

March 17, 2025

Vote NO on 1540

Good morning, As a leader of a small public school district, I am asking you to vote NO on 1540 and stop the idea of supporting private school tuition with taxpayer dollars. School choice is different from ESA's and vouchers; the parents of North Dakota have had "choice" for many years and 88% of them still use public school as the means for educating their children. That's not by accident, it's because we do the best job of providing an education to every child in our community and we share that data with anyone in the state that wants to see it. Religious preference, learning disabilities, and income level of the parents have never mattered to those of us working in public education; we accept every child and work to make learning the best possible experience it can be. Public education is held to a set of standards by the state that private schools are not required to be held too and, frankly, are not interested in being held to either. In public education, we are required to hold elections for our local board members and our board meetings are required to be public meetings. Public schools are required to take state assessments and the data from those assessments is shared on a public website that is run by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

HB 1540, is designed as an opportunity for parents who already have their children enrolled in private education to get reimbursed by the state. HB 1540 proposes \$4000/child for families with students in private schools. There is no money in 1540 for public school or homeschool families. The state cannot spend \$40 million on 6% of the students in North Dakota; there is absolutely no equity in this plan and it should not be considered.

The House has already told us with their votes that feeding all children attending school is too much of a burden to the taxpayers. If that's true, then it must be an equal burden on the state to spend \$40 million on 6% of the educational population of the state. Please vote NO on 1540.

Dr. Dave Wheeler
Superintendent
Manvel Public School