

1 HB 1328 – DJS – Relating to Delinquency Referrals to Juvenile Court

2 Mandan Public Schools – Carly Retterath Testimony

3 Chairman Beard and members of the Education committee my name is Dr. Carly Retterath. I am
4 the Assistant Superintendent for Mandan Public Schools. I strongly support you giving HB 1328
5 a Do Pass recommendation.

6 In Mandan, we have had many opportunities to expand our interventions and options for students
7 struggling to be successful in the traditional school setting. Over the past six years, we have had a
8 strong partnership with the Division of Juvenile Services (DJS). That partnership has supported
9 two, day treatment programs at our secondary schools. These programs allow students a safe space
10 to transition back into school after placement or to receive therapeutic interventions while
11 maintaining school engagement. Furthermore, we have utilized the Behavioral Health Grant and
12 System of Care Grant dollars to expand our district's capacity to address the non-academic needs
13 of our students and families. Some of these supports include site-based clinical counseling at
14 school, additional Family Liaison Support, family case-management support, and offering
15 expanded social skills groups. Finally, as a district, we support an alternative high school and
16 virtual academy to offer additional options for students seeking different educational
17 environments.

18 We also recognize as a district the need to collaborate with other agencies. One example of how
19 we do this is a monthly meeting we hold that includes Three Rivers Human Services, our CHINS
20 worker, school personnel, and our School Resource Officers (SROs). The purpose of these
21 meetings is to collaboratively problem solve and coordinate our services around students. Despite
22 these collaborative efforts, we often encounter youth and families who refuse to engage in the
23 available supports and interventions. This lack of engagement leads to ongoing disruptions in
24 school and the community or complete non-attendance at school.

25 HB 1328 seeks to enhance a school's ability to refer students to Juvenile Court when they have
26 exhausted all their options. This referral capability is a critical component of the intervention
27 process that is currently lacking. By enabling schools to involve the juvenile court, we can ensure
28 that interventions have the necessary legal backing to enforce meaningful engagement and
29 participation from students and their families. This step will provide the intervention process with
30 the "teeth" that it needs to be more effective.

31 Let me be clear: our intention is not to incarcerate students or to involve law enforcement
32 unnecessarily. However, without the ability to mandate engagement in interventions, we find
33 ourselves unable to make progress. HB 1328 would provide a step in the right direction for the
34 necessary legal framework to require participation, ensuring that students receive the support they
35 need while maintaining a positive and productive school environment.

36 In conclusion, I urge the committee to support HB 1328. This bill is vital for empowering schools
37 with the authority they need to effectively support our students and address their challenges. Thank
38 you for your time and consideration.

39 I urge you to give HB 1328 a DO PASS recommendation.