



1 SB 2311 – Required Health Curriculum

2 NDCEL Testimony in support

3 Senator Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee. For the record my name is
4 Dr. Aimee Copas and I serve as the Executive Director for the North Dakota Council of
5 Educational Leaders representing all our ND school administrators, directors, and school leaders.

6 We come today in support of this bill and ask for a slight adjustment in process to increase the
7 odds of successful implementation. Our request is grounded in approach and not content. Please
8 do not misconstrue our testimony as any sort of opposition about learning about the content
9 mentioned in the bill in fact we’ve been partnering with Senator Heckaman on working on educator
10 mental health over the past several months.. There are effective processes in place that should be
11 utilized when it comes to addressing what should be taught in the classroom.

12 The process of determining what is taught: The state’s role is to define broadly what needs to be
13 covered (course areas) (this is wrapping your arms around education with good policy). NDDPI
14 is charged with setting standards in cooperation and partnership with our best health teachers.
15 School Boards are set with determining curriculum. Teachers are charged with executing those
16 standards and curriculum, and administrators are charged with assuring it and providing the needed
17 professional development to assist. This is a beautiful arrangement. We ask that we keep our roles
18 defined appropriately. We feel confident that emphasizing this work as a power-standard is the
19 best education related approach to having this curriculum addressed.

20 The ND Health Standards can be found here – last updated in 2018 contain 59 pages of well-done
21 health standards for grades K-12:

22 <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Safe%20%26%20Healthy/Health%20Standards%20Final%202018.pdf>
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1 The standards do cover the topics needing to be addressed in this bill and emphasis in these
2 standards is warranted. It is important to allow the process to work. If stakeholders feel that a
3 stronger emphasis be put in an area, there is a process to work on that. We respectfully ask that
4 we follow the successful process as outlined and consider amending.

5 Possible Language:

6 *During the 2021-23 biennium, the state superintendent shall call for the review process of the*
7 *North Dakota Health Standards. During that process, a review of current standards dealing with*
8 *mental health awareness and suicide prevention with focus on identifiable warning signs and risk*
9 *factors, and identifying at-risk peers shall be conducted and needed emphasis included and*
10 *adopted in the new standards. This emphasis should be as early as developmentally appropriate*
11 *and continue through the 12th grade.*