

## Milnor Public School District No. 2

530 Fifth Street | P.O. Box 369  
Milnor, North Dakota 58060-0369  
Phone: 701-427-5237 | Fax: 701-427-5304  
[www.milnor.k12.nd.us](http://www.milnor.k12.nd.us)

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Chris Larson, Superintendent and Activities Director  
Ryan Weber, High School Principal  
Theresa Wittich, Elementary Principal

To: North Dakota House  
Human Services Committee

From: Dr. Chris Larson  
Superintendent  
Milnor Public School

Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Topic: SB 2260

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee,

As a school leader, I am in opposition of SB 2260. There are several areas in which 2260 would be doing schools, families, and communities a disservice. In many ways, schools already have policies and procedures in place to deal with much of the content within 2260 and the wording within 2260 creates larger and unnecessary burdens on school districts.

One major concern that I have is in the area of security. 2260 would require all families/parents to “opt in” if we are to continue to use security cameras. 2260 makes an exception for buildings and grounds, but not buses. Milnor, along with many schools in ND, have cameras on all of our buses. Our bus cameras have helped us correct many behavior issues on buses before they become widespread problems. I do not believe that 100% of families would opt in, and we would lose a valuable tool to educate and protect students and staff. A vast majority of public schools in North Dakota are members of the North Dakota School Board Association. NDSBA has policies available for recording in schools: [ACDB](#) and on buses: [ACDBA](#)

Much of the content within 2260 deals with curriculum and parent consent and involvement. To be accredited through Cognia, schools need to have a policy that addresses this issue. I’ll link my policy for your reference: [GACC](#). If the issue to be addressed is the timing of a parent to object to a lesson and uploading 7 days prior- 2260 does a poor job. Having teachers legally bound to their lesson plans does a complete disservice to the profession. As a former high school social studies teacher, I’m not at all ashamed to admit that most of my best class periods were driven by the questions my students asked and guiding discussions in my classroom. The potential to be sued if it took me four days to teach the bill of rights vs. the two days I’d originally planned, is ludicrous. Accommodating to the needs of your students and adjusting your teaching plan to be effective during the course of a lesson, unit, and class period are traits of great teaching- not something to be punishable by law.

Further, 2260 tip toes into areas that have no need for legislation. What is the intent of getting written permission to refer to a student by name? My legal name is Christopher. I never go by Christopher. The only thing that says Christopher are my drivers license and my diplomas. My teaching license (granted

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by ESPB) says Chris. It is apparent that this legislation is aimed to stop Sally from being called Bob. The federal courts have several rulings on this matter that would place North Dakota in severe jeopardy of a litigation. That said, I am supportive of schools working with parents and families on this issue. I would encourage some thought on the line between what is logical and prudent and what is made legally enforceable.

Page 2, line 30 establishes that students can be excused from school attendance for religious purposes. What regions? Who get's to decide what religions "count" and what purposes are applicable? For many parents- attending the state basketball tournament could be religious. Maybe a ski trip? A trip to worship my families new gods- Mickey Mouse and friends at Disney World. This may lead us back to page 2, line 7- the moral and religious training of the child should be reserved as rights (I'd say responsibilities) of parents. I agree with this statement. I do not agree that all parents have the same, or even adequate, moral compass or that what is being taught, or not taught, at home is good enough right now.

A short google search shows that this legislation is not a local solution to a North Dakota problem. It is legislation that is working its way across the nation as another battleground in the ongoing war against public education. North Dakota schools are good. North Dakota teachers are great. We have no need to codify legislation to hamper the work of the great teachers and administrators in our state. They're already doing the work. We need to find ways to support our educators and allow them to do the work. 2260 does not accomplish that mission.

Finally, 2260 appears to only impact public schools. There is other legislation pending that would allocate tax dollars to non-public schools. If these become law, I would urge that the language and stipulations stemming from 2260 apply to all schools- not just public schools.

I urge a "do not pass" recommendation on SB 2260.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Larson  
Superintendent  
Milnor Public School