

SB 2303 @ 2:30

J216 in the judicial wing

Senator Beard, members of the education committee, thank you for hearing my testimony in support of SB2295.

My name is Jeff Ringstad and I am the administrator of Our Redeemer's Christian School in Minot. Reside in district 3

I have had people question me why a Christian education is so important. They ask if there is really that big of a difference. I want to share how we are similar and how we are different so that this committee can see why this decision about education that parents face is so important. *Why choice must be supported*

First of all, we are similar in that we are educating ND students. We want to see all students find success and go on to find meaningful careers. It is important that the future leaders in business, education, skilled trades, and other professional areas are being cultivated at all times through the ND education system. Both private and public schools find success in these areas. We look to educate in innovative ways as we work to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

It is the differences between public and private schools that exist that are so vital to our families. I can speak directly to my school, Our Redeemer's Christian School, but believe that each of the non-public schools is very similar in many ways. Our students have many of the same classes that you would find in public schools from Biology, Physical Science, Chemistry, and a host of other sciences. We have English and English electives, a progression of math courses, World History, US History, Government, Econ, and social studies electives. The big difference is not what is taught, but the manner in which they are taught. A public school will teach these courses from a secular worldview, and they will be taught at my school with a Biblical worldview.

Our mission and purpose for existence is to deliver a solid education to prepare our students for their next life steps, and to develop a biblical worldview. Education is always either secular or it is faith based – it is NEVER neutral. Every course a student completes at Our Redeemer's incorporates Jesus and a biblical worldview. This occurs in math classes as students look at how God followed a process in creation, how He is systematic, provides order, patterns, and ultimately, He created math. We find a similar approach to all of our content areas. Our students become proficient in state standards, but all standards are evaluated to offer a biblical worldview.

Additionally, every student has Bible as a class every day, just as they would have other content courses. We have chapel on Wednesdays, prayer is common in the classroom at the start of each day and at the start of many classes during the day. We use scripture to motivate students

Colossians 3:23 *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if working for the Lord, not for human masters*

We use scripture to address behavioral issues

Romans 12:16: *Live in harmony with others, with humility, gentleness, and patience*

We use scripture to focus on achievement through using the gifts they have been given.

**James 1: 17** *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

As I visit with public school administrators, I hear about their biggest problems: to motivate students to do well, the violent and aggressive behaviors, attendance, and the achievement shortfalls. There are reasons families want choice and deserve choice. In the end our students do well as they have averaged 23.2 on their ACT scores over the past 5 years, nearly 90% attend college right out of HS and 85% of those graduate college with a degree, and they become valuable tax paying ND citizens.

Going to a public school does not mean that students will receive an atheist education and become atheists themselves. We know that there are many Christian students and teachers in public schools. But.... students that attend public school will absolutely receive is a secular education and 30-35 hours of school per week will develop a secular worldview no matter the involvement a family has in their church.... a Christian school supports what the family is doing at home, and what is being instilled within the church – a 3-legged stool. That is how we are different, and that is why parents deserve to be supported in the educational choices they make for their families.