

Dear Senator Schaible, Chairman Sorvaag, and members of Senate Appropriations Committee,

I am writing to urge you to continue funding the Red River Valley Writing Project. As a teacher in Center-Stanton and member of the Red River Valley Writing Project (RRVWP) community, I have seen firsthand the positive impact this program has on our teachers and students.

Purpose

The Red River Valley Writing Project is a professional development program that provides teachers with the training and support they need to improve their writing instruction. By participating in this program, teachers gain new skills and strategies that enable them to better engage their students and help them develop stronger writing skills. This, in turn, benefits our students by preparing them for academic success and future careers.

Furthermore, the Red River Valley Writing Project is a program that focuses on training teachers to increase North Dakota's voice in both written and spoken mediums, ensuring that all students have access to innovative and high-quality writing instruction. This is especially important for students from rural and low-income communities who may face barriers to academic success.

Impact

When I was in my 3rd year of teaching, I was ready to quit. I then decided to take a chance in taking a RRVWP professional development for teachers, and RRVWP changed everything. With their help, I learned instructional strategies, classroom management skills, and student engagement strategies, which made me a better teacher, saved me from leaving the

profession, has enormously impacted the communities that I teach in, and has provided students with opportunities that they would not otherwise have in a challenging and academically engaging environment.

Some of the impact the RRVWP has had on my classroom:

- Journal swap between students and the Knife River Care Center
- Group work between students and lawyers; students and community leaders; students and engineers; students and business owners
- Published writing in our city's newspaper sharing student perspectives and voice in our community
- Creating a 9/11 Remembrance Memorial event
- Establishing a butterfly garden on the school's playground to learn about North Dakota's pollinators, milkweed, and the butterfly cycle
- An upcoming collaboration between our school and the Cross Ranch State Park

Request for Funding

A request of **\$45,000** (or a total of \$90,000 for the next biennium), would allow us to fulfill our aims and service to North Dakota's teachers, students, and citizens. Without funding from the DPI grant, Without continued support, this valuable program may be forced to cut back on its services or even shut down entirely. This would be a tremendous loss for North Dakota and the students and teachers who rely on this program (at a time when our youth need **more and better writing, not less**).

Therefore, I urge you to support continued funding for the Red River Valley Writing Project. Please consider the impact that this program has on our community and the importance of providing our teachers and students with the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Gusewelle