



**NDSBA**  
**NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL  
BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

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**SB 2295**

**Testimony of Amy De Kok  
Senate Education  
February 4, 2025**

Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education, my name is Amy De Kok. I am the executive director of the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents all 168 North Dakota public school districts and their governing boards. I am writing to express our opposition to SB 2295, particularly Section 2, which directly allocates state public education funds to private and home-school students. While NDSBA supports the right of parents to choose the best educational path for their children, we firmly believe that public tax dollars should be used exclusively to support and strengthen public education, which serves all students and is accountable to taxpayers.

**Public Funds Should Support Public Schools**

Public schools are the foundation of our democracy, providing equitable access to quality education for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Directing state aid to private schools and home-educated students diverts critical resources from public schools, which already face funding challenges. This shift threatens the ability of public schools to maintain high-quality instruction, reduce class sizes, and support necessary programs such as special education and mental health services.

**Lack of Accountability and Oversight**

Unlike public schools, private schools and home-education programs are not subject to the same rigorous state oversight, academic standards, and accountability measures. Public dollars should be used in a manner that ensures transparency and measurable educational outcomes, and SB 2295 does nothing to ensure accountability for the billions of dollars of taxpayer funds that would shift to private and homeschool education. Without these safeguards, taxpayer money could be funneled into institutions that do not meet the same requirements for curriculum, teacher certification, or non-discrimination policies that public schools must adhere to.

**Potential for Increased Inequity**

Section 2 of SB 2295 disproportionately benefits families who already have the financial means to enroll their children in private schools or provide home education. This policy could widen the gap

between affluent and lower-income students by subsidizing private education at the expense of public school funding. Public education funding should prioritize serving all students equitably rather than subsidizing private choices that do not serve the broader community.

### **Significant Increase in Cost to the State**

The financial implications of SB 2295 are substantial. According to the fiscal note, the most recent average cost per pupil is \$14,345. Under the proposed funding formula, this amount is multiplied by the projected weighted average daily membership for students enrolled in public schools, nonpublic schools, and those receiving home education. This results in a total projected cost of \$4,420,706,009. In contrast, the cost to continue the current funding formula is \$2,268,704,483, meaning SB 2295 would increase costs by \$2,152,001,526. This significant rise in state expenditures would place a substantial financial burden on taxpayers, diverting funds from other critical public services and priorities.

### **The Role of Public Education in Economic Development**

Public schools serve as economic drivers in our communities by preparing students for the workforce and fostering civic engagement. Weakening public education through funding reductions could have long-term negative consequences for our state's economic health. Investing in public schools benefits all North Dakotans, ensuring that we cultivate a well-educated and prepared workforce.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to oppose SB 2295 and preserve public education funding for its intended purpose—supporting and improving the public school system. Public tax dollars should not be redirected to fund private and home-school education, which lack the same accountability and mission as public schools. I respectfully request that the committee reject this bill and instead focus on strengthening our public education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.