

# North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders

## Mr. Jeff Fastnacht, President

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Date: Wednesday, January 6, 2020  
To: North Dakota House Education Committee  
From: Jeff Fastnacht, Asst. Superintendent  
Re: Support for HB 1075

Good Morning Chairman Owens and members of the committee. I am Jeff Fastnacht, Asst. Superintendent at Mandan Public School and I also have the privilege of being the President of the ND Council of Education Leaders. Today, I speak to you on behalf of all educational leaders in North Dakota, as their President.

For over forty years North Dakota has found time in mid-October to ensure educators and leaders are provided an opportunity to broaden and improve their skills, to facilitate the best educational system for our children. This time was once reserved specifically in statute for the ND Teachers Convention. In 2015, this was changed to allow the North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify the days. During this entire time ND Council of Educational Leaders has conducted their fall convention.

As you are aware the Superintendent, just recently, notified schools that she would not identify any days in October of 2021 for professional development. As stated before, this is the first time in over forty years where the fall educators break is not set for all schools.

I hope you believe that educational leaders make a difference for our schools, educators, and our children. *The International Journal of Instruction* (Ismail, Don, Husin & Khalid, 2018) shared the results of a study entitled "Instructional Leadership and Teacher's Functional Competency across the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning" in 2018. This study concluded that there was a strong positive correlation between school leader's instructional leadership and teachers' functional competency. Leaders instructional leadership practices were reported to improve teachers' success in their instructional practices, which in turn increased student performance (Ismail, Don, Husin & Khalid, 2018).

The annual NDCEL Conference is the premier professional development opportunity for school leaders. Each year, this event hosts hundreds of leaders offering access to world renowned thought leaders, regional experts on educational practices, and state-level innovators. No other event in our state provides leaders with this depth of opportunities. No other event offers half as many hours of professional development as the NDCEL Fall Conference.

The question for some, is do these days need to be carved out as non-instructional days. In my view yes. Principals and Superintendents in small schools need to be in their schools when students are present. I have known many leaders that have not attended other events or allowed their full leadership teams attend events in the past, because of the need to have leaders in the building while instruction was taking place. Educators are amazing, but when trouble arises leaders are often called upon to address concerns promptly. Leaders in our state believe their only opportunity to take part in professional development of this quality during a busy school year is when classes are not in session. They rely on these days to be excluded from instructional calendars so they can advance their skills.

I would simply ask that you support HB 1075 to ensure that our states educational leaders are provided the opportunity to learn, grow, and become the leaders our educators, families and students deserve.

Thank you for your time and I would stand for any questions from the committee.

### Reference

Ismail, S. N., Don, Y., Husin, F., & Khalid, R. (2018, July). Instructional Leadership and Teachers' Functional Competency across the 21st Century Learning. Retrieved January 4, 2021, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1183348.pdf>