

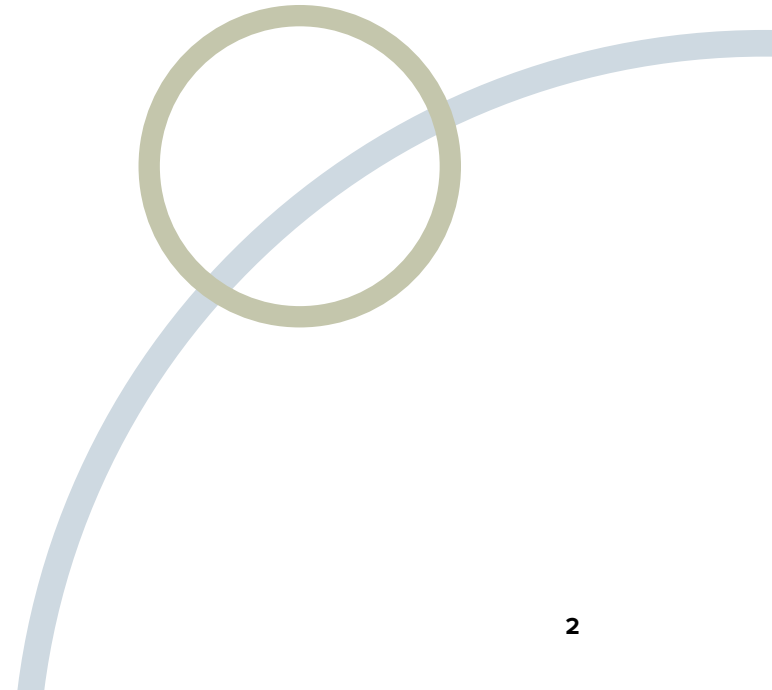
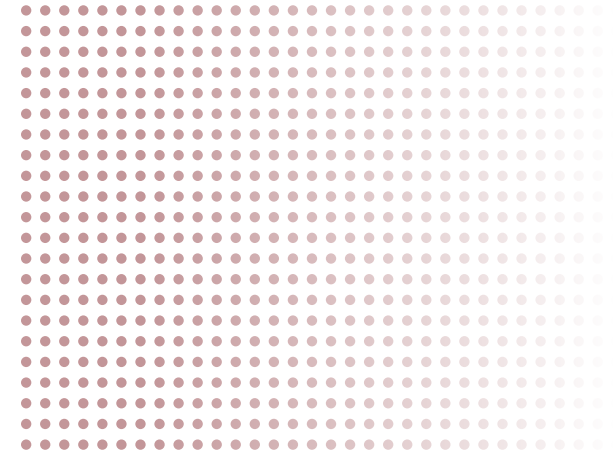
North Dakota Policy Primer

A tool for navigating student-centered
policy opportunities



CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Designing an Innovative Education Program	4
Leveraging Flexibility Through Waivers for Student-Centered Learning.....	8
Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework.....	12
Activating Learn Everywhere for Real-World Learning	17
References and Resources	22



INTRODUCTION

The North Dakota Policy Primer serves as a planning and informational resource for school and district administrators, community leaders, and education partners who want to advance their student-centered system and make progress toward innovation.

Why use the policy primer?

The North Dakota Policy Primer is intended to increase awareness of state policy flexibilities that can inform and inspire local strategic planning to create innovative learning experiences for North Dakota students. By understanding and integrating the concepts in the primer, school systems can take advantage of state policy to strengthen their student-centered learning environments. The primer is also designed as a companion to the [North Dakota Innovation Guide](#), which includes examples of what is possible for districts using the flexibilities outlined in the primer.

What's in the policy primer, and how should it be used?

Organized into four different topics, this primer highlights key policies that provide the flexibility needed to promote innovation and ensure education prepares students for their futures. Each topic distills policy details into accessible summaries, interpretations, and implementation considerations.

School systems can explore any topic in any order, depending on their needs and priorities. The primer functions as a “policy-at-a-glance” document to support usability, but does not cover every potential question a system might have. Districts are encouraged to contact staff at the North Dakota Intermediary for Innovative Education or the [North Dakota Department of Public Instruction](#) (NDDPI) if they have additional questions.

Topics include:

1. [Designing an Innovative Education Program](#)
2. [Leveraging Flexibility Through Waivers for Student-Centered Learning](#)
3. [Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework](#)
4. [Activating Learn Everywhere for Real-World Learning](#)

The North Dakota Policy Primer helps districts take action to advance education innovation in North Dakota. Use it as a guide to reimagine education and lay the foundations for transformative learning experiences in your school, district, or system.

PRIMER

Designing an Innovative Education Program

North Dakota's [Innovative Education Program](#) helps local schools and districts create their own pathway to develop personalized experiences for their students, with flexibility from statute and/or regulation when needed. The program allows schools and districts to request long-term flexibility from certain state requirements to support their innovation plans. Additionally, if schools and districts are granted flexibility through the Innovative Education Program, they receive a longer period of time and fewer state review requirements than districts pursuing a standalone waiver.

This policy might be right for you if...

- You have or are seeking to design a local portrait of a graduate and are looking for opportunities to redesign your school structures around that vision
- You are seeking to redesign educational experiences for students and teachers

What is it?

- » The Innovative Education Program application includes both a planning proposal and an implementation proposal. Any public school, school district, or nonpublic school can apply to be a part of an Innovative Education Program.
- » The planning proposal process takes about one year. Final proposals should include:
 - Rationale and a vision explaining why participation in the Innovative Education Program will improve education for the school or district
 - Aligned professional development plan
 - Evidence that stakeholders were engaged in the planning process
 - Evidence of local governing board support
- » During the planning year, districts will complete an implementation proposal, which the state can approve for a period of up to five years. The implementation proposal should include evidence that stakeholders have been engaged in the process, a plan for implementation, approval from the local board, professional development strategies, a plan for continuous improvement, and an indication of how the plan will be evaluated and sustained.
- » Within the plan, determinations are made as to whether the school/district needs flexibility from state statute to implement the plan.
- » [State regulation](#) specifies what needs to be in the application, how to submit an application, how the application will be evaluated, and the length of the approval process, among other things.

What does it mean?

- » Schools and districts have an opportunity to engage in a deep, community-driven planning process around redesigning the K-12 experience, especially when a community-focused vision is already in place. Districts can leverage the [Innovative Education Program Planning Proposal Guidance](#) and the [Innovative Education Program Implementation Application Guidance](#) created by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) as they create their application.
- » The Innovative Education Program gives schools and districts an opportunity to more effectively meet their community's needs by requesting longer-term flexibility for creating and adapting new learning experiences, so long as it falls in the areas of statute where the state superintendent is allowed to provide flexibility.
- » Schools and districts can use this process to both identify additional areas of flexibility from statute or regulation that are necessary to pursue their vision. The approval of an Innovative Education Plan may provide up to five years of flexibility.



How can it be used?

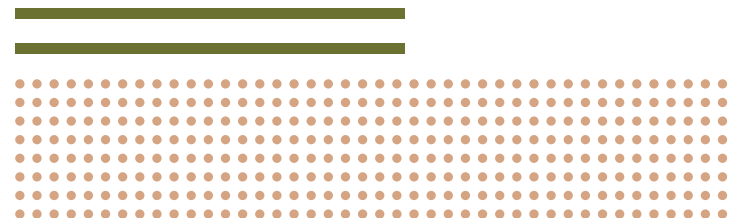
To develop a plan for an Innovative Education Program, districts can take the following actions:

Build community commitment to education innovation

- » Anchor conversations in the Innovative Education Program planning year by engaging staff and leaders in defining or refining a shared vision (e.g., a portrait of a graduate) that will serve as the foundation of the required planning proposal.
- » Create structured stakeholder engagement aligned to application requirements by hosting listening sessions, focus groups, or town halls with parents, students, school board members, and local business leaders. Use these conversations to gather evidence of stakeholder engagement to include in the planning and implementation proposals.
- » Use the planning year to test and refine innovation concepts by sharing draft models, example schedules, or prototype learning experiences with the community before finalizing the implementation proposal.
- » Connect the proposed innovation to local needs and state priorities by using stories, student experiences, and data to demonstrate how participation in the Innovative Education Program will improve outcomes and better meet community goals.
- » Build governing board understanding and support early by providing regular updates throughout the planning year so that the required local board approval reflects sustained engagement rather than a single vote.
- » Leverage existing required processes (e.g., the continuous improvement plan) to align innovation planning with district strategy and ensure the Innovative Education Program is integrated into broader district goals rather than operating as a standalone initiative.

Strengthen educator capacity for innovative approaches

- » Assess current professional learning structures by working with educators to determine whether existing supports align with the vision outlined in the Innovative Education Program planning proposal.
- » Design personalized learning pathways for educators that build the specific skills and competencies needed to implement the district's innovation goals.
- » Create dedicated time for deep professional learning through summer institutes and release-day learning labs that allow educators to practice, reflect, and refine new strategies before full implementation.
- » Leverage statewide networks and regional supports such as the [Personalized Learning Network](#), [Standards-Based Learning Network](#), and [Regional Education Associations](#) to accelerate readiness.
- » Explore how flexibility could create additional time and space for collaborative planning and educator development during implementation.



Rethink school structures

- » Use an Innovative Education Program combined with a Learn Everywhere flexibility to create opportunities for community-based experiences that allow students to earn credits toward graduation requirements.
- » Create hybrid opportunities where students meet course standards through a mixture of virtual and asynchronous learning and community-based experiences. Students could complete specific standards through online modules and show mastery of the remaining standards through applied projects or work-based learning with local nonprofits or businesses.
- » Explore existing funding opportunities to support Innovative Education Programs. Advance competency-based education programs using [federal Perkins dollars](#) or [Title I, Part A](#) funds to provide students with a well-rounded education.

Key next steps

- » Review the [North Dakota Innovation Guide](#) and the district spotlights for inspiration.
- » Connect with districts in the innovation guide that have used the Innovative Education Program and learn from their experience.
- » Review NDDPI's guidance around the Innovation Education Program and start planning next steps.
- » Identify key stakeholders in your community that need to be engaged in the process of developing the application.

You might need to consult other primers if...

- You want to create a mastery framework policy to implement that resource in your district (consult the [Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework primer](#))
- Your approach includes creating community-based learning experiences for students for the purposes of earning credit (consult the [Activating Learn Everywhere for Real-World Learning primer](#))

Additional Resources

- » [North Dakota Innovation Guide](#)
- » [Innovative Education Program Planning Proposal Guidance](#)
- » [Innovative Education Program Implementation Application Guidance](#)
- » [Approved Local Uses of Federal Perkins V Funds](#)
- » [North Dakota Standards-Based Learning](#)
- » [North Dakota Department of Public Instruction – Strategy Map Guidance](#)
- » [Title I, Part A: Use of Funds Quick Reference Guide](#)

Policy References

- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-08 et seq.](#) – Rules for School Accreditation – Waiver
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-08.2](#) – Innovative Education Program – Participation – Reports to Legislative Management
- » [N.D. Admin. Code 67-19-03 et seq.](#) – Innovative Education Program

PRIMER

Leveraging Flexibility Through Waivers for Student-Centered Learning

North Dakota's waiver opportunity allows schools and districts to request flexibilities from some state statutes and regulations. Utilizing a waiver process may be appropriate for districts interested in testing out new ideas in the short term. Waivers give communities a valuable opportunity to reimagine their school structures.

This policy might be right for you if...

- You are seeking flexibility from high school unit instructional time requirements to support a mastery-based or other flexible approach to awarding credit
- You are exploring a reconfiguration of instructional days, such as transitioning to a four-day school week
- You have identified a specific scheduling or instructional time constraint that limits how you structure learning experiences for students
- You want to make a specific change to school structures without pursuing a full Innovative Education Program application

What is it?

- » North Dakota school districts can [request a waiver](#) to try new education approaches. School districts can utilize state [waivers](#) to seek flexibility from [high school instructional time requirements](#) and to transition to a [four-day school week](#).
- » Districts can receive waiver approval for one year, with the option to secure a follow-up extension for up to one year and a second extension for up to two years. [State regulation](#) provides additional details on the application and evaluation process.

What does it mean?

- » Districts can use the waiver process to request flexibility around instructional days or high school time that might limit their ability to implement innovative practices.
- » The waiver gives districts the ability to pilot an innovation strategy **specific to days and time** without submitting a full Innovation Education Program application and plan. This can be a useful tool for districts that wish to pilot ideas they might later build upon in an [Innovation Education Program proposal](#)

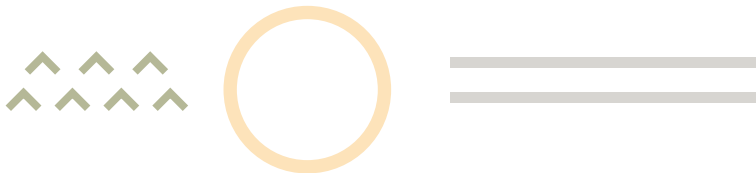
Note: In North Dakota, districts can leverage many flexibilities that already exist in state policy. Districts can review state policy and reach out to NDDPI staff with any questions or to determine whether and when a waiver is needed.

How can it be used?

To prepare to submit a waiver, districts can take the following actions:

Engage your community in shaping a waiver request

- » Develop structured engagement aligned to the waiver proposal by using school board meetings, town halls, or advisory groups to gather input on the specific flexibility being considered, such as high school unit instructional time requirements or a four-day school week.
- » Focus community conversations on a specific challenge the waiver would address by connecting discussion to your district's vision (e.g., portrait of a graduate) and clearly naming the proposed shift to instructional time requirements or the school calendar.
- » Translate policy barriers into practical questions for stakeholders by asking educators, families, and business partners where current instructional time requirements or daily/weekly schedules might limit new learning experiences.
- » Work with district leaders, NDDPI staff, or other policy experts to determine whether identified barriers stem from statute, regulation, or local practice and if a waiver is necessary.
- » Form a working group including representatives from local business and industry to help shape a waiver request when workforce or community-based learning is involved. Consider whether the waiver is a short-term pilot or part of a broader transformation strategy by evaluating if a standalone waiver is sufficient or if an Innovative Education Program application would better support long-term implementation.



Engage educators in the process

- » Include both classroom teachers and school leaders in conversations about the community's vision to better understand what is needed to implement changes to high school instructional time requirements or a revised school week (e.g., four-day model).
- » Collaborate with educators to identify barriers in policy, practice, or operational structure that limit their ability to realize the district's vision. Capture concrete examples related to credit requirements tied to instructional time, daily schedules, or calendar design.
- » Work with NDDPI to clarify the source of each barrier and identify if a waiver is appropriate. Barriers created by district policy, a school-level policy or non-policy practice cannot be addressed with a waiver.
- » Ensure educators play a central role in the waiver writing process by involving classroom teachers who may need to adapt to new credit structures tied to instructional time or shifts in the school week, and school administrators who develop student schedules and staffing models.

Design flexible school models

- » Rethink instructional time requirements by reviewing current schedules to identify where time could be used in more flexible blocks, particularly at the high school level, where unit instructional time requirements may be limiting more flexible or mastery-based approaches to credit.
- » Examine teacher qualification requirements in light of your innovation goals by identifying where statutory requirements may limit the ability to bring in subject-matter experts or industry professionals to support flexible or extended learning opportunities created through schedule or calendar changes, while maintaining instructional quality.
- » Engage stakeholders in business and industry as to how the district could engage them formally as part-time educators, particularly within reconfigured schedules or a shortened school week that creates new opportunities for community-based learning.
- » Use the flexibility provided under the state's [Choice Ready](#) framework to expand how students demonstrate readiness for what comes next, especially when changes to instructional time or a four-day school week create space for new experiences. Align structural changes to state-required continuous improvement processes and [strategy mapping](#)
- » Create an implementation strategy that identifies supports needed to make new instructional time structures or revised school calendars (e.g., four-day weeks) work, including how personalized, competency-based learning will be embedded in daily practice.

Key next steps

- » Engage educators to identify what flexibilities are needed to support your vision.
- » Review state and local policies to determine where waivers may be needed.
- » Connect early with NDDPI to refine your waiver request.

You might need to consult other primers if...

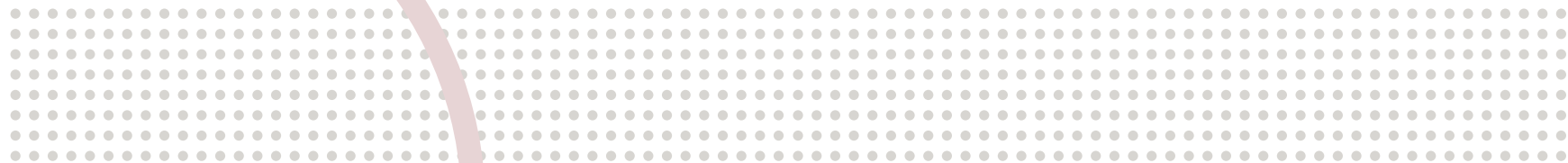
- You are pursuing broader, system-level changes beyond instructional time or calendar flexibility, such as redesigning multiple aspects of the student experience (consult the [Designing an Innovative Education Program primer](#))
- You decide you want to build out a mastery framework policy for your district as a part of your innovative education vision (consult the [Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework primer](#))

Additional Resources

- » [North Dakota Innovation Guide](#)
- » [Waivers | North Dakota Department of Public Instruction](#)

Policy References

- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-04](#) – School Calendar – Length
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-08.1](#) – Statutes – Waiver
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-03](#) – High School Unit – Instructional time
- » [N.D. Admin. Code 67-19-02-01 et seq.](#) – Waiver of Accreditation Standards or High School Unit Instructional Time



PRIMER

Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework

North Dakota law establishes the minimum required units (i.e., courses) that students must complete to graduate, including a requirement that they must meet or exceed content standards established by the state. The state has also established the North Dakota [Learning Continuum](#) (“learning continuum”) articulating a progression of both academic and higher order skills. [State policy](#) allows a school district or governing board of a nonpublic high school to establish a local policy to award credit for required graduation units based on mastery of the relevant sections of the learning continuum rather than state content standards. This gives districts interested in mastery-based learning an opportunity to reorient their high schools around the state’s broader learning domains.

This topic might be right for you if...

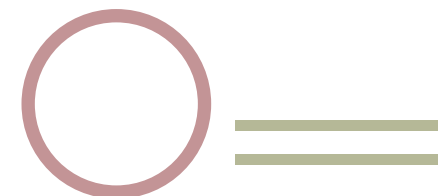
- You’ve started implementing a proficiency-based approach to K-12 education and are looking to take the next steps in the high school space
- You want to reorient the high school experience around mastery of higher-order, durable skills such as those outlined in the North Dakota Learning Continuum
- You have broad community support for mastery-based learning to draw upon when creating a mastery framework policy

What is it?

- » The learning continuum is a statewide framework that contains a set of learning expectations, also called competencies, along with performance levels that students in a proficiency-based learning model should be able to demonstrate over their K-12 career.
- » This continuum includes both academic content areas like English, math, science, and social studies, as well as essential skills like collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and more.
- » Under [state law](#), students are required to have a total of 22 units of high school coursework in order to graduate. North Dakota [statute](#) allows school districts or nonpublic high schools to award credit for these units through a locally created mastery framework that identifies which portions of the learning continuum will be mastered.
Note: to leverage the full flexibility of the policy, schools need to have an innovative education plan.
- » When coupled with the Innovative Education Program, [state statute](#) also allows flexibility from the requirement that each unit includes a certain number of hours of student engagement (either 120 or 150, depending on the unit).

What does it mean?

- » Districts interested in pursuing personalized, competency-based approaches can adopt a mastery-based grading policy using the state learning continuum to go beyond the traditional requirements historically tied to seat time, credit hours, and state standards.
- » This policy does not require state approval. School districts and governing boards may adopt a mastery framework policy that meets the requirements articulated in [statute](#). Specifically, districts and governing boards must identify the portions of the learning continuum that need to be mastered.
- » Districts should combine a mastery framework policy with an Innovative Education Program application to redesign their high school processes not just with respect to graduation requirements and units of credit, but also instructional time, school calendars, teacher professional development, and other areas.
- » North Dakota's Department of Public Instruction provides [guidance](#) to help districts better understand the mastery framework policy and accompanying process.



How can it be used?

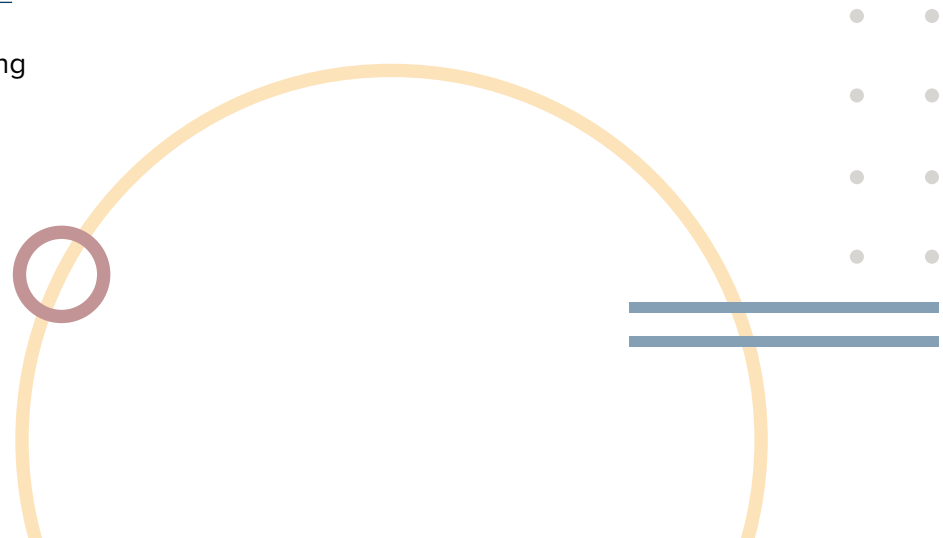
To develop a mastery framework policy, districts can take the following actions:

Build community momentum for change

- » Have open conversations with educators and school leaders to determine if your institutions are ready to effectively implement a mastery framework policy. Use district-wide or school-level meetings with implementation teams.
- » Conduct community and stakeholder engagement to ensure everyone understands the opportunity a mastery framework policy and the learning continuum provide, and how they can support the district's vision. Methods can include school board presentations, community forums, higher education meetings, and industry engagements.
- » Focus specific attention on parents and students; their support is crucial for successfully changing grading and graduation policies. Use established communication channels, school staff, and parent organizations once the process is adopted for sharing information.
- » Highlight how a mastery framework policy aligns with the state's existing accountability priorities by demonstrating how competencies within the learning continuum connect to measures in North Dakota's [Choice Ready framework](#). This alignment can provide a more comprehensive and transparent picture of student readiness while reinforcing the district's broader vision for learner success.

Develop the local mastery framework policy

- » Convene a representative working group or steering committee to develop the local policy. Engage school board members regularly from the start to ensure they understand the mastery framework, its function, and its connection to broader educational efforts. Their official, state-required approval makes this critical.
- » Establish mechanisms and timelines for stakeholder input and policy refinement to support continued progress toward the eventual adoption of a formal policy.
- » Map the learning framework and state standards to proposed promotion and credit accumulation under the local policy as a key step in policy development.
- » Review and update the district-wide grading policy so that it provides clarity about what constitutes sufficient mastery for promotion or credit accumulation.



Support strategic implementation

- » Establish a strategic rollout timeline. This may include starting with specific school sites to pilot the new policy or having the policy grow with a specific cohort.
- » Start with a pilot at a single school or within a specific grade level to test and revise the policy as needed. This can be beneficial as a part of an interactive cycle of improvement.
- » Establish regular periods for policy iteration in the first few years of implementation. Major shifts should be carefully considered and be conducted between school years.
- » Identify professional learning that is needed for educators to support mastery-based instruction and grading under the new policy.
- » Create time for both professional learning and professional collaboration among educators.
- » Identify lead teachers or teams of teachers in each building to facilitate this work. This could be accomplished through an existing school structure like an instructional lead team; additional responsibility can be compensated through stipends or by reducing teaching load.

Rethink school structures

- » Think early about how you might want to redesign the school day. Adopting a mastery framework policy frees districts from traditional instructional time requirements. But districts need a detailed plan about what comes next.
- » Hold in-depth focus groups with students, teachers, and parents about how to reorient the school day when freed from strict instructional time requirements. Consider what types of new opportunities learners and caregivers may want to see.
- » Develop strong partnerships with other schools, leaders, teachers, and organizations to understand implementation approaches for reimagined school structures.
- » Conduct a credit audit of current high school students to identify what credits learners are earning and how these might change under a mastery framework policy. This will help you identify where you can adjust the traditional school schedule structure – which courses must remain to meet graduation requirements, and where there is flexibility to create new learning opportunities.
- » Consider a range of ways to organize content within the school. When freed from traditional credit requirements, schools have more flexibility to implement interdisciplinary courses that cover multiple content areas at the same time. You might start by identifying any existing pilots or learning experiences that could be scaled up and what additional teacher training will be needed.

Key next steps

- » Engage school board members early to build understanding and support.
- » Review district policies that may need to change under a mastery framework.
- » Align mastery framework planning with other flexibility efforts or waivers.
- » Build support by engaging families, community partners, and higher education providers.

You might need to consult other primers if...

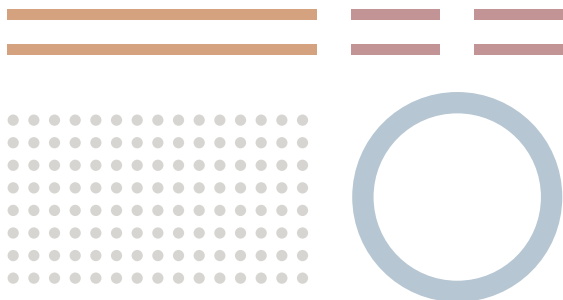
- You will want to integrate a mastery framework policy with a broader approach for school or districtwide transformation (consult [Designing an Innovative Education Program primer](#))
- You want students to be able to demonstrate mastery of elements in the North Dakota learning continuum through opportunities outside the classroom (consult [Activating Learn Everywhere for Real-World Learning primer](#))

Additional Resources

- » [North Dakota Innovation Guide](#)
- » [Learning Continuum](#)
- » [Learning Continuum Guidance](#)
- » [Choice Ready Framework](#)

Policy References

- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-02](#) – High Schools – Required Units
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-02.2](#) – Minimum Requirements
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-03](#) – High School Unit – Instructional Time



PRIMER

Activating Learn Everywhere for Real-World Learning

North Dakota districts have an opportunity to expand access to meaningful pathway opportunities that broaden students' career readiness experiences through the state's [Learn Everywhere](#) programs. Under the Learn Everywhere policy, students can earn credit for out-of-school learning experiences in grades six through twelve. This flexibility can be advanced through local efforts and does not require state-level approval.

This topic might be right for you if...

- Students, parents, and teachers in your district want more real-world learning experiences in education
- Stakeholders, including educators and businesses, are looking to build deeper and more meaningful connections between K-12 and workforce partners
- You're looking to create more pathways to help students become [Choice Ready](#) as defined under the state's accountability framework

What is it?

- » School boards [must first adopt](#) a policy allowing educational opportunities through sponsoring entities. This allows students in grades six through twelve to earn course credit outside the classroom through educational opportunities with a sponsoring entity.
- » The policy passed by the local board [must include](#) details on program administration including: criteria for submission, approval, and evaluation processes for students seeking credit through this policy flexibility; eligibility criteria for sponsoring entities; and specifications for how sponsoring entities will be held accountable for educational experiences.
- » [Regulation](#) specifies that proposals must also include:
 - Name and information of the sponsoring entity
 - Course title and state course code number for each course provided by the sponsoring entity
 - Licensed teacher of record employed by the school that has approved the proposal. The teacher must be licensed in the course being awarded credit for
 - An assurance that the courses meet state content standards
 - A statement of how students will demonstrate proficiency and be evaluated
- » The board must approve a proposal for each individual sponsoring entity. Education opportunities can include a broad range of experiences outside of a classroom that meet course content standards, while sponsoring entities can be businesses, nonprofits, trade associations, or other providers that partner with districts.
- » Once approved, the proposals must be submitted to the state superintendent for review, though they do not need to be approved by the state.

- » While the policy is adopted and managed at the local level, the state superintendent may request evaluation data and can revoke a Learn Everywhere program if they determine that the district hasn't met the terms outlined in statute.
- » [Regulation](#) requires districts to submit evaluation data annually. Districts may select the academic indicators that they submit, as well as their description of how the program improves education for students.

What does it mean?

- » The Learn Everywhere program allows students to obtain meaningful learning experiences while earning credit toward graduation.
- » Students have the opportunity to participate in real-world, hands-on learning that helps them connect earning to their future goals and ambitions.
- » This policy provides schools and districts with the flexibility to create meaningful connections between K-12 schools, businesses, and the broader community. Schools and districts can work with sponsoring entities, educators, and students to co-create learning experiences that align with course standards.
- » School districts share data demonstrating how the program improves education for students. School districts can select data that best measures the educational outcomes relevant to the learning experiences.

How can it be used?

To leverage Learn Everywhere flexibility, districts can take the following actions:

Build community support for a Learn Everywhere policy

- » Engage students, parents, and families in conversations about the outside-of-school learning experiences already taking place in your community. Inquire about what is working, what isn't, and what other opportunities might be beneficial.
- » Use a diverse range of opportunities and settings to engage families such as pre-established meetings within schools or other community-based gatherings.
- » Have open conversations with local businesses and community-based groups about needs and how to better meet those needs through partnerships with your K-12 schools. Strive to understand what might be preventing them from engaging with your schools now so that you can work to proactively reduce or eliminate any barriers prior to implementation.
- » Engage your local school board early and often in conversations about Learn Everywhere. This is a crucial step since the local board has to both approve proposals and is responsible for ensuring that proposal requirements are met.
- » Convene key stakeholders to design a policy that conforms to the requirements in statute and regulation and that is grounded in meaningful stakeholder feedback.
- » Establish a cycle of feedback and adjustment where stakeholders periodically examine Learn Everywhere opportunities, evaluate if the experiences are meeting student needs, and to identify where adjustments might be needed.

Create hybrid or independent learning opportunities

- » Create an inventory of the types of learning experiences that students can engage in outside of the classroom. Consider how these current learning experiences are used and what's missing or could be improved. Use that information to chart your course forward.
- » Pilot a small number of Learn Everywhere experiences to test and refine new ideas before scaling. For example, you might create opportunities for students to earn some of their course standards through virtual experiences while completing the rest through community-based experiences with nonprofits or businesses.
- » Explore how non-traditional experiences might be used to fulfill credit requirements. For example, a student who achieves Eagle Scout rank could use that to fulfill at least some of the civics requirements needed to earn a credit.
- » Consider how existing funding structures around career education, such as [Perkins or Title I funds](#), could be used to advance career readiness opportunities grounded in a competency-based approach to education.
- » Establish a Learn Everywhere coordinator or designee with Learn Everywhere included in their job description for each school. This ensures that there is a dedicated staff member to facilitate this work.

Enhance accountability outcomes

- » Analyze existing performance on the state’s [Choice Ready framework](#) in collaboration with students, parents, and families. Consider where the district and its schools are already doing well and where opportunities for improvement exist.
- » Use these conversations to consider what types of opportunities could be most beneficial for your community. For example, if the community indicates they want more opportunity for students to engage in real-world learning, you could prioritize “additional indicators” in the framework around community service hours, having two or more years in organized extracurricular activities, or career exploration experiences.
- » Focus conversations on the creation of opportunities in all three areas of the Choice Ready framework – postsecondary readiness, workforce readiness, and military readiness. If conversations uncover that students want more postsecondary and workforce ready opportunities, you could consider expanding access to dual credit career and technical education courses.

Establish and implement a Learn Everywhere policy and approval process

- » Work with the local school board to adopt a policy that allows educational opportunities through sponsoring entities, ensuring the policy clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, and approval requirements.
- » Develop a clear process for reviewing and approving sponsoring entity proposals, including required components such as the entity’s information, aligned course titles, state course codes, and the identification of a licensed teacher of record.
- » Collaborate with sponsoring entities to ensure all proposed learning experiences align to North Dakota content standards and include clear expectations for how students will demonstrate proficiency and be evaluated.
- » Establish internal processes for managing student participation, such as requiring completion of credit approval forms and clearly defining the role of the advisor or teacher of record in overseeing student progress.
- » Define expectations for monitoring and validating student learning by ensuring advisors or teachers of record verify that evaluations have been completed and that students have demonstrated proficiency based on the approved proposal.



Key next steps

- » Review current pathways and learning experiences to identify gaps and opportunities.
- » Engage local partners to strengthen and expand Learn Everywhere opportunities.
- » Use [Choice Ready](#) results to identify areas where Learn Everywhere can support improvement.
- » Align Learn Everywhere planning with other flexibility efforts or waivers.

You might need to consult other primers if...

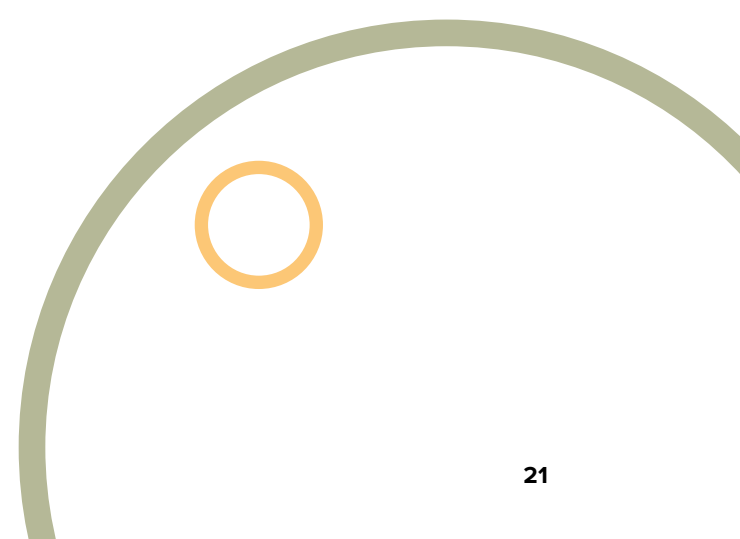
- You decide you want to go beyond just awarding credit based on these expanded learning opportunities and do so based on the North Dakota Learning Continuum (consult the [Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework primer](#))
- You identify additional statutory or regulatory barriers to your work in building community-driven educational opportunities (consult the [Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework primer](#))
- You want your Learn Everywhere experiences to be part of a broader effort at systemwide education change (consult the [Designing an Innovative Education Program primer](#))

Additional Resources:

- » [North Dakota Innovation Guide](#)
- » [Learn Everywhere Guidance](#)
- » [Choice Ready Framework](#)
- » [Approved Local Uses of Federal Perkins V Funds Guide](#)

Policy References

- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-07-35](#) – School Districts – Policy – Alternative Curriculum Outside the Classroom – Participation – Report to Legislative Management
- » [N.D. Admin. Code 67-19-04 et seq.](#) – Educational Opportunities with Sponsoring Entities



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Designing an Innovative Education Program

- » [N.D. Admin. Code 67-19-02 et seq.](#) – Waiver of Accreditation Standards or High School Unit Instructional Time
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-08 et seq.](#) – Rules for School Accreditation – Waiver
- » [Innovative Education Program Planning Proposal Guidance](#)
- » [Innovative Education Program Implementation Application Guidance](#)
- » [Approved Local Uses of Federal Perkins V Funds](#)
- » [North Dakota Standards-Based Learning](#)
- » [North Dakota Department of Public Instruction – Strategy Map Guidance](#)
- » [Title I, Part A: Use of Funds Quick Reference Guide](#)

Leveraging Flexibility Waivers for Student-Centered Learning

- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-04](#) – School Calendar – Length
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-06-08.1](#) – Statutes – Waiver
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-03](#) – High School Unit – Instructional Time
- » [N.D. Admin. Code 67-19-02-01 et seq.](#) – Waiver of Accreditation Standards or High School Unit Instructional Time
- » [Waivers | North Dakota Department of Public Instruction](#)
- » [Choice Ready Framework](#)
- » [North Dakota Department of Public Instruction – Strategy Map Guidance](#)
- » [North Dakota Portrait of a Graduate](#)

Implementing the Learning Continuum Through a Mastery Framework

- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-02](#) – High Schools – Required Units
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-02.2](#) – Minimum Requirements
- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-21-03](#) – High School Unit – Instructional Time
- » [North Dakota Innovation Guide](#)
- » [Learning Continuum](#)
- » [Learning Continuum Guidance](#)
- » [Choice Ready Framework](#)

Activating Learn Everywhere for Real-World Learning

- » [N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 15.1-07-35](#) – School Districts – Policy – Alternative Curriculum Outside the Classroom – Participation – Report to Legislative Management
- » [N.D. Admin. Code 67-19-04 et seq.](#) – Educational Opportunities with Sponsoring Entities
- » [Learn Everywhere Guidance](#)
- » [Choice Ready Framework](#)
- » [Approved Local Uses of Federal Perkins V Funds Guide](#)

Additional Resources

- » [A Shared Vision](#)
- » [Aligning Competencies with Your Portrait of a Learner](#)
- » [Finding Your Path: A Navigation Tool for Scaling Personalized, Competency-Based Learning](#)

This guide was developed in collaboration with:



KnowledgeWorks is a national nonprofit organization advancing a future of learning that ensures each student graduates ready for what's next. For more than 25 years, we've been partnering with states, communities and leaders across the country to imagine, build and sustain vibrant learning communities. Through evidence-based practices and a commitment to equitable outcomes, we're creating the future of learning, together. [KnowledgeWorks.org](https://www.knowledgeworks.org)