

Hello House Education Committee,

My name is Liz Hoffner, we live in the Grand Forks school district. I am the proud mother of two boys who attend Holy Family-St. Mary's School in Grand Forks. I support HB1540, but I am in support of all school choice bills that support parent autonomy and the right to provide an education for my children.

Our journey into Catholic education began when our eldest son was preparing to enter kindergarten. At the time, he was very shy and uncomfortable in large group settings. Although we live just two blocks from an excellent public elementary school, we knew that its large class sizes and multiple sections per grade would not provide the nurturing start he needed. We wanted him to feel comfortable, confident, and supported—something that simply didn't seem possible in a large public-school setting.

As parishioners at HFSM, we began exploring other educational options. When we toured the school, we were warmly welcomed by older students who eagerly shared what they loved about being part of HFSM. We met with the principal, spoke with other families, and immediately knew this was the right place for our children. From the moment we stepped inside, we felt at home. The love, passion, and dedication of the teachers and students were undeniable. HFSM is more than just a school—it's a community that nurtures not only academic excellence but also the whole child: mind, body, and soul.

At HFSM, students are held to a high moral standard through a faith-based approach to education, creating a warm, inclusive environment where every child is valued. They learn respect—for themselves, their peers, and their teachers—rooted in the belief that each of them is perfectly created and deeply loved by God. This atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement has transformed my once-shy kindergartener into a confident and outgoing fifth grader.

Beyond academics, HFSM instills a spirit of service and leadership. Students actively participate in community service, from raising funds for local charities and disaster relief to organizing food drives and forming meaningful connections as pen pals with elderly parishioners. They also develop leadership and teamwork skills by leading weekly Mass through readings, music, and altar serving.

Choosing HFSM for our children has been one of the greatest blessings of our lives. However, this decision has required financial sacrifices—sacrifices that many families may not be able to make. I truly believe that every family should have the ability to choose the best educational environment for their children, regardless of financial constraints. It's time to empower families with school choice, ensuring that every child has access to an education that meets their unique needs and helps them thrive.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB1540. Thank you for your service to the state of North Dakota and your time on HB1540.

Sincerely,

Liz Hoffner and Family