



North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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SB 1187 Testimony in Support
Senate Education Committee
Senator Elkin – Chairperson
March 7, 2023

Chairman Elkin 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 150-member school districts of the North Dakota Small Organized Schools. NDSOS stands in support SB 1187.

SB 1187 provides school districts with the opportunity to incentivize teachers to join their district or to look at a shortage area within their existing district. The provision in the bill that delays the bonus to be paid until the teacher is in the district for two years make the bill much more palatable for smaller schools. Our smaller schools are often filling positions that have been created by teachers leaving to work in a larger community and school district.

The teacher shortage is real in large and small schools and the pool of qualified teachers continues to shrink. Teachers moving from smaller schools to larger school is not new. What is new, is large schools finding it difficult to fill position and the smaller schools pool of eligible teachers to fill open positions has gone from a small number to no candidates in many cases. Providing school districts with the ability to incentivize teachers through bonuses to join or to move to a shortage area will help recruit and retain teachers in our classrooms.

North Dakota Small Organized Schools supports a do pass recommendation for SB 1187. Thank you, Chairman 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.