

TESTIMONY ON HB 1349
SENATE POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS COMMITTEE

March 25, 2021

By: Jim Upgren, Assistant Director, Office of School Approval and Opportunity

701-328-2244

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

Chairman Burckhard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Upgren, Assistant Director in the Office of School Approval and Opportunity with the Department of Public Instruction. I am here on behalf of the department to speak on HB 1349.

One of my duties with the department is to lead the effort to make updates to administrative rules, and one of those components is the public notice for the public comment hearing. We would like to see some clarity added to Section 3, Subsection 4 on page 3, lines 28-30, as well as Section 5, Subsection 2 on page 4, lines 22 and 23 of the bill, regarding publishing of information to join the meeting online. If we allow a virtual option for a public comment hearing, would we be required to include the entire website address for the virtual meeting link, or simply contact information for who at our office can provide it? There are two reasons that we are asking for this clarity. First, since we must public notice for administrative rules in all 53 county newspapers, adding the full website link could significantly increase the cost of our public notice. And second, publishing the full link could potentially lead to “zoom bombing” and other forms of online disruption of meetings. If an individual had to

reach out to our office in advance to get the weblink, they would likely be attending for legitimate reasons and not just to disrupt the meeting.

While we will do whatever is required by law, these are some things that we feel should be clarified in the bill. We also stand willing to assist committee members in drafting any amendments that may further strengthen the bill.

Chairman Burckhard and Members of the Committee that concludes my prepared testimony and I will stand for any questions that you may have.