

1 HB1201– Relating to Prohibiting a State Entity from Employing
2 and Individual under Contract with a School District

3 Mandan Public Schools – Mike Bitz, Superintendent

4 Good afternoon Chairman Heinert and members of the House
5 Education Committee. For the record, my name is Mike Bitz. I
6 am fortunate to serve as the superintendent for Mandan Public
7 Schools. I am here today in support of HB1201. I will be brief.

8 In each of the past two school years special education teachers in
9 the Mandan Public School District have been offered jobs in
10 October by the ND Department of Public Instruction. This is
11 problematic for a number of reasons. Special education teachers
12 are difficult to find even when you open the position 5-6 months
13 before you need the teacher to start. It also is problematic from
14 an education perspective, special education teachers case manage
15 their students and spend a large part of their day with them. When
16 teacher leaves mid-year, this relationship is disrupted, and it is the
17 students who suffer.

18 When Mandan Public Schools interviews teachers, we ask the
19 question “are you currently under contract with another school

1 district?" If the answer is yes, we do not offer a contract to that
2 individual without okaying it with the superintendent of that
3 school district and we would never offer a contract to a teacher
4 under contract once the school year begins. I know the Bismarck
5 Public School District extends the same courtesy to neighboring
6 districts.

7 MPS has not approved the request for the teacher to be released
8 from her contract this year, and she is still working at Mandan
9 Middle School. We have been searching, but we have been
10 unable to find a suitable replacement. Ultimately, schools can
11 deny the release from contract, but this creates an unhealthy
12 working environment.

13 I urge you to vote YES on HB1201 and I would be happy to
14 answer any questions you may have.

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