



**Garrison Public Schools**  
*"Home of the Troopers"* P.O. Box 249  
Garrison, ND 58540-0249  
Ph (701) 463-2818  
Fax (701) 463-2067

<b>Superintendent</b> Dr. Nick Klemisch Ph. 463-2818	<b>High School Principal</b> Steve Dangel Ph. 463-2818	<b>Elementary Principal</b> Michelle Fuller Ph. 463-2213	<b>Business Manager</b> Amy Betz Ph. 463-2818
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Dear Members of the Legislative Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 1328. I am writing to express my opposition to this bill due to its significant implications for schools and their ability to manage student conduct effectively while maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment.

As currently drafted, this bill places an untenable burden on schools by requiring them to exhaust all disciplinary and intervention policies before referring a student to the juvenile court system for infractions or misdemeanors. While the intent to address minor issues within the school system is commendable, the practical challenges associated with this approach cannot be overlooked.

First, schools are not adequately equipped to handle persistent or severe behavioral issues without external support. Many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack access to specialized staff, mental health resources, and alternative educational programs. Requiring schools to manage students who repeatedly violate laws without the ability to escalate cases to juvenile court undermines the safety and well-being of the broader school community. Furthermore, the requirement to document extensive interventions creates additional administrative burdens, diverting time and resources away from core educational responsibilities.

Second, the exceptions provided in the bill for serious offenses, such as drug-related crimes or weapon violations, are insufficient to address the broader spectrum of disruptive behaviors that can significantly impact school environments. Instances of repeated theft, vandalism, harassment, or other misdemeanor offenses, if not adequately addressed, erode trust among students, staff, and families. Schools need the flexibility to respond proportionally to misconduct, including referrals to juvenile court when warranted.

Third, this bill risks creating a precedent where schools are expected to serve as de facto juvenile justice systems, a role they are neither trained for nor resourced to fulfill. Teachers and administrators are educators, not law enforcement officers or social workers. Without adequate training or funding, schools cannot be expected to handle the complex social, emotional, and behavioral challenges that may accompany certain infractions.

Finally, by limiting schools' ability to refer students to the juvenile court system, this bill could inadvertently exacerbate disparities in disciplinary practices. Schools with limited resources may struggle to implement comprehensive interventions, leading to inconsistent enforcement and potentially unequal treatment of students.

I urge the committee to consider the significant challenges this bill would create for schools, especially in rural and under-resourced areas. Schools need partnerships with the juvenile justice system to address certain cases effectively. Rather than limiting schools' ability to refer students to juvenile court, I encourage the legislature to explore initiatives that enhance resources for schools, such as increased funding for mental health services, training for staff, and access to alternative education programs.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to oppose House Bill 1328 in its current form and work toward solutions that support both students and schools in addressing behavioral challenges.

Sincerely,



Dr. Nick Klemisch  
Superintendent  
Garrison Public Schools