

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing today in opposition to House Bill 1251. I am a full-time attorney and full-time mom and I live on a farm outside of Powers Lake, North Dakota. Two of my children attend Powers Lake Elementary School and I have one that will attend in a few years. My husband and I chose to live in Powers Lake because it's a small town with a great school system. I can personally attest to that – having graduated from there 20 years ago. My mom was a teacher in our school and my sister teaches in a neighboring school and both have benefited from having their own superintendent in that school building.

HB 1251 seeks to limit the school board's ability to pay a superintendent and will force schools to share superintendents combining at least 2 and, in our case, probably 3 schools together. The school boards already have the ability to share superintendents should it be advantageous to the schools involved and if the schools agree on this action. This bill would take this choice away from the local school districts and make it mandatory for the schools to combine. This choice should be left at the local level.

In our school, the superintendent serves many, many important roles including in discipline, guiding curriculum discussions, supporting school staff, and promoting our school and community, and many more. If the schools are sharing a superintendent – who would handle those duties? This bill may unintentionally cause schools to hire another individual to replace the absence of the superintendent – just with a different title. Our teachers cannot be placed in a position to have to deal with certain situations themselves because our superintendent is only in the school building on Mondays and Thursdays and today its Tuesday. Some may argue that this can be handled through technology, but I am a strong advocate for the personal presence is much better than talking to someone through a computer. We need a superintendent in our building and if my school board agrees we should be able to do that.

Please leave this decision up to the local school boards to make decisions that are best for their local school. Give House Bill 1251 a DO NOT PASS. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber Fiesel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Amber Fiesel
Powers Lake, ND