1	Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2215
2	Presented to the Senate Education Committee
3	Dr. Robert Lech, Superintendent, Jamestown Public School District #1
4	February 2, 2021
5	
6	Good morning Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee.
7	For the record, my name is Robert Lech and I serve as the superintendent of the Jamestown
8	School District. I am providing testimony in support of Senate Bill 2215.
9	As a school district superintendent, I am tasked with being a resource for both
10	negotiating units and school boards throughout the negotiations process. As such, I feel it is my
11	role to consider the impacts of negotiations on all sides. It is important to me that both the
12	negotiating units and the school boards are treated equitably to ensure that good faith
13	negotiations can take place.
14	I appreciate that the bill sponsors specify the formation of the negotiating unit to be no
15	later than February first of the negotiating year and the corresponding petition filing no later
16	than March first. As noted in NDCC 15.1-16-13, this would mean that negotiations must start
17	no later than thirty days after recognition of the negotiating unit. This should provide ample
18	time for negotiating units and school boards to discuss the topics pertinent to negotiations and
19	reach consensus prior to the deadline of June 1. While both sides would need to grow more
20	accustomed to this new timeline, I believe it is ultimately to the benefit of both negotiating
21	units and school boards.
22	It is important to note that good-faith negotiations continue to be clearly defined in
23	NDCC 15.1-16-13. There remains the necessity to meet at reasonable times and negotiate in

good-faith. This bill provides the opportunity for both sides to agree to start negotiations later and to extend beyond the deadline if both agree to do so. In the event that there is not an agreement on extending negotiations, the impasse process, or possibly mediation, continues to be in place to help both sides reach that common ground necessary to complete good-faith negotiations.

I contend that stakeholders are better cared for, if an agreement can be reached or if the good-faith negotiations are complete and contracts can be issued prior to the beginning of the next school year. Teachers and administrators will be offered a contract, school districts will have a better understanding of personnel needs and, more importantly, will have the time to adequately fill any vacancies, and the students and families will know their teachers and administrators.

I ask that you support the process to provide a more expeditious pathway for the completion of negotiations in a fair and reasonable timeframe through a Do Pass Recommendation on Senate Bill 2215. Thank you for the time today and I would stand available for any questions you may have. I am also available through email at Robert.Lech@k12.nd.us.