



1 Testimony in support of HB 1497 – 4-year-old program

2 Chairman Heinert and members of the committee. Earlier this year it was brought to my  
3 attention about a perceived gap in how we were approaching admittance into our 4 year old  
4 programs. In North Dakota Century Code, the current guidance is that the age of the child at  
5 attend pre-school under the 4-year-old program, the child must be 4 years old by August  
6 1<sup>st</sup>. Occasionally, there may be a child who is born after August first may be ready to be in the  
7 program, and the parent may wish for them to attend, and the district may have space in their  
8 program and are willing to admit. However, currently we have no mechanism to allow for this to  
9 happen.

10 In the Kindergarten section of code, we do have a mechanism to allow for this. In the Kindergarten  
11 section of code, it states that by August 1<sup>st</sup> the student must be 5 to attend Kindergarten, however,  
12 for this grade, there is a mechanism whereby if a student passes a test showing readiness, or the  
13 student has been in kindergarten elsewhere, and their birthday falls somewhere between August 1  
14 and December 31, they could be admitted into kindergarten.

15 What this bill does, is provides a provision for pre-school that is similar to the kindergarten  
16 model that K12 schools are familiar with a bit of flexibility with regard to the age of the  
17 student being admitted into school on the basis of room in the school, student readiness,  
18 and parent desire for them to attend. At the kindergarten level, although the date to be  
19 admitted at the age of 5 is August 1<sup>st</sup>, if readiness is shown through screening and those  
20 other parameters in place, a school may admit that student so long as their birthday was  
21 between August 1 and December 1.

22  
23 I will say from the beginning that we do have a modest change that needs to be made so I'd  
24 as that you please accept this amendment to the current bill, but it ensures that the district  
25 is able to admit on the basis of district discretion as well (keeping in mind that a 4 year old  
26 program offering is not a legal requirement for schools) but it does serve a community well.

27 This bill asks for similar flexibility on admittance as does the current kindergarten law allow  
28 districts to have some flexibility without losing their grant funding while providing that.

29 Here is the amendment asked for: (after line 21) include this:

30 **(3) Final decision on enrollment subject to the discretion and approval of the operating school district.**



1 This addition to the language and minor amendment requested will provide flexibility and an  
2 environment where a district can respond to the needs of a community and yet maintain some local  
3 decision making.

4 Our school districts believe that this is a good move for our students. The local decision making  
5 on space and readiness is important. We ask that you please consider adopting this amendment  
6 and providing a do pass recommendation for this bill.