



HB 1467 – POD education outside the classroom during a declared emergency or disaster.

February 1, 2021

Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1467. I am Dr. Russ Ziegler, assistant director for the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders.

When the state went to all online learning last spring all stakeholders were put under a lot of stress and hardships. Parents were thrown into a situation where they had to help their children attend school online. Teachers had to change all of their curriculum to be presented and assessed online. We understand that this bill is trying to address those issues from the parents' perspective, however we feel that the main tenant of this bill is already available to families. We also feel that this bill may take away the support and resources that are available through the school.

There is nothing in current code that prohibits a group of parents to get together to help their children with school. During the COVID-19 pandemic when our state could not do in-person instruction the schools did their very best with making that transition. With the current code the students could still be utilizing the school's curriculum and following the standards while the parents created a pod to help their children with their schoolwork. Current code does not restrict a parent from setting up group tutoring sessions where items could be pre-taught or re-taught by one of them to a group of students. It is our concern with bill that a parent would withdraw their children from the school do to pod education, and in doing so would lose the resources and support that the schools have in place.

Another concern that we would have is that pulling the students out of school to do pod education would also remove them from the help and support of their teacher. Most teachers build good positive relationships with their students, they know where the students are educationally and try to do what is best for them. Removing them from the school also removes that very valuable resource, the teacher.

Because of this NDCEL would be in opposition of HB 1467 as it is currently written.