



## **LD 607, “An Act to Require the Approval of Superintendent Agreements Regarding Transfers of Students Between School Administrative Units”**

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Laurel Libby, and I represent House District 90, North Auburn and Minot. I am pleased to introduce LD 607, “An Act to Require the Approval of Superintendent Agreements Regarding Transfers of Students Between School Administrative Units.”

This legislation is fundamentally about fairness, flexibility, and putting the well-being of students at the center of decision-making. The current system, in which a superintendent has broad discretion to deny student transfers between school districts, too often limits families’ ability to seek the best possible education for their children. LD 607 addresses this by ensuring that, when it is in the best interest of the student and the receiving school has the capacity to accommodate them, superintendents approve these transfers rather than arbitrarily denying them.

### **The Importance of Educational Flexibility**

Every child is unique, and their educational needs can vary significantly based on academic strengths, social environments, and personal circumstances. Families sometimes find that their assigned school does not adequately meet their child’s

needs, whether due to specialized programs offered elsewhere, class sizes, school culture, or various educational needs.

In its current form, the superintendent agreement system does not provide families with a reliable path to pursue better educational opportunities for their children. Some superintendents approve nearly all transfer requests, while others deny them outright without a clear rationale. This inconsistency creates an unfair and unpredictable system that often leaves students stuck in environments that are not conducive to their success.

Consider the example of a student who thrives in a smaller class environment but is assigned to a school with significantly larger class sizes. If there is a neighboring district with the capacity to provide that student with the individualized attention they need, why should bureaucratic hurdles stand in the way of their success? LD 607 ensures that these cases are handled with fairness and that superintendents base their decisions on what is best for the student, rather than arbitrary policies or administrative convenience.

### **Supporting Equity in Education**

Opponents of school choice policies often argue that such measures may disproportionately benefit students from more privileged backgrounds. However, the reality is that the ability to transfer between school districts is often most critical for families with fewer resources.

Affluent families already have options—they can move to a district with better schools, enroll their children in private schools, or pay for costly tutoring and extracurricular programs that compensate for shortcomings in their local schools. Families with fewer financial resources do not have these same luxuries. Their children are often the ones who suffer most when they are trapped in a school that does not meet their needs.

By requiring superintendents to approve transfer requests when there is available capacity and a demonstrated benefit to the student, LD 607 helps level the playing field. It provides lower- and middle-income families with more agency in determining their child's educational future, ensuring that opportunity is not limited to those who can afford to buy a home in a higher-performing school district.

## **Ensuring Fairness and Transparency**

A fair public education system must be transparent and consistent. Under the current structure, there is no uniform process guiding how superintendents evaluate transfer requests. Some families are granted approvals while others in nearly identical circumstances are denied, simply because they reside in a different district or face a superintendent with a different philosophy.

This bill establishes a clear expectation that when a transfer is in the best interest of a student and there is space available in the receiving school, the transfer should be approved. It removes subjectivity from the process, ensuring that decisions are made based on student welfare rather than administrative preference.

It is also important to recognize that LD 607 does not create an unchecked system of movement between schools. Schools that do not have the capacity to take in additional students are not forced to do so under this bill. It strikes a reasonable balance—ensuring that when a transfer is feasible and beneficial, it is approved, but not at the expense of overwhelming receiving districts.

## **Conclusion**

LD 607 is about fairness, flexibility, and putting students first. It ensures that families are not left powerless in decisions about their children's education and that students are not arbitrarily denied the opportunity to learn in an environment that best suits their needs. By establishing a clear and reasonable framework for approving transfers, this legislation promotes a more just and equitable education system.

I urge this committee to support this common-sense reform that prioritizes student success over bureaucratic rigidity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.