

**2021 SENATE EDUCATION**

**SB 2235**

# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee  
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2235  
1/27/2021

A BILL relating to the creation of a school nurse grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

9:00 AM

**Discussion Topics:**

- Medical needs of students

**Sen JoNell Bakke #3585**

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbem	p

**Shawn Oban** – Principal Myhre Elem, Bismarck via Zoom  
#3535

**Lucas Schaefer** – Central Regional Education Association in support #3078

**Elizabeth Tofteland** – ND School Nurse Organization in support #3546

**Heather Kapella** - Program Admin - ND Dept of Health #3683

**Matt Bakke** – Devils Lake Superintendent via Zoom #3701

**Tom Ford** – Grand Forks County Director of Administration via Zoom in favor #3475

**Additional written testimony:**

**Katie Stewart #3686**

**Nick Archuleta #3678**

9:34

*Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk*

Testimony for SB2235

Senator JoNell Bakke

Chairman Schaible and members of the Education Committee. It is my pleasure to stand before you and introduce SB2235.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, we learned very quickly how vital it is to have some basic health care protocols in place to protect our children in the school setting. Administrator, school secretaries, custodial personal, teachers, parents and students have all had to make adjustments in order to assure that our schools are safe. However, these kinds of services have not only been an issue this year or only because of Covid.

There have been increases in medical needs for students over the last two decades. More children with complicated medical conditions such as feeding tubes, ports, and the need for dispensing of medication have been increasing. Often time, these duties have been left up to an untrained individual. If school nurses were available, they could provide the necessary treatment or at the very least train others to perform these procedures correctly.

This bill would provide 20 grants that would allow school districts to hire a nurse either full time or part time to work with their district on the training and implementation of needed health care services, policy development, or training. The wide range of services that can be made available through a school nurse is far reaching and can be a benefit to students, teachers and staff.

How I envision this working is that school districts would apply to the State Public Health Department for one of the grants. The criteria for the grant would be established by the Health Department and School Districts would submit their applications. A full grant would provide \$150,000 and a part time grant would be \$75,000 over the biennium.

Those districts that have already established a school nursing program have found them to be extremely successful and it has taken the stress off of school secretaries and teachers as they are not trained medical personal.

That is the bill and I will stand for questions at this time.

Shawn Oban

[Shawn\\_oban@bismarckschools.org](mailto:Shawn_oban@bismarckschools.org)

701-3223-4200

Good morning, my name is Shawn Oban from Bismarck, North Dakota. I am here in my role as school principal of Jeanette Myhre Elementary of the Bismarck Public Schools. I am writing in support of Senate Bill 2235.

In previous experience as an elementary principal, I was allocated about 4 hours per week of nursing time. This proved to be insignificant when dealing with daily injuries and illness, but even worse when considering our diabetic students and students with severe allergies. It caused a great deal of anxiety of teaching staff wondering if we would be needed to make health decisions for students. Even with the training, we felt it was not in our lane of expertise. Would you have anyone other than a medical professional making your medical decisions?

In my current location at Myhre we use title 1 federal dollars to increase our district allocated nurse time. I have seen first-hand the impact it can have on attendance, health, and confidence of our students and staff. Under the circumstances of the last year our Nurse Jenny has been a star assisting our administrative and office staff in managing COVID cases in students and staff. If it were not for Nurse Jenny most of my time would have been taken away from my area of expertise, which is leading teachers and focusing on the academic growth of our students.

In closing, the reasons for supporting this bill are quite clear to me, an individual who works in the school environment every day, working with a vulnerable population, and understanding the significant impact having our kids in school means to our state. By using these funds our district will increase nursing time for buildings.

Having a regularly scheduled school nurse affects student attendance, academics, time for our office staff and administration to focus on student needs, and the accountability asked for by the state. School nurses can decrease absences, manage chronic conditions, treat injuries, and keep kids in school.

Thank you for your time.

Testimony regarding SB 2235  
Senate Education Committee  
Jan 25, 2021

1/21/2021

Dear Chairman Schaible and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Luke Schaefer and I am the Executive Director of the Central Regional Education Association, one of seven service agencies that exist to provide support to ND schools in many forms. Further, I am a Oversight Committee member of the ND Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) Consortium which is a framework for schools to become the hub of supports, working closely with partners, to provide services to students and their families in the community, whether it is related directly to academics or indirectly, such as health, poverty, food insecurity, housing, etc. Lastly, I have been an educator in ND for 17 years. I would like to provide testimony for how SB 2235 aligns with the philosophy and practices we promote in FSCS, an evidence-based approach to increasing student outcomes.

This bill provides funding for one of twelve pipeline services outlined in FSCS schools; primary health care. It is no surprise that many schools do not have nurses. Cost and availability of nurses both make hiring extremely difficult. This bill would help alleviate that. It is common practice in ND for the school secretary to make the decision sometimes about whether or not to call the caregivers of a child when they are not feeling well. With as many students as report to the office with headaches, ear aches, tummy aches, and chills, the school secretary becomes the first level of triage for many districts, especially our smallest.

I would offer an additional solution. The ND E-Nurse Program was designed in partnership with Avera Health out of South Dakota and is available to schools in ND. This program offers all day access to a nurse in the building through live audio-visual medical technology, which is a gold standard of care. Unfortunately, even our largest districts who have hired or contracted with agencies to provide nurses, do not have nurses in their buildings all day. ND E-Nurse teaches the school secretary and others how to simply and easily connect to the school nurse, use the otoscope or other medical devices, and allow the nurse to help determine if little "Johnny" can go back to class with a couple of crackers or if more care is required for things like heart or lung sounds; ear and throat issues; skin problems; injuries; or even chronic care, such as diabetes. What is, I believe, the most effective part of this program, is that 91% of students who had an E-Nurse visit were able to stay in school instead of going home.

Further, the ND E-Nurse program, since it does not rely on a physical presence in the building, is priced out in a per-pupil manner. The typical cost for the districts in ND using ND E-Nurse is between \$3,000-\$12,000. This nurse is not only available all day, but they are the ones who call parents and document visits to the office for student care. They also work in partnership with local medical providers with students as needed.

This program currently services 21 schools in ND consisting of 3,785 students. There have been 2,509 school nurse video visits in just 2019-2020. Further, four of our schools have added the school behavioral health access for 751 students.

This bill addresses the number one belief, that of early prevention mechanisms. Addressing student health during the school day has a direct impact on student attendance and achievement. For this reason, this bill is wonderful for ND. Hiring a FT nurse might be the best option for some schools. Others may be able to find a nurse willing to keep PT hours. I would ask that you consider more than just hiring nurses, as contractual processes can be more affordable, and in some rural instances, the only possibility for accessing this much-needed service through which we do not want geography to create inequitable opportunity.

I humbly thank you for considering this bill. A do pass would provide the ability for students to stay healthy and stay learning.

Respectfully submitted,

Luke Schaefer (Minot, ND)  
Executive Director, Central Regional Education Association



**Testimony in Support of SB 2235  
Senate Education Committee  
January 27, 2021**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Liz Tofteland and I am testifying in favor of Senate Bill 2235 on behalf of the North Dakota School Nurse Organization (NDSNO). I currently work for Central Regional Educations Association as the ND eCare School Health Program Manager. The ND eCare School Health Program is a partnership program which provides school nurse services to ND schools through a telehealth platform. I serve on the NDSNO executive board as the Public Relations Director.

NDSNO is excited about the possibility of a state grant program to assist school districts in providing additional school nurse services to students. We see firsthand the difference that a school nurse can make in the lives of students and staff. The work of school nurses can lead to decreased absenteeism, enhanced learning, increased referrals for vision, hearing, dental, and increased vaccination compliance. School nurses can also provide peace of mind to parents of children with chronic conditions such as diabetes, severe food allergies, asthma, and seizure disorders.

The funding in SB 2235 would go a long way in helping school districts experience the benefits of school nursing.

NDSNO would recommend to this committee to amend SB 2235 to provide additional flexibility to the ND Department of Health and to school districts that would apply for these funds. We recommend allowing school districts to apply for the funds for the amount they feel they need. This gives school districts the freedom to consider their needs and increases the likelihood that the school district continues the school nursing positions beyond the timeframe of the grant. It could also provide more school districts with the opportunity to take advantage of these grants.

We would also recommend leaving it up to the ND Department of Health and the school districts to determine the appropriate nursing services that are to be provided under these grants. School districts have different needs and may not need all the services as outlined in the bill or may have other health needs not identified in the bill.

We've heard from many administrators across the state that they find value in school nursing. This year especially has highlighted the need for access to staff who have a strong understanding in disease and infection control during this COVID-19 pandemic. Our problem isn't convincing people that the services we can provide are valuable and needed. Our hurdle has been finding a way to fund school nursing programs. This grant program would allow for school districts to evaluate the value of a school nurse with a low financial risk.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide our support for this bill.

*Michelle Dever, BSN, RN, NCSN  
President  
(701) 220-9707*

*Kate Gartner, BSN, RN, NCSN  
Vice President*

*Liz Tofteland, BSN, RN  
Public Relations Director*

Good morning Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Heather Kapella and I am a program administrator and the State School Nurse Consultant in the Division of Special Health Services for the North Dakota Department of Health. I do not have testimony for Senate Bill 2235, relating to the creation of a school nurse grant program, but want to let you know I am available virtually to answer questions, if needed. Thank you.

#3701

# DEVILS LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

1601 College Drive North, Devils Lake, ND 58301  
(701) 662-7640 (FAX) 662-7646

Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2235. I am Matt Bakke, Superintendent in the Devils Lake Public School system. Today, I will provide testimony in support of SB 2235.

In education today, school nurses play an instrumental role in the identification and referral to community resources for students and families. The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) defines school nursing as a specialized practice that “protects and promotes student health, facilitates optimal student development, and advances academic success. School nurses, grounded in ethical and evidence-based practice, are the leaders who bridge healthcare and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design systems that allow individuals and communities to develop their full potential.” School nurses stand at the intersection of health and education, weaving support needed to reduce barriers to learning and promoting healthy children, families, and communities. School nurses assist children in having access to appropriate educational opportunities regardless of their state of health. They have a foundational role, providing not only direct services for students with health problems, but also promoting the health of the communities in which they live and serve.

I ask that you support SB 2235 with a do pass recommendation. This is an opportunity to provide students across the state with greater access to health and wellness.

**Board of Commissioners****Diane K. Knauf**  
Grand Forks, ND**David Engen**  
Northwood, ND**Cynthia Pic**  
Niagara, ND**Tom Falck**  
Grand Forks, ND**Bob Rost**  
Grand Forks, ND

Tom Ford  
Grand Forks County  
PO Box 5726  
Grand Forks, ND 58206-5726

RE: SB2235 - A BILL relating to the creation of a school nurse grant program; and to provide an appropriation

January 27, 2020

Dear Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Tom Ford and I am the Grand Forks County Director of Administration. I am writing you today in support of SB2235

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant negative impacts on the private and public sectors, non-profits, health care industry, and of course education, which contains our largest vulnerable population – students. These negative impacts have been felt throughout the Grand Forks School District, and Grand Forks County’s rural school districts. Grand Forks county rural school districts have been in need of school nurses to provide healthcare necessary to students; however, with limited resources, these rural school districts have found it difficult to hire nurses.

Through CARES Act funding provided by the ND Office of Management and Budget, and in working directly with the rural school districts, the County provided \$34,090 to the Thompson School District and the Northwood School District each to support their school nursing program. The County provided CARES Act funding in the amount of \$178,480 to Grand Forks County Public Health to hire two school nurses for the Midway School District and the Larimore-Emerado School District. Unfortunately, this is not a permanent solution to those school districts nursing needs.

As of 2019, access to school nursing is now a BRAC (base realignment and closure) and strategic basing criteria. Access to school nursing will help determine whether or not a military installation will be subject to BRAC or may receive a new mission. During the summer of 2019, the Grand Forks region and Grand Forks AFB were assessed in the area of “quality of life” which included access to school nursing. Unfortunately, the Grand Forks region scored poorly in this category.

## Board of Commissioners

**Diane K. Knauf**  
Grand Forks, ND

**David Engen**  
Northwood, ND

**Cynthia Pic**  
Niagara, ND

**Tom Falck**  
Grand Forks, ND

**Bob Rost**  
Grand Forks, ND

In a recent New York Times article (Belluck, 2020), the Center for Disease Control states that schools with school nursing programs will be able to resume in-person classroom learning for students faster, and keep them in schools longer.

Per the National Association of School Nurses, school nurses are helping us safely reopen U.S. schools. These pandemic-related responsibilities are above and beyond the core contributions of school nurses; they traditionally address student health and mental health issues to support learning. Yet more than a quarter of our nation's schools do not have a school nurse. Most funding for school nurses is from education dollars, and since states' and schools' budgets are stretched during this pandemic, money to hire school nurses is scarce. Across the nation school nurses are helping prevent COVID-19 spread within their schools. Like the 1918 flu pandemic, we have quickly learned that school nurses are critical during this pandemic. In some places, school nurses are already implementing the COVID prevention, detection, and isolation measures that are needed to reopen schools. In Texas and elsewhere, school nurses have been instrumental in crafting school pandemic action plans and evaluating whether students should remain home because of Coronavirus-like symptoms. In other places like Massachusetts, school nurses are helping local health departments with contact tracing.

According to the National Association of School Nurses, school nurses can help keep healthy students in school. School nurses reduce the number of students who leave school because of illness or injury, thus improving attendance since students are not sent home unnecessarily. This is critical, since chronic absenteeism has a profoundly negative effect on student achievement, particularly for students of color, and is closely correlated with ongoing and/or unmet health care needs.

School nurses can increase student access to immunizations, which is especially challenging during COVID. School nurses routinely give immunizations and can help now to make sure all children are caught up on their immunizations. Schools that employ nurses have higher immunization rates, meaning that fewer vaccine-preventable infections spread to those that are not immunized.

School nurses improve access to health care, particularly for children living in poverty. Today's students face more medically complex conditions and chronic health illnesses – including asthma, diabetes, food allergies, obesity, and mental health and behavioral issues. The knowledge, assessment skills and judgment of a school nurse are needed to manage these conditions.

## Board of Commissioners

**Diane K. Knauf**  
Grand Forks, ND

**David Engen**  
Northwood, ND

**Cynthia Pic**  
Niagara, ND

**Tom Falck**  
Grand Forks, ND

**Bob Rost**  
Grand Forks, ND

The National Association of School Nurses cites research conducted and appearing in peer reviewed journals which find school nurses are cost-effective. A cost-benefit analysis of Massachusetts' school nursing program showed that for every dollar invested in the program, society would gain \$2.20. This study only accounted for the cost of parent's time off work, teachers' time and the cost of treatment. School nurses also provide cost-effective preventive services like wellness and disease prevention and early intervention services, including vision, hearing, and dental screenings.

Student access to school nurses has always been critical, however, the COVID-19 pandemic has elevated the issue to the forefront of school officials, public health officials, and elected officials. It has been demonstrated that access to school nursing services help keep students in school, therefore keeping Teachers and staff in school.

In closing, counties, cities, and school districts have been able to address this gap through CARES Act funding, however, this is only a short-term solution. SB2235 will provide the necessary funding for school districts, especially our small school districts, the means necessary to ensure students have access to this critical service.

It is for these reasons that Grand Forks County supports SB2235. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Tom Ford  
Director of Administration



## Board of Commissioners

**Diane K. Knauf**  
Grand Forks, ND

**David Engen**  
Northwood, ND

**Cynthia Pic**  
Niagara, ND

**Tom Falck**  
Grand Forks, ND

**Bob Rost**  
Grand Forks, ND

### References

Association of School Nurses (2020). School Nurses: A Solution to Safely Open Schools and Help Students Learn.

Belluck, Pam (July 11, 2020). *How to Reopen Schools: What Science and Other Countries Teach Us*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/11/health/coronavirus-schools-reopen.html>.

## Testimony in support of SB 2235

Senate Education Committee

Jan 26, 2021

Dear Chairman Schaible and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Katie Stewart and I am testifying today in support of SB 2235 as a concerned parent. I am the mom to three daughters, and we have been actively enrolled in the Bismarck Public School System since 2013. For the first four years, we had little interaction with our school nurse and certainly didn't realize the importance of having one on staff full-time.

In 2017, we were delivered the devastating news that our Kindergarten daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. This came as a huge shock and changed our lives forever. We quickly became extremely overwhelmed by the 24-hour management necessary to sustain a healthy child! Our daughter spent 4 days in the hospital while her blood sugar dropped to a level that would be safe enough to bring her home. As we started to find our new normal, we reached out to the elementary school to learn how her medical treatment would be managed while she wasn't under our direct care.

We were very surprised to learn that our elementary school that was home to over 500 students, had a nurse on-site for less than 50% of the school week! This same nurse was responsible for floating between 3 different schools. Our daughter was only 5 and needed close supervision throughout the day. She needed her blood sugar checked at least 3-4 times a day, needed someone to administer insulin for every snack and lunch, and needed immediate action if her blood sugar would drop to a dangerous low!

Fortunately for us, the head of the Bismarck Public Schools Nursing Program and our assigned nurse were as accommodating as they possibly could be, but it was clear that government funding was an issue. There was not enough money available to have a nurse on-site full-time. My daughter demanded more attention from the school nurse than the average student, but we quickly learned how important it was to advocate for a full-time nurse at every Bismarck Public School, especially the elementary schools housing children that are much more dependent on an adult to provide care in times of need.

Because of our daughter's diagnosis, we have developed tight relationships with her school nurse and her team of other supervisors and have seen firsthand how "in-demand" the school nurse is! Type 1 Diabetes can become life threatening very quickly under certain circumstances and it would be much more comforting to know that there was a trained medical provider on site the entire school day; not to mention the randomness of school accidents, broken bones, allergic reactions, bloody noses, upset stomachs and the like. It is not fair to expect our overburdened teachers and non-medically trained staff to attend to all these circumstances that arise with our school-aged children.

Thank you for your consideration. It is with sincere passion that I support our Bismarck Public School nurses and will be forever grateful for their incredible care! I'd humbly ask for a DO PASS to promote healthy learning for our BPS students and peace of mind for their families!

Sincerely,

Katie Stewart



**Testimony SB 2235  
Senate Education Committee  
January 27, 2021**

Chairman Schaible, and members of the Committee, for the record my name is Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. ND United is a union of professionals dedicated to public service. On behalf of our 11,500 members across North Dakota, I rise in support of SB 2235.

Mr. Chairman, SB 2235, should it pass, will serve to put badly needed nurses into schools that desperately need them. The shortage of school nurses in public schools is not just an issue in North Dakota, it is a confounding issue across the United States. Consider these statistics from Education Week:

- 1.7M students are in schools with police but no counselors.
- 6M students are in schools with police but no school psychologists.
- 10M students are in schools with police but no social workers.
- 3M students are in schools with police but no nurses.

Let me pause here to say that ND United encourages the presence of School Resource Officers in our school buildings. In North Dakota, SRO's have become part of our school families and have proven to be welcome contributors to school climates.

Still, we recognize that many of our school districts lack school nurses and that every school district would benefit in many ways by having them. And while I do not have state specific data, please consider the attributes that school nurses bring to their workspaces:

- School nurses work with their school districts to advance the well-being and academic success of students.
- School nurses work with faculty and staff to promote healthful student behaviors and choices.



*Great Public Schools*

*Great Public Service*

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- Schools provide a congregate setting which makes it easier for medical professionals, including school nurses, to reach students and inform them of health and lifestyle risks, as well as positive practices that enhance the health and safety of our students.

For these reasons, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee, I am urging you to bestow a DO PASS recommendation on SB 2235.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to stand for questions.

# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee  
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2235  
2/2/2021

**COMMITTEE WORK** - A BILL relating to the creation of a school nurse grant program; and to provide an appropriation.

**Chair Schaible** called to order at 3:14 p.m.

**Discussion Topics:**

- Student health

**Sen Lemm:** I move a Do Not Pass

**Sen Elkin:** I second

**Roll Call Vote: 5-YES 1-NO 0-AB**

**Motion Passed**

**Sen Schaible will carry the bill.**

Adjourned 3:28 p.m.

*Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk*

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbema	P

Senator	Vote
Chairman Schaible	Y
Senator Elkin	Y
Senator Conley	Y
Senator Lemm	Y
Senator Oban	N
Senator Wobbema	Y

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2235: Education Committee (Sen. Schaible, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (5 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2235 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.