

Going the Distance:

Monthly News & Updates

November 2022

News Briefs

CDE Adds CTE Designation to Store

CDE Counselor Jocelyn Kolle recently identified a need for students turning to CDE for CTE courses to quickly locate such courses in the CDE online store. The CDE team responded to this request by adding a CTE filter, which is visible once a course category (e.g., High School, Agriculture) is chosen in the store. The CTE designation is also shown on applicable course cards. This enhancement helps you and your students quickly identify such courses to fulfill Choice-Ready criteria and/or qualify for the CTE scholarship. We strongly advise your students to always work with a counselor before enrolling in one of these courses to double-check the MIS03 code and ensure that the student has not already maximized the number of allowable credits associated with it for purposes of the state scholarship.

EmpowerU Reminder

Over the past few months, CDE has highlighted a unique opportunity made possible by DPI and ESSER funds to enroll your students in EmpowerU courses for half price. These courses are aimed at teaching students resilience, healthy social behaviors, and self-motivation techniques. The opportunity to participate in these discounted courses will end soon. We encourage you to enroll your students by mid-December to take advantage of the discount.

Inside the Explorer Academy SmartLab

CDE began its SmartLab program in 2015. The program has since grown to 25 labs located throughout the state in buildings ranging from elementary schools to colleges. The purpose of these labs is to provide students with hands-on learning in STEAM through a wide variety of tools and projects integrated into a curriculum complete with assessments. Testimonials on these labs abound and are captured on the CDE website: <https://www.cde.nd.gov/information/nd-smartlabs>. As CDE has witnessed the outcomes associated with students learning and experimenting in these facilities, it has taken additional efforts to foster the success of this program.



Eric Lach, Facilitator
Shown in front of the
Explorer Academy
SmartLab

One way CDE has done this is by investing in its own lab to help our staff remain current on their SmartLab knowledge and skills. When CDE moved off the NDSU campus, it no longer had a place to house this lab. It sought a partnership with Fargo Public Schools to host the lab, leading to a new and innovative use of this equipment.

Fargo Public Schools chose to place the lab in its new Explorer Academy--the first K-8 special education day school in North Dakota. This facility's goal is to integrate project-based STEAM learning and gross motor skills development within a framework in which students receive social and emotional training and support. Given these aims, the CDE SmartLab was the perfect fit for this school.

The lab is overseen by a full-time facilitator, Eric Lach (pictured), who guides and mentors students on projects from 3-D printing design to capturing and editing digital photography. Learning in the lab is student-led, allowing them to select from the myriad of learning opportunities and decide which aligns best with their interests. The lab has been tailored to a special education environment with slight adjustments. For example, materials and supplies needed to work on projects are kept in a storage closet and brought out by the facilitator as needed. The Explorer Academy SmartLab is one of only a handful of such facilities operating in the United States.

Story continued on the next page.



SmartLab, cont.

Creative Learning Systems, CDE's partner in delivering SmartLabs, is working with Explorer Academy to connect it to the other special education SmartLabs in the U.S. to share tips and innovations that can help enhance the curriculum and delivery of this service to special education students. CDE looks forward to sharing the outcomes of this collaboration with all our SmartLab schools, which can, in turn, implement them to refine learning opportunities for special education students within your own labs.

Upcoming CDE Policy Changes

NDCDE recently made updates to two enrollment policies that will go into effect on Dec. 30: our extension policy and our satisfactory academic progress policy. We will detail these changes in our December newsletter. In the meantime, if you have any questions about these changes, please reach out to Principal Jenifer Mastrud at jenifer.r.mastrud@k12.nd.us.

In the Spotlight: Educators, Students, & CDE Staff

In this month's educator spotlight, we feature Becky Trumbo. Becky's excellence in teaching was recently brought to the CDE administrative team's attention by a school board member whose child was taking one of Becky's classes. Becky is one of our adjunct teachers who came to teach through a non-traditional pathway, using CDE to gain teaching experience. Her story is below.



Becky Trumbo
NDCDE Adjunct Teacher

The road to get here had some twists and blind spots, but I am excited and thankful to now teach English/Language Arts for NDCDE. I never rebelled growing up, so refusing to go into education was my rebellion. That rebellion lasted about fifteen years (college and a couple of careers), at which point I followed my two kids to elementary school, working as a para, noon supervisor, and eventually a tutor. It turned out that I loved education.

Tutoring allowed me to cheer on kids while we solved the puzzles of why they struggled to read. It was great! Then, the pandemic and a cancer diagnosis took me out of the school. An NDCDE teacher friend suggested applying for a TA position to help with the workload during the pandemic's online crunch. I found kind and knowledgeable coworkers at NDCDE, and the job allowed me to recover at home, check on my kids' virtual classes, and continue to work in education.

I wondered if it was too late to become a teacher. A search of the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) website brought me to the American Board program, a self-paced program for people with four-year degrees and work experience in the field. After the coursework, there are two four-hour tests to receive an initial teaching license. I then used that license to secure a teaching job with monthly observations for the first year. With the American Board, ESPB, and NDCDE administration and teachers to field my questions, I'm now just months away from full licensure. I'm thrilled to have found a path that led me to NDCDE.

How CDE can Assist your Students with Becoming Choice Ready!

Essential Skills:
Choice-ready requirements, with which CDE can help: Earn a high school diploma, complete an online course.
How CDE can assist: We offer an entire high school program per NDCC 15-1-21-02.2, including a diploma option, all delivered asynchronously online. Courses include physical education and a wide variety of options within subject areas like social studies, the sciences, and career and technical education (CTE). CDE is accredited by Cognia, and our courses align with national standards.

Post-Secondary Ready:
Choice-ready requirements, with which CDE can help: Dual credit courses, Algebra II, foreign language courses.
How CDE can assist: Through an MCU with Marquette State University, CDE offers dual credit in English, science, math, social studies, education, and psychology. These courses are all delivered online each semester, helping students also meet an essential skill. CDE has a wide range of foreign language choices and offers Algebra II, all asynchronously online to help busy students fit these requirements into their schedules.

Workforce Ready:
Choice-ready requirements, with which CDE can help: Three or more CTE courses, dual credit courses, fine arts courses, some work-based learning experiences.
How CDE can assist: With nearly 100 different asynchronous online CTE courses, CDE can help your students hone their career interests on a schedule that works for them. A few of our courses, such as our veterinary science, require students to engage in work-based learning. Courses in the fine arts allow students to learn an instrument or study art. Dual credit options are described under the post-secondary ready section.

Military Ready:
Choice-ready requirements, with which CDE can help: Physical fitness, two or more additional indicators from post-secondary or workforce options.
How CDE can assist: As referenced above, CDE offers physical education courses to high school students to help students prepare for a military career; under our menu of CTE options, we offer engineering, aerospace, and drone operation courses.

To learn more about enrolling your students, visit:
<https://www.cde.nd.gov/information/policies-resources/enrolling-courses>

CDE has learned that nearly half of the school districts that applied for a DPI Choice-Ready grant referenced virtual education as a key component in its Choice-Ready plan. Many of these same districts referenced CDE as a possible provider of these virtual courses. This prompted us to develop a quick reference guide on the courses available through CDE that can assist your students with meeting the requirements in all three Choice-Ready pathways (students only need to meet requirements in two of the three areas): post-secondary, career and technical, and military readiness. The key benefit of integrating CDE courses into your district's Choice-Ready plan is our asynchronous delivery method and the wide range of courses offered, allowing even the busiest student to prepare for multiple roads upon graduation. With Cognia accreditation and highly-qualified teachers, we invite you to consider including CDE courses in your plan. See the full document here:

https://www.cde.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/PDFs/choice_ready_whitePa_per.pdf

