



Empowering families to thrive by providing community-driven resources that foster safe and nurturing environments for children.

Senate Bill 1562

Senate Human Services Committee

Testimony Presented by Christy Dodd, MPH

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Chairman Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

My name is Christy Dodd, and I am the Executive Director of Families Flourish ND (formerly known as Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota). I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of mandated reporter training. I am here today to provide testimony in opposition of HB 1562 which requires MR training before initial licensure only. This means that a teacher would only have to take mandated reporter training once in their career. I stand here in front of you today because our children in North Dakota deserve more than that.

Currently teachers are required to take the online mandated reporter training each year (per HB 1144 in the 2023 session) and HB 1562 would take it from a yearly update/renewal to once prior to initial licensure. Families Flourish ND oversees the free online MR training in partnership with DHHS. During the first year this training was required we had 10,883 individuals take the training. This was a 482% increase in the number of individuals taking the training. The 2 busiest months for the training are August and September each year just prior to the start of the school year. In August we had 9,045 individuals take



Empowering families to thrive by providing community-driven resources that foster safe and nurturing environments for children. the training and in September we had an additional 3,756 individuals trained. I have heard many concerns over the amount of time that it takes to complete the training but we have been pulling and tracking the data with the medium time it takes for those that take the Educator Course to complete the training is 1 hour and 10 minutes or 70 minutes of time. This is taking out the outliers who stayed logged into the system for over 10+ hours including someone who left the system open for over 200 days. During this same time period between when mandate reporter training was required and prior to December 2023 DHHS saw a 20% increase in the number of reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Teachers and school personnel spend the largest chunk of time with children during waking hours each year outside of parents/guardians. Often times schools are the place where children feel the safest. Teachers are our first line of defense in protecting our most vulnerable population. HB 1562 with the amendment takes the training for MR from yearly to prior to obtaining their license. This is a disservice to not only the children here in ND but also to the teachers. I can't tell you the number of times that I have heard from a teacher who when they find out that I work in child abuse prevention have mentioned a concern about making a report or knowing how or what to report. We can't expect someone who has taught for 5 years without any updates or refreshers on reporting to remember and feel comfortable when they don't feel comfortable now and I know they have had updates for the last 2 years. Laws here in ND change as does the process for reporting and the current online MR training is updated to reflect that. Our children deserve to be protected and grow up with happy childhoods.

Senator Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns about this bill. For the



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Christy Dodd

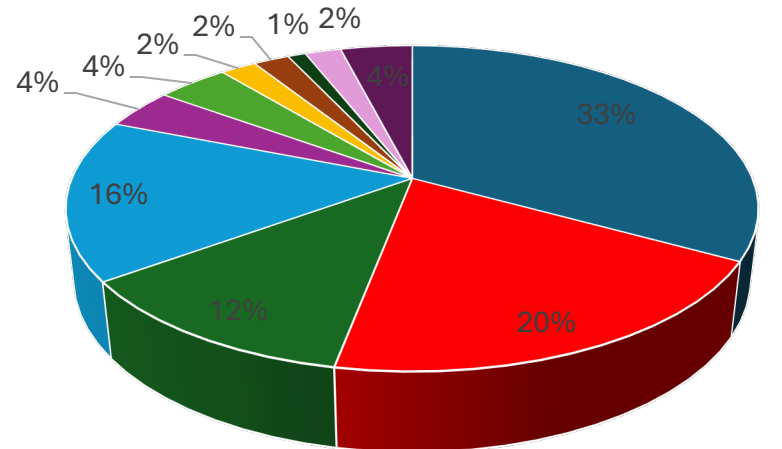
Executive Director

Families Flourish ND

Reports of Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect

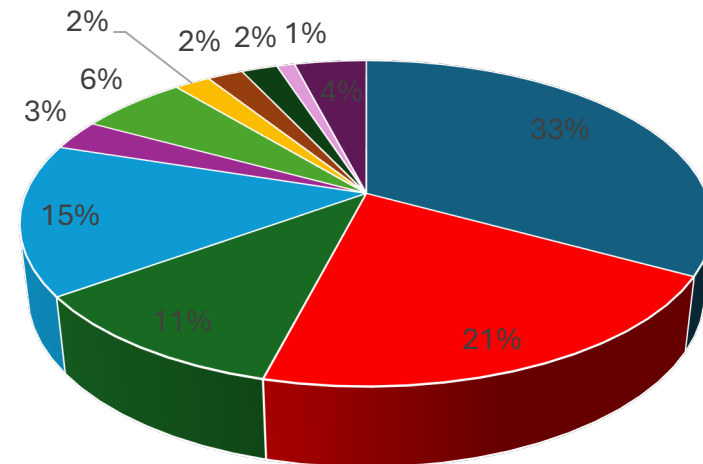
Report Source

FFY 2023



■ Law Enforcement ■ Educators ■ Medical
■ Social Services ■ Other ■ Parent
■ Friend / Neighbor ■ Anonymous ■ Mental Health
■ Child Care ■ Other Relative

FFY 2024



■ Law Enforcement ■ Educators ■ Medical
■ Social Services ■ Other ■ Parent
■ Friend / Neighbor ■ Anonymous ■ Mental Health
■ Child Care ■ Other Relative



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Mandated Reporter Training: Educator Course Overview

Month	Number of Users that Completed Educator Training		
	July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	July 1, 2024 – Dec 31, 2024
July	29	35	89
Aug	467	4,963	9,045
Sept	506	4,741	3,756
Oct	382	543	613
Nov	100	60	232
Dec	108	59	118
Jan	56	106	-
Feb	44	141	-
Mar	29	110	-
Apr	42	56	-
May	28	33	-
Jun	11	36	-
Total	1,802	10,883	13,853

2022-2023 School Year

- There were 10,853 Teachers, Administrators, and Other Specialists within the School Year.
- We had 1,802 Unique Users complete the Educator Course within the Mandated Reporter Training.
- If we assume that the 1,802 Unique Users that completed the training in School Year 2022-2023 were within the Education System, **17% of the Teachers, Specialists, and Administrators completed the MRT.**

2023-2024 School Year

- There were 10,946 Teachers, Administrators, and Other Specialists within the School Year.
- We had 10,883 Unique Users complete the Educator Course within the Mandated Reporter Training.
- If we assume that the 10,883 Unique Users that completed the training in School Year 2023-2024 were within the Education System, **99% of the Teachers, Specialists, and Administrators completed the MRT.**

If the Unique Users completing the Educator Course were within the Education System,
then from School Year 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 there was a

482% INCREASE

in Teachers, Specialists, and Administrators completing the training.

As of January 1, 2024, we started collecting the duration or the time it takes to complete the training. For the 2024-2025 School Year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025), in the data we have collected so far (July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024), we found that the **MEDIAN TIME** it takes for those that take the Educator Course to complete the training is **1 HOUR AND 10 MINUTES.**