



**Dr. Terry Brenner**  
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Dear North Dakota Legislators:

As a long-time servant in public education amassing 42 years of professional experience as a teacher, principal, director and now superintendent, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1540, HB 1590, HB 1607, and SB 2400, which are currently under consideration by the committee. It has been my vocation to advocate for students on all levels of the educational spectrum from gifted and talented to multi-lingual to special education and general education. Public schools are the linchpin to a sustained democracy and represent ALL people from a global perspective. We welcome ALL students at our front doorstep every single day.

Given the above, I implore you to recommend a DO NOT PASS on this legislation. The legislation in question seeks to divert crucial funds from public schools by implementing a voucher system. I don't need to remind you of the separation of church and state as you well understand the Constitution.

If this is an attempt to create competition so public schools can "up our game", please consider the following challenges public education has undertaken, sometimes without the necessary funds:

- Special Education student population has increased from 9% to 20% over the last generation. IDEA funding (federal) has not kept pace with special education needs.
- Multi-language learners doubled from 200+ to over 400+ in one academic school year with little funding to support programming.
- We have been forced to create satellite campuses for students who are coming out of drug/alcohol rehab, students with a violent history, and students who have been expelled from other school districts.
- The lack of "school readiness" for students entering kindergarten has increased significantly. In a classroom of 18-21 kindergarten students, there is a 5-year disparity between the top and bottom performers in that given classroom.
- Since COVID-19, absenteeism has skyrocketed (we have new procedures in place addressing this with some good results) which creates more workload for classroom teachers in "catching up students".

I am fully aware that fighting for public education and the necessary resources that accompany it is an uphill battle in North Dakota. It is disheartening to know that it has come to this.


I respectfully ask you to fully and completely understand what these bills will do to public education. And I urge you to vote these bills down.

Professionally,

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