



1 Testimony in Support of HB 1223 – Dealing with Student Expulsion

2 Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

3 NDCEL, representing your K12 school leaders is here today to express my support for House  
4 Bill 1223, dealing with student expulsion.

5 As school administrators, our foremost responsibility is to create a safe, supportive, and  
6 equitable learning environment for all students. Discipline policies must strike a balance  
7 between maintaining order and providing students with the necessary support to address  
8 underlying challenges that contribute to behavioral concerns. HB 1223 offers a measured  
9 approach to student discipline, emphasizing both accountability and compassion.

10 One of the critical aspects of this bill is the provision that allows school districts to consider  
11 the severity of infractions, the age of the student, and their disciplinary history when  
12 determining the duration of an expulsion. This ensures that disciplinary actions are not one-  
13 size-fits-all but instead tailored to the unique circumstances of each student. Additionally,  
14 the ability to review and potentially reduce the duration of expulsion upon satisfying  
15 reinstatement conditions provides students with a clear path toward redemption and  
16 reintegration into their educational community.

17 The bill also acknowledges the importance of addressing equity in discipline by ensuring that  
18 students from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are treated fairly and with  
19 consideration of their individual needs. The ability of the school board to differentiate  
20 between a student expelled early in the school year versus one expelled just weeks before  
21 the end of the term is critical in maintaining a fair and just disciplinary process. Schools must  
22 have the flexibility to provide support and interventions that align with the student's  
23 educational trajectory and future opportunities as well as their need for potential counseling  
24 or rehabilitation.

25 As administrators, we often see students who exhibit behaviors stemming from unmet social,  
26 emotional, or mental health needs. Suspension and expulsion, while sometimes necessary,  
27 should not be and is NOT the default response. Unless it is mandated by law as it is in the  
28 case of guns, it is our very last resort. HB 1223 provides an opportunity to ensure that during  
29 periods of suspension or expulsion, students have access to the resources and support they  
30 need to address the root causes of their behavior. This includes mental health services,

*NDCEL is the strongest unifying voice representing and supporting administrators and educational leaders in pursuit of quality education  
for all students in North Dakota.*

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1 behavioral interventions, and academic support, which are critical to fostering long-term  
2 student success.

3 Furthermore, the bill's recognition of alternative education programs ensures that students  
4 who require a different educational setting are given the appropriate time and resources to  
5 succeed. Providing flexibility in the disciplinary timeline for these students allows schools to  
6 address their unique needs while maintaining high expectations for behavior and learning.

7 I appreciate the legislature's commitment to supporting both the safety of our schools and  
8 the well-being of our students. I urge you to support HB 1223, as it aligns with our shared  
9 goal of fostering a safe, inclusive, and compassionate learning environment for all North  
10 Dakota students.

11 Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the  
12 committee may have.

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