



# North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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HB 1304 Testimony in Support  
Senate Education Committee  
Senator Elkin– Chairperson  
January 24, 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 HB 1304.

This bill like several others in this and the previous sessions is designed to provide a pathway for entry into the teaching profession to address teacher shortage. This bill is specific to the shortage of Special Education Teachers. Special Education continues to be one of the greatest areas of need for all schools and is particularly critical for small schools. All shortage areas are difficult to deal with, but shortages in special education impact our most fragile learners. Often compromising the supports this group of learners need to be successful. The shortage of special education teacher has a ripple effect in the classroom as teachers do not have the support of the specialist to assist with developing interventions and modification for students on Individualized Education Plans (IEP). This in turn impacts all students as teacher time may be compromised when special education teachers are not available.

This bill provides a pathway for our schools to secure much needed special education teachers. North Dakota Small Organized Schools supports a do pass recommendation for HB 1304. I will stand for questions.

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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.**