



**SB 2229 – Scholarships to Student Teachers**

**February 2, 2021**

Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2229. I am Dr. Russ Ziegler, assistant director for the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders.

Today I am testifying in support of SB 2229. As I am sure you all have heard that there is a teacher shortage problem in the State of North Dakota. This shortage is really not a shortage of teachers as much as a shortage of teachers that are willing to go to the rural areas of the state. I have heard that the universities are graduating enough teachers to fill the position, however some graduates would rather substitute teach in a larger town than teach in a rural one. In my past job of being principal at Richardton-Taylor High School we were able to find good teachers mainly because we were only 20 miles from the bigger town of Dickinson. We had numerous teachers that would live in Dickinson and drive the 20 miles for work. However, in rural communities that are not as close to a larger town, especially a larger town with a University, it is difficult to find teachers to fill open positions. In our principal discussions we would call it the Walmart effect. We just could not find teachers that would be willing to move to a small town that does not have the amenities that they are used to.

It is our belief that SB 2229 is a GREAT incentive for students to see what working in a small close nit community is like. I have lived in small towns in North Dakota and in my opinion, there is nothing like the family community that they have. We also believe that many of the student teachers that are given this opportunity to teach in these rural schools will stay. This bill will help both the school by filling the needed areas AND the student by helping them with their tuition and/or living expenses while they are student teaching. It is definitely a win-win scenario in our opinion.

We humbly request a Do Pass on SB 2229, and I can stand for any questions.