

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1436  
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**February 1, 2021**

**By: Joe Kolosky, Director of School Approval and Opportunity**

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**North Dakota Department of Public Instruction**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joe Kolosky and I am the Director of School Approval & Opportunity with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). I am here on behalf of the department, to speak in favor of House Bill 1436 regarding to flexibility to enroll into summer school courses.

Currently, students in kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade can only enroll in public summer school courses in mathematics and reading if they fall into the “remedial” category. Remedial refers to students that are below the sixtieth percentile on a standardized test; below the sixtieth percentile on a teacher-developed test; or have a grade of C or below in the school year that just ended.

Pinning students into these areas poses the risk of missing or overlooking struggling students who may need the extra foundational instruction in mathematics and reading to enable their success. In addition, providing all students (including those who are average or above average) the extra support in the summer can prevent the “summer slide.” The summer slide is a decline in reading ability and other academics during the summer months. Extensive research has

been conducted on this phenomenon, and it has been concluded that up to 20% of school-year gains in reading and up to 27% of school-year gains in mathematics can be lost during the summer. These are learning losses we cannot afford.

Lastly, with the devastation the COVID-19 pandemic has caused, it is imperative now, more than ever, that we provide our students every opportunity to participate in quality education services with the fewest number of obstacles in their way. It is especially important to provide these opportunities to our youngest learners as our public schools build the foundation of their learning.

Your colleagues in the Environment & Education House Appropriations subcommittee are considering ways to accelerate the learning recovery of our students this biennium, especially of our youngest learners. One of the options they are considering is opening up the summer school opportunities for more students. This policy in NDCC 15.1-21-16 would need to be adjusted to align with that work.

Chairman Owens and members of the committee, this concludes my prepared testimony and I will happily stand for any questions you may have.