

Mr. or Madam Chairman, and members of the committee, my name is Monica Meadows from New Rockford. I am currently a teacher at New Rockford-Sheyenne Public Schools and have 2 children that attend school in the district. I am in opposition to this bill for several reasons both as an educator and as a parent.

I would like to mainly address section 2 of the bill which concerns parental involvement in reviewing all curricular material that will be available to students in a class at least 7 days in advance. One concern that I have is the amount of extra work this puts on teachers to develop written descriptions of all topics and subjects presented in class and lists of all curricular material used. As a teacher for 11 years, I have yet to have a day go by that I haven't deviated from my lesson plans. This is not due to incompetence but by responding to how my students learn. Checking for understanding avoids redundancy or frustration. A 7 day deadline would lock teachers into a plan that by its design needs to be flexible and reactive to the needs of the students. The added, invisible mental load on teachers would be significant as we would always be thinking about where we would be or where our students might be in 7 days.

I also want to address the availability of curricular materials. If posted digitally or given to parents or potentially the public, would students have access to exams they will be taking in 7 days? I want my students to know the information on their assessments but I don't want them to have a copy of the exact questions. Parents could also misunderstand and oppose the curricular material without context or full understanding of the subject itself. As professionals mandated to be certified through testing for our specific content area, teachers have the training to make decisions about how to teach in our classrooms.

Some other questions in regards to expectations for student access to online content. Would students have access to websites for research because they weren't listed in the curricular material? Would websites that are constantly changing like news or scientific journal sites be allowed? Would we turn away relevant learning experience because a student asks about the European Adder and the website is not apart of the curricular materials that I needed to post 7 days ago?

I become disheartened when I think about the decrease in flexibility to take advantage of these authentic learning experiences. As a science teacher in a small school I have to teach to the standards put forth by the state in creative or unconventional ways. Often our learning opportunities arise in the form of a parent who is a nurse and can teach my students how to take blood pressure, field trips around town to find lichens, or coding projects that provide a brain break in the last 10 minutes of class. We already have procedures for our administration to approve and supervise these activities. We have observations several times a year in our classrooms. We have lesson plans that state the standards covered and objectives for each lesson. We have professional development that helps us adopt research-based, evidence guided practices that have shown to be what is best for our students.

What this bill is requiring of teachers and schools - is not what is best for our students. It adheres teachers to a rigid plan that doesn't serve the students, the teachers nor the community. Contrary to the claim of the bill, I would argue that the intention of a bill that encourages parents to suspiciously examine all curricular materials in advance is to foster mistrust between parents and teachers which will ultimately harm the quality of education the children will receive. While many rural teachers have the freedom to choose how to teach their content, some of us are teaching 4 or 5 different subjects per day. On top of that, we may have meetings in the morning, over our prep time or after school in addition to our instructional time in the classroom. Any additional time spent on detailed lists of all topics, subjects and activities would be on our own time.

Schools are made up of a diverse group of people that have incredibly different life experiences. If we attempt to scrub our curriculum of these unique perspectives, we squander the opportunity to see the world in a different way. I believe that this bill is an attempt to interject politics into the classroom. It could be used as a tool to reduce the position of a particular political viewpoint held by a parent or group of parents. The parents with strong political or ideological views may try to push their agendas onto schools, leading to a lack of balance and diversity in the curriculum.

Therefore, I believe that this bill would exacerbate the already significant strain on schools and those in the teaching profession in North Dakota. This bill restricts the ability for teachers to teach. I believe that this bill will drive more teachers out of the classroom or out of the state. Instead of improving the quality of education

students receive, this bill would degrade the expertise of teachers and deprive students of meaningful learning experiences.

Thank you for your time.