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Members of the North Dakota Senate Education Committee

RE: Support for SB2269 - Relating to the administration of the center for distance education.

Dear Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee. I am reaching out to you in opposition of SB2269 as currently written.

North Dakota Center for Distance Education (ND CDE) is an interesting and eclectic tool within the North Dakota educational ecosystem. They currently receive direct allocation funds from the State to support North Dakota public, private, and homeschool students, along with out of state entities and individuals, within various coursework areas such as core academics (i.e. Math, Science, English, Social Studies, etc.), world languages (i.e. Spanish, German, French, American Sign Language, etc.), elective courses (i.e. Music, Art, etc.), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses (i.e. Agriculture, Family & Consumer Sciences, Computer Education, etc.).

The overall merit to move the Center for Distance Education from the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education over to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI) is there. However, it is important to realize, currently ND CDE serves under the authority of the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education State Board comprised of local, State, and industry leaders. Unfortunately, as currently written, this bill presented to you provides complete organizational and governance authority to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, establishing a new precedent. Moreover, precedent has already been set with educational entities such as the North Dakota School for the Blind and North Dakota School for the Deaf, in which each have their own local boards to help support, guide, and manage their operations, processes, and organizational expectations, yet still serve under ND DPI.

Per the precedence already established by the organizational and operational function of the North Dakota School for the Deaf and North Dakota School for the Blind currently under the ND DPI, considering the ND Center for Distance Education's eclectic structure, I would strongly encourage you to set forth amendments in this bill that would require ND CDE to have their own governance board, with required representations from key local stakeholders on the board including small and large public school administration, a career and technical education center director, a regional education association director, a two-year higher education institution (due to dual credit involvement), and other applicable state leadership that have experience and background knowledge related with the various educational programs associated with the North Dakota Center for Distance Education.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony and recommendations for amendments to this bill.

Sincerely,
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