



February 5, 2025

SB 2400 — Neutral

North Dakota Senate
Education Committee

Dear Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Catrin Wigfall, and I am the education policy fellow for American Experiment North Dakota, a state-based public policy organization. I am writing today with a neutral stance on SB 2400, which would create an education savings account (ESA) program in North Dakota.

American Experiment North Dakota supports school choice policies that expand the accessibility of educational options. The framework of SB 2400 seeks to give more North Dakota families the opportunity to access the learning environment and educational services that best meet their children's unique needs, and we believe it includes a number of strong features.

We also believe there are doable revisions that would strengthen the bill to help ensure it is substantial enough to significantly enhance educational opportunities for North Dakota families, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

First, we recommend increasing the ESA dollar amount made available to eligible students accessing a nonpublic participating school. If the dollar amount is not substantial enough to significantly enhance what families, particularly lower-income families, can access, it will not meaningfully break down accessibility and financial barriers.

Second, we recommend giving participating schools the option to administer either the state tests and assessments or nationally norm-referenced tests to encourage a dynamic marketplace of school options while still maintaining the bill's goal of academic accountability.

Finally, we recommend allowing unused dollars to rollover while the eligible student is participating in the ESA program. Students' educational needs change throughout their K-12 journey, and families should be able to adjust the pre-approved educational services they use their ESA on accordingly.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these proposed revisions and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catrin Wigfall".

Catrin Wigfall
Policy Fellow
American Experiment North Dakota