

North Dakota Senate Education Committee
600 E Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 2355 – Intelligent Design in Science Content Standards

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

As the Director of Standards-Based Instruction for Fargo Public Schools, I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 2355, which mandates the inclusion of intelligent design in North Dakota's science content standards. This bill represents a fundamental overreach into science education, conflicts with established scientific consensus, undermines North Dakota's academic integrity, and raises serious legal and constitutional concerns.

1. SB 2355 Conflicts with Established Scientific Consensus

Science education is based on rigorous empirical research, peer-reviewed evidence, and widely accepted scientific theories. Intelligent design is not recognized as a scientific theory by the National Academy of Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, or any other credible scientific institution. Mandating intelligent design in science standards falsifies scientific literacy and misrepresents the nature of the scientific method.

2. SB 2355 Undermines the Integrity of North Dakota's Science Standards

North Dakota's science content standards should reflect well-established, peer-reviewed scientific research, not political ideology. Science instruction must be based on empirical data, reproducible results, and evidence-based reasoning. Forcing intelligent design into the curriculum undermines the credibility of North Dakota's education system, placing students at a competitive disadvantage in STEM fields.

3. SB 2355 Raises Constitutional and Legal Concerns

Intelligent design has been ruled by U.S. courts as a religious doctrine, not a scientific theory. In the landmark case *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District (2005)*, a federal court ruled that teaching intelligent design in public schools violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which prohibits government endorsement of religious doctrine. If SB 2355 is enacted, North Dakota will face costly legal challenges, potential lawsuits, and national scrutiny for violating constitutional protections.

4. SB 2355 Wastes Valuable Educational Resources

Mandating intelligent design in science standards will require the reallocation of funds, teacher training, and instructional materials, diverting resources away from legitimate scientific education. Given North Dakota's ongoing educational priorities—such as improving student

outcomes in STEM, closing achievement gaps, and supporting teacher development—this bill represents an irresponsible use of taxpayer funds and state educational resources.

Conclusion

Science education must remain free from ideological interference, rooted in empirical evidence, and aligned with the consensus of the scientific community. SB 2355 is an unnecessary, unconstitutional, and anti-scientific mandate that weakens North Dakota's educational credibility, threatens legal challenges, and misleads students about the nature of scientific inquiry.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose SB 2355 and support science education that is evidence-based, constitutionally sound, and aligned with national and international scientific standards.

Sincerely,

Dr. Liann M. Hanson
Director of Standards-Based Instruction
Fargo Public School