

Senate Bill 2241
Maria Neset
House Education Committee
Rep. Heinert, chair
March 11, 2025
Couteau Room

Good afternoon Chair Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. For the record, my name is Maria Neset, Chief of Staff to the Lieutenant Governor and Senior Advisor to the Governor. The Office of the Governor is here to provide supportive testimony on Senate Bill 2241 that allows for Public Charter Schools in the state of North Dakota.

Senate Bill 2241 aims to authorize and administer public charter schools. The bill proposes the creation of a new chapter in the North Dakota Century Code that outlines the requirements, governance and performance expectations for public charter schools. It also includes provisions for legislative management reports to ensure accountability.

Benefits of Public Charter Schools:

1. **Tailored Curriculum:** Charter schools can customize their curriculum to focus on specific areas like STEM, arts, or vocational training.
2. **Increased Flexibility:** They have more autonomy in decision-making, allowing them to quickly implement changes and innovate in teaching methods.
3. **Parental Involvement:** Charter schools often foster strong community ties and encourage parental participation in school activities.
4. **Accountability:** They are held accountable for meeting performance goals, driving innovation and improved student outcomes.

5. Specialized Programs: They offer unique opportunities for students to explore their interests and develop skills in particular fields.
6. Teacher Choice: The unique education focus of public charters gives educators the opportunity to teach in a school that aligns with their professional passions.

Expanded School Choice Benefits:

1. Parental Satisfaction: Parents have more options to choose schools that best meet their children's needs, leading to higher satisfaction.
2. Closing Achievement Gaps: Increased enrollment in charter schools has been shown to narrow the achievement gap between low-income students and their peers.
3. Healthy Competition: The presence of charter schools can motivate traditional public schools to adopt innovative practices and improve overall educational outcomes.

We are supportive of Senator Axtman and her efforts toward expanding school choice in North Dakota. This bill and Senate Bill 2400 begin to pave the way for improving education outcomes and access for students and families across our great state.