

Dear Chairman Beard, Chairman Heinert & all Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing in opposition to SB2400 which would set up ESAs for non-public school students.

On Feb. 25, 2025, the following statement was shared in support of a different bill (HB1540) on the House Floor; right before the House Members voted on it. “Scholarships, ESAs, and vouchers are a few examples of mechanisms that can make school choice a reality for every family; leveling the playing field and providing equal opportunities for all students.”

These types of statements continue to be a false narrative coming from lobbyists, outside interests, and ND legislators who support the plan to fund non-public schools by way of ESAs and vouchers. Ironically, it is the non-public schools that HOLD ALL THE CARDS and do not accept every child applying to attend. Some families are devastated when their child is not accepted or no longer allowed to attend the school in which they have made the choice to attend. No entrance for orthopedic needs, severe learning disabilities, behavioral needs, English language learners, severe speech/language, severe neurodivergent disorders, attendance factors, etc. The non-public school administrators will testify about students who are accepted with special needs or IEPs, but there are very few and with minimal specialty services.

When public tax dollars from government funds are used to fund a non-public school, our citizens should expect those schools to ACCEPT ALL students. Accepting all students would provide “equal opportunities for all students” as stated on the House Floor. If public dollars are made available to help families afford tuition costs, then ANY child should be accepted. This would “level the playing field” as stated above.

In our larger North Dakota cities, the choice for different school settings is already available. Accepting every child in a non-public school is not available. So the narrative coming from legislators to “provide equal opportunities for all students” is deemed false.

I am asking to VOTE NO on SB2400

Amy Neal

Minot Kindergarten Teacher

2016 ND Teacher of the Year