



1 **Testimony in Support of HB 1200** – School Board authority to waiver/substitution.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **HB 1200**, a bill that introduces an option
3 for a local board to adopt a policy to allow for flexibility in rare circumstances with regard to
4 North Dakota's high school graduation requirements. This bill acknowledges the reality that
5 unforeseen, emergent circumstances can impact a student's ability to meet the rigid structure of
6 current graduation requirements and provides a fair, practical solution.

7 **Key Reasons for Support:**

8 **1. Flexibility for Students Facing Emergent Circumstances**

- 9 ○ Life events such as family emergencies, health challenges, or unforeseen personal
10 hardships can significantly disrupt a student's academic progress.
- 11 ○ HB 1200 provides a **reasonable and structured pathway** for students to
12 substitute one graduation unit with an alternative course, ensuring they stay on
13 track for graduation without compromising their future opportunities.
- 14 ○ This flexibility allows schools to support students without lowering academic
15 standards or expectations.

16 **2. Empowering Local School Boards**

- 17 ○ The bill empowers **local school boards** to establish policies that accommodate
18 individual student needs, ensuring decisions are made by those who best
19 understand the local context.
- 20 ○ It maintains **educational integrity** by allowing districts to determine the
21 appropriateness of alternative coursework on a case-by-case basis, ensuring
22 alignment with students' post-secondary and career goals.

23 **3. Maintaining Rigor While Allowing Adaptability**

- 24 ○ The bill preserves the overall framework of North Dakota's rigorous graduation
25 requirements while introducing a layer of adaptability that acknowledges the
26 realities students face.
- 27 ○ Students will still need to meet core educational expectations but can do so in a
28 way that fits their unique circumstances, fostering resilience and perseverance.

29 **4. Supporting Workforce Readiness**

- 30 ○ By allowing substitution of courses such as **dual-credit or elective courses**,
31 students can pursue practical skills that align with career or technical aspirations.
- 32 ○ This legislation recognizes the growing demand for flexibility in preparing
33 students for the workforce, helping them acquire skills that are immediately
34 applicable in today's job market.

35 HB 1200 strikes the right balance between **academic accountability and practical flexibility**,
36 ensuring that North Dakota's students have the support they need to graduate successfully, even
37 in the face of unexpected challenges.

38 I respectfully urge this committee to support HB 1200 and provide students with the necessary
39 tools to overcome barriers while maintaining high educational standards.

