TESTIMONY ON HB 1357
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
March 5, 2025
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kirsten Baesler, and I am the State Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). I am here to speak in support of HB 1357 as written.

In the original House version, NDIT, NDDPI, and other state entities with a vested interest in the SLDS expressed concerns about the bill as introduced. Laura Balliett, the Assistant Attorney General advising the SLDS group, echoed these concerns. Assistant Attorney General Balliett subsequently drafted an amendment to address the identified issues. The House Education Committee passed the amendment unanimously and then gave the bill a unanimous "do pass" recommendation. The House floor vote provided further support of 93 yea votes and zero nay.

But if I could today, I'd like to provide some context regarding the historical, current, and future flow of student data. Historically and currently, student data is pulled from a Student Information System (SIS) and deposited into the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), which is managed by NDIT. The

current SIS vendor, PowerSchool, feeds student data and course codes nightly from over 480 buildings across 168 separate instances of district-level PowerSchool systems.

This process requires that the 168 PowerSchool instances and the SLDS are housed on North Dakota Information Technology (NDIT) servers. Data required by NDDPI for funding formulas and state and federal reporting is then routed from the SLDS to NDDPI's State Automated Reporting System (STARS). The NDDPI STARS system also requires the collection of data directly from districts related to teacher licenses, school approval (MISO3s, MISO2s), and other information, which is then fed back into the SLDS. While this system functions, it is far from efficient and highlights the need for improvement in data flow processes.

SLDS also receives data from ND Health & Human Services, ND University System, Workforce & Development, Job Service, and CTE. Centralizing relevant data in one location with data-sharing agreements gives legislators a clear and comprehensive view of a student's involvement – and success - in public programs and services. This helps them answer important questions about how various programs impact students and young adults and evaluate the return on investment of taxpayer dollars.

Current data-sharing agreements are between the districts and NDIT, which allows this extraction and usage of the data (under the provisions, of course, of the

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other data privacy guidelines).

In 2021 and 2023, the ND Legislature provided funding to NDDPI and NDIT to modernize our data systems to make it more efficient for K12 users and more effective for legislators to use better information to make decisions. An RFP process for the NDDPI side of the project began in late 2023 and was completed in the Fall of 2024. The contract to update our system and create one state edition to serve as the STARS and the SIS was awarded to Infinite Campus. The new name for the NDDPI data frame that we are using is the Infinite Campus State Edition (ICSE). We hope to come up with a more unique and distinctly North Dakota name, but for now, it is ICSE. Migration from current STARS and SIS (PowerSchool) to ICSE will be completed by July 1, 2026.

Under the new system configuration using ICSE's cloud-based architecture, student data, and course codes will be replicated nightly into a single, state-level instance of the Infinite Campus Student Information System within ICSE. This data will continue to be used for calculating funding formula payments and for meeting state and federal reporting requirements. NDDPI will provide only the necessary and appropriate student data from ICSE to the larger warehouse of SLDS for state and federally required or state-directed cross-agency research projects.

This new data flow process is consistent with how other North Dakota state agencies provide their data to the SLDS. For instance, NDHHS uses FRAME (Field Reporting and Management Environment), an online platform for managing child welfare services. NDHHS collects data within FRAME and determines which information is appropriate to share with the SLDS data lake. The SLDS does not and should not collect the child welfare information and flow it back to NDHHS. This new system modernizes K-12 student data management, aligning it with 21st-century standards for security and efficiency.

This change means that the data-sharing agreements currently in place between school districts and NDIT will need to transition to agreements between school districts and NDDPI. These new agreements will enable NDDPI to share only the appropriate data with the SLDS to meet the state's reporting and research requirements.

HB 1357 provides an effective date that coincides with the final migration and updates the entity with whom districts must establish these agreements. Importantly, this does not alter or expand who has access to the data—only a limited number of authorized users can view student-level data. The amendment simply modifies the process for how the data gets there.

If passed this bill will provide guardrails and clarity of expectations for all parties involved.

Ast. AG Balliet is here to answer any technical questions, and NDIT will be testifying after me, but before I turn the podium over to them or answer any questions, I can walk through the amendments that were made in the House Education Committee and approved by the House if you would like or you can consider just the language as received which NDDPI fully supports.
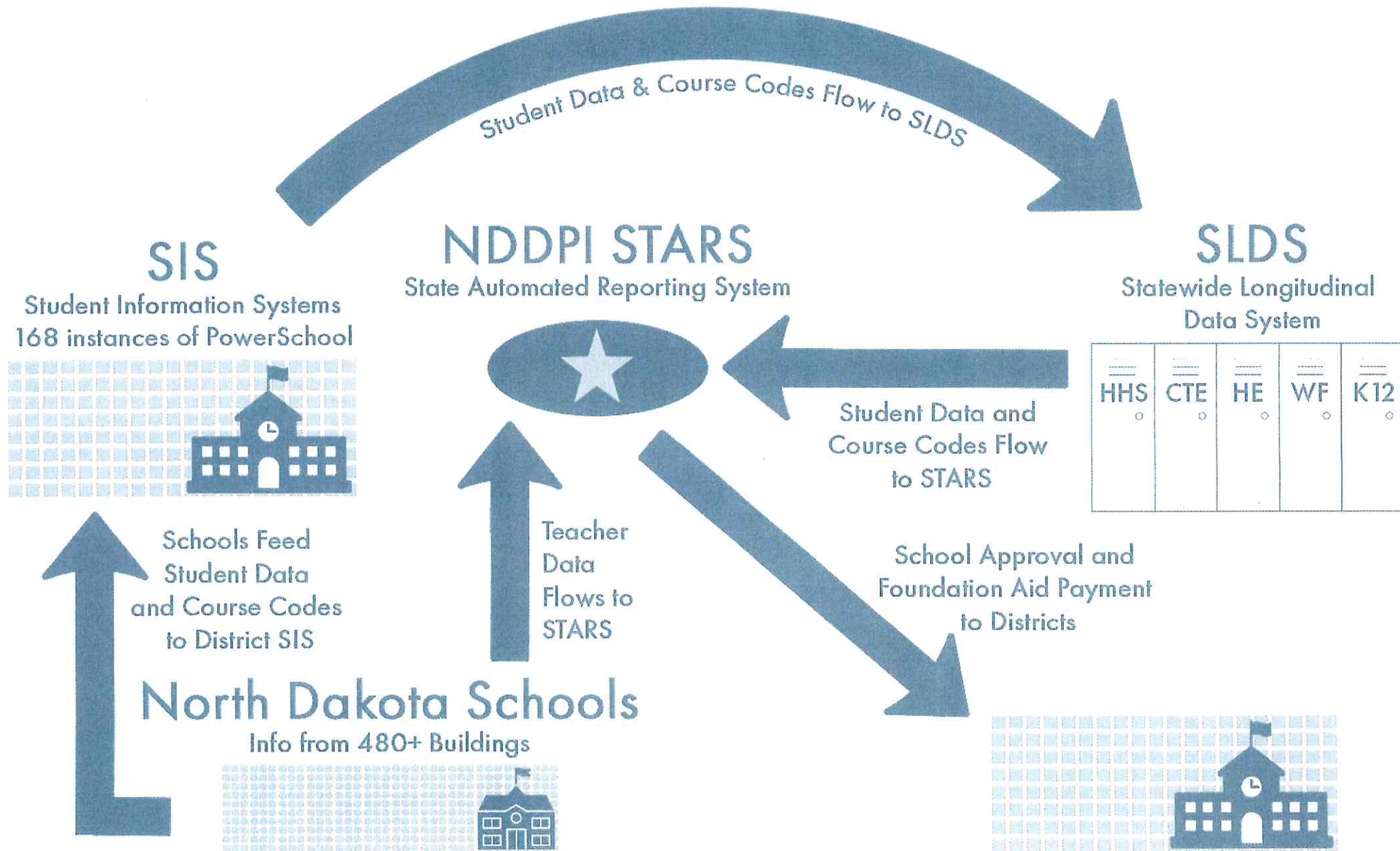
Chairman Beard and Members of the Committee, that concludes my prepared testimony, and I will stand for any questions that you may have.

Existing System
Through July 1, 2026

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Student Data & Course Codes Flow to SLDS

SIS
Student Information Systems
168 instances of PowerSchool

NDDPI STARS
State Automated Reporting System

SLDS
Statewide Longitudinal
Data System

HHS	CTE	HE	WF	K12

Student Data and
Course Codes Flow
to STARS

Schools Feed
Student Data
and Course Codes
to District SIS

Teacher
Data
Flows to
STARS

School Approval and
Foundation Aid Payment
to Districts

North Dakota Schools
Info from 480+ Buildings

Future System
Effective July 1, 2026

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
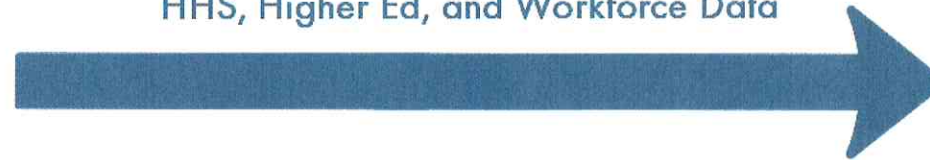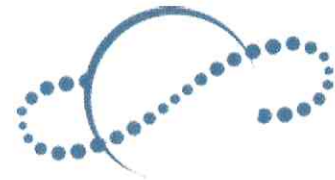**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

NDDPI ICSE
Infinite Campus State Edition
(Former STARS and SIS Combined)

Appropriate Student, Teacher Data,
and Course Code Flows to SLDS to join
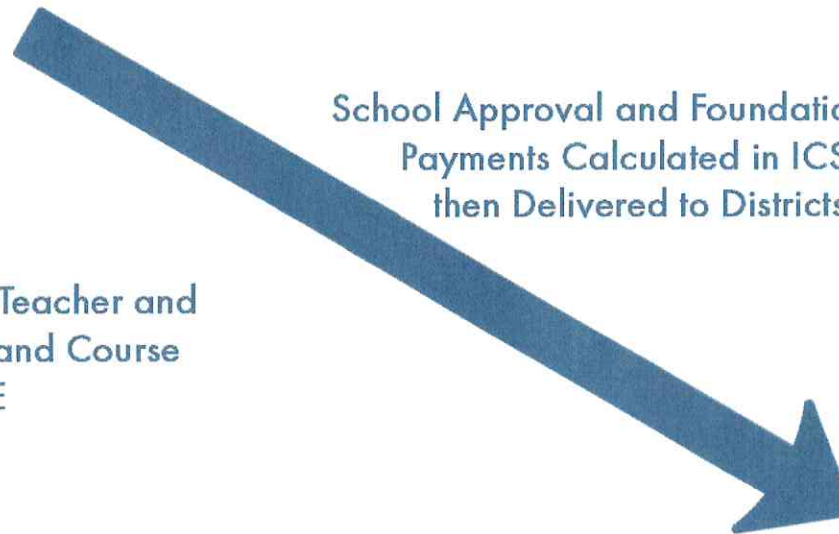HHS, Higher Ed, and Workforce Data

SLDS

| HHS | CTE | HE | WF | K12 |

School Approval and Foundation Aid
Payments Calculated in ICSE
then Delivered to Districts

Schools Feed Teacher and
Student Data and Course
Codes to ICSE

North Dakota Schools
Info from 480+ Buildings