



1 SB2229 – Rural Student Teacher

2 NDCEL Testimony In Support

3 Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. For the record, my name is  
4 Dr. Aimee Copas and I serve as the Executive Director of the North Dakota Council of Educational  
5 Leaders. We are here today to testify in support of this bill which would provide opportunity and  
6 incentive for our student teachers to put preference into having their experience in a rural  
7 community.

8 It has been no secret to this legislative body or to the general constituency of the state that we've  
9 been struggling with a teacher shortage issue for quite some time. That issue has been clearly  
10 exacerbated in our rural communities. At times districts feel lucky if they even get an applicant  
11 for certain positions. What we also know is that our rural communities are welcome, charming,  
12 and are quite attractive once you get there and get to know the communities and the people. What  
13 we've been struggling with as a state is the question – “how do we get them there?” This bill may  
14 show us a proven pathway to make some in-roads into this ever-challenging question.

15 We are not the first state to look at this as an option nor to implement. States such as Indiana,  
16 California, and Colorado are implementing stipends for teachers in high need areas (all rural) and  
17 are seeing success.

18 Much like our teacher scholarship programs of past – we've learned that if we can get a teacher  
19 into the rural communities for an experience, we have a great chance of getting them to stay. We  
20 need highly qualified teachers for our students in rural communities and to make these  
21 communities competitive, the stipends are critical.

22 We strongly recommend a do-pass of this bill and a thumbs up to efforts to help staff our rural  
23 schools in North Dakota.

*NDCEL is the strongest unifying voice representing and supporting administrators and educational leaders in pursuit of quality education  
for all students in North Dakota.*

*Executive Director: Aimee Copas-----Assistant Director: Russ Ziegler*