

# Manvel Public School

Inspiring 21st Century Learners to Influence 22nd Century Successes



March 13th, 2023

Good morning Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education committee,

My name is Dr. Dave Wheeler and I am the Superintendent for Manvel Public School. I am writing this today as testimony in opposition to HB 1532 and the vouchers going to private education in North Dakota.

In the state of North Dakota, 60% of all our students attend rural schools and, as a Superintendent in a rural district, HB 1532 does almost nothing for a majority of students who attend school in this state. Private schools exist in the largest communities in North Dakota and most of the students in this state don't live in proximity to such schools so this money isn't accessible to their families. There is a real issue with equity in this bill when so many students in North Dakota do not have access to the opportunity to use the funds.

Also, I'm proud of the fact that Manvel Public School, be it students who live in our district or come to us through open enrollment, are welcome in our district. We don't "select" our students, we "develop" our students and we develop them regardless of struggles that may exist within their lives inside our outside of school. Public education embraces everyone. There are students in my district who, even if their parents wanted to enroll their child/children in private education, would be denied due a disability, a 504 plan, etc. Using the tax dollars of the families who live in Manvel to fund private education when we have families who could be denied access to the private school of their choice is unfair and, also, another example of the inequity that exists in this legislation.

Manvel School District has been a transition maximum school since 2014 and have had hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars withheld due to the legislation written at that time. If this legislation passes, another \$24 million of state dollars will be going to private schools and there is a great likelihood that less money will again come to the K-12 schools of North Dakota, where 93% of all students in North Dakota attend school and are educated. It would be incredibly disappointing for the families of rural North Dakota, especially those of the Manvel school district, if we are now going to see money going to private schools when we have not been funded fully for almost 10 years. Our students should have access to any taxpayer money before private schools in ND, it's just that simple.

Dr. Dave Wheeler  
Superintendent  
Manvel Public School