



# North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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SB 2340 – Testimony in Support  
House Education Committee  
Representative Heinert– Chairman  
March 7, 2023

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Michael Heilman. I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Small Organized Schools (NDSOS). I represent 150-member school districts of the North Dakota Small Organized Schools. NDSOS supports SB 2340.

NDSOS supports SB 2340 as it provides our schools with the flexibility to serve and meet the needs of our students. Counselors are in short supply and filling a part-time position is extremely difficult, especially in our small schools. While the counselor to student ratio may seem like a great idea it simply does not work when counselors are not available to hire. The addition of contracted service to meet the counseling requirements is beneficial especially, when a small FTE is needed to meet the required ratio. Also, the addition of section 4, subsection b., provides our schools with the option of a variety of highly qualified and licensed individuals to meet the counseling guidelines.

All schools, especially the small schools are having a very difficult time hiring counselors and to hire a small fraction of an FTE is impossible. This bill provides our schools with a viable option to meet the counselor to student ratio requirements and to provide the students with access to professionals with a broader skillset to serve student and family needs.

NDSOS supports a Do Pass Recommendation for SB 2430.

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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.**