



North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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HB 1388 – K-12 Funding Formula

Testimony in Support

Michael Heilman – Executive Director North Dakota Small Organized School

March 15, 2021

Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Michael Heilman. I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Small Organized Schools (NDSOS). I represent 154 member school districts of the North Dakota Small Organized Schools. I will keep my testimony brief as NDSOS's position is much the same as NDCEL's.

NDSOS stands in support of HB 1388. HB 1388 is the result of the work of the interim legislative committee to resolve the large number of school districts not on the funding formula, both the transition minimum and transition maximum school districts. HB 1388 may not be perfect, but it lays a framework that allows all schools to be on the formula while addressing the needs of most of our schools. Over a period of seven years the transition minimum schools will be moved onto the formula as will the transition maximum schools. HB 1388 recognized the different funding needs of a small school compared to a large school. The weighted pupil unit for varying size schools provides for these differences. There is an area of concern for a small number of consolidated school districts that maintain two K-12 building. NDSOS is willing to work with and offer possible solutions for the districts affected by the proposed formula.

As you have heard from other testimony NDSOS also supports the removal of the 92% calculation for K-6 and K-8 school districts. Some of these districts that are over 245 ADM could see their weighted student unit fall below 1.0. NDSOS and its member schools supports the 1% -1% increase in each year of the biennium. The dollars in the form of the 1%-1% increase will soften the blow of the reductions many of our transition minimum schools will see and provides funding for all schools to use for increased salaries and reoccurring operation and maintenance costs. We understand that schools are receiving significant dollars due to Federal COVID relief funding but using one-time impact aid dollars to support ongoing expenditures like salaries would be irresponsible. We are hopeful that the federal impact dollars can be used to provide tax relief to our local taxpayer through addressing deferred maintenance, paying down of sinking and interest, callable bonds and any other costs that are funded by local taxpayers.

NDSOS support HB 1388. Thank you Chairman Schaible and members of the committee.

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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.

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