

# Mandan Public School District

District Offices

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Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021  
To: North Dakota Senate Education Committee  
From: Jeff Fastnacht, Asst. Superintendent  
Re: Support for HB 1083

Good Afternoon, Chairman Schaible and members of the committee. I am Jeff Fastnacht, Asst. Superintendent at Mandan Public School and I stand in support of HB 1083.

This bill is simple. It provides an opportunity for the students affected by COVID-19 in March, April and May of 2020 to not be penalized in regard to the ND state scholarship.

To make the value of this bill personal I wish to share with you a recent discussion with a student. On February 24<sup>th</sup> I had the opportunity to meet with a student (I will call her Katie, that is my daughter's name to protect her identity). Katie had transferred to MHS in the fall of 2019 from a small school in North Dakota. She was a good student yet affected by some health conditions which made learning for her a challenge. Katie has a 504 accommodations plan. In the spring of 2020, with the onset of COVID-19 Katie found herself struggling with online learning, how to connect with her teacher, and the difficulties of now learning alone at home with her health condition. Resources and help were challenging despite the good work of our educators. She was struggling.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of February our team met to discuss her 504 plan and helping Katie successfully graduate. She was concerned about a couple courses, which she needed, from this past fall along with one class from the spring of last year. Her concern was that her grade in that class was going to be the only thing preventing her from receiving the state scholarship. We provided her options to retake the course but with her health conditions, just completing the work she had to do now was going to be a challenge. You see in addition to Katie being a full-time high school student, she is also working 20-30 hours a week as she lives on her own. She is 18 and lives on her own due to struggles with her family. She lives on her own, goes to school, and works a job all while from suffering from severe and persistent chronic pain. The pain makes it difficult to regularly attend school or go to work. The pain, the work, and the challenges of COVID-19 have impacted her opportunities to receive the state scholarship. Katie is not alone in this struggle.

I spoke to Katie about HB 1083 and the possibility it may help her. The actions you take today have an impact on kids, some that had few good options during this time. I commend you for your consideration of HB 1083 and encourage you to recommend it with a DO PASS.

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