



North Dakota Small Organized Schools

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1 **Testimony in Support of North Dakota House Bill 1214**

2 Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

3 I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of House Bill 1214, which seeks to
4 improve the state’s transportation reimbursement system for schools by introducing a per-pupil factor.
5 This legislation represents a much-needed shift away from the current block grant model, which has
6 proven to be inefficient and inequitable for many school districts across North Dakota.

7 **Enhancing Efficiency and Equity** HB 1214 establishes a per-pupil factor that ensures transportation
8 reimbursements are distributed based on actual student transportation needs rather than a fixed block
9 grant. The current system does not account for variations in district size, geography, or student
10 population growth, leading to disparities in funding allocations. By transitioning to a reimbursement
11 model that ties funding to the number of students served, the state can more effectively allocate
12 resources where they are most needed, encouraging efficiency and fairness among all districts.

13 **A Thoughtful, Data-Driven Approach** This legislation is the result of extensive work by the interim
14 legislative committee on school funding and input from members of the education focus group. Their
15 research and discussions have provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges school
16 districts face in covering transportation costs under the existing system. HB 1214 is a thoughtful and
17 data-driven solution that addresses these concerns while laying the groundwork for a more sustainable
18 and equitable funding model.

19 **Encouraging Fiscal Responsibility and Best Practices** By shifting toward a reimbursement system based
20 on a per-pupil factor, school districts will be incentivized to optimize their transportation services while
21 maintaining high standards for student safety and accessibility. This model supports responsible fiscal
22 management by ensuring that funds are directed toward real transportation costs, rather than being
23 locked into an outdated block grant structure that does not adjust to changes in enrollment or district
24 needs.

25 **Conclusion** HB 1214 is a critical first step toward modernizing North Dakota’s school transportation
26 funding. It introduces a more equitable and efficient method of reimbursement that reflects the needs
27 of individual school districts while encouraging responsible resource management. I urge the committee
28 to support this legislation to ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, have access to safe
29 and reliable transportation to and from school.

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The mission of NDSOS is to provide leadership for the small/rural schools in North Dakota and to support legislation favorable to their philosophy while opposing legislation that is harmful.

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