



Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Jeff Ringstad, I am the school administrator at Our Redeemer's Christian School

As a Christian non-public school, I am often asked about how we admit students. Must families meet certain criteria in order to receive an invitation? This question is easier to answer from a standpoint of what would disqualify a family.

1. Faith is our primary reason for denying families. If families intend to enroll students, but cannot offer any applicable testimony, no church home, or actively oppose Christian ideals – they are denied. The mission of our school really focuses on two key areas: knowing each student so that we can challenge each according to their abilities with a level of rigor that will spur educational growth, and to share the Gospel every day to spur spiritual growth.
2. Available space. Just as a public school can and will deny open enrolled students once the physical space has all been utilized. Non-publics do not have a defined district and thus may deny admission once a class is full.

The truth for us is that over 80% of our revenue comes from collection of tuition. It is our goal to have a full school of tuition paying families. We have students that are denied, but this is a very small number.

A common misconception that I hear from families interested in attending my school are that students with disabilities are not admitted. We admit many students with disabilities, but because we do not receive state funding we are limited in resources and ability to meet the needs of all students. In certain rare cases, we have shared with parents that a public school would be capable of offering additional needed services that would be best for the child. We have students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, students on the autism spectrum, and a wide range of learners.

Public schools in ND will tell you that they are required to accept EVERY student – this is not true. ND public schools deny students wishing to open enroll from another district when they have run out of room or for other reasons. Every student at a non-public school is open enrolled and some are denied.

Public school districts in our largest districts have alternative schools that students with behavioral problems are sent. Some with significant disabilities are sent to Anne Carlson School



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in Jamestown. ND public schools also close their doors to students that have broken rules that have led to expulsion.

Some may suggest that public money cannot support private education. In 2021, \$384M of public funds went to support ND Higher Education. ND colleges are not expected to accept every student and they will kick students out if that student fails to meet academic expectations or if they violate school policies.

We are different than public schools because of faith and funding. We are similar to public schools in that we are educating students and preparing them for the world after high school. Our teachers are licensed through the ESPB the same way public school teachers are licensed. Our students are assessed and found to be learning at expected rates. Our Redeemer's Christian School has been successful without state funding, but this bill is the right move for the families desiring a choice in education.

I would be open to any questions from the committee.

Respectfully,


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