

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony. I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 2400. As a taxpayer, I want my taxes to support public schools. As a public school teacher with over 40 years of experience, I know how important every dollar is to public schools around our state.

I have listened to all of the testimony related to this bill, and I remain convinced that this bill will be detrimental to public school students in our state. We have the privilege and responsibility to teach every student in our district and meet each child's needs. This is not the case for private schools. You have heard arguments about the differences between public and private schools in terms of accountability, transparency, services that need to be provided to students, and more. These are all reasons to vote "NO" on this bill. I ask you to consider how this bill will hamper educational choices for students and their families by diverting funds away from public schools.

It is essential to keep public funding in public schools. The majority of parents choose to enroll their students in public schools. It is not right to divert funds from these schools. In addition, there are reasons families also choose to send their students from private or home schools to public schools. Public schools are always present to welcome every student into their buildings. We need to keep those schools strong and well-funded. I respect the decision of families to send their children to a private school. However, it is not the responsibility of taxpayers to fund any part of private tuition, which is why I urge you to say "no" to this bill.

I know how deeply each House Education Committee member cares about our students' education. Our public schools are the hub of large and small communities across North Dakota. They are a consistent, constant presence in our neighborhoods and towns, but they are not static. Our public schools are filled with thriving classrooms where teachers are continuously learning how to bring content alive to their students in meaningful and effective ways. I know how much I value my hometown school, Des Lacs-Burlington High School. I do not have children, but I know that the taxes I pay that go to public schools are the best investment I can make in the future. Please support our public schools so that we can continue to offer the choice of an excellent education to every single student in our state, regardless of their needs or location. We have so much to be proud of, and we have so much great work to do. Your support is valued, and your willingness to listen is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mary Eldredge Sandbo, Ed. D., NBCT
Biology Teacher, Des Lacs Burlington High School
2010 North Dakota State Teacher of the Year