



# North Dakota AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

---

## Testimony

68<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly

Senate Human Services Committee

SB2323

January 25, 2023

Submitted by: North Dakota Afterschool Network

Chairwoman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide informational testimony on SB2323. My name is Kristin Knorr and I am the Lead for the North Dakota Afterschool Network. The ND Afterschool Network is a statewide program of the South East Education Cooperative, one of seven regional education associations in ND situated between the ND Department of Public Instruction and K-12 school districts to provide support services to the educational system.

The ND Afterschool Network works to equip North Dakota after school, before school and summer learning programs with the tools and support to expand program quality, build leadership capacity, and increase access to high-quality out-of-school time programs for youth across North Dakota. Afterschool includes any program serving youth ages PreK through Grade 12 with organized, regularly scheduled academic or enrichment activities in a supervised environment. These programs can take place in schools, school-age licensed childcare facilities, community-based organizations, libraries, summer camps, and more.

ND Afterschool Network and Child Care Aware of ND collaborated in the Fall of 2022 to collect data and illuminate the needs of the early childhood and school-age industry, which encompasses children from birth to age 12. Major themes of the data collection fell into three categories: Availability, Affordability, and Quality. For the purposes of testimony relating to SB2323, I will share information regarding quality relating to afterschool programs.

Afterschool programs primarily fall into two categories: DHHS licensed child care programs and afterschool programs which take place in school buildings and are exempt from child care licensing ((ND Century Code 50-11.1-02 "Early childhood services does not include: Child care provide in any educational facility, whether public or private, in grade one or above."))

Currently, there are 35 school-age DHHS licensed child care programs in ND with the capacity to serve 2,533 school-age children. The number of children ages 6 to 13 potentially needing care in ND is 53,576. 31 of the school-age licensed programs are from YMCA or Boys and Girls Club facilities. There are no school-age licensed childcare programs participating in Bright and Early, ND's quality rating and improvement system.

Around 90% of school-age programs operate in schools to help meet the need for afterschool programming. Afterschool programs play a critical role in helping youth succeed, keeping young people safe, and supporting working families as many schools dismiss between 2:30-3:30pm each day.

School-age programs (licensed and unlicensed) are currently unable to participate in the ND Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), Bright & Early. The system is only focused on early childhood with no existing pathway for school-age programs. The ND Afterschool Network supports this bill which proposes to open that pathway for school-age programs to help improve quality for programs and expand access to some of the



# North Dakota **AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK**

---

QRIS benefits including the Quality Improvement Grants. Including school-age programs in Bright & Early would create consistency within the mixed-delivery child care system.

Early childhood and school-age care occurs in a number of different learning environments, and we want to support access to quality supports for all programs who are serving children birth through age 12. To do so, we support allowing access to QRIS for school-age programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information regarding quality in afterschool programs and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kristin Knorr  
North Dakota Afterschool Network