



Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 1472

Chairperson and Members of the Committee - Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. While I appreciate the intent to expand educational options, this bill poses serious risks to public education, student accountability, and equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities.

Lack of Accountability and Oversight

HB 1472 removes essential oversight mechanisms that ensure educational quality and student safety. The bill exempts microschools from elementary and secondary education laws, teacher certification requirements, and background checks. Without these safeguards, there is no guarantee that students in microschools will receive a comprehensive, high-quality education.

Additionally, the bill does not require licensed educators, instead allowing anyone with a high school diploma to serve as a teacher. Public school educators undergo rigorous training and certification to ensure effective instruction. Removing these requirements for microschools puts students at risk of receiving substandard education.

Potential for Educational Inequities

This bill could exacerbate educational inequities across North Dakota. Microschools will likely attract families who can afford tuition or provide supplementary education, leaving low-income and special needs students with fewer viable options. Public schools, which serve all students regardless of background, could face funding reductions as enrollment declines, further disadvantaging marginalized communities.

Additionally, there are no clear protections in place to ensure that students with disabilities receive adequate services. Unlike public schools, which must comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), microschools would not be subject to these protections, potentially leaving vulnerable students without the support they need.

Funding and Resource Drain from Public Schools

HB 1472 allows microschools to operate with no clear financial oversight while still enabling students to participate in public school courses and extracurricular activities. This arrangement means public schools will be required to allocate resources to students who are not fully enrolled, stretching already limited budgets.

Public schools rely on state funding based on student enrollment. By diverting students to microschools without requiring them to meet the same standards or contribute to the broader public education system, the bill undermines the financial stability of school districts.

Health, Safety, and Building Code Exemptions



1 The bill explicitly exempts microschools from compliance with health, fire, and building codes.
2 These exemptions pose serious risks to student safety. Public schools must meet strict safety
3 regulations to ensure the well-being of students and staff. Allowing microschools to bypass these
4 basic safety requirements creates unacceptable risks.

5 **Conclusion**

6 While educational innovation is important, it must be balanced with accountability, equity, and
7 student well-being. House Bill 1472 removes essential oversight, risks exacerbating educational
8 disparities, and threatens the stability of public schools without clear benefits to students.

9 For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject this bill and instead focus on strengthening
10 educational opportunities within the public school system to benefit all North Dakota students.

11 Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions the committee may have.