

February 3, 2025

Chairman Senator Beard, Vice chairman Senator Lemm, Senators Axtman, Boschee, Gerhardt, and Wobbema, my name is Darrel Lund and I am a retired teacher of 42 years in the West Fargo Public School system. I am opposed to SB 2295 relating to state education funding for all students in the state.

I urge a DO NOT PASS on SB 2295. No matter what these bills are called—education savings accounts, scholarship programs, tax credits, vouchers or otherwise they divert public dollars to private schools.

Public funds should NOT be going to private schools. Taxpayer money is for public entities. As a taxpayer, I pay for public parks and our local park district in West Fargo. Parents can decide that they want their children to play golf at a private country club rather than a public golf course. Would anyone expect that public money would be used to subsidize that choice? Of course not. The same goes for schools. Parents can choose to send their child to private school or have them educated at home. Private schools don't have to follow the same rules as public schools, they can choose to reject students based on disability or socioeconomic status. Public dollars should be used to strengthen our public schools (our teachers, support staff, mental health resources, and students), which are for everybody, not to subsidize private institutions that serve the chosen few. We need the legislature to invest in public education, not dismantle it.

- Private schools are funded by student tuition, private donations, tax credits, and other means, while public schools are funded solely through public funding.
- Rural communities receive no benefit, and their schools will be at greater risk for consolidation.
- Private schools do not have the capacity to educate students with varying educational needs.
- Nothing in this bill prevents a private school from raising tuition after receiving the reimbursement.
- This bill does not expand on parent choice. It merely benefits parents who have already made the choice to send their child to private school.
- SB 2295 requires no accountability for these expenditures on the part of the private schools who will receive them.

When considering bills that use public dollars to support nonpublic schools, answer this question; **How does this bill strengthen our public schools?**

I urge you to vote against SB 2295 and continue to strengthen public-schools by covering 100% of the cost to educate every North Dakota student in K-12 public schools.

Thank you,

Darrel Lund