

HB 1114

Testimony of Erin Jacobson

House Education Committee

January 12, 2021

Good morning Chairman Owens and members of the House Education Committee. I am Erin Jacobson, Coordinator of the North Dakota Teacher Support System. NDTSS works to provide supports for teachers in our state through mentoring and instructional coaching. I am here today in support of HB 1114.

This fall, the K-12 Education Coordinating Council Quality Education Personnel Subcommittee presented a 2021 legislative recommendation for action which included funding for 100% of first year teachers in addition to a second-year mentoring program. This recommendation was based on the demonstrated results and needs that are detailed in the recommendation below:

**K-12 Education Coordination Council
Subcommittee Recommendations**

2021 Legislative Recommendations for Action

Quality Education Personnel

1. *Fully fund and expand the teacher mentoring program to second year teachers.*

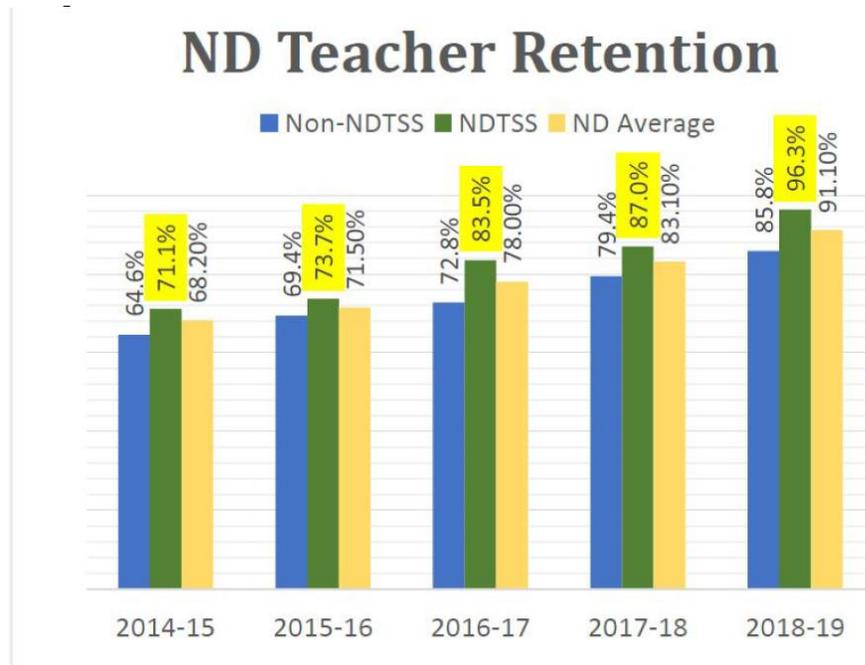
- a. **Current Appropriation:** \$2,125,764 per biennium
- b. **Current Program Status:** According to the MISO3, there were 2,593 new teachers since 2014-15. Of those teachers, 1,275 were not in the NDTSS Mentoring Program.

Approximately 51% of new teachers participated in the NDTSS. In order to fully fund the program, additional funding would be necessary to provide mentoring to the remaining 49% of new teachers.

- Total First Year Teachers: 2,593
- Mentored in NDTSS: 1,318
- Not Mentored: 1,275

c. **Demonstrated Results:** Each year, the average rate of retention for NDTSS teachers since 2014-15 is higher than for teachers not mentored in the NDTSS and the ND Average retention rate.

- Average rate of retention for NDTSS during the 2018-19 school year was 96.3% compared to 85.8% for teachers not mentored in the NDTSS.



d. **Need:** The COVID-19 pandemic created an immensely stressful year on all teachers,

especially first year teachers. The traditional informal mentoring that would occur with veteran teachers did not occur as all teachers were learning new skills, schedules and solutions. The first year teachers of 2020-21 school year are anticipated to have an even greater uphill climb as they enter into their second year of teaching and will need assistance in navigating the challenges a regular routine schedule and protocols hold that were missed the first year.

e. **Policy Change:** Fund 100% of first year teachers in addition to a second-year teacher program.

As the coordinator of NDTSS, I work closely with mentors, first year teachers, administrators and instructional coaches. We are working with the common goal to provide every student in our state an effective teacher. In order to ensure that we retain effective teachers, we must work together to offer high quality support such as mentoring and instructional coaching.

In a survey that was given to all mentors, first year teachers and administrators in the mentoring program, they were asked if a 2nd year of the mentoring program was offered would you want to participate.

- 97% of administrators would want their first year teacher to participate in a 2nd year mentoring program depending on the needs of the first year teacher
- 92% of mentors would want to continuing mentoring their first year teacher depending of the needs of the first year teacher
- 82% of first year teachers would choose to continue working with their mentor if a 2nd year of mentoring was offered. Several teachers were undecided as they were moving to a different school or content area and thought they should be reassigned a new mentor.

For these reasons, Mr. Chairman, NDTSS strongly supports HB1114 and will work tirelessly to support beginning teachers in our state. Thank you for your consideration of this bill and the positive impacts it will make on the staff and students in our schools. I will stand for any questions.