

SB 2304

Senator Joan Heckaman

Chairman and Members of the Committee: I am Senator Joan Heckaman representing District 23 and I am here to introduce SB 2304 to you this afternoon.

I would like to start off by telling you my testimony is very short, but I would ask permission to read Senator Richard Marcellais' s testimony as he is absent today.

SB 2304 requires all public elementary, secondary, and nonpublic schools in the state to include curriculum on Native American history integrated into their social studies curriculum. The four-week course could be included in several options already taught in our schools. Grades 4 and 8 already participate in North Dakota studies and this would be a perfect fit for them. Other US history courses and even a Government course could be the fit for grades 9-12.

I received information from Lucy Fredricks from the Department of Public Instruction via my staff that there are already some prepared lessons developed with the input of tribal elders from the different tribes following essential understanding that the elders developed. This project continues to grow with new lessons and content and are available for download from the department's web site. Over 3000 teachers across the state have been trained with on-site training as well as training during conferences. So, this information is readily available but not all students have access to this information.

Schools that have received training from NDNAEU (North Dakota Native American Essential Understanding) project include schools at Bismarck, Mandan, New Town, Sunny Side elementary in Minot, Fargo, West Fargo, Dunseith, Belcourt, Warwick, Central MS, Circle of Nations, Mandaree, Four Winds, and Cannonball Elementary.

As you can see many these schools are schools with a rich presence of Native American heritage that we should not lose. But a greater richness can develop as all schools across North Dakota understand and appreciate Native American history.

Chairman, that completes my testimony. I would like to read Senator Marcellais testimony with your permission.