

Good morning, Chairman [Sorvaag](#) and committee members.

I am Sara Dudley, principal of St. Michael's School in Grand Forks. My school has a 23% free and reduced rate as well as serving 30% of families receiving scholarship. Even with free and reduced lunches and scholarship opportunities, families make a financial sacrifice when they choose St. Michael's School. HB 1532 is not about financially benefiting non-public schools, it is about supporting all families in North Dakota and the choices they make for their children's education by providing a tax credit. The money does not go directly to the non-public school.

Non-public schools have received tax payer services in federal Title I programs and always complied with audits by DPI. In consultation with our public school partners, the resources and equitable services that are allocated from our free and reduced students go directly to serve them in the non-public setting. The resources from tax payers follow the students in this example.

The approved non-public schools are approved by DPI with the assurances currently required of non-public schools. As assurances have been added, non-public schools comply and provide the required reports. An example would be the recently added Science of Reading professional development required by both private and public schools. Non-public schools are not avoiding accountability. We are doing exactly what is asked of us by DPI and will continue to do so.

Non-public schools do serve students with special needs. It is only because of the current state funding model that we cannot provide all services. It is not because we do not want to serve a child. When a student qualifies for a special education service in a non-public school, it is through rigorous evaluation and partnership between public and non-public schools. The best outcomes arrive when the public and non-public can serve students who are in a non-public school. Non-public schools serve students who are not identified using the special education categories and those who do not meet special education categories as well as students who qualify for special Ed services.

Students who have Autism spectrum disorder , ADHD, post traumatic stress disorder, learning disability, speech and language disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, reactive attachment disorder, dyslexia, generalized anxiety disorder, and sensory processing

disorder all attend my school this year. To say we don't accept students with special needs is not accurate. With the current funding model, the services are limited but not because of the commitment to the child or desire to have the child in our school community. It is limited because of the current state funding model.

Non-public schools are accredited using the same school improvement process as public schools through Cognia. We use the same school improvement model as public schools. There are 25 non-public schools that are fully accredited in the state of North Dakota.

Accountability looks like licensed teachers, DPI approval, accreditation and the school improvement process, consultation with our public partners and school districts, partnerships with our individual boards, compliance with special education law and DPI audits, professional development and most importantly, our relationship with parents and guardians who choose to send them to our school.

Non-public's schools value the accountability that comes with the trust that each parent has placed in our schools and those I have shared today. With this high level of accountability that I have outlined for you, I urge you to vote in favor of HB1532 to support parents and guardians who make a different educational choice for their children.

Thank you for your time and I will stand for questions.