



1 **SB 2304 –Relating to requiring all elementary and secondary public and non-public schools**
2 **in the state to include curriculum on Native American history.**

3 **March 9, 2021** Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee. I am Dr. Russ
4 Ziegler, assistant director for the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders and am here today
5 to testify in support of SB 2304.

6 We feel that the current version of this bill – 21.1054.2000 – is the best way to ensure that this
7 much needed information will be presented to the students in North Dakota. NDCEL believes what
8 was written in EdNote, which is a policy blog from The Education Commission of the States. They
9 stated:

10 *Improving the quality of and access to Native American curriculum benefits all students.*
11 *For nonnative students, it can lead to greater awareness and compassion. For native*
12 *students, it can teach strength and resiliency, foster positive identity development and help*
13 *uphold tribal sovereignty. It can also support academic success – which can make a big*
14 *impact in the near term – and have a ripple effect at both the individual and community*
15 *levels.*

16 I also personally believe placing an emphasis on the Indigenous, Native peoples of this land that
17 includes all the nations in North Dakota, history and impacts will also correct false narratives that
18 exist in the population as a whole.

19 We do feel that placing this language in Century Code under school approval will also help drive
20 discussion when it is time to review the social studies standards.

21 NDCEL supports this version of the bill and would respectfully ask for an affirmative vote from
22 the committee.