



North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Michael Heilman and I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Small Organized Schools (NDSOS). I am here in support of HB 1188.

Recruitment and retention of teachers is a real issue for the 154 member schools of NDSOS. All schools, including NDSOS members, have seen the applications for teachers in their districts go from low to zero in some cases. Special Education is one of the many areas schools struggle to find qualified individuals to teach or work as paraprofessionals. I have heard from several of our member schools that Special Education may be the most difficult of all the shortage areas to find qualified teachers. Providing an opportunity for schools to employ a special education technician will assist school district efforts to serve our most vulnerable students.

It will also provide much needed assistance to special education teachers who have seen their caseloads increase. Additionally, some of the individuals who become special education technicians may decide to pursue a special education teaching credential, further helping address a critical shortage area. North Dakota Small Organized Schools stands in support of HB 1188.

Thank you Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee.

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The mission of NDSOS is to provide leadership for the small/rural schools in North Dakota and to support legislation favorable to their philosophy while opposing legislation that is harmful.