

Debra Austin
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Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to urge you to continue funding the Red River Valley Writing Project, which is supported by a Department of Public Instruction pass-through grant. As a member of this community, I have experienced firsthand the positive impact the Red River Valley Writing Project has on teachers and students.

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 their training, 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. I have seen this firsthand in the students I have had and those I am currently working with. They have gained skills that make them more confident writers and better prepared for high stakes testing and their future. Writing is also one of the soft skills employers seek in prospective employees.

Furthermore, the Red River Valley Writing Project is a program that focuses on equity and inclusion, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality writing instruction. This is especially important for students from underrepresented communities who may face barriers to academic success. The program's emphasis on culturally responsive teaching practices ensures that all students feel valued and supported in their learning. As a teacher in rural North Dakota teaching predominantly Native American students the support and training I have received through the Red River Valley Writing Project has been invaluable and having them in state is an added bonus.

Funding for the Red River Valley Writing Project is currently at risk. 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 the communities served by the program and for the students and teachers who rely on this program, myself being one of those teachers.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Debra Austin