

Testimony of Kirsten Baesler
North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction
Senate Education Committee
In Support of SB 2269
Monday, Jan. 23, 2023

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee, good morning.

My name is Kirsten Baesler, and I am the North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction. The State Superintendent is the Constitutional Officer granted the authority to oversee K-12 education in North Dakota.

I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 2269.

The administrative structure outlined in Senate Bill 2269 is similar to the Department of Public Instruction's relationship to two other state schools – the School for the Blind & Vision Services in Grand Forks and the School for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing in Devils Lake, as well as the State Library in Bismack. The State Superintendent hires and supervises the heads of those institutions. They have separate budgets and staff but they often benefit from the infrastructure of our agency including HR, fiscal and procurement if desired. Their budgets are heard separately each biennium as part of the Department of Public Instruction budget bill that includes state funding for our local schools.

Director Sick, Dr. Martin and I sat down and reviewed this bill together making the suggested amendments as a team with the interest of students' and their future at the center of our discussion. We agreed that this change will help provide opportunities for children in all grade levels across the state. CTE, CDE and DPI have developed a strong cross-agency team and this change will only strengthen our ability to better partner with each other in service to students.

Chairman Elkin and members of the committee, I ask for your Do Pass recommendation on Senate Bill 2269 with the friendly amendments that have been proposed.

I welcome any questions you may have.