

1 HB1172 – CDE Fees – by Dr. Jeff Fastnacht, Superintendent, Bismarck Public
2 School District.

3 I am here today, providing testimony in support of HB 1172. You heard my
4 testimony last week in support of Representative Jonas’s bill HB 1105. I remain in
5 support of aspects of that bill, but I would argue that HB 1172 is a more streamlined
6 version that addresses many of the concerns raised by school leaders.

7 Is North Dakota a conservative state? Is it one that aspires for efficiency and being
8 frugal with taxpayers dollars? Did we hear the message last election with proponents
9 of Measure 4?

10 The unintended consequences of the virtual learning bill last session have cost
11 residents of Bismarck Public School a total of \$292,158.84 in FY 2024 and an
12 additional \$98,847 on CDE tuition that, with few exceptions, is a duplication of the
13 services we already provide within Bismarck High, Century High, and Legacy High
14 School. Are we living up to our ideals? This legislation has resulted in a significant
15 waste of taxpayers' dollars that could have been used for other needed services or,
16 more beneficially, just put back into our taxpayer's pockets.

17 You heard in my testimony last week that these costs caused the reduction of nursing
18 staff in Bismarck Public Schools. These three nurses were previously funded by
19 ESSER funding but were significantly supported by parents, students, and staff.
20 Faced with adding those salaries and benefits into the general fund this past year, or
21 putting aside funds to pay for CDE fees, I had little choice but to cut the nurses and
22 set aside the funds, because that was the directive from NDDPI, despite already
23 providing the courses in my traditional schools.