

Milnor Public School District No. 2

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Chris Larson, Superintendent and Activities Director

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1 Testimony in Support of Senate Bill No. 2362

2 Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly – North Dakota

3 Presented by: Dr. Chris Larson

4 Superintendent, Milnor Public School

5 Date: February 11, 2025

6 Chairperson Beard, members of the committee,

7 I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of **Senate Bill No. 2362**, which provides schools across
8 North Dakota with greater flexibility in meeting accreditation requirements while maintaining a
9 steadfast focus on student achievement. As Superintendent of Milnor Public School and a dedicated
10 advocate for high-quality education, I strongly support this bill’s approach to accreditation reform.

11 Key Benefits of SB 2362

12 1. Increased Flexibility to Meet Local Needs

- 13 ○ Every school district has unique instructional goals and operational challenges. This bill
14 allows schools to choose an accreditation pathway that aligns with their specific needs,
15 whether through state-defined accreditation or a nationally recognized accrediting body.
- 16 ○ Schools can adopt best practices from formal school improvement or continuous
17 improvement organizations, ensuring that accreditation is not just a compliance exercise
18 but a meaningful tool for progress.

19 2. Maintaining High Standards with Multiple Accreditation Options

- 20 ○ The bill does not lower expectations but rather ensures that any accreditation option must
21 meet or exceed state standards and provide measurable student achievement outcomes.
- 22 ○ Schools are still accountable for student success, and the requirement for periodic
23 reviews by the Superintendent of Public Instruction guarantees ongoing evaluation and
24 improvement of these accreditation pathways.

25 3. A Collaborative and Transparent Process

- 26 ○ The inclusion of a steering committee with education stakeholders—including
27 representatives from North Dakota United, school administrators, principals, and school
28 boards—ensures that decisions about accreditation options are made with broad input
29 from those directly impacted.
- 30 ○ This collaborative approach strengthens the partnership between the state and local
31 schools, reinforcing our shared commitment to academic excellence.

32 4. Empowering Schools to Focus on Student Achievement

- 33 ○ Accreditation should be a tool for continuous school improvement, not a rigid, one-size-
34 fits-all requirement.
- 35 ○ This bill allows schools to focus on instructional strategies, innovative programs, and
36 student success initiatives while still meeting accreditation standards.

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1 **Conclusion**

2 Senate Bill No. 2362 strikes the right balance between **accountability and flexibility**. It upholds
3 rigorous academic standards while giving schools the ability to select an accreditation process that best
4 supports student learning and school improvement efforts.

5 I urge you to support this bill to empower North Dakota schools with **choice, flexibility, and high**
6 **expectations**—all of which are critical to advancing education in our state. Thank you for your time,
7 and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

8 Respectfully submitted,

9

10 Dr. Chris Larson

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