



1 **SB 2229 – Scholarships to Student Teachers**

2 **February 2, 2021**

3 Chairman Schaible and members of the Senate Education Committee. Thank you for the
4 opportunity to testify on SB 2229. I am Dr. Russ Ziegler, assistant director for the North Dakota
5 Council of Educational Leaders.

6 Today I am testifying in support of SB 2229. As I am sure you all have heard that there is a teacher
7 shortage problem in the State of North Dakota. This shortage is really not a shortage of teachers
8 as much as a shortage of teachers that are willing to go to the rural areas of the state. I have heard
9 that the universities are graduating enough teachers to fill the position, however some graduates
10 would rather substitute teach in a larger town than teach in a rural one. In my past job of being
11 principal at Richardton-Taylor High School we were able to find good teachers mainly because
12 we were only 20 miles from the bigger town of Dickinson. We had numerous teachers that would
13 live in Dickinson and drive the 20 miles for work. However, in rural communities that are not as
14 close to a larger town, especially a larger town with a University, it is difficult to find teachers to
15 fill open positions. In our principal discussions we would call it the Walmart effect. We just could
16 not find teachers that would be willing to move to a small town that does not have the amenities
17 that they are used to.

18 It is our belief that SB 2229 is a GREAT incentive for students to see what working in a small
19 close nit community is like. I have lived in small towns in North Dakota and in my opinion, there
20 is nothing like the family community that they have. We also believe that many of the student
21 teachers that are given this opportunity to teach in these rural schools will stay. This bill will help
22 both the school by filling the needed areas AND the student by helping them with their tuition
23 and/or living expenses while they are student teaching. It is definitely a win-win scenario in our
24 opinion.

25 We humbly request a Do Pass on SB 2229, and I can stand for any questions.