

HB 1214 Testimony

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, for the record my name is Brandt Dick, Burleigh County Superintendent of Schools and President of ND Small Organized School Board, and I am here to speak in favor of HB 1214. HB 1214 is the result of a concept that was worked on by a small group of Focus Group Members with the assistance of Adam Tescher. The goal was to find a way to integrate transportation into the K-12 Funding Formula in a method that did not require more reporting, and in a way that would not negatively impact school districts. It also considered ways in which the reporting of school districts and managed by DPI could be streamlined and more accurate. It takes the current reporting of school districts of runs and miles and eliminates the most problematic part of a transportation report, annual ridership.

HB 1214 is the product of this work done and does this by providing a way to adjust the transportation expenditures into a student count for each school district. The number of students generated by the formula then is multiplied by the per pupil aid generating dollars that the district then would utilize for their transportation costs. This is the first step that would allow policy discussions in the future to determine what factors should be considered, and what is the proper weight of those factors. As an example, in my opinion, this could and should include the number of gravel miles traveled by buses.

Page 4 of the bill shows how this is accomplished. It takes into consideration eligible large bus and small bus miles traveled the previous year. Lines e and f on page 4 show the formula does consider two variables which currently are not reported by the school district, but information is readily available at DPI and would be included. These two are factors in expenditures for school districts when transporting students, square miles of a school district and the number of schools within a school district boundary. This does show that in the future, other factors could be considered.

The final factor is based on eligible miles for those situations where the school district pays families to transport their children to the school of attendance. This is currently reported by school districts to DPI.

These factors were considered as part of the transportation study done by UND. The factors were adjusted to try to assure no districts were negatively affected in the amount of revenue generated in this formula as compared to the current formula. It appears there are three districts that would be negatively affected by instituting this formula, with the remainder of districts seeing increases in their transportation payments.

The fiscal note is more than was intended as in the bill as presented would allow students generated by the formula to be part of the consideration of school size weighting factors, which was not intended by those that worked on this concept, and I believe an amendment has been drafted for consideration.

NDSOS supports transportation and feels that HB 1214 is a great first step in providing a way to fund transportation that can be expanded in the future to allow for differences between districts that affect expenses incurred by school districts. Please support passage of HB 1214.

I stand for any questions.