



# North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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HB 1232 Testimony in Support  
Workforce Development Committee  
Senator Wobbema– Chairperson  
March 9, 2023

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development 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 1232.

This bill is about how connecting various segments of our society provides a win/win. By connecting cutting edge technology, with workforce development and putting it in the hands of the future workforce, our students; that is a win for our students and for workforce development. This technology using the existing RU Ready Platform allows schools to provide realistic career exploration without leaving the school. We all love a good field trip to a power plant, or Baker Boy, or Bobcat. While in Dickinson where I was principal, I and Rich Wardner, mostly Rich set up program called Leadership Dickinson. The program was designed to allow a select group of students to experience the multitude of careers available in Dickinson. It was and I hope it still is, a great program but it served a very small percentage of students. This technology makes a multitude of career experiences available to all and the students or adults for that matter never have to leave the school or community.

How does a student in the eastern part of the state see firsthand what it is like to work in the oil field, or a student in Kenmare see what it would be like to work for Tecton in Fargo. Using this technology all of this and more is possible more. Whether it is a location and associated cost of travel, or other funding issues, HB 1232 makes this available in large and small schools alike. This is especially important in our rural schools where travel can be cost prohibitive and career exploration opportunities may be limited.

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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.**

If you've had the opportunity experience or see this technology in use, you clearly understand how amazingly realistic the virtual experience is. When kids remove the headset after experiencing what a wind tower technician does, the look on their face tells the whole story. This technology opens the door for our children, regardless of where they live to have a career exploration experience that could be the difference between a student choosing a great career right here in North Dakota, or thinking they have to leave the state for a very similar career opportunity.

As you have heard students can use any device, computer, tablet, phone, I-pad or VR googles to access the library of career video's. A guidance or career counselor, or a classroom teacher can use this technology to create clear picture of the relevance of a curriculum to existing high paying careers here in North Dakota. Imagine finishing a lesson on electricity and electrical generation and immediately taking a virtual trip to a North Dakota power plant or to the top of a wind tower. What a great tool for our students and teachers.

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Workforce Development Committee, NDSOS urges you to support HB 1232.

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