



North Dakota Choice Ready Guidance

An emerging and exciting addition to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan is the innovative focus on a broad, comprehensive set of indicators that truly embraces the ESSA philosophy of “well rounded” education and state-specific measurements. In a shift from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), North Dakota stakeholders have adopted the framework of Choice Ready as an indicator to measure school growth in high schools. This concept focuses on the culmination of academic growth and gains, in combination with specific indicators of school success for post-secondary, workforce, and military readiness. The positive messaging behind the Choice Ready framework is inclusive of all students, and helps students identify career clusters and related skills which will prepare and enhance success in any or multiple areas beyond high school.

The choice ready indicator supports the NDDPI mission: All students will graduate choice ready with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to be successful.

School Growth Versus State Growth

As a new component in the North Dakota accountability system, Choice Ready will measure whether our high schools prepare students that 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.

The growth model for grades K-8 is student-based; however, the Choice Ready initiative, which is our growth model at the high school level, will measure school growth rather than student growth. The 2017-2018 school year will set the baseline data for this initiative. The expectation is for schools to increase the percentage of students graduating choice ready each year so the choice ready percentage matches the graduation rate.

Choice Ready Elements

In order to showcase the elements within the Choice Ready initiative, a visual [Choice Ready](#) chart was created. The main purpose of this guidance is to provide detail and clarification of all included elements within the Choice Ready initiative.

- **Essential Skills:**

Essential Skills are defined as those skills needed for work and life, and can be critical in helping students to be successful in whatever they choose to do in their life. ESSA places a strong focus on providing students with a well-rounded education that offers numerous experiences and skills needed to become critical thinkers and productive members of society.

The Essential Skills section begins with the overarching goal of having all students earn a North Dakota high school diploma or GED. It then outlines three key requirements for all graduates as required in the North Dakota Century Code (NDCC):

- ✓ Complete a 9-week Career Education Course or Individual Counseling (NDCC 15.1-21-18)
- ✓ Financial Literacy (NDCC 15.1-21-21)
- ✓ Pass ND Civics Test (NDCC 15.1-21-27)

Although these three items are required within NDCC for all North Dakota students, the ESSA planning committee felt it was important to include them within this Choice Ready element to demonstrate to our community, parents, and others across the nation our expectations for North Dakota graduates.

Students are then able to select - anytime between grades nine and twelve - four or more from the following list of eight indicators:

- **25 Hours of Community Service**

Having students participate in community service has many advantages, including teaching responsibility and servanthood. Simply stated, community service can be any work that benefits others. There are numerous ways to participate in community service depending on a student's skills and interests. Students can elect to use 25 hours of community service as one of their indicators to meet the Essential Skills component of Choice Ready.

- **95% Attendance (not counting school-related absences)**

Attendance rate is defined as the aggregate days of attendance in a school divided by the aggregate days of enrollment. Attendance data are collected through the state's pupil membership reporting system.

The attendance rate is inclusive of grades nine to twelve and should reflect the official attendance as reported to parents on the student report card.

- **Work-Based Learning Experience**

Work-based learning provides extended learning experiences by connecting students with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop employability skills. These experiences can include cooperative education, job shadowing, service learning, industry field trips, apprenticeships, or any other strategy that provides students with real-life work experience. Work-based learning experiences provide career exploration opportunities and help create a skilled pool of future employees.

- **Two or More Years in Organized Co-Curricular Activities**

Co-curricular activities often complement learning experiences and typically take place during the school day. Examples of co-curricular activities include but are not limited to: FFA, FCCLA, DECA, Science Olympiad, Acalympics, band, and choir.

- **Two or More Years in Organized Extra-Curricular Activities**
 Extra-curricular activities are coordinated by the school, but typically are not connected to academic learning and take place outside of the school day. Examples of extra-curricular activities would include all North Dakota High School Activities Association sponsored activities (i.e., drama, debate, fine arts contests, athletics).
- **Successfully Complete a Capstone Project**
 The Glossary of Education Reform defines a capstone project as a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students, typically during their final year of high school, or at the end of an academic program or learning-pathway experience. The Glossary of Education Reform further states that capstone projects are generally designed to encourage students to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop skills such as oral communication, public speaking, research skills, media literacy, teamwork, planning, self-sufficiency, or goal setting (i.e., skills that will help prepare them for college, modern careers, and adult life).
- **Successfully Complete an On-Line Learning Course**
 Schools work tirelessly to develop life-long learners. Technological developments allow students to access information at any time and compliment what they're learning in school, at work, or life. Online learning can be a successful experience if properly supported and intentionally developed. Students may take any online course of their choice to use this element as one of their four choices.
- **Demonstrate Competency in 21st Century Skills**
 The four C's of 21st Century learning include critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. These are considered key skills for all students to possess to succeed in the 21st Century. [Demonstrating competency in 21st Century Skills](#) is one of eight indicators students can select to meet the essential skills component of the Choice Ready initiative.

There are multiple ways districts can demonstrate student competency in 21st Century Skills. Some districts are working with an outside vendor to implement the four C's throughout their teaching and learning. The National Education Association (NEA) has an excellent guide on the four C's and preparing students for the 21st Century which can be accessed on their [website](#).

In addition, the NDDPI has requested to join the [P21 Partnership for 21st Century Learning](#). [P21](#) is a national nonprofit organization that advocates for 21st century readiness for every student. P21 recognizes that all learners need educational experiences in school and beyond, from cradle to career, to build knowledge and skills for success in a globally and digitally interconnected world. Representing over 5 million members of the global workforce, P21 unites business, government, and

education leaders from U.S. and abroad to advance evidence-based education policy and practice to make innovative teaching and learning a reality for all.

P21 has numerous tools and [resources](#) available on their website to assist districts interested in supporting 21st century learning.

Providing North Dakota students with the skills to succeed in life is critical and providing 21st century learning opportunities will assist our students in acquiring these critical skills and meeting our vision to ensure they graduate with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to be successful.

Choice Ready Pathways

Post-Secondary Ready

Workforce Ready

Military Ready

Post-Secondary Ready

Schools support higher education and academia-bound students who have demonstrated high academic proficiency and meet the additional criteria that supports the rigor of post-secondary clusters and provide a solid transition to college. Like the other two pathways, the Post-Secondary Ready component begins with the students completing a four-year rolling plan.

The [rolling four-year plan](#) outlines the various steps a student will take throughout their secondary school in preparation for life after graduation. It focuses on academics, college, career, and military readiness, and more. The plan begins when students are still in middle school, and continues one grade at a time going through the first year after high school graduation. The [four-year plan](#) is intended to serve as a guide for students and parents to navigate high school and beyond. Use this guide to complete items that apply to you, and visit with your school counselor or principal should you have any questions. The rolling four-year plan will allow students to plan four years into the future in terms of their educational career. Each year, students will meet with their counselor to complete an updated plan, including plans for after high school.

Students must earn a 2.8 GPA or greater and then complete one of the two academic indicator sets:

ACT or SAT Minimum Subsection Scores		
✓ ACT English – 18 ✓ ACT Reading – 22 ✓ ACT Math – 21 ✓ ACT Science – 21	- OR -	✓ SAT Reading/Writing – 480 ✓ SAT Math – 530

North Dakota University System (NDUS) policy [402.1.2](#) establishes placement pathways for students in the various content areas based on a variety of assessments.

- OR -

Students must meet two or more of the following academic indicators:

- **Advanced Placement Course (A, B, or C)**
An [AP](#) course is a high school course with curriculum approved by the CollegeBoard and taught by a high school teacher who receives specific AP professional development. Students may choose to take a standardized AP exam at the end of the course. The course appears on the high school transcript. Postsecondary credit may be awarded by a college or university based upon the final AP exam score.
- **Dual Credit Course (English or Math) (A, B, or C)**
An Early Entry/[Dual Credit Course](#) is a college course with college curriculum taught by a high school or college instructor who meets the qualifications to teach for the college offering the course. In all cases, college credit is awarded upon successful completion of the course and is recorded on the college transcript. The high school determines whether the Early Entry/Dual Credit college course fulfills high school requirements in consultation with the student and, if so, is recorded on the high school transcript.
- **Algebra II (A, B, or C)**
Algebra II is a critical course to take for students interested in pursuing post-secondary education. A passing grade of A, B, or C is needed in order for students to select this as one of their indicators.
- **Advanced Placement Exam (3+)**
[AP Exams](#) are given each year in May. A score of 3 or higher on an AP exam can typically mean students earn college credit and/or placement into advanced courses in college. It is important to note that AP exams may be taken without enrolling in an AP course.
- **International Baccalaureate Exam (4+)**
International Baccalaureate (IB) students are immersed in rigorous coursework that prepares them for university studies. The [IB program](#) aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect through the development of challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. The IB profile is the IB mission statement translated into a set of learning outcomes for the 21st century. Oftentimes, students who attend school on a military base will have taken the International Baccalaureate exam.

- **3.0 GPA in core course requirements for NDUS admission**

There are certain [core course requirements](#) for NDUS research university admission which serve as an indicator of student preparedness to enroll in college coursework and take credit-bearing courses.

College preparatory core course completion requirements for NDUS research university admission:

4 units English

3 units Math above Algebra I

3 units Lab Science

3 units Social Science

Students that obtain a 3.0 GPA in these core courses can use this element to be deemed post-secondary ready.

- **CLEM/CREAM**

College Ready English and Math ([CREAM](#)), as well as its equivalent from the North Dakota Center for Distance Education, College Lab English and Math ([CLEM](#)), provides an opportunity for remedial coursework to be completed by students who would be required to take such courses upon entering college. High school seniors are given the opportunity to successfully complete the self-paced online course through Pearson's My Foundations Lab in either English, math, or both. Successful completion is defined as 70% or higher completion per subject area, as outlined in NDUS policy [402.1.2](#).

Workforce Ready

Schools support students who desire to secure employment directly after high school graduation. In addition to academic standards, criteria are identified which promotes the transition to the workforce. The breadth of criteria broadens the opportunities for students who seek employment to also consider vocational or technical programs.

As with the other two pathways, the Workforce Ready component begins with students completing a four-year rolling career plan.

The [rolling four-year plan](#) outlines the various steps a student will take throughout their secondary school in preparation for life after graduation. It focuses on academics, college, career, and military readiness, and more. The plan begins when students are still in middle school, and continues one grade at a time going through the first year after high school graduation. The [four-year plan](#) is intended to serve as a guide for students and parents to navigate high school and beyond. Use this guide to complete items that apply to you, and visit with your school counselor or principal should you have any questions. The rolling four-year plan will allow students to plan four years into the future in terms of their educational career.

Each year, students will meet with their counselor to complete an updated plan, including plans for after high school.

Students need to complete two or more from the following list of indicators:

- **Complete Three CTE Courses or More (A, B, or C)**
Students have opportunities to take a wide variety of CTE courses throughout their high school experience. To meet this indicator, students can complete any three CTE courses with a final grade of A, B, or C.
- **Complete Career Ready Practices (3.0)**
The Career Ready Practices developed by CTE provide a framework of twelve areas for the developmental skills necessary to becoming career ready; skills that can be practiced using many different approaches in a variety of settings. The definition and outline of Career Ready Practices (CRP) were established under the Common Career and Technical Core (CCTC), as released in 2012, from Advance CTE (the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education). These Practices, as well as the CCTC itself, were developed with help from national educators, administrators, and business experts and were derived from the earlier Career Clusters/Pathways Framework model.

The Framework [guidelines](#) include a set of rubrics. Students refine these practices, and once they meet the competencies, they are deemed career ready with the necessary skills to be successful at finding, gaining, and keeping employment over the course of a lifetime.

- **Dual Credit Course (A, B, or C)**
An Early Entry/[Dual Credit Course](#) is a college course with college curriculum taught by a high school or college instructor who meets the qualifications to teach for the college offering the course. In all cases, college credit is awarded upon successful completion of the course and is recorded on the college transcript. The high school determines whether or not the Early Entry/Dual Credit college course fulfills high school requirements in consultation with the student and, if so, is recorded on the high school transcript.
- **WorkKeys (Gold or Silver)**
The [ACT National Career Readiness Certificate](#) (NCRC) is based on ACT [WorkKeys](#) research-based work skills assessments. To earn an ACT NCRC, a student must successfully complete three ACT WorkKeys assessments: Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents.

Gold: Scores of Level 5 or higher on all three exams

Silver: Scores of Level 4 or higher on all three exams

- **Technical Assessment/Industry Credential**
 Technical skill assessments are aligned with industry recognized standards to measure technical achievement. Earning an industry credential allows students to learn about a particular skill set or job and demonstrate mastery of skills. CTE programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials can help students find skilled positions and give them the option of later returning to school for a higher degree. A complete list of approved industry credentials is currently being developed.
- **Work-Place Learning Experience (75 hours)**
 Work-place learning provides extended learning experiences by connecting students with real-life work experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills and develop employability skills. These experiences can include cooperative education, job shadowing, service learning, industry field trips, apprenticeships, or any other strategy that provides students with real-life work experience. Work-place learning experiences provide career exploration opportunities and help create a skilled pool of future employees.
- **CLEM/CREAM (English/Math) Course (70% or greater)**
 College Ready English and Math (CREAM), as well as its equivalent from the North Dakota Center for Distance Education, College Lab English and Math (CLEM), provides an opportunity for remedial coursework to be completed by students who would be required to take such courses upon entering college. High school seniors are given the opportunity to successfully complete the self-paced online course through Pearson’s My Foundations Lab in either English, math, or both. Successful completion is defined as 70% or higher completion per subject area, as outlined in NDUS policy [402.1.2](#).
- **NDSA (Reading/Math) Level 3 or Greater**
 Historically, students have taken the NDSA annually, which includes grade eleven in high school. North Dakota uses a four-point rubric to report out the student results on achievement. A level three in either reading or math indicates that a student demonstrates adequate understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college-content readiness, and therefore could be used as one indicator to demonstrate workforce readiness.

Military Ready

Schools support students who wish to enlist in one of the many military branches. Students are military ready if they have met the indicators and have participated in additional identified criteria. The goal is to support a career plan which best meets the student’s needs and desires. As with the other two pathways, the Military Ready component begins with students completing a four-year rolling career plan.

The [rolling four-year plan](#) outlines the various steps a student will take throughout their secondary school in preparation for life after graduation. It focuses on academics, college, career, and military readiness, and more. The plan begins when students are still in middle school, and continues one grade at a time going through the first year after high school graduation. The [four-year plan](#) is intended to serve as a guide for students and parents to navigate high school and beyond. Use this guide to complete items that apply to you, and visit with your school counselor or principal should you have any questions. The rolling four-year plan will allow students to plan four years into the future in terms of their educational career. Each year, students will meet with their counselor to complete an updated plan, including plans for after high school.

In addition, the following elements are required:

- [ASVAB](#) Score of 31 or Greater
- Quality Citizenship – Students meet the quality citizenship element if they have no expulsions or suspensions
- Physically Fit – Students who have successfully completed required PE courses (A, B, or C)
- Additional Elements – Students complete two or more additional indicators from the Post-secondary or Workforce Ready options.

Reporting on Choice Ready

The NDDPI is working with ITD to create a Choice Ready report at the student level using a data interface via the SLDS portal. Each district will decide who completes the Choice Ready report (i.e. high school principal, counselor, etc.). A tool is being created which should be available in the spring of 2018. We anticipate the report will be due by June 1 in any given year and will be completed for all seniors in North Dakota public high schools. We anticipate that the report will include check boxes to show which elements are being used to demonstrate readiness. Going forward, the NDDPI will need to establish a process to audit districts on a rotational basis to demonstrate to the USDE that information reported by each district is accurate, complete, and reliable.

Schools should complete a report on each senior, even if only partial data is available. Students may be able to demonstrate readiness in one pathway, even if they don't meet the requirement for accountability purposes to demonstrate readiness in two of the three pathways. A Choice Ready graduate is defined as having evidence of meeting the criteria in at least two of the three categories of Post-Secondary, Workforce, and Military Ready. Student-level data on Choice Ready will be available on the internal site for schools personnel to review. This data will be rolled up to the school-level to report growth for accountability on the dashboard.

Under ESSA, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports are gone and replaced with an interactive dashboard which allows multiple factors to be used when summarizing a school's measure of quality. The NDDPI is working with the Information Technology Department (ITD), the North

Dakota University System (NDUS), and OtisEd to generate an interactive dashboard for every public school in North Dakota.

The NDDPI released the first iteration of our interactive dashboard on Thursday, November 30, 2017. The first iteration is not the accountability dashboard. The accountability dashboard will be released in February 2018. The Choice Ready initiative will not be measured or reported on in the February 28, 2018 release of the interactive dashboard. The Choice Ready initiative was designed to be our growth model at the high school level. Therefore, we need to collect two full years of data (2017-2018 and 2018-2019) before we can report on the Choice Ready element. We will, however, report on the Choice Ready results for personnel to review for their particular school within the internal dashboard.

The 2017-2018 school year will set the baseline data for this initiative. The expectation is for schools to increase the percentage of students graduating choice ready each year so the choice ready percentage matches the graduation rate. The NDInsights dashboard can be accessed on the [NDDPI homepage](#).

Questions

Specific questions pertaining to Choice Ready can be directed to the following NDDPI staff:

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