

Milnor Public School District No. 2

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Chris Larson, Superintendent and Activities Director

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To: North Dakota
Senate
Education Committee

From: Dr. Chris Larson
Superintendent
Milnor Public School

Date: Monday, March 13, 2023

Topic: HB 1532

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

As a school leader, I feel it is necessary to speak out in opposition of HB 1532. This bill is not about choice. It creates a wider gap in the system that would only benefit the urban areas of North Dakota- at only a small percentage of that population.

Using public dollars to support private schools, even partially, is holistically unjust. As a public school, we are charged with the education of all the students within our boundaries- we can't pick and choose. We educate students of all economic backgrounds and all disability levels. Private schools do not play by that same set of rules. Until they do, and follow every other state regulation handed down to public schools, they have no place receiving any public funds.

Attending a private school is a choice. That choice is not offered to all families in our state. The nearest private school is 70 miles from me. Taking public funds and using them to support an entity that most residents have little ability to access is irresponsible and will inherently reduce the amount of money that is available to support an already underfunding public education system- in which the vast majority of students of our state are in attendance.

The state should not be allocating tax dollars without a vote of local constituents. Allow a local vote to access some portion of a mill levy to private schools. If the voters of Fargo pass a vote to support JP II schools or Oak Grove- then it's reasonable to allow them access to the mill values within their boundaries. The funding of a private school should have no impact on North Dakota schools. I urge a "do not pass" on HB 1532.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chris Larson
Superintendent
Milnor Public School