	Expanded co-curricular opportunities
Professional development on Capstone development and structures	AP Capstone course	Partnerships for online courses and online course experiences
Contract for Portrait of a Graduate work (alignment to 21st Century Skills)	Algebra I by 8th Grade initiatives	Pay for a person to collaborate with community to locate and place students with disabilities in workplace learning experiences or community service experiences
Pay to hire a Job Coach for employment experiences (Students with disabilities)	Purchase Work Skills Readiness Curriculum for Alternate Choice Ready Students	Purchase materials for Independent Living Activities for Alternate Choice Ready Students
Purchase Transition Assessments for Students with disabilities	Purchase Career Exploration Labs	Provide transportation to increase attendance
Determine Assistive Technology needs for students with disabilities	Pay staff during out of school time programming to focus on Choice Ready	Pay costs for technical assessments or industry credential fees

## Section III

School districts in North Dakota have numerous funding streams available to support education. Outlined below are potential resources available to schools to help support activities designed to graduate students Choice Ready:

### School Funding Sources

**Title I:** Title I grants provide funding for eligible schools to support supplemental educational opportunities so students may reach proficiency on the state's standards and assessments, provide professional learning for school staff, and to implement strategies for raising student academic achievement. Allowable costs will depend on whether a building is Title I eligible and implementing a targeted assistance or schoolwide program. All interventions, activities, and strategies should be aligned to the Title I school's plan and included in the Title I budget. Schoolwide programs offer flexibility in supporting and meeting the needs of all students. In a targeted assistance program only Title I eligible students may benefit from the services.

The following are examples of Title I activities to support Choice Ready components:

- Supplemental, evidence-based interventions, practices, strategies, and/or programs to support student achievement in all areas.
- Instructional staff dedicated to supporting activities by providing access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience including tutors, liaisons, job coach, and coordinators.
- Instructional strategies to raise student academic achievement including accelerated learning programs, dual or concurrent enrollment courses, early college high school courses, advanced placement, CDE courses, and international baccalaureate.
- Technology needs or manipulatives to improve student achievement or assist students complete projects successfully.
- Instructional materials, technology, devices, software, and coursework materials to support student learning and digital access; especially, to student populations including students with disabilities, poverty, homeless, foster care, English learners, Neglected or Delinquent, Native American, and migrant.
- Teacher stipends for professional development, tutoring, and/or programming including those to support dropout prevention, accelerated learning, and work-based learning experiences.

- Expanding co-curricular offerings in areas such as music, art, civics, foreign language, engineering, technology, career and tech ed, health, geography, and culture, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum.
- Supporting extending learning time or expanding educational experiences in programs such as 21st CCLC, STEM, literacy, before/after and summer school programs.
- Course fees, exam fees, attendance incentives, and training to support Choice Ready based on student needs and aligned to program goals/objectives.

**Title II:** Title II grant funding provides supplemental funding to support activities that strengthen the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders.

The following are examples of Title II activities that support Choice Ready components:

- Educator professional development on advanced coursework
- Professional learning on capstone structures
- Educator professional development for effective online courses and teaching strategies

**Title III:** Title III provides supplemental funding to support the language development and academic instruction of English learners. Districts could use Title III funds to support choice ready activities outlined in section II for English learners.

**Title III - Immigrant:** Title III provides supplemental funding to support the language development and academic instruction of immigrant children and youth. Districts could use Title III funds to support choice ready activities outlined in section II for immigrant students.

**Title IV:** Title IV provides supplemental funding to improve students' academic achievement by increasing access to well-rounded education, improve school conditions for student learning, and advance the use of technology.

The following are examples of Title IV activities that support Choice Ready components:

- Support Community Service by promoting volunteerism and community involvement, service-learning partnerships that create community service opportunities for students, and programs for tracking community service hours for students.
- Expanding co-curricular offerings in the areas such as music and art.

- Increase attendance by implementing dropout prevention programs, creating student engagement opportunities such as clubs; Lego Robotics, STEAM/STEM, and improving school climate activities/programs.
- Extra-Curricular supports such as eSports.
- Support career exploration through extra college and career counseling, college and career ready curriculums, college and career fairs/nights, virtual career experiences, training counselors to effectively use labor market information in assisting students with postsecondary education and career planning, and financial literacy and federal financial aid awareness activities.
- LEAs may use funds to raise student academic achievement through accelerated learning programs that provide courses or instruction accepted for credit at institutions of higher education i.e.: dual or concurrent enrollment courses, early college high school courses, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate.
- Support programs to develop 21st Century Skills.
- Activities to promote the development, implementation and strengthening of programs to teach traditional American history, civics, economics, geography, or government education; foreign language instruction; and environmental education.

**Transferability**: School districts have the flexibility to transfer their federal funds to other federal priorities in order to best meet their local needs.

In addition to the above activities listed for Titles I, II, III and IV, the following are examples of how a district might use Title V flexibility for Choice Ready components:

- Purchase supplies and materials for hands on learning experiences – such as career exploration labs, workforce readiness, or industry credentials/certifications.
- Hire personnel to provide student supports and increase access to choice ready opportunities – Job Coach, Community Liaison, Internship Coordinator, etc.
- Secure consultant for designing a local portrait of a graduate.

**SRSA**: Under ESSA, the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) Program is aimed at providing supplemental grants to small rural school districts. The SRSA flows directly from the U.S. Education Department (USED) to districts; however, the USED provides

the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) with eligibility and allocation information.

These funds are extremely flexible and could be used to fund many of the activities outlined in section II. Approximately 110 North Dakota districts receive an SRSA grant ranging from a few hundred dollars up to \$40,000. SRSA funds can be used for any allowable activity under Title I, II, III, and IV.

**RLIS**: Funds from the Rural Low Income Schools (RLIS) grant may be used for a wide range of activities. In fact, it can be used for any of the activities authorized under Title programs I through IV, and parental involvement activities. This aligns with many of the Choice Ready indicators, such as CREAM, on-line learning courses, and more. Some examples of activities which would support the Choice Ready framework would include: programs which support school/HHS agency collaborations to combat absenteeism through a school/community approach, extended school day programs which provide additional learning time, and mental health supports such as additional counselors.

**IDEA**: IDEA Part B funds are to be used for the purpose of providing for the education and services of students with a disability, to strengthen education, drive reforms and improve results for students' ages 3 through 21.

The following may be examples of supporting Choice Ready initiatives with IDEA Part B funds:

- Hire a job coach for students who need training to access community employment experiences.
- Purchase workplace readiness curriculum(s) to teach skills to students with significant needs.
- Hire personnel to assess community resources and provide students opportunities for workplace readiness training or volunteer experiences.
- Evaluate transportation needs for students with disabilities, consider purchasing taxi vouchers, bus tickets, etc. for student to increase attendance or access community.
- Conduct assistive technology evaluation and purchase assistive technology devices to increase student independence. Teach student how to utilize device.
- Purchase transition assessments to assess the following areas: jobs and job training, home/independent living, community participation, and post-secondary training and learning opportunities.

- Visit colleges student is interested in attending after graduation and visit the disability service office at each college.

**CTE State:** Currently, State General Fund CTE funds are reimbursed to schools to offer CTE programs. The reimbursement includes instructor and counselor salaries. This supports Choice Ready as this is funding that assists schools in offering career and technical education courses, meeting the first indicator under Workforce Ready.

**CTE Federal:** The intent of Perkins V is to guide data driven decisions on how to use Perkins funds, through the completion of a comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA). The CLNA includes student performance data, CTE enrollment data, labor market information alignment and stakeholder engagement. Since ESSA and Perkins V accountability measures align, using Perkins funds could assist in meeting a number of the workforce ready measures, such a dual credit, industry certifications, work-based learning, and NDSA.

**School Improvement:** School Improvement funds are granted to help schools make progress in areas that led to being identified as either Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) or Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). If schools are identified for either TSI or CSI at the high school level, the following areas are examples of activities that support Choice Ready components:

- Supplemental, evidence-based interventions, practices, strategies, and/or programs to support student achievement in all areas
- Supporting programs to develop Essential Skills
  - Technology and/or hands-on manipulatives that lead to student achievement and/or assist students in successfully completing a capstone project or an online course.
  - Teacher stipends for professional development, tutoring, and/or programming outside contract hours for the following:
    - Implementing dropout prevention programs
    - Supporting accelerated learning programs
    - Creating opportunities for work-based learning experiences

**BIE:** Some schools receive additional federal BIE Funds. These funds can be used to support students in meeting Choice Ready, to increase student academic achievement and meet the needs of Native American students.

**ESSER:** All districts have access to ESSER funding (ESSER I, II, III) due to the pandemic. Congress appropriated this additional funding to assist districts with their

needs due to COVID-19. These funds are extremely flexible and can be used for expenditures outlined in Appendix B of our plan to address COVID needs and help address potential learning loss. Since all ESEA, Perkins, and IDEA activities are allowable, these funds could literally pay for any of the activities outlined in section II and those activities designed to get more students Choice Ready.

**Family Engagement Grants:** Schools and Districts can apply for Family Engagement grants to increase family engagement in their schools and communities. We anticipate this grant opportunity to be available in January 2022. These grants will be used as incentives to focus on highly effective methods of engaging families to increase student achievement. These grant funds can be used to support families in understanding the Choice Ready metric through family engagement activities.

**Out of School Time Grants:** Many districts have 21st Century grants to fund afterschool programs that provide appropriate youth supervision and involvement. Districts could tailor their 21st Century afterschool program to provide activities that will strengthen the Choice Ready framework.

**State Funds for CREAM:** The state will fund the codes needed for the CREAM program for each student. Funding is also provided for the CREAM facilitator if the CREAM responsibilities exceed the individual's contracted hours. Documentation to verify the additional hours would need to be provided.

**State Funds for AP:** The state reimburses the full cost of the student's first AP exam in math, English, science, or computer science. 50% of the next three AP exams are covered as well. If students are impoverished, the state will reimburse the entire costs of four AP exams in math, English, science, or taken in the student's high school career. The state also provides reimbursement for AP Summer Institute training for AP teachers up to \$2500 for registration and travel.

**Dual Credit Assistance:** The Bank of North Dakota provides assistance for needy students who meet requirements. This assistance would fund two dual credit courses. The 67th Legislative Assembly passed HB 1375 which provides a reimbursement scholarship for students who meet the criteria which would cover the cost of dual credit courses up to \$750.

**Homeless ARP:** The ARP-HCY I program provides funds for the purposes of identifying homeless children and youth, providing homeless children and youth with wrap-around services, and providing the assistance needed to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities. These funds may be used to address urgent needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. The funds may also be used to increase capacity by hiring staff, dedicating resources and planning partnerships with community-based organizations, among other strategies.



**Choice Ready Grants:** In the spring of 2021, the NDDPI provided an opportunity for eligible entities (high schools/CTE/special education) to apply for a Choice Ready grant. The Choice Ready Assessment Grant funds were designed to fund activities that build up and enhance the Choice Ready framework and/or increase the number of students who graduate Choice Ready.

A total of 44 entities received a Choice Ready grant. A list of the approved entities can be accessed [here](#). A list of notable Choice Ready grant activities can be accessed [here](#). At this time, the Choice Ready grant is a one-time opportunity, unless an unobligated funding source would become available.

**Other Options:**

- Pool Your Resources – In North Dakota, it is becoming quite common for districts to cooperate and share services. Federal regulations allow school districts to pool their resources to share services among several schools. One district would simply agree to be the fiscal agent and the funds would flow through that district to pay for the activity. Districts could pool their funds to support a Choice Ready coordinator, sponsor a career day, or fund the “You’re Hired” event series.
- Another viable option would be to share resources through your local Regional Education Association (REA).
- Gifted funds specifically for the program (e.g., gifts from community).
- Granted funds specifically for the program (e.g., fundraisers).