

1 Wednesday, March 12, 2025

2 Levi Bachmeier, Business Manager, West Fargo Public Schools

3 Support and Amendment Request for SB 2351

4 Good afternoon, Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education
5 Committee. My name is Levi Bachmeier; I am the Business Manager at West
6 Fargo Public Schools. West Fargo Public Schools supports Senate Bill 2351 and
7 requests an additional amendment to further improve the annexation process in
8 North Dakota.

9 The proposed language as written seems to be a commonsense solution to ensure
10 property owners are notified of any potential changes to the jurisdictions
11 governing their property in some form. While I cannot speak for the entire State
12 Board of Public Education, when this issue arose during a recent meeting, I was
13 surprised to discover that landowner notification was a courtesy extended by
14 many counties but not a statutory requirement. Additionally, I would request the
15 committee consider an amendment and add an emergency clause that expands the
16 potential for voluntary land swaps between school districts, addressing a crucial
17 limitation currently hindering collaboration between public school districts.

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19 In Cass County, we have seen firsthand the challenges faced by neighboring
20 school districts eager to engage in mutually beneficial land swaps but constrained
21 by the existing statutory cap of \$1,000. Despite the willingness of both districts to
22 engage with a family hoping to permanently be moved into a different school
23 district, suitable parcels to comply with the law to enable a voluntary land swap
24 within the statutory value limit has proven elusive, thus stalling initiatives aimed

1 at promoting school choice for families without adversely impacting the financial
2 base of one district to the benefit of another.

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4 By amending Century Code to allow for land swaps of any amount mutually
5 agreeable between two school districts, this legislature can empower local
6 educational leaders to forge partnerships with property owners and solve
7 boundary issues more collaboratively. This ensures that families have expanded
8 access to diverse educational options without compromising the financial stability
9 of district tax bases.

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11 Such an amendment enables school districts to better navigate their unique
12 realities while fostering collaborative solutions that benefit all stakeholders. I
13 respectfully urge your support for Bill 2351 with an additional amendment and
14 emergency clause, helping willing parties work better together.

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16 Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.