

I am writing in favor of Bill HB 1532.

Students attending private schools consistently achieve higher standardized test scores compared to students attending public schools even when adjusted for specific student characteristics. (<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2006461.asp>) The gap has only widened since the start of the Covid Pandemic as standardized test scores have plummeted nationwide for publicly instructed children. (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/test-scores-show-how-covid-set-kids-back-across-the-u-s>). Private school tuition at most private schools is less than the per student payment rate that public schools receive, which suggests that private schools produce better results while being run more efficiently. Tuition assistance can reduce the amount of tuition private schools collect even lower. In sum, private schools have achieved better results with less funding.

In my opinion, the percentage of the per student payment rate should be increased higher than the proposed 15 – 30%. States such as Iowa and Utah (and other in progress) have recently passed bills signed into law that allocate \$7,000 + per student to attend private schools, which it appears is much higher than what ND is proposing. If we're serious about school choice, let's propose something that will totally eliminate the financial hurdle for families that want to utilize this program.

This bill will not 'take away money' from public schools. Personally, I homeschool my children and therefore, the public-school district in which we live does not receive any funds from the state specific to my children (*ND Century Code: 15.1-23-19. Home education - State aid to school districts. For purposes of allocating state aid to school districts, a child receiving home education is included in a school district's determination of average daily membership only for those days or portions of days that the child attends a public school*). Similarly, if someone is currently electing to send their child to private school, the public school in the district where they live is not receiving any state funding either. If someday we decided to enroll our children back in public school, then the public school would start receiving state funds specific to my children. Enrollment at public schools will likely decline as a result of this bill because a majority of families that want to send their kids to private school cannot simply due to the financial hurdle. Declined enrollment at public schools will reduce the total amount of state funding public schools receive, however, a majority of a public school's budget or expenses are variable and as such, public schools will be able to adjust their budget accordingly just as they already do when they have fluctuations in enrollment. Per West Fargo Public School Districts 2020-2021 annual report, 82.6% of their expenses were for salaries & benefits.

In this great state of ND, we should care more about funding individual students rather than funding one specific system. To say that there is a one size fits all approach to educating children (public school) is a stretch. This bill will enable parents to make the best choice for their child's individualized educational needs, which should be the ultimate goal if we really care about children and their education. Parents, not the state, are best suited to determine what the best educational approach for their child is and this bill will help more families to be able to do that.

It really doesn't make sense that someone sending their child to private school should have to pay taxes specific for education and not receive any of the benefit from paying those taxes. Families that choose private schools are getting hit twice. Paying education related taxes and paying private school tuition. Approximately 50% of my property taxes are specific to education for example.

I would also advise an amendment to consider reciprocity with neighboring states within a reasonable distance as well. The Fargo-Moorhead community specifically has a great private school in Moorhead, MN (Park Christian) that would not be accessible with the bill as currently proposed to give one example.