



1 HB 1231

2 Testimony In opposition

3 Chairman Elkin and honorable members of the Senate education committee. I am here  
4 representing NDCEL and your school leaders. I come to you today carrying a message  
5 from my specialists that work in this area with a note of concern that may very well be  
6 solvable from the legislative standpoint. The first iteration of this bill came with grave  
7 concerns from the field – those concerns in the newly amended version are now at the  
8 point of completely unworkable.

9 Last session this body approved pilot programs to screen for dyslexia. We realize there  
10 is a need for this. I come in opposition sharing concern from Special Education Directors  
11 (one of my affiliate organizations) as well as other leaders regarding a bill that is  
12 incomplete. We are missing grave components. Funding, and a universal screener, and  
13 now additional layers to a science of reading mandate that has been extensively at  
14 question before additional pieces were layered on.

15 The PD, screening tool, dyslexia specialist and services required in this bill will cost  
16 money and time. Is there a plan to pay for that?? – if not – that is yet again another  
17 unfunded mandate which erodes our ability to provide services to students as well as  
18 our ability to appropriately fund employees. Who will pay for the training or time of  
19 this new “certified screener” that each and every school now needs to have?

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21 This doesn’t even touch the redundancy of requiring both districts and their special ed  
22 units to do the same thing as it appears parts of this bill require. We believe there can  
23 be a pathway to meet the needs of all involved, however, we believe it is important that  
24 to solve a problem for students it needs to be looked at beyond the “we just need to do  
25 this” standpoint. The “how,” the “why”, and the “how much” needs to all be  
26 considered and accounted for. As we consider the “how much” we need to also  
27 understand that this must be ongoing funding not one time as the screener is about  
28 \$15 per student plus FTE time to conduct the screening. These are similar issue we

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for all students in North Dakota.*

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1 encountered last session when it was put into a pilot that was funded. If we funded  
2 the pilot, we must logically believe the statewide application should be funded as well  
3 as overcoming the redundancies in the bill.

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5 As an initial step toward resolution, Rep. Timmons has developed an amended version  
6 of the bill taking it back to closer to its original version, but it is still missing funding.  
7 Passage of policy bills that cost extensive amounts without recognition of a need for  
8 fiscal notes is detrimental to districts. At minimum, this bill needs to be moved to the  
9 amendment provided to be even modestly workable for districts. Without funding  
10 supports, however, this bill may still be unworkable.

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13 Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this as you discuss this bill.

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