



February 3, 2025

HB 1472 — In support of

North Dakota House of Representatives
Education Committee

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Catrin Wigfall, and I am the education policy fellow for American Experiment North Dakota, a state-based public policy organization. I am writing today in support of HB 1472, which would allow for the authorization of microschoools in North Dakota.

As someone who experienced a variety of education settings throughout my K-12 journey, and as an educator with experience in both public and private institutions, I have seen first-hand how students benefit when they can access a learning environment that best meets their unique educational needs.

Microschools are creative schooling options that provide individualized, innovative education with more flexibility and lower cost than other school settings, which encourages accessibility particularly among families who face financial barriers with nonpublic alternatives.

According to the National Microschooling Center's 2024 analysis of 400 microschoools representing 41 states, over 70 percent of today's microschoool founders are current or former licensed educators. The analysis also found that more children attending microschoools are from households at the average income for their area (48 percent) or below the average income (40 percent), than above the average income for their area (12 percent).

Because microschoools operate in intentionally small school settings with low student-to-teacher ratios, students in need of additional support and students requiring additional services have the opportunity to thrive in ways that perhaps their previous educational environment couldn't accommodate. Expanding the educational opportunities for particular learner populations who have not had adequate access historically to alternatives is an important contribution to the state and communities with specific needs.

The personalization, freedom, and flexibility of microschoools enable the students attending the schools and the entrepreneurial teachers and parents creating the schools to flourish. American Experiment North Dakota believes an openness to the varied learning environments and approaches that prepare the state's next generation of leaders is an essential part of any education ecosystem, and I respectfully ask for a Do Pass.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1472.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catrin Wigfall".

Catrin Wigfall
Policy Fellow
American Experiment North Dakota