



January 22, 2023

Members of the North Dakota Senate Education Committee

RE: **Opposition for SB2269** - Relating to the administration of the ND Center for Distance Education.

Dear Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee, I am reaching out in opposition of SB2269 as currently written.

North Dakota Center for Distance Education is an eclectic agency within the North Dakota educational ecosystem, providing distance education opportunities to students around the world since 1935. According to the NDCTE purpose statement:

- *NDCDE does not work alone. It relies on teachers, schools, curriculum providers, software providers, parents, government officials, and citizens to partner with NDCDE for the benefit of students.*
- *NDCTE, in partnership with all members of the education community, seeks to add value to each student.*

Overall, I believe there is merit to move the ND Center for Distance Education (NDCDE) oversight from the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education (NDCTE) to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), as coursework delivered under NDCTE aligns with core academics monitored by ND DPI. There is also precedence for such a model from existing educational entities such as the North Dakota School for the Blind and North Dakota School for the Deaf.

NDCDE currently receives direct state funding, along with spending authority for fees charged for coursework, to support North Dakota public, private, and homeschool students, along with out-of-state entities and individuals. A wide range of coursework is offered through NDCTE including, (i.e. Math, Science, English, Social Studies, etc.), world languages (i.e. Spanish, German, French, American Sign Language, etc.), elective courses (i.e. Music, Art, etc.), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses (i.e. Agriculture, Family & Consumer Sciences, Computer Education, etc.).

However, my opposition to SB2269 as written, is language that provides complete organizational and governance authority to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. I feel this limits input and broader representation from the field and could have lasting implications on partner organizations without collection decision-making model.

I would be supportive of SB2269 if amendments were added to create a NDCDE governance or advisory board. Rationale, 1) this would align to precedence already established by the North Dakota School for the Deaf and North Dakota School for the Blind, 2) it would also provide a mechanism for stakeholder input from the field, and 3) it would provide neutrality between agencies, such as NDPI, NDCTE, and others involved in NDCDE for distance education.

The board could be comprised of representations from small school administration, large school administration, career and technical education, department of public instruction, regional education association, a two-year and four-year higher education, and small rural schools' associations. All have knowledge associated with NDCDE and are impacted by decisions related to this organization.

I would strongly recommend amendments to SB2269 to provide language to establish a North Dakota Center for Distance Education governance board for decision authority with oversight under the NDDPI.

Sincerely,
Dr. Denise Jonas