



North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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1 Testimony in Opposition to SB 2295

2 Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee

3 My name is Michael Heilman, I am the Executive Director of North Dakota Small Organized Schools. The
4 140+ schools that are members of NDSOS stand in opposition to SB 2295, which seeks to provide state
5 funding to home education and private schools. While the bill is framed as an opportunity for school
6 choice, it does little to enhance choice and simply funds current home education and private schools.

7 The major concerns with SB 2295 is the huge fiscal note of over \$2 billion, the lack of private school
8 options in rural areas of North Dakota, and funding home education at a level that seems extreme. SB
9 2295 directs taxpayer dollars primarily to the urban private school families who have already made the
10 choice to attend private schools, while leaving rural students with no comparable choices. Four metro
11 areas representing six communities, Bismarck/Mandan, Fargo/West Fargo, Minot and Dickinson make
12 up the vast majority of private school enrollment. This creates a disparity that unfairly favors one
13 segment of the population over another. There are currently fewer than twenty communities in North
14 Dakota with a private school option and less than half of those offer a high school option.

15 Additionally, private schools receiving state funds must be subject to the same level of oversight and
16 regulation as public schools. If the state is going to fund private education and home education, NDSOS
17 strongly believes that the education providers must comply with all regulations and rules that public
18 schools are required to follow, including accepting of all students, open records laws, open board
19 meetings, participation in TFFR and all other state laws, rules and regulations that apply to public
20 schools. Public funds should only be allocated to educational institutions that are required to meet the
21 rigorous accountability and transparency measures that are applied to public schools.

22 SB 2295 does little to serve the students in rural areas. It simply directs funding to existing private
23 schools and home schools without the same regulations of public schools and diverts critical funding
24 away from public schools. I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 2295 and prioritize policies that
25 strengthen our public schools for the benefit of all North Dakota students.

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The mission of NDSOS is to provide leadership for the small/rural schools in North Dakota and to support legislation favorable to their philosophy while opposing legislation that is harmful.

