SB 204 #2
TOBIN MORRIS

Oglala Lakota County School District 65-1

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OLCSD Mission
To Strengthen the Lakota Identity and Values of Students and to Assure Their Overall Well-Being and Academic Success.

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Oglala Lakota County School District
Batesland, South Dakota

February 27, 2026

South Dakota State Legislature
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 204

Dear Members of the South Dakota State Legislature,

On behalf of the Oglala Lakota County School District, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 204 and urge its passage. This legislation, which would increase the housing loan eligibility threshold from 33% to 50%, would have a transformative impact on our district's ability to recruit and retain certified teachers in one of South Dakota's most underserved communities.

For years, the single greatest barrier to attracting qualified, certified teachers to our district has been the lack of affordable housing. Located in a rural and economically challenged region, our community does not offer the private housing market options available in more urban areas. Prospective teachers — many of whom are eager to serve our Lakota students — have turned down positions simply because there was no suitable place to live.

In response to this critical need, our district recently invested in the Lakota Tech Teacher Housing Complex, adding 58 new units that include 20 apartments, 24 three-bedroom duplexes, and 14 single-family homes (5 with six bedrooms and 9 with three bedrooms). We are proud to report that every single unit is currently occupied. This immediate and complete occupancy speaks volumes about the depth of housing need in our community and the demand that existed before this complex was built.

While this investment has made a meaningful difference, demand continues to outpace supply. Senate Bill 204 would give districts like ours the financial tools needed to expand housing capacity further. By raising the loan threshold from 33% to 50%, the bill would allow us to pursue additional housing units — whether apartments or homes — that would enable us to continue growing our teacher workforce and better serve our students.

The Oglala Lakota County School District serves a population with deep and enduring educational needs. Our students deserve access to a full complement of qualified, certified educators. Senate Bill 204 is a practical and impactful step toward making that possible. We respectfully and enthusiastically urge your support for this bill.
Respectfully,

Connie Kaltenbach

Connie Kaltenbach, Superintendent