



# North Dakota Senate

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## Senator Josh Boschee

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**COMMITTEES:**  
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### SCR 4019 Testimony Senate Education Committee February 11, 2025

Chair Baird and Fellow Members of the Senate Education Committee,

SCR 4019 was introduced to provide the legislature with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of what's working and not working when it comes to reading and mathematics proficiency rates among students with disabilities in our state. This would be done in partnership with the Department of Public Instruction, educators, parents, students and stakeholders who would like to see proficiency rates increase for students with disabilities.

50 years ago, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was enacted by Congress. With its reauthorization in 1990, it became known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and has been the foundation of Federal financial support for students with disabilities. With the President's recent Executive Order expanding educational freedom for families, we may see significant changes in how IDEA funding is disseminated. This is why I believe the study is important for Legislative Management to consider, but also very timely.

It has been my experience that parents of students with disabilities tend to be highly engaged in their students' education. So, a study like this would allow them to share their experiences of success stories and challenges for us to learn about best practices and potentially provide policy and funding recommendations to the next legislative assembly. Furthermore, I am aware of at least one cohort of special education teachers who meet virtually on a regular basis to share resources and develop strategies to improve outcomes for their students. Teachers like this who are engaging each other, on their own time, to improve the delivery of education for their students with disabilities are exactly the stakeholders we should hear from.

I also know that for every engaged parent, there is likely a handful of less engaged parents who aren't as involved in their child's education. This is often due to work scheduling, lack of advocacy and negotiating skills or unfamiliarity with the rights and responsibilities they have as a parent in our education system. I am confident that a study like what is proposed in 4019 would provide us insight into how to better engage and empower those parents to be stronger partners with their child's educator to improve educational outcomes.

I hope you'll provide SCR 4019 your support and I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.



FACT SHEETS

# FACT SHEET: PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP EXPANDS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

January 30, 2025

**DEFENDING PARENTAL RIGHTS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY:** Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order expanding educational freedom and opportunity for families. It recognizes that parents, not the government, play a fundamental role in choosing and directing the upbringing and education of their children.

- It directs the Department of Education to issue guidance on how the States can use federal funding formulas to support their K-12 scholarship programs.
- It directs the Secretary of Education to prioritize school choice programs in the Department's discretionary grant programs.
- The Order requires the Department of Health and Human Services to issue guidance on how states receiving block grants for children and families can use those funds to support educational alternatives, including private and faith-based options.
- It directs the Secretary of Defense to submit a plan to the President for how military families can use Department of Defense funds to send their children to the school of their choice.
- The Order also directs the Secretary of the Interior to submit a plan to the President for how families with students attending Bureau of Indian Education schools can use federal funds to send their children to the school of their choice.

**EMPOWERING PARENTS AND STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOOL CHOICE:**

Every child deserves the best education available, regardless of their zip code. However, for generations, our government-assigned education system has failed millions of parents, students, and teachers. This Executive Order begins to rectify that wrong by opening up opportunities for students to attend the school that best fits their needs.

- According to the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 70% of 8th graders were below proficient in reading and 72% were

below proficient in math. 40% of 4th graders did not even meet the basic reading levels.

- Standardized test scores have essentially been flat for over 30 years, despite hundreds of billions of dollars spent on government-run education.
- A dozen states have universal or near universal school choice programs and 33 states have some form of school choice program.
- School choice programs have a strong record of improving students' academic performance.
- School choice has proven to be cost effective and saves taxpayer dollars.
- Parents report higher levels of school safety for their children who participate in school choice programs.
- Support for school choice is overwhelming, with 70% of Democrats, 73% of Black Americans, and 69% of Hispanic Americans in favor of it.
- President Trump is dedicated to ensuring every child has the opportunity to receive a world-class education.

### **FULFILLING THE PROMISE TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION THROUGH**

**FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY:** President Trump promised to bring school choice to every family in the Nation. Today's historic executive order is a critical step in delivering on that promise, and builds on the long list of accomplishments from the first Trump Administration, including:

- Calling on Congress to pass the School Choice Now Act and the Education Freedom Scholarships and Opportunity Act.
- Providing in-person learning options for low-income parents forced to send their children to virtual school during the pandemic.
- Re-authorizing the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program twice.

- Investing nearly \$1.5 billion in the development of public charter schools, helping this innovative sector grow to 7,500 charter schools serving more than 3 million students.
- Allowing parents across the nation to withdraw up to \$10,000 tax-free per year from 529 education savings plans to cover public, private, or religious K-12 schooling costs, thanks to the President's historic tax cuts.

Parents can be confident that under his Administration, President Trump will provide every available opportunity for parents to enrich the education of their children through individual choice.

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