



# North Dakota Small Organized Schools

Mr. Michael Heilman  
Executive Director  
3144 Hampton Street  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
[mheilmanndsos@gmail.com](mailto:mheilmanndsos@gmail.com)  
701-527-4621

Mr. Brandt Dick  
President  
1929 N. Washington Steet. Ste.A  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
[Brandt.Dick@k12.nd.us](mailto:Brandt.Dick@k12.nd.us)  
701-415-0441

Mr. Steven Heim  
Vice-President  
PO Box 256  
Drake, ND 58736  
[Steve.heim@k12.nd.us](mailto:Steve.heim@k12.nd.us)  
701-465-3732

## 1 **Testimony in Support of North Dakota House Bill 1214**

2 Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

3 I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of House Bill 1214, which seeks to  
4 improve the state's transportation reimbursement system for schools by introducing a per-pupil factor.  
5 This legislation represents a much-needed shift away from the current block grant model, which has  
6 proven to be inefficient and inequitable for many school districts across North Dakota.

7 **Enhancing Efficiency and Equity** HB 1214 establishes a per-pupil factor that ensures transportation  
8 reimbursements are distributed based on actual student transportation needs rather than a fixed block  
9 grant. The current system does not account for variations in district size, geography, or student  
10 population growth, leading to disparities in funding allocations. By transitioning to a reimbursement  
11 model that ties funding to the number of students served, the state can more effectively allocate  
12 resources where they are most needed, encouraging efficiency and fairness among all districts.

13 **A Thoughtful, Data-Driven Approach** This legislation is the result of extensive work by the interim  
14 legislative committee on school funding and input from members of the education focus group. Their  
15 research and discussions have provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges school  
16 districts face in covering transportation costs under the existing system. HB 1214 is a thoughtful and  
17 data-driven solution that addresses these concerns while laying the groundwork for a more sustainable  
18 and equitable funding model.

19 **Encouraging Fiscal Responsibility and Best Practices** By shifting toward a reimbursement system based  
20 on a per-pupil factor, school districts will be incentivized to optimize their transportation services while  
21 maintaining high standards for student safety and accessibility. This model supports responsible fiscal  
22 management by ensuring that funds are directed toward real transportation costs, rather than being  
23 locked into an outdated block grant structure that does not adjust to changes in enrollment or district  
24 needs.

25 **Conclusion** HB 1214 is a critical first step toward modernizing North Dakota's school transportation  
26 funding. It introduces a more equitable and efficient method of reimbursement that reflects the needs  
27 of individual school districts while encouraging responsible resource management. I urge the committee  
28 to support this legislation to ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, have access to safe  
29 and reliable transportation to and from school.

### Board of Directors

#### Region 1

Mr. Tim Holte, Supt. Stanley  
Mr. Kris Kuehn, Supt. Ray

#### Region 2

Mr. Monte Mayer, Supt. Velva  
Mr. Steven Heim, Anamoose & Drake

#### Region 3

Dr. Frank Schill, Supt. Edmore  
Mr. David Wheeler, Supt. Manvel

#### Region 4

Mr. Brian Christopherson, Supt. New Salem  
Mr. Russ Ziegler, Supt. Elgin-New Leipzig

#### Region 5

Mr. Rick Diegel, Supt. Kidder Co.  
Mr. Brandt Dick, Supt. Burleigh County

#### Region 6

Mr. Mitch Carlson, Supt. LaMoure  
Dr. Steven Johnson, Supt. Ft. Ransom

**The mission of NDSOS is to provide leadership for the small/rural schools in North Dakota and to support legislation favorable to their philosophy while opposing legislation that is harmful.**

30

31

32 Mr. Michael Heilman – Executive Director

33 North Dakota Small Organized Schools

34 [mheilmandsos@gmail.com](mailto:mheilmandsos@gmail.com)

35 701.527.4621

36