



NDSBA
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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Bismarck ND 58507-7128
1-800-932-8791 • (701)255-4127
www.ndsba.org

HB 1251
House Education | January 25, 2023
Testimony of Alexis Baxley

Good morning, Chairman Heinert, and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Alexis Baxley, and I serve as the executive director of the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents the elected school boards of all 170 public school districts and several special education units in North Dakota.

NDSBA stands in strong opposition to HB 1251. I plan to keep my comments brief this morning in an effort to allow my members plenty of time to speak to why this bill would be bad for public education in North Dakota. As you can see, there are many folks here today. We had too many folks who were interested in testifying, so in an effort to be respectful of your time, we have collected letters from school boards, superintendents, business managers, teachers, and other school staff members who oppose this bill. You should have those letters available at your desk and online.

Before I introduce my board members, I want to share a couple of points. First, when I shared with this committee about our organization earlier in the session I told you that our default position was always the one that supported local control. That is the primary reason we oppose this bill. We believe that schools are best run by the parents of the children that fill the halls and the members of the communities in which they are located – because that’s who locally elected school board members are. They are individuals who volunteer their time because they care about student outcomes, they value the richness and opportunities schools bring to rural communities, and they care about their neighbors and fellow taxpayers. HB 1251 is a direct attack on local control and will hamstring a school board’s ability to serve its students through quality leadership. These are not decisions that should be made at the state level.

We have also heard arguments from proponents that this bill will save money, which would be beneficial to teachers and taxpayers alike. Later speakers will address this false savings narrative, but I want to speak a little bit to the discussion surrounding taxes and higher per-capita costs in rural districts. We hear the cry for reduced property taxes often, but I have never had a conversation with a rural North Dakotan who wants to close their local school district and send their kids or grandkids the next town over to save money. Local, rural schools are still valued greatly by North Dakotans.

For these reasons, and the many that will be presented by the speakers who will follow me, I’d ask that you give HB 1251 a do-not-pass recommendation. I have school board members from Finley-Sharon, Turtle Lake-Mercer, Elgin-New Leipzig, and Richardton-Taylor following me. I’d be happy to take any questions you might have, but will be sticking around for the remainder of the hearing if you wish to save any questions for the end. Thank you.

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

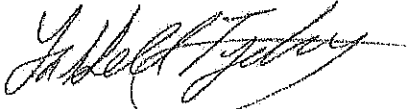
I am writing in extreme opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if we deem fit for our district. We are the voice for our constituents.

Not only does this bill attack our decision to have our own superintendent but also it strips us from the authority of selecting our own superintendent. This is an over reach of state government.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

As a locally elected school board member, I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LaShell Tjelde', written in a cursive style.

LaShell Tjelde
Alexander Public School Board President

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,


I am writing in extreme opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if we deem fit for our district. We are the voice for our constituents.

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Your constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Wahlstrom', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Cameron Wahlstrom
Alexander Public School Board Vice President

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in extreme opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if we deem fit for our district. We are the voice for our constituents.

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As a locally elected school board member, I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your constituent,



Chris Link

Alexander Public School Board Member

Dear ND Legislators,

My name is Robert Sperry. I am a rancher and sell performance and production horses and raise cattle. Sperryhorses.com will give you and understanding of the size of operation I run. I am also a school board member for eleven years and the Beach School Board President. From the size of my ranch business, I understand what it takes to run a school. It's not a part-time job.

Leadership is a presence. As a school board member and president, I rely heavily on the administration, foremost the superintendent, to take care of any situation that may arise at **any time** (not just 8-4, Monday-Friday). The foundation of our school is a superintendent who lives in our school district and our county, feels the pulse of our community and is dedicated to our kids and staff on an everyday basis. The parents and patrons in our school district want to see the superintendent, the visual presence, confirming the dedication to our kids and community.

My ranch runs on leadership, as do my schools. I want someone in the saddle every day, all day. From sun up, to sun down. As much as it takes. The position doesn't have set hours. The position is demanding, the very definition of the superintendent position. Always present, always on top of situations, always aware, always available. "That's a keeper.", as we would say in the ranch business.

Let's just say hold your horses, when the conversation of making the superintendent position part-time is discussed. Our kids safety is number one. These are my kids, my friends kids, my community members kids, our future. We need and expect the superintendent in the building when our kids are in the building. Should anything arise, our fearless leader is trained, prepared, and most of all PRESENT to handle any situation that could arise. That's dedication. Having our kids safety at the forefront every single day, every single minute is crucial. We see this on the national news all too often. As a school board member, I want to keep our school under a full-time, watchful eye 24/7. That's what we hire a superintendent to do.

I tip my hat to the superintendents in North Dakota, the school leaders who tirelessly oversee our schools, serving however many hours of the day or night it takes. The students of the Beach Public School District are well taken care of.

Thank you and hats off for dedicating your **full-time** presence and leadership to the staff and kids of our schools.

Until next time,



Robert Sperry
Rancher and School Board President
Beach Public School District #3
Beach ND

January 24, 2023

Chairman Heinert, Vice-Chair Schreiber-Beck and members of the North Dakota House Education Committee,

I am writing in opposition to HB 1251. I am a school board member of the Beach School District in rural southwest North Dakota. Our district is currently comprised of 275 students including Home on the Range students. Within the last year we went through the daunting process of trying to find and hire a qualified superintendant candidate for our district. In rural areas this can be a challenge recruiting teachers and administrators to choose us for their livelihood and home. Rural communities expect our school administrators to be active in our community and be present within the community. When school boards are interviewing and reviewing candidates for administration positions it is important that the person they hire have a desired interest in engaging in our rural community and collaborating with our local government officials. This relationship is vital to small communities to ensure growth and opportunities for our children and the continued life of our small towns.

HB 1251 will take away any local control we currently have to decide who is the best candidate for our community, staff and kids. In order to meet the 475 quota as proposed we would have to combine with 3 surrounding schools, one 13 miles away, another 24 miles away and the next closest being 42 miles away. It seems impossible for a superintendent to properly manage this capacity of schools to meet your 475 quota. That takes us from a full time superintendent five days a week to one coming to our school 1.25 days a week. Our staff, kids, and community deserve better than this.

With this change we expect a new position would be required to help fill the void of a part time superintendant. The workload does not go away, however HB 1251 removes our resource to do the work. This position would most likely have to be someone in an administration role, costing our school district an additional \$65,000 + dollars. It is irresponsible to assume principals would pick up the slack from an absent superintendant. Our superintendent and principals are ALWAYS BUSY. Larger schools may have multiple assistant administrators and positions to help with the work load but in rural america our superintendent is expected to do it all and they do. They are a jack of all trades to assure we are meeting state and federal requirements. Many schools require superintendents to wear multiple hats to help fill the gaps This may include filling in for a sick cook, an absent teacher, supervising a sporting event to help our AD, or driving the rural roads at 4:30am to determine what is safest for our kids in inclement weather. Our school added a responsibility to the job description for our superintendent; they are required to help our Athletic Director as needed. Instead of saving schools and taxpayers money, you have now added another layer of government control and costs. HB 1251 will essentially remove the local and personal relationships superintendants have with boards, staff and communities.

Local school Boards members are elected by the communities to be the voice of the people. With these elections communities expect board members to make the best decisions for our community. HB 1251 takes away our voice and silences rural schools. Local school board members know best the values and expectations of our community. Please keep our rural schools alive, I ask you please **DO NOT PASS HB 1251.**

Kindest Regards, Lindsay Dykins

Billings County School District
350 Broadway
Medora, ND 58645

January 18, 2023

Dear N.D. Legislators,

The Billings County School Board is providing this letter to share our strong opposition to HB 1251. Each board should have the ability to choose their school leaders, as they have a deep understanding of community and educational needs. Losing that ability is concerning and directly correlates to student success and staff retention. Additionally, this one-size-fits-all “financial” solution that supposedly provides tax relief is extremely misleading to the public. School district input was not requested and therefore people do not have a true understanding of what this bill will look like within the school system. We truly don’t see your vision for this bill, and we believe our school district will be negatively affected if this bill should pass.

In rural areas, this bill could require four, five, or even six school districts to share one superintendent to meet the student number requirement. In doing so, each superintendent would be spread so thin that they would be unable to provide the proper leadership in any building. The day-to-day tasks would then fall on the current staff or need to be hired out. In this job market that is nearly an impossible task, as we are currently struggling to fill open positions. In the past, Billings County School District has tried to share a principal between multiple buildings and saw firsthand the inefficacy of this method. Without strong leadership within the buildings, the school culture deteriorated, student success declined, staff retention drastically decreased, and employee burn out was at an all-time high. Who suffers in this scenario? The students and their families suffer from lack of strong leadership available to them within their buildings. Effective leadership drastically impacts the success of the students, why are we looking to force these leaders into impossible situations and then waiting for them to fail?

Our district philosophy has always been student focused. We make decisions every day to do what is in the best interest of our students. We are an extremely unique district with a very small population. Our families are conscientious in their desire for both meeting student educational needs and hiring staff who can do so. The school staff we have hired, regardless of their positions, work endlessly to create an educational environment where all students can be successful. As a board, we support student needs and provide the staff with the tools they need to be impactful educators. Additional staff members will need to be hired in an already strained job market and without strong leadership within the buildings your “dedicated educators” will have no one to turn to for support and guidance.

For these reasons, the Billings County School Board is adamantly opposed to HB 1251.

Thank you for your time,

Billings County School Board Members

Bowbells Public School

School Board
J.R. Aufforth, Pres.
Adam Jensen, VP
Jade Parkinson
Jill Wettstein
Tyler Ross

Dist. #14
200 Madison Ave.
PO Box 279
Bowbells, ND 58721-0279

Celeste Thingvold, Supt/HS Prin
Sherry Lalum, Elem Prin
Darlene Pullen, Bus Man.
Supt. Phone 701-377-2396
School Phone 701-377-2397
School Fax 701-377-2399

To: ND House Education Committee Members of the 68th Legislative Assembly
From: Bowbells School Board
Date: 1/16/2023

Re: HB 1251 Problems for Bowbells Public School District

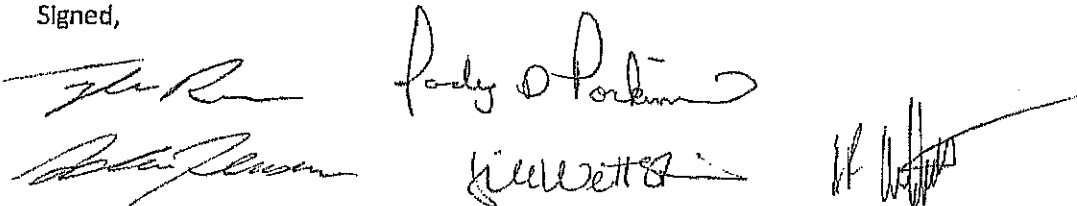
Chairman Heinert and members of the ND House Education Committee,

The Bowbells Public School Board met this week and discussed the impacts of HB 1251, which would dictate to schools the salary and FTE of a superintendent. For Bowbells, we currently employ a FT superintendent. Her duties include board management, district leadership, fiscal stability, financial decision-making, curriculum and instruction leadership, evaluation, human resources, community relations, building maintenance, transportation management, and a myriad of other responsibilities. Without a highly qualified superintendent who is solely dedicated to our school, we feel that our District would fall behind in building maintenance, hiring and managing qualified staff, encounter an increase in student and staff behaviors that result in a drop in school climate, and fall even further in academics.

Our board, five locally elected community members, devote our time working with our Superintendent very directly. We made the decision to contract business management services and this has required even more dedication from our Superintendent. This bill would erode our ability to make decisions for the effectiveness of our school and how we operate it. While it may be good for some school districts to share a superintendent, we feel that we would need to hire additional staff in order to fill the many duties performed by one individual. This would need to be done in a market where finding qualified employees is already very difficult, and it would be compounded by the fact that many of the positions would be part-time, making it even harder to attract and hire in our community.

In short, this would be a mistake for our District.

Signed,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is on the left, the second is in the middle, and the third is on the right.

Bowbells School Board members

January 22, 2023

REF: HB 1251

ND Legislators,

The Carrington School Board opposes HB 1251. Even though HB 1251 does not affect the Carrington School District directly at this time, we oppose the bill because of the effects this bill, if passed, would have on the future of the secondary educational process in North Dakota.

This bill would take away local control when hiring and/or firing school administrators. State government should not and cannot dictate who a school district has as their school administrator. Next, state government will dictate which school districts must close and/or consolidate. Is the future of secondary education in North Dakota a state government mandated system, where there is no local control by the patrons of the district, whose students are being educated? Patrons of the school district must have the right to local control over their local school district that is educating their youth.

The local school is the heartbeat of a lot of our North Dakota small rural communities. It is the largest employer in the community. The local school has the responsibility of educating the youth of the community in a safe environment that will prepare them for advanced education or to enter the job force. The youth of any community are the most precious commodity of that community. Whatever happened to the "main street initiative"?

The bill suggests that passage would save 13 million dollars that could be passed directly to teacher salaries. Everyone involved in secondary education knows that would not happen. In many cases any additional money paid to teacher salaries would be offset to the district by the additional cost to the district for additional building principals, salaries for those secondary jobs that many superintendents have in small schools, (athletic director, teacher, bus driver, technology director, coach, etc.).

The superintendent is the leader of the school district. He/she is the one that works to develop the "culture" of the school district that makes the school successful in educating their students. They must have the daily contact with the teachers, students, and employees of the school to develop that culture. That is only done with regular contact and communications with everyone in the school. That culture cannot be developed without regular contact. It cannot be developed by virtual means either.

Quality superintendents are hard to find. When you find a great one, you hope they can avoid burnout and they will stay in your district forever. Asking an administrator to serve 2, 3, 4, or even 5 school districts, will just lead to job burnout and that person seeking a position in another state, or leaving the educational profession altogether.

The Carrington School Board strongly opposes HB 1251.

Joel Lemer
School Board President
Carrington Public Schools

DEVILS LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

1601 College Drive North, Devils Lake, ND 58301
(701) 662-7640 (FAX) 662-7646

January 17, 2023

Dear Chairman Heinert, Members of the House Education Committee, and District 15 Legislators,

We, the Devils Lake School Board, are writing in opposition to HB1251. Our reasons are as follows.

- Choosing a superintendent is best done at the local level. Local boards and their patrons know the needs of their districts best and should be allowed to choose their own leadership.
- Superintendents in small districts perform many other duties needed within their districts. If a district's superintendent is forced to supervise other districts, these other duties will fall to other personnel within the district. This may not only negate any cost savings, it could ultimately end up in higher costs within the district.
- Superintendent salaries should be determined locally and not mandated by the state. Local boards are authorized by century code to determine the salaries for their districts. Citizens of the communities have a better understanding of what is happening within their districts and are better equipped to determine salaries for their employees.
- States should not have the authority to force districts to partner with another district. This will only create disruption within each district and turn superintendents into managers instead of a person with a vested interest in one district.
- Forcing districts to combine leadership and creating salary caps will have a negative impact on the quality of candidates who seek superintendent positions within our state.
- Forcing districts to combine will also create problems for evaluating superintendents. In a combined district, which district board will have the final say over whether or not a superintendent is performing his or her duties effectively?

Thank you for trying to improve education throughout the state of North Dakota, however, we do not believe that this is the path to follow.

Sincerely,



Cory Meyer, Board President
Jason Hodous, Board Vice President
Lee Ann Johnston, Board Member
Steve Halldorson, Board Member
Sheri Olson, Board Member

Krista Verlinde
9999 108th Ave NW
Noonan, ND 58765
Krista.Verlinde@yahoo.com
January 19, 2023

House Education Committee
Chairman Pat Heinert

Dear Mr. Heinert,

I am writing in opposition to proposed ND House Bill No. 1251 relating to limiting compensation for school district Superintendents. I am currently the Vice President of the Divide County School District School Board, and have been an active member within our board for nearly 6 years.

The bill being presented states it is designed as an important step for North Dakota schools, however I disagree. This proposal would hurt & limit local decision making, decrease communication & transparency, and trickle-down past administration to teachers, students, parents, and community members – all suffering from the changes proposed.

The Divide County School Board met this week and I was proud to initiate a motion that was passed unanimously to document our shared objection to ND House Bill No. 1251. Personally, I am against this bill for numerous reasons, a few being the following:

- Sharing a Superintendent will not automatically reduce district cost, in fact I would argue it would increase our bottom line. Main example being that we would need to hire additional administrative employees to handle duties currently being handled by our Superintendent.
- Based on requirements of bill, our district for the 22/23 school year could utilize a little over \$34K towards Superintendent salary. To find a qualified administrator while offering a reasonable salary, we would potentially need to share this expense with 4+ school districts.
- Our school is the center of our community – Divide County wide. This forced consolidation, is the first step of moving towards forced consolidation – and I am strongly opposed.

In addition to my concerns – has it been considered that there are areas of the state without several options when it comes to organizing together to share a Superintendent? I did not read anything within the bill limiting distance or requiring contiguous connection. Divide County School District sits less than 10 miles from the Canadian border and less than 60 miles from the MT border. If we could not make the requirements work locally, I fear we would share a Superintendent with school districts potentially 150 to 300 miles away, making it awful hard to assume it would or could logistically work to best support our school(s) needs on a daily basis.

Thank you in advance for reconsidering this bill.

Sincerely,



Krista Verlinde

BARBARA A. KING

**907 DAKOTA DR
CROSBY, ND 58730**

**CELL: 620-385-0144
WORK: 701-965-6313**

January 24, 2023

North Dakota School Boards Association
1224 W Owens Ave
Bismarck, ND 58507-7128

Re: HB1251

I am writing this letter in opposition to HB1251.

First and foremost it removes all local control, from our School Board and our voters. The very same voters that had faith in you and exercised their voting right to elect you to the position you currently hold. Those of us that choose to reside in small communities choose to do so largely, in some cases, because of the personalized education our children can receive in a smaller setting. Even though I do not have students in our local District, my husband and I re-located from a large school to a small school setting when our children attended school. We loved the idea of the staff, teachers and administrators knowing our child's name and our children being familiar with those adult members of our community as well.

The School Board and administration are charged, in North Dakota Century Code, with the fiscal responsibility of managing our District. HB1251 is effectively telling us that an individual in the next county or on the other side of the state knows what our District can financially afford when employing a Superintendent better than the seven members that were elected by our patrons. Among the powers of a School Board in accordance with North Dakota Century Code 15.1-09-33 is the power to "Contract for the services of a district superintendent, provided that the contract, which may be renewed, does not exceed a period of three years." Nobody in the state knows our District's fiscal position better than the Board of our District and the ability to expend funds in the best interest of our District, our students, and our taxpayers should absolutely remain with our Board, and our Board alone.

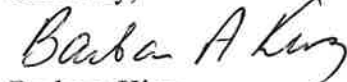
I understand that small districts can struggle with recruiting qualified individuals to fill the position of Superintendent but this bill will only make that exponentially more difficult rather than easing the burden for those schools. The individual would have to be willing manage a minimum of two boards and staff (in many cases more) while attempting to be an active member of all communities involved all while their salary has been limited at the state level to 1.5% of the districts' combined local and state revenue.

As a Business Manager I oppose the thought that we would have limited control over the hiring process of a Superintendent.

As a taxpayer I oppose the suppression of my voting voice. I vote in the election for the School Board candidates I feel will best represent my voice when making hiring decisions for a Superintendent. By taking the control from the local voters you are making our votes inconsequential.

Please oppose HB1251 for the sakes of the children and Districts who know we can trust our School Boards to make fiscally and educationally responsible decisions regarding the administration of our Districts and education of our children.

Sincerely,



Barbara King

January 20, 2023

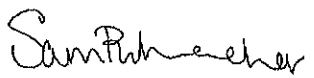
Attn: House Education Committee

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,
I am writing to encourage you to oppose HB 1251. I am a Divide County School District school board member and parent of three elementary students. This bill takes away local control and decision making when it comes to the superintendent. Divide County School District has roughly 381 students enrolled per Public School District Fall Enrollment 2022-23 which would make this bill applicable to our school district. I have seen firsthand the long hours, well over any 40-hour week, that our superintendent puts in for the school district. In addition to the already long hours, there is concern with the geographical area and distance to the nearest school districts. As you are aware, Divide County School District already encompasses an entire county. I included a chart of enrollment numbers and miles to the nearest schools below.

Public School District Fall Enrollment 2022-23 data from NDDPI

School District	Enrollment	Miles from Crosby	County
Divide County (Crosby)	381	n/a	Divide
Burke Central	80	36	Burke
Ray (Nesson)	421	47	Williams
Grenora	160	48	Williams
Powers Lake	227	54	Burke
Bowbells	87	55	Burke

As you can see, even if we were to combine with the nearest school, we would still be under 475. Even if the combined enrollment was over 475, that distance would be a barrier for quality work as a superintendent. In addition to the already listed concerns, any of the neighboring school districts are in different counties from Divide which would further complicate work for the superintendent as they would be dealing with different tax levies, etc. for the different buildings. There would be additional time and financial expense with travel between the possible multiple schools. With this bill, there are bound to be current superintendents that will no longer have a position due to combining of roles. What message does this send to our employees? Superintendents that fall under this bill would be answering to two or more school boards, have multiple differing school policies to work with and manage, as well as double or more administrative staff that they are responsible for supervising. I also have concern that the larger territory they would be expected to cover, and additional duties would be a barrier to retaining and hiring superintendents. The capped salary is very concerning as it's not realistic to expect a management position that's covering such a wide area and huge responsibility to accept that low level of pay. I would again urge you to oppose this bill. If you have questions, please let me know.


Samantha Pulvermacher
701-641-6763

Edmore Public School

706 North Main St. P.O. Box 188

Phone: (701) 644-2281

FAX: (701) 644-2222

Frank Schill, Superintendent

Board of Education:

Doug Freije, President

Ryan Lorenz, Vice President

Sandra Knoke, Director

Justin Grohs, Director

Amanda Sten, Director

Diane Martinson, Business Manager

Diane Martinson, Principal

Testimony

House Bill 1251

House Education Committee

By Edmore Public School Board of Directors

Chairman Heinert, Members of the House Education Committee:

The Edmore Public School Board of Directors opposes HB1251 which would limit superintendent compensation and require school districts to share a superintendent if their K12 enrollment was below 475 pupils.

The Edmore school board operated under the proposed legislation of sharing a superintendent among two school boards from 2000-2012. During this period, the superintendent managed both boards and staff, but fell short of leading either organization to enhance student achievement. In 2012 the Edmore school board hired a superintendent to lead their district. We have been extremely satisfied with having our superintendent focus on the Edmore school district rather than divide his time among two school districts.

Our superintendent wears many hats and even though it appears that his salary is excessive for the 25 students we serve, the board has processed his salary, years of experience, advanced degrees, along with his job duties and have concluded that to hire additional staff to fulfill his many responsibilities and duties would be more expensive for the district.

We believe that a school board should have the flexibility to determine the financial compensation they offer to their superintendent and all school employees. This is a local control issue and should remain local. Each school district has its own culture and unique job duties for their administration, teaching staff, and classified staff. Each school district should be allowed to compensate these individuals as the school board feels appropriate.

The Edmore school board of directors urges a do not pass on HB1251.

Doug Freije, President

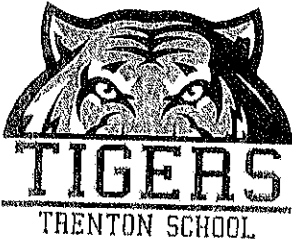
Ryan Lorenz, Vice President

Sandra Knoke, Director

Justin Grohs, Director

Amanda Sten, Director

"Working Together to Inspire Lifelong Learners"



EIGHT MILE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

P.O. Box 239
Trenton, North Dakota 58853

Phone: 701-774-8221
Fax: 701-774-8040

District Website
www.trenton.k12.nd.us

Facebook Page
@trentonschool

January 16, 2023

Dear House Education Committee (Chairman Pat Heinert)

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Eight Mile School District #6 school board in opposition of HB 1251. I would like to share three main points on why we are not in support this bill.

1. In our community the school is our lifeblood. We see this bill as one that will ultimately force us to consolidate with a neighboring school district. The sponsors deny this, but also admit that districts would be forced to submit co-op agreements to DPI for their approval.
2. This bill will eliminate an essential measure of local control over our community's school. School districts choose superintendents based on the person they believe will best meet the needs of their children and families and we fully believe that choosing a superintendent should be left up to the individual districts and their stakeholders. This bill will force school districts to abide by leadership decisions made by other communities and remove the ability of smaller communities to control who leads the education of their children.
3. Finally, while our school district is part of Williams County, our demographics with a roughly 50% Native American enrollment, make us distinct and unique in our region and this is very important to us when selecting school leaders. Sharing a superintendent would not be beneficial to our community and would serve to erode the uniqueness of found here. The individual we have serving our school must understand this cultural uniqueness and share in our values. If a person must answer to multiple boards, we would wonder where their allegiance lies? Would they truly be vested in our community and hold the best interests of our students at the forefront of their larger "regional" decision-making?

So, Education Committee members please vote NO on HB 1251

Sincerely,

Anita Falcon, Board President
Eight Mile School District #6
Trenton, ND

TRENTON SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT
Nurturing Values that Empower Students to Succeed

WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

I am here before you today in opposition to HB 1251. This Bill is a direct attack on local control, as well as a hit to small school districts, who are already struggling. The position of superintendent is part of the lifeblood of a school. The person in this position is essential to ensure that your school is functioning at the highest level possible. By removing local control in that decision, you are crippling the local school board from doing what is best for the learners within their buildings.

It is already extremely difficult to find quality citizens to run for school board. What will happen with the forced consolidation of superintendents? If school districts share superintendents, it will be even more difficult to fill those board positions. You will be eliminating local control and creating environments in which one district could overpower others, creating a monopoly on a superintendent's time, leaving the other school or schools without focused leadership. Who will suffer the most? The students.

Last year the Ellendale School District was selected to be part of the Be Legendary School Board Training. This state-funded training required a commitment on the school board's part, as well as administration, in order to develop goals for student outcomes, guardrails to ensure success and forward movement, as well as review of structures, teamwork development and advocacy. This training was intense, time-consuming and has created a change in culture in our school, as well as our school board meetings and our interaction and focus with administration. The state invested in this training, and we have just begun the process. An important key partner in this process is our superintendent, and his ability to connect the elementary and high school pathways, as well as ensuring that the Board is on the same page and directing funding where it is most needed to meet the needs of the students. We are already beginning to see some success in changing how we tackle the issues before us. Why are we not allowing this training and process to develop before getting our feet kicked out from under us?

Let me share with you my experience as a school board member: we have hired two superintendents in the last 5 years. I do not know why we would intentionally throw school boards into this process, let alone doing so within a hostile environment and adding in the challenge of co-oping with another district or two, and topping it all off with leaving ultimate control within the state's hands. The instability that such a proposal would create could cripple a district, especially any district (such as Ellendale) that borders another state. We would struggle to compete for quality candidates for these positions, which would also trickle down to principal positions, teachers, support staff, etc.

Our superintendent has been a member of our community for just over six months. He came into a less-than-ideal situation in which we were also in the process of hiring both elementary and high school principals. His experience allowed him to hit the ground running, and through our Be Legendary training we worked hard to create a better environment for both students and staff, as well as developing new ways in which our board can engage and ensure that we were focusing on student outcomes. He not only has been an asset to the board in creating a positive environment, but he has also stepped into many other roles to ensure that our school is functioning at as high of level as possible, whether be as a bus driver, janitor, lunch personnel or coach. I cannot imagine attempting to function and focus on the aspects that we have promised to make priority without having him as part of our team.

Again, I stand before you today in opposition of this bill. I cannot imagine the depths of the negative impact that this would have on our districts, especially our rural ones. It would definitely Be Legendary, just not in a way that would be a positive step for North Dakota and more importantly, for our students.

Val Wagner

Ellendale School Board Member

HB 1251 - Testimony in Opposition

Greetings Chair Heinert and Honorable Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Robin Nelson, and I share this testimony on behalf of the Fargo Public School Board.

We are opposed to HB 1251, a bill to require school districts with fewer than 475 students to share a superintendent, and to limit superintendent compensation.

While HB 1251 does not directly affect the Fargo School District:

- It shifts control further away from parents and the values of each community.
- Local school boards are directly elected by the citizens of their district. Those closest to the people they represent should be the body that determines whom the community employs.
- Limiting the compensation of superintendents will likely affect the quality of candidates attracted to our state, as well as the retention of the most highly qualified education leaders.

The Fargo Public School Board respectfully encourages the committee to recommend a DO NOT PASS on House Bill 1251.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our position.



FINLEY-SHARON PUBLIC SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 448 FINLEY, ND 58230-448 701 524-2420
www.finleysharonschool.com



Educating today's learners for tomorrow's world.

Jeff Larson, Superintendent/Elem. Principal
Neil Race, Sec. Principal

Holly Stromsodt, School Board President
April Grandalen, Business Manager

January 17, 2023
RE: OPPOSITION OF HB 1251

Dear ND House Education Committee – Chairman Pat Heinert,

My name is Holly Stromsodt and I am the President of the Finley-Sharon School District. I am writing this letter on behalf of the entire, 5 member, Finley-Sharon School Board. We stand united in opposition of House Bill No. 1251. We are concerned about the proposed limitation on superintendent compensation and the partnering with another district to jointly employ a superintendent. The district that we serve currently enrolls 88 students in K-12 grade. We undoubtedly are a small district in a vast rural community. We are in a sports co-op with our neighboring district 25 miles away. Our community's survival is greatly accredited to our existing K-12 school.

Like most rural districts, our school is the heart of our community. We are concerned that forcing school districts to share a superintendent is the first step towards further consolidation and the demise of our district. We are already able to share a superintendent with a neighboring school district, if we so choose. We have not choose that path, because we are able to operate and function within our financial means. This is the epitome of local control. If this bill passes, "low enrollment school districts" would lose this local control.

Finley-Sharon's current superintendent is also the elementary principal, IT coordinator, Federal Programs Coordinator, Transportation Supervisor, and Title IX Coordinator, amongst many other duties that he "fills-in" on a daily basis. In small districts like Finley-Sharon, the superintendents wear many hats and works countless hours year-round to keep the district functioning properly. Our superintendent is the "Boss/CEO/CFO" of our school. If we did not have a superintendent in our building, who becomes the "boss"? The remaining high school principal (who always wears multiple hats)? Will we then be forced to find a K-12 principal, and then have only 1 admin in the building? That principal would more than likely need an assistant of some sort. So where is the cost savings?

We are also concerned about the amount of meetings that would be required of a superintendent that is employed by more than one district. That superintendent would have double the school board meetings, double the committee meetings, and double the phone calls from school board members and parents. The joint superintendent's daily schedule would greatly change by adding the extreme responsibility of an additional district to their already over-flowing plate.

At the Finley-Sharon School District, we strive to operate within our financial means and have a balanced budget. We offer a fair wage to our superintendent, but also fair to the district as a whole. It is only natural that a superintendent has a higher wage than a teacher. The superintendent (along with the board) is ultimately responsible for the successes and/or failures of a district. Superintendent salaries should be the decision of the local board and the taxpayers.

We, the Finley-Sharon School Board, urge your opposition to HB 1251. Please do not vote to take additional liberties away from our school district. The rural communities in the great State of North Dakota depend on it. Thank you for your consideration and the time you took to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Holly Stromsodt
President of the Finley-Sharon School Board

And on behalf of the entire board:

Ryan Braaten
Laurie Tuite
Lynn Carlson
Amy Czapiewski

FORT RANSOM SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

135 MILL ROAD, FORT RANSOM, ND 58033-4011

PHONE 701-973-2591, FAX 701-973-2491

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES – PO BOX 593, LISBON, ND 58054

PHONE 701-683-4106, FAX 701-683-4414

<http://www.ft-ransom.k12.nd.us>

District 24 Legislators:

Please vote no on HB1251, which would restrict local school boards like Fort Ransom to select their own lead administrator. The Fort Ransom School Board reviewed and discussed this bill during their school board meeting on January 11, 2023. Fort Ransom has only 22 students grades k-6 and we do a great job of meeting the needs of our students and staff. According to this proposal, we would be one of 136 school districts out of the 173 operating North Dakota school districts that would be forced to meet this standard. Let the local Fort Ransom School board make those decisions they were elected to make by the voting patrons of the Fort Ransom School District #6. Please oppose HB1251. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to board members or me. SLJ

Steven L. Johnson, Superintendent

Fort Ransom School District #6

135 Bluff Street

Fort Ransom, ND 58033

Steven.Johnson@k12.nd.us

#IamARuralTeacher #WhyRuralSchoolsMatter #MakeItWorkND

Cell 701.678.3099 Home 701.683.4553 Twitter @johnson557377 “Never in history has a situation improved on its own while people sat there doing nothing”

Cc: Fort Ransom School board members

Alayna Brudevold, President

Sherri Ness, Vice President

Chesley Jones, Director

Stacy Ercink, Director

Lynn Thorfinnson, Director

Pamela Hoistad, Business Manager

SUBJECT: Legislature Bill to Limit Superintendents

Brought forward by Rep Matt Ruby

Superintendent limitation compensation and limiting only districts with over 475 students to have their own superintendent.

To Whom It Concerns,

I am whole heartedly opposed to this bill in part and as whole.

This is nothing more than a blatant attempt to take away any and all local control from our rural districts. Attempting to put salary caps on superintendents by the state only further reduces local control.

Every rural district is unique and has different needs. Trying to hire a superintendent is hard enough without tying our hands by capping what compensation we are able to offer them.

In many rural districts, superintendents are also coaches, mow grass, move snow, drive bus, etc. on top of their daily duties. They are also huge mentors to our students.

In addition to that, they are required to have much more education than a teacher which equals to higher salaries.

Requiring one person to oversee the needs of several districts does justice to none and breeds failure to our future.

Sincerely,

Rodger Affeldt
Garrison District Board President
Garrison, ND

GLENBURN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 26

BOARD OF EDUCATION
James Peters, President
Scott Heit, Vice President
Dianne Hensen
Amy Cunningham
Jamec Hansen

"Panther Country"
PO Box 138
Glenburn ND 58740
Phone (701) 362-7426
Fax (701) 362-7349

SUPERINTENDENT
Larry K. Derr
PRINCIPALS
Layne D. Fluhrer
James P. Swegarden
BUSINESS MANAGER
Jennifer Hansen

Letter of Opposition to Bill HB 1251

Dear Chairman Pat Heinert and Members of the House of Education Committee,

The Glenburn Public School Board would like to address their concerns on HB 1251. First and foremost, this is something that should be handled by local school boards as they see fit, as current law dictates not for the state to step in and take over. Local control is always best as every district's needs are different and should not be put under a one-size-fits-all type law where local boards/communities have no say in the matter.

If this bill passes you will see a major decline in small communities as people will not want to live where they have no say, no control, no voice on issues concerning them directly. This will eventually be the end to small towns in North Dakota.

In regards to our school superintendent, not only does he have the duties of running the district on a day-to-day basis, he also does multiple other roles without regards to "job title". He is a bus driver, coach, fill in maintenance person, along with many other roles not described in his Superintendent job description.

If this bill passes not only will you have a hard time finding someone to fill the role of multi-district superintendent (for less pay) but there will also be the need to hire more administration/staff to fill extra roles he carries as a superintendent. Which will not save the district money, the districts will need to compensate the over-flow roles he carries to another person.

In conclusion we would strongly urge that this bill be turned down as the consequences of passing it are far greater than the benefits.

Thank you,

Glenburn School Board

Dianne R. Hensen
James Peters
Scott Heit
Amy Cunningham

The Glenburn School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs or activities.

GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Inspiring Excellence
Building Character

Superintendent
Darren Albrecht
1548 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-1943 Fax

Grafton High School
Randy Rice, 7-12
1548 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-1943 Fax

Century Elementary
Brad Larson, 3-6
830 15 St West
701-352-1930
701-352-1120 Fax

Century Elementary
Jill Olson, PK-2
1542 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-0163 Fax

Activities Director
Jon Koehmstedt
1548 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-1943 Fax

January 16, 2023

Honorable Karen Anderson
Honorable David Monson
Honorable Janne Myrdal

Re: HB 1251

My name is Darren Albrecht, and I am the Superintendent of Grafton Public School District #18. Please consider this letter as Grafton Public School Boards opposition to the proposed HB1251 Relating to Limiting Compensation for School District Superintendents.

The sharing of superintendents is already an option in North Dakota as I have experienced firsthand. In 2014 the St Thomas Superintendent retired from his position. The St Thomas District #43 School Board approached the Grafton District #3 School Board to determine if there were any potential options to share duties with the Grafton Administration. It was established that the workload of the Superintendent of the Grafton District would not allow an extension into another district. Having around twenty years of experience in education, most of which was administration, I was approached as the High School Principal in Grafton. With the structure of services already in place in Grafton we developed a plan to allow my time in St Thomas as Superintendent. What this did was further the relationship between both communities while a vision for reorganization was being developed, ending with the Grafton School District # 18.

Personally, the level of commitment required to accommodate both positions prepared me for my current position as Superintendent. With that said, having worked as Superintendent in a district of 40 students while being Principal to 275 students for five years I can say that is about the extent of my tenure based on the duties and sacrifice of time to myself and my family.

Board of Education
Donald Suda, President
Sharon Lipsh, Vice President
Chad Bigwood, Nathan Green, Trina Papenfuss,
Maggie Suda and Jennifer Thompson
Cathi Heuchert, Business Manager

I understand the proposed bill would not have an impact on my current position. We have regions in this state that would combine roughly four buildings to reach the 475-student threshold set by this bill. The retention of quality administrators will no doubt be stressed beyond what we have currently experienced. I reference my colleagues in districts less than 475 students in the Northeast and the additional duties they must consider as a Superintendent leads me to believe the practicality of this bill will do the opposite of its intent. We will need additional resources, additional funding for time lost in those buildings due to the multiple duties vacated by the Superintendent. With the current shortage we are experiencing at all levels of education, taking away local control and leadership from our districts is not the answer to saving money.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our testimony. We appreciate your service and commitment to our district.

Grafton Public School District #18 School Board

**GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
A RESOLUTION OF THE GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL BOARD'S AFFIRMATION, COMMITMENT, AND SUPPORT OF
LOCAL GOVERNING CONTROL**

WHEREAS, the Grand Forks Public School District School Board believes that a system of quality public education is one of the essential foundations to make a meaningful difference in today's and tomorrow's world; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Forks Public School District School Board believes that education under local governing control, and led by a superintendent, is the most important asset in maximizing the opportunities of an individual and a community; and


WHEREAS, the Grand Forks Public School District School Board believes that without local governing control of a quality public education, and the employment of a superintendent, a great divide will exist between the educated and the uneducated; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Forks Public School District School Board believes that well-funded, effective public schools inclusive of local governing control, and led by a superintendent, are essential to developing empowered learners prepared to meet the challenges of a complex future.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the commitment to excellence through local governing control, and led by a superintendent, is the hallmark of the Grand Forks Public School District.


THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Grand Forks Public School District School Board does hereby affirm its support for local governing control and the employment of a superintendent of the Grand Forks Public School District along with school districts throughout the state of North Dakota.

Dated: 1-23, 2023.



President of the School Board

ATTEST:



Business Manager

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was duly made by Member Shabb, seconded by Member Larson, and upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor: Anderson, Berger, Flynn, Gaukler, Larson, Lunn, Manley, Palmiscno, and Shabb; the following voted against the same: None; and the following were absent: None; whereupon the resolution was declared duly passed and adopted and was signed by the President and attested by the Business Manager.

House Education Committee and Chairman Heinert:

I respectfully request that you do not pass this bill.

Perhaps it is easy to think that the position of superintendent is one that doesn't have much impact in a school district. However, the chief leadership of a school district comes from the superintendent and in the absence of this leadership, small pockets develop and in no time you have a district that has "leaders" everywhere. In this instance, the real leadership of the district is diminished and vision for the school district and students will be extinguished. As a school board member for Grand Forks, I firmly believe that employing a superintendent independently or jointly is a local decision that should be under the authority of every independent school board in North Dakota.

In addition, I firmly believe that all salaries should be driven by the local community in which a superintendent serves. Placing one superintendent in charge of several communities will create a position where this person will deal with the largest issues at hand. It will remove opportunities for creating vision, strategic planning, supporting networks, interacting spontaneously in the community, and interacting with students and staff. In addition, the money that will be "saved" by hiring less superintendents will be spent in hiring additional staff to support the day-to-day operations of school.

As a point of reference, 16 of 21 schools in the RRVEC do not have 475 students. This is a critical time for education in North Dakota, please support education in its entirety by supporting local control for all communities and NOT supporting this bill.

I would be happy to discuss this bill with you or answer any questions you have. Please reach out to me at 701-740-5912 or email.

Warm regards,
Monte Gaukler
Grand Forks Public Schools, School Board Member

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM
Derek Simonsen
Superintendent

Lauren Ressler
High School Principal

Frannie Tunseth
Elementary Principal

Tamara Cushman
Business Manager

Griggs County Central

SCHOOL DISTRICT #18

1207 FOSTER AVE NE
COOPERSTOWN, NORTH DAKOTA 58425-7037

TELEPHONE (701) 797-3114
FAX (701) 797-3130

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Scott Saxberg
Chairman
Lynn Haugen
Vice Chairman

Directors
Stacey Aarestad
Todd Edland
Andrew Johnson
Patrick Larson
Hope Stadler

To: House Education Committee - Chairman Pat Heinert

Re: Opposition to HB 1251

The Griggs County Central School Board is in strong opposition to HB 1251 Limiting Small School Superintendents. The bill removes local control from school districts taking away the ability to hire a superintendent of our choice. Small school districts already have the option to work with area districts to share administration, teachers, or staff. That should remain a choice.

Beyond the loss of local control, the financial savings that the bill claims, will not become a reality in a rural district like ours. Day-to-day operations of the district will need to fall on someone and that will require additional administrators like an assistant superintendent or principals to be hired. The number of roles that the current superintendent fills cannot be spread out over three districts to save some money.

This bill will move small districts into a position of forced consolidation that will crush small rural communities. That will not lead to cost savings and better leadership. It will be the end of small rural towns and it will put students on buses for 60+ miles one way to get to their consolidated school district.

The Griggs County Central School Board strongly opposes HB 1251 and asks the legislators to keep local control and local decision-making power with the locally elected leaders that live in these communities.

Respectfully,

Griggs County Central School District #18 School Board



HANKINSON PUBLIC SCHOOL

415 1st Avenue SE
P.O. Box 220
Hankinson, ND 58041

Phone: 701.242.7516
Fax: 701.242.7434
hankinsonschool.com

January 20, 2023

House Education Committee
Pat D. Heinert, Chairman

On behalf of the school board of the Hankinson Public School District, I am writing to express our strong opposition to House Bill 1251. Our board unanimously passed a resolution opposing this bill January 20, 2023.

As elected school board members, we have a deep interest in education and take our roles as local public officials seriously. HB 1251 will dramatically undermine the local control that has been the foundation of our educational system. The choice of a school superintendent should be a decision made by the local school board. We are the ones who understand our school district and our needs as a district. Likewise, any decision to share a superintendent should be the choice of our district, not something dictated by the State. Make no mistake about it, mandating school districts to share a superintendent is the first step towards forcing consolidation. We do believe that as a local district, we are better suited to make the decision of if, and when, to consider the sharing of a superintendent based upon our needs. We are sensitive to the cost of operating our school district, but we also fully understand as board members at the local level, what is in the best interest of both our students and our patrons.

We do not believe the forced sharing of a superintendent will result in the cost savings proponents anticipate. Superintendents in smaller schools do in fact cover more areas of responsibility than just the administrative aspects of the job. For example, in our district, our superintendent does many tasks that are critical to the daily operation of our district. Whether it be driving a bus route, working on snow removal, assisting in the kitchen or covering the front office, or other situations that come up on a regular basis. He does the critical daily jobs that need to be done, whether or not it is part of his regular administrative duties. This bill may well increase our staffing costs, having the opposite effect of what is intended. The impact of sharing superintendents may well have the unintended consequence of causing districts to hire additional personnel to cover duties that would otherwise go undone. That is not an option when we need to meet the needs and expectations of our students.

Superintendent
Mr. Chad Benson

High School Principal
Mrs. Sarah Pohl

Elementary Principal
Mrs. Anne Biewer



HANKINSON PUBLIC SCHOOL

415 1st Avenue SE
P.O. Box 220
Hankinson, ND 58041

Phone: 701.242.7516
Fax: 701.242.7434
hankinsonschool.com

The capping of superintendent compensation at 1.5 percent of the total of state and local revenue would likely result in salaries low enough to the point that it would create extreme difficulty in attracting and retaining quality candidates to fill open positions. This would place districts in the unenviable position of trying to hire a qualified superintendent while offering a non-competitive compensation package. When a school district has a superintendent in place who is meeting or exceeding the expectations of their school board, such as ours does, taking that control away from that local board would indeed handicap our ability to function efficiently.

Again, we believe HB 1251 is detrimental to our current system of education in North Dakota and its long-term effect will prove to be negative not only to the survival of our rural schools, but negative to those most important to all of us, the children we strive to serve and support.

Sincerely,

David L. Muehler, President
Hankinson Public School Board

Superintendent
Mr. Chad Benson

High School Principal
Mrs. Sarah Pohl

Elementary Principal
Mrs. Anne Biewer

January 17, 2023

House Education Committee, Chairman Pat Heinert

Although I hope the bill HB 1251 came about with good intentions, I am writing to tell you that I am strongly opposed to it. Enclosed are some points that quickly come to mind.

#1 A superintendent is to be present for all of the staff, students and day-to-day operations and to be able to take control when a situation arises. How can they do that when they're juggling between districts.

#2 Our superintendent has wore many hats and did so without added compensation. He's been a principal, teacher, AD, bus driver, coach, janitor, served lunch and many more than I can count. All because he saw the need and rose to the occasion. I can't tell you how much more we would be spending on compensation due to the need of having to hire additional staff to perform those duties. All while taking compensation away from our teachers, staff and needs of our students.

#3 I can't imagine juggling the many duties of managing staff, budgets, board meetings, etc all while traveling between districts. They would not be truly present in each district.

#4 We prefer our superintendent live in our district and become a part of the community. He is the champion of our district. That will not be the case if this bill passes.

#5 Taxpayers in small districts want to have local control for our boards. That's what makes our small districts have success. Is that not what we hear that's disliked about our federal government? Now some are trying to do that in our own proud state of North Dakota.

#6 What happens when districts can't come to the same choice when hiring a superintendent? Which district is more important than the other one? All districts choices matter! Each one should have their own voice.

#7 Districts already have the choice of sharing a superintendent. Let them decide! Why do you think forcing others to do so would work?

#8 We already have a great shortage of teaching staff and administrators. Forcing someone to add the many responsibilities of managing multiple districts will only cause North Dakota to lose administrators and to lose future possibilities.

PLEASE WITHDRAW HB 1251 FROM CONSIDERATION IMMEDIATELY!!

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts.

Collette Hertz,
Vice-Chairman of Harvey Public School District Board of Education
Owner of Hertz Funeral Homes, Inc
Parent of four children that proudly attended HPSD



HEBRON PUBLIC SCHOOL
400 CHURCH AVE.
HEBRON, ND 58638
PHONE: 701-878-4442
Fax: 701-878-4345

www.hebron.k12.nd.us

Myron Schaff - Superintendent

Jenifer Hosman - Principal

January 16, 2023

House Education Committee (Chairman Pat Heinert),

On behalf of the Hebron Public School Board in Hebron, North Dakota we are writing to you today to please vote NO on HB NO. 1251.

Choosing a superintendent should be a local decision made by us the locally elected officials. If districts must share the decision with other districts or the state, our local people have no merit. Aren't we elected to make local decisions that best impact our schools? House Bill 1251 will take that authority away.

Sharing a superintendent will not automatically generate cost savings. Many of the districts, including ours will need to hire principals or change the title of our current superintendent to assistant superintendent to ensure there is leadership in the building every day. Now we would be spending more money on administrator salaries than before. We may also need to hire other positions that the superintendent is covering like transportation director and athletic director.

Schools are the pulse and heartbeat of small communities. We are proud of our school and our administration and we as a board deserve the right to make local decisions about the staffing of our school. Forcing districts to share a superintendent is the first step towards consolidation. Small communities should be able to have local authority to decide when they want to consolidate and how they are going to do it.

Please vote NO on House Bill No. 1251. This is North Dakota. We are better than that! Thank you.

Hebron Public School Board

Dave Kraenzel- President

Joel Opp

Josh Dakken

Holli Martinson

Ashlie Palmer

January 18, 2023

Pat Heinert & House Education Committee,

As a united Board for Hettinger Public School District, we are respectfully writing this letter in complete opposition to HB 1251. We strongly believe that this bill will be devastating to small town schools across rural North Dakota, but we want to highlight some impacts it would have on our district.

A Superintendent is specifically hired by the School Board for which they serve. This is a very important relationship as that superintendent is our daily connection to our school. We require this person in order to have our school run as it is intended. Our Small town Superintendents are not just the head of our school, but they are also in front of our community. A lot of schools in rural North Dakota are among the largest employer if not the largest in their respective communities. Therefore, it is vital to our rural communities to have this dedicated individual in place.

It is no secret that our district has been through some very hard situations over the last few years. Some of which we hope no district ever has to encounter again. Without our dedicated Administrator, some of this would have been MUCH worse. Our board, faculty, kids, patrons etc. leaned heavily on our administrator to help lead our district through these tragedies.

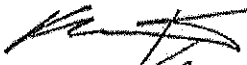



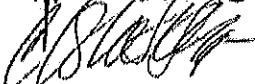
As a district that is also currently in a long standing "co-op" with our sports, we can absolutely testify to the fact that sharing with other districts does NOT ensure any cost savings. Both districts still have to have the man power on site which leads to faculty having more than one role within our districts. We already lean heavily on our staff to help fill the roles that we as a small district cannot hire full time to fill. If HB 1251 were to pass we would have to either push our staff to pick up even more responsibilities or hire another individual to assist in all the daily responsibilities when the shared administrator is not onsite or busy with commitments outside our district. Either of these options would only cost our district even more, not a cost savings. We will incur costs to hire someone to fill the role that is needed to handle daily on-site tasks which will impact our ability to successfully fund our current programs and staff. Our rural superintendents are required to take on a lot more responsibilities than this bill would allow for. In short, we believe there would be no actual cost savings. Not to mention that this individual's travel costs as well as travel time would obviously need to be accounted for and somehow split amongst the schools impacted. "Co-ops" are not easily managed and also require additional resources to account for.

Due to the fact that we do rely on our Superintendents to take on extra responsibilities, we also believe that this relationship is a personal one between each superintendent and the district they serve. Therefore, we also believe that the perspective superintendent salaries should also be a decision between them and the district they work for.

Rural North Dakota School Districts need more resources. We need better funding. What we do not need is a bill that takes away the ability to have a dedicated Superintendent.

Please support North Dakota rural school districts and Oppose HB 1251.

Thank you for your time,

 - Kortney Kindsfater Pres.  Rich Jehner
 Patrick Kilzer Vice Pres.
 Jordan Christman - Board Member
 Christi Schmitz - Board Member

Nicole Winter
1936 Horse Creek Road
Cartwright, ND 58838

January 20, 2022

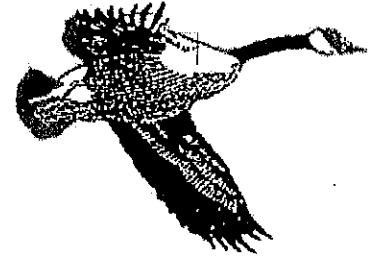
To whom it concerns:

I am highly opposed to HB 1251. The right for small schools to choose their superintendent should be left up to each district. The choice to cut costs and consolidate and share a superintendent should be left up to each district and is not a State matter. I see this as one more step at trying to take away local control and also a step toward consolidation and/or ultimately closure of small districts. Forced co-ops and such to share an employee should not be handed down from the State level. These decisions are not a blanket fix, one size fits all does not apply to rural North Dakota. Please leave this decision to be made by board members themselves, administrators deserve administrator pay, let districts choose what they can afford to do.

Sincerely,

Nicole Winter
Chairman of the Horse Creek School Board

Kenmare Public Schools
Box 667 · Kenmare, North Dakota 58746
<https://www.kenmare.k12.nd.us>



Board of Education:

Jason Zeltinger, Chair Mike Pugh
Lars Christensen Donna Schmit
Tawnya Gill Brad Griffin
Josh Cook

Administration:

Alex Hennix, Superintendent
Fay Froseth, High School Principal
Keely Heidel, Elementary Principal
Mary Ann Melln, Business Manager

Dear Chairman Pat Heinert and House Education Committee:

The Kenmare Public School Board respectfully opposes House Bill 1251: School district superintendent - Limitation on compensation. Kenmare Public School has 301 students grades preschool through twelfth grade (prechool is locally funded). KPS shares duties between two schools and has 57 employees. This bill would force our school district to share a superintendent with one or more surrounding schools which would take away time from our current buildings and place more responsibilities on principals, teachers, and support staff. Not only will responsibilities shift, employees will require more compensation for extra duties. Superintendents are on a 12 month contract. Administrators/principals will be forced to have extended contracts to fulfill the extra paperwork and other duties superintendents take on in the summer months.

House Bill 1013 in North Dakota legislative session 67 gave districts the opportunity to share administrators with financial incentives. At the local school board level, KPS decided it was in the best interest of our school district to have a superintendent dedicated to the needs of the Kenmare Public School district. This is a local decision that the United States government put school boards in place 130 years ago, while respectfully following century code given by legislation. Superintendents need to be invested in the mission and vision of their school district to be successful. Having more than one district with a separate mission and vision does not allow the superintendent to invest fully in their district. This bill could also force districts to have a superintendent designated by the state, not the locally voted school board.

Superintendents, administrators, teachers, and staff wear many hats in rural school districts, which we pride ourselves for. The school board at KPS has the ability to hire who they want to run their district within the budget that they approve. This bill takes away the local control that school boards have to hire their superintendent and assign duties since the superintendent would essentially take over other districts leaving duties to other administrators, leaving teachers and support staff with administrative responsibilities.

The student body (PK-12) is $\frac{1}{3}$ of the population in Kenmare and is the largest employer of the community. North Dakota needs rural communities to survive. We continue to support agriculture, oil, trades, small businesses, the air force base, medical facilities, a grocery store, and many other entities who contribute to our local taxes. We are a successful, self-sufficient community that makes local decisions that are best for our community.

Please consider our opposition.

Sincerely,


KPS School Board, President, Jason Zeltinger

High School: 701-385-4996

Grade School: 701-385-4688

Fax: 701-385-4390

HB1251

Amanda Lee <amandabredah@hotmail.com>

Tue 1/17/2023 9:02 PM

To: cheadland@ndlegis.gov <theadland@ndlegis.gov>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Good evening: As the Vice President of the Kensal Public School Board, I am writing to urge you to oppose HB1251. HB1251 would require our small school to share a superintendent with up to 4 other schools due to the sizes of the surrounding schools in order to meet the bills criteria. This would mean the superintendent would have to drive approximately 200 miles a day in order to serve all 4 schools. This would be challenging and not feasible for any superintendent. It would not attract quality leaders or allow the superintendent to lead any of the schools effectively. Our school has first-hand experience with sharing a superintendent in past years, which was unsuccessful.

This bill would not provide cost savings, because it would require us to add an administrative position on top of paying a superintendent. The cap on the superintendent's salary this bill is proposing would make it extremely difficult to find a quality leader in the rural area. The duties of the superintendent would be passed off on other administration within the school who already have a full plate. A lot of superintendents also teach classes, drive bus and fill other voids found in the small schools, if a superintendent would serve multiple schools this would not be possible.

Please oppose this bill, as it will hurt small rural schools. School boards should be responsible for who is in charge of their school, not the State. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amanda Lee

Vice President, Kensal Public School Board

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Killdeer Public School District No. 16

Administration

Jeff Simmons, Superintendent
Karter Kleeman, HS Principal
Andrew Cook, Elem Principal
Rhonda Zastoupil, Business Manager



School Board

Levi Bang, President
April Dutchuk, Vice-President
Larry Lundberg, Member
Scott Bice, Member
Kelli Schollmeyer, Member

January 17, 2023

Dear House Education Committee:

We are writing in opposition to HB 1251.

Superintendents are the lead administrators and managers of our school districts. Their physical presence in our schools is vital to ensure success as they are the eyes and ears in the daily operations and management of the district. They are direct employees of the board and work closely with them to provide necessary information for the board to make well informed decisions. Having one individual reporting to multiple boards dilutes board authority and has the potential to create conflicts of interest. As well, many superintendents in smaller districts serve in multiple capacities including but not limited to principals, bus drivers, activity directors, substitute teachers and even custodial. Sharing a superintendent across multiple districts would require these other positions to be filled most importantly on-site administrators. The claimed \$13 million in savings would be negligible.

As in all industries management is compensated at a higher level because they carry the risk and responsibilities of failure and success. It is important to remember that teacher contracts are 9 months while superintendent contracts are 12 months. If we were to extrapolate average teacher salaries to 12 months they are only making \$7/ hour less than the average superintendent salary. To limit a boards ability to properly compensate our superintendents would cause our quality individuals to look elsewhere for proper compensation. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the cap of one and one-half percent of state and local general fund revenue regarding oil revenue. The compensation package is determined by the local school board and capping it removes local control.

Schools are the lifeblood of small communities. Forced sharing of superintendents is a step towards forced consolidation. Districts are required to submit co-op agreements for state approval and if they are unable to come to those agreements the state will dictate which districts will share superintendents. This removes rights of taxpayers to maintain their local school. A current example of this situation is the Halliday school. That district with input from their taxpayers made the decision to permanently close their doors. If that decision were not made voluntarily in the spring of 2022 it would be forced with the passage of this bill.

It is our responsibility as elected officials to protect our constituents' rights and local control of their school district is one of those rights. If we give up the ability to choose our lead administrator and to compensate

Killdeer Public School District No. 16

Administration

Jeff Simmons, Superintendent
Karter Kleeman, HS Principal
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School Board

Levi Bang, President
April Dutchuk, Vice-President
Larry Lundberg, Member
Scott Bice, Member
Kelli Schollmeyer, Member

them as the board sees fit, it will become a slippery slope to further over government overreach. School boards are capable of making decisions that are best for their taxpayers, district and most importantly students.

We ask you to please vote NO on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Levi Bang, President

April Dutchuk, Vice-President

Scott Bice, Member

Larry Lundberg, Member

Kelli Schollmeyer, Member

Jeff Simmons, Superintendent

Rhonda Zastoupil, Business Manager



KINDRED PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

255 Dakota St. Kindred, ND 58051

High School - (701) 428-3177 Elementary School (701) 428-3388

Steve Hall, Superintendent
Jessica Tibor, Elementary Principal
Eric Burgad, Assistant Elementary Principal

Kent Packer, Secondary Principal
Matt Crane, Activities Director/Dean of Students

Mission

To Educate, Prepare, and Maximize Student Potential

To: Chairman Heinert, ND House Education Committee

From: Kindred School Board Pres., Brian McDonald; VP, Jesse Cook

Re: HB 1251

Date: January 17, 2023

Kindred Public School District encourages a no vote on HB 1251. The overall impact of this bill is a reduction of local school district's power to govern and operate their school district.

The bill sponsor, Representative Ruby, recently was interviewed on KFGO and expressed that if we shared superintendents between districts money could be saved and the extra money could be used to pay teachers more. The reality is there may not be a cost savings to districts since someone else will be needed to take over the other positions the superintendent had and would be unable to do if in two districts. This approach to increase teacher pay seems to be an inadequate strategy by the legislature.

The state of North Dakota has the opportunity to provide schools with adequate funding to pay all staff, including teachers. We feel the state should use the current funding formula and foundation aid payments to increase revenue sources for districts. Telling a district that they must pay someone less or more and transfer the money to other staff just seems like an overreach of power by the state. The compensation to staff should be a local decision.

Another concern of Kindred Public School District, in HB 1251, is the forced assignment of a partner school district. Kindred is currently 883 students. If a school district around us ends up not having a partner then they could be assigned to Kindred. The assignment or partnering of cooperative services, staff or otherwise should be a local decision between boards. Kindred Public School District superintendent should not be coerced to be superintendent of two or more districts. We are at a size that certainly does not lend to having a shared superintendent. The cooperative agreements between school districts should be a local decision.

We recommend a no vote on HB 1251.

1.22.23

Dear ND Education Committee, Chairman Pat Geinert:

As a member of the Kulm School Board, I strongly oppose passage of ND House Bill 1251. Passage of this bill would precipitate a series of outcomes that would be detrimental to the efficient operation of our school district, ultimately hurting the teachers, employees and students. The potential upside described by supporters of this bill is far outweighed by the tremendous and disastrous downside potential.

In our district the superintendent fills a multiplicity of roles. In addition to the traditional role of a superintendent she currently teaches high school business classes and she is the school's technology coordinator. She frequently fills in as a substitute teacher, substitute custodian and substitute bus driver because substitutes are extremely difficult to find in the current employment environment. And she also helps manage the electronic and technical side of the HVAC system. This list is not exhaustive, but the point is clear: If we are forced to share a superintendent with one or more other districts, we will also be forced to hire additional employees to cover the roles left vacant by an absentee superintendant. This would absolutely negate the primary cost saving purpose of the bill in the first place.

The forced elimination of a superintendent on site would inevitably increase the workload and stress load of the rest of the staff at the school. Most employees are already stretched quite thin, and to remove any remaining margin will likely lead to lesser quality education in the school.

This bill represents a top down, bureaucratic framework for school management. It consolidates the power of school governance into the hands of an absentee manager whose power is derived by a law hastily driven through the legislature without concern for the preservation of local control, something the ND legislature has, in the past, worked so determinedly to uphold. Ultimately this will lessen the capacity of the local school board to represent and advocate for the interests of the local communities they serve.

The needs of each community and school district are often unique to that district and community. A superintendant must have their finger on the pulse of their district in order to serve it best. There is no way that one person can adequately serve the varying interests and the disparate needs of separate school districts.

Please vote "NO" on HB 1251.

Sincerely,



Jordan Gackle,
Board President, Kulm Public School #7

LANGDON AREA HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL
"HOME OF THE CARDINALS"

A+ FOR EXCELLENCE

SUPERINTENDENT: DAREN CHRISTIANSON

PHONE: Work 701-256-5291
FAX: Work 701-256-2606

715 14TH Avenue
Langdon, ND 58249
E-mail: daren.christianson@k12.nd.us

1-19-2023

To all legislators who represent Langdon Area School District

The Langdon Area School Board would like to express that House Bill 1251 is an overreach from the legislature that takes away the control and decision making of the local school board.

We determine the staffing needs of our district and are accountable to our patrons. Over the years our superintendent has been assigned many other duties along with the superintendent duties. The Langdon Area School Board wants a consistent and daily presence in our school district to provide the leadership and guidance that we hire that position for. If we are placed in a position that we must share a superintendent with another district we do not believe we will save any funds as we must compensate others to do some of the vacated duties or hire another individual to do those duties.

The Langdon Area School Board discussed House Bill 1251 at our January 18th school board meeting and our desire is that this bill does not receive any support from any of our legislators.

Thank-you for all you do in representing the people of your legislative district.

Dave Hart- Dave.Hart@k12.nd.us (School Board President)
Tiffany Hetletved- Tiffany.Hetletved@k12.nd.us (School Board Vice-President)
Cindy Stremick- Cindy.Stremick@k12.nd.us
Dawn Kruk- Dawn.Kruk@k12.nd.us
Abby Borchardt- Abby.Borchardt@k12.nd.us
Daren Bachman- Daren.Bachman@k12.nd.us
Loren Fetsch- Loren.Fetsch@k12.nd.us



LASD # 23 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

January 20, 2023

To House Education Committee and Chairman Heinert:

At our last board meeting on January 18th, the Leeds School Board unanimously passed a motion in opposition of HB 1251. We feel this bill would have a profound negative impact to our small school district in many ways, but I will highlight some of the main reasons below.

This bill would reduce our local control and severely limit our flexibility in staffing our school in the best way we see fit. As our enrollment has slowly declined over the past many years, we have been forced to be creative with our administrative, teaching, and support staffing. We have reduced our administrative FTEs from nearly 3.0 to our current 1.5. We have also changed our administration from a full-time Superintendent/Secondary Principal with a part-time Elementary Principal to a full-time K-12 Principal and a part-time Superintendent. As recently as last school year, we shared our Superintendent with a local school district as well. We are always looking for cost-savings and sharing services with other school districts, but it is important that these decisions happen locally with elected officials who know the needs and wants of our district patrons and students. With our current Superintendent set to retire this spring, we value our local control and decision-making to decide how to best advertise and adjust those job duties to attract the best possible candidate to serve our students.

We do not feel that this bill would provide any reduced expenses for our school district. Yes, we may not have to cover the full salary and benefits for a Superintendent, but our administration in small schools wear many hats. They fill in on bus routes or even drive routes full-time, they fill in when needed in the school kitchen/cafeteria, they ref basketball games, they cover classes when a substitute teacher cannot be found, they take students to extracurricular activities and out of town learning opportunities, and the list can go on and on. Not having a Superintendent in our building as we need would force us to find and/or hire more substitute teachers, refs, bus drivers, kitchen workers, janitors, and probably another assistant administrator just to meet those needs. Our school currently has open positions for bus drivers and a kitchen worker/janitor that we have had no success in filling and have had little to no applicants to even consider. This would just create another hardship on our small school district and community and would negatively impact our students.

The passing of this bill would create a logistics nightmare for a school our size and in our geographical area. With neighboring school enrollments, it would require 3-4 schools to employ a single Superintendent covering 60 miles between some communities. How will three different school boards be able to decide on who to hire and how to properly evaluate them? How will three different schools board be able to agree on a schedule for when the Superintendent will be present in their school buildings? How would we ever attract a candidate that would be interested in answering to three different school boards, patrons in three different unique communities, having to oversee three different staffing groups, and be required to manage learning goals and students needs in three different schools?

For the reasons stated above, the Leeds School Board is opposed to HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Jeff Jacobson

Leeds School Board President

The Lewis and Clark school district held a special meeting Wednesday Jan 18 to discuss HB 1251. After discussion a motion was made to pass a resolution to oppose this bill and any other bill that takes local control away from local school boards. Was passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Waylen Deaver yes
Mike Lautenschlager yes
Bob Blunk yes
Kyle schepp yes
Troy Pank yes
Denver Deaver yes
Shane Erickson yes.

So in conclusion Lewis and Clark school district opposes HB 1251. Thank you for your time.

Shane Erickson
Lewis and Clark School Board President

Chairman Pat Heiner and House Education Committee members,

A superintendent by job description could file paperwork for multiple districts. The superintendent that my board hired is an individual who is filling multiple roles. We as a board have taken action to combine positions already without the need for state oversight.

If our superintendent were not physically in our building, we would have many days where we are short staffed. He takes it upon himself to drive the bus, serve lunch, substitute teach, mop floors, supervisor recess, answer the phone, supervise sporting events.... There is not a job he leaves undone. Our current structure needs this individual to physically be in the building.

Sharing a superintendent with a neighbor should be by choice of those parties, not a forced decision. Having the "475" peg also creates the dilemma of finding a third neighbor to share a superintendent with. Lidgerwood and our neighbors are near the 200 number. This requires three of us to split a superintendent to meet the criteria. It also means we would hire more personnel to fill the additional positions held by our current superintendent.

We in Lidgerwood have already taken it upon ourselves to work with our neighbors when we see fit. Board members prior to my tenure have seen the need to co-op sports with neighboring communities. We have our major sports co-op with our neighbors to the north Wyndmere. We have working relationships with Forman, Milnor, Hankinson, Fairmount. That list continued to change and expand as Fairmount became Tri-State. We have the working relationship with the Southeast Career and Technical Education Center in Wahpeton. We as a local board can make these decisions without oversight.

We need to be able to compensate these individuals in a manner we see fit at a local level. Every district has different expectations for their management. Some want an individual in the office. Others are looking for the "jack of all trades." Having the authority to set a proper salary needs to be dictated by the local board. If we cannot reward demanding work with compensation, we will continue to struggle to find individuals willing to fill these demanding positions. Our world lacks motivated individuals who simply have pride in their work. There was a time when individuals were so proud of the role they played on the assembly line. Now we continue to see individuals who are upset that the "boss" is making the "big bucks". We need to reward the individuals who are going above and beyond for us. They show up every day, they stay late, they are proud of the product they produce, and they acknowledge that they are part of a working team.

I do not support HB1251. We need to keep local decisions local. Leave these decisions to the local representatives and the local taxpayers.

Sadie Siemieniewski
701-640-3181
Board President
Lidgerwood Public School

Representing the Lone Tree School District I am writing in opposition to HB 1251. We are of the mindset that the decisions to be made for our district are best left decided by our own School Board. We feel we are doing an outstanding job operating our own school by using taxpayer dollars in a smart and efficient way. This bill that will eliminate school boards hiring who they think best fits their school and supposedly save money will result in the exact opposite by costing school districts like ours more trying to fill the roles our superintendent currently fulfills. Which are almost too many to count. It's hard enough meeting all the needs for small districts like ours and passage of this bill would only make that harder by restricting local school boards to make decisions that are best for them. This is a direct attack on local control and would have a negative effect on our schools. Thank you for your time.

*Jason Bosserman
Lone Tree School District
Golva Elementary*

Marmarth School District 12
PO Box 70
Marmarth, ND 58643

RE: HB 1251

January 18, 2023

A school district is one of the most basic and local levels of government in existence. This nation and this state were founded on some fundamental principles – and local and limited government are some of those principles. House Bill (HB) 1251 is a direct attack on both local and limited government. Marmarth School District 12 strongly opposes HB 1251 and encourages our state legislators to vote NO on this bill that seeks to usurp local authority and further expand state government.

Marmarth Public School is a K8 school and is the only school left operating in Slope County and in School District 12. Through the last 20 or more years, the small rural schools (K8) that were in the district have been forced to close and consolidate with surrounding K12 schools. One of the reasons, is that the state legislature continues to pass bills that directly involve or mandate small schools without providing funding, without considering if the requirement can be filled in the rural area, or the overall impact to the district. Or, the impacts are considered, and the legislation is purposeful in a progression to close small rural schools and force consolidation with larger districts.

Marmarth School District 12 strongly opposes HB 1251. As a school district with less than the 30 students (therefore less than 475 students), Marmarth School District does not need the state government dictating any hiring, including a Superintendent, or placing limitations on the salary. School districts are perfectly capable of coordinating with other districts on hiring needs if they choose to. A state law requiring small districts to jointly share a Superintendent is unnecessary and infringes upon the rights of school districts to make decisions for the school and the district. State legislators needs to vote NO on HB 1251 and defend the limited government that most legislators support.

Not all school districts and not all students and parents want to go to a big school in a big town. Some folks like the small school setting, the attention to each individual student, the close proximity to our homes, and the family atmosphere of a small school. We do not have diesel busses and we do not have a hot lunch program, but we do have a Halloween carnival, a Christmas concert, fundraisers, and we go on school field trips. The other great thing about our small school and district is we have low taxes. In a day when conservative tax principles seem to be absent in our state government, the Marmarth School District taxes based on needs, not wants. We provide what our students need for a quality education, but we don't overburden our taxpayers with artificial turf or Olympic sized swimming pools. Marmarth School District strongly

opposes HB 1251 and opposes the state government mandating districts to jointly share a Superintendent or be "assigned" to share with a district or be told what the salary cap should be for any employee. State legislators need to vote NO on HB 1251 and allow local decisions to be made by local school districts.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please vote NO on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Kelly Turbiville, Marmarth School Board President
Shannon Minerich, Marmarth School Board Vice President
Dennis Rice, Marmarth School Board Member
Sam Fisher, Marmarth School Board Member
Norman Rice, Marmarth School Board Member

Dear Legislators,

The superintendent of our schools is the equivalent of the CEO of a business. He or she is responsible for assuring that the finances of the school are sufficient and that goals set by the local school board are achievable. He/she is responsible for the oversight of the principal(s) in our schools, and in the case of a school that employs a principal who is early on in his/her own career, the superintendent plays an integral role in helping that principal develop their own skills. The superintendent is there to advise and discuss issues with local school boards. The superintendent is there to assure that the school makes efficient use of their facilities, and that everything operates smoothly. The superintendent is, dare we say, one of the most important individuals (in terms of job duties) within the school building.

We are writing to you about our opposition to house bill 1251 which was recently introduced by Representative Matt Ruby regarding employment and compensation of K-12 superintendents being tied to student enrollment numbers.

The student enrollment number in the bill is listed as 475. For reference's sake, May-Port CG has an enrollment this year of right around 500 students K-12. However, this number fluctuates depending upon how many students graduate and how many students are coming into kindergarten. For example, we have 22 students who are seniors this year and possibly have 50 kindergartners coming in next year. Given these numbers, we know that when our 22 students walk across that stage, that we will have over 475 students. We met the threshold to keep our superintendent employed. For fun now, let's say that the reverse was true, and we had 52 students who are seniors and we had 22 kindergartners coming in next year. Yikes, our enrollment dropped to 470 students on graduation day! As our students walk across the stage, we must also say goodbye to our superintendent under this bill! Does it mean that we don't think he is 'busy' enough or that his job isn't important enough to our district because we dropped below the magic number of 475? Absolutely not! Even in years where our enrollment would drop to say 400 students, he is still extremely important and valuable to our district.

We do understand that we would have the ability to file a form asking that we have a one-year grace period before we would face consolidation of superintendent duties with nearby school(s) if we did not increase enrollment to 475 the following year, however, it would be difficult for us to retain our superintendent if we were in this predicament. We would understand that our superintendent would need to look out for his/her own best interest in making the decision about whether to move on to a position that would provide him/her more certain job security than we could offer him/her.

We feel that not only does this bill create great turmoil for schools like us who would be on the bubble each year for hitting the magic number, but it would be difficult for schools to retain a superintendent and assure that he/she feels secure in their own career at the helm of small schools. We feel that this bill puts more importance on large schools, like Bismarck, Minot, Fargo, West Fargo, and Grand Forks. We feel that this bill looks to take away local control from districts. We feel that this bill looks to force consolidations of small districts. And speaking of consolidations, we feel that this bill attacks the very feel and livelihood of those small towns. Once a small town loses their school district, it is difficult to attract families to those towns knowing that their children are going to be bussed elsewhere to learn. We feel that this bill would make it more difficult to attract teachers to our small schools for the same reasoning. We look at some of the other small towns in our region and think of how this bill will affect them even more than our own school - Hatton, Finley and Hope-Page to name a few. We question what enrollment numbers are of nearby districts of Hillsboro, Central Valley, Northern

Cass, Larimore, McVille, Cooperstown, and Northwood to name a few. How many of these schools are with May-Port CG on the bubble, and how many of them would need to say goodbye to their superintendent?

The other misguided information that we see in this bill is the dollar amount that they are using as examples for superintendent salaries. The video shared with the legislators this week showed small school superintendent salaries which we don't feel are altogether accurate. There are many of our small schools that pay our superintendent less than was depicted. We would implore you to really analyze that savings number further. We also feel that IF our school district was to lose our wonderful superintendent to this bill that we would seriously consider downsizing his title to assistant superintendent or head principal or whatever we would need to call him and keep him on at the same salary we are currently paying him and then hope and pray that he would choose to stay in our school. We are strong proponents for needing to have a point-man; a person responsible for all the things to keep a school (or any business) running smoothly and efficiently.

Thank you for your consideration and for hearing our thoughts as to why we would respectfully ask you to consider voting **NO to HB1251**.

Sincerely,

Umariana Knudson
May-Port CG School Board President

James Aarsvold MDCG School Board

Cory Pire MDCG School Board

Chris He MDCG School Board

Lynne Lee MDCG School Board

Jane Parker MDCG School Board Vice President

Wendy Hanson MDCG School Board

Dear North Dakota Legislators,

I am the president of the May-Port CG School district and am a member of the ND School Board Association's Legislative Committee. The reason that I got involved in school governance is that I feel passionately about the education of the next generation; I believe that if we educate students particularly in these young, impressionable phases of their lives to become strong, independent thinkers that they will have the power to keep our great state a place that thrives. The reason that I returned to my own small-town community after I graduated college and chose to raise my children in a small community is that I love the small town feel and community support that I knew my children would receive as they grew up. I feel there is something very special about small towns. I love the thought that my sons, from preschool or kindergarten on to their senior year of high school had teachers, principals, and superintendents who knew them by name; who knew them by their interests; and who knew right away if my children were struggling or having a bad day. It was comforting to know that they had a great group of people looking out for their best interests, and who were there to assure that not only were they being educated but that they were being fully supported as individual people.

Small schools are wonderful in that they have the everybody knows everybody feel to them. Instead of 475 children per grade level there are often less than 475 students K-12. Small schools are wonderful in the small classroom sizes and low student-to-teacher ratios that they can provide children. Small schools are wonderful because you have classroom teachers and administrators who are there to support, cheer, and perhaps even coach students at extra-curricular activities. And with those extra-curricular activities most of the time there isn't a try-out for a student to have to participate in an activity; it's more of if you want to try it, come on out and join the team. These are all great things for parents and students alike.

I am not sure how much you know or understand about the inner workings of our small school districts, so please forgive me if I am overexplaining my viewpoint here. The superintendent of our school is the equivalent of the CEO of a business, just as he or she is in a large school. He is responsible for assuring that the finances of the school are sufficient and that goals set by the local school board are achievable. He is responsible for the oversight of the principal(s) in our schools, and in the case of a school that employs a principal who is early on in his or her own career, the superintendent plays an integral role in helping that principal develop their own skills. The superintendent is there to advise and discuss issues with local school boards. The superintendent is there to assure that the school makes efficient use of their facilities, and that everything operates smoothly. The superintendent is, dare I say, one of the most important individuals, in terms of job duties, within the school building.

In a small school the superintendent also regularly wears other hats. They fill in as necessary to assure that all roles are filled on all days. This may mean that the superintendent is working in the kitchen, is working as a janitor, is assisting a school counselor, is a substitute teacher, or is working recess duty. It may mean that the superintendent is out shoveling sidewalks, is sitting in on meetings with parents and students, or that he or she is driving a bus. It means that the superintendent is out checking road conditions to see if and when school should be closed. It means that when a death occurs in the community, he is working to assure that the affected students, or past students, have their basic needs met. It means when a student hits the ditch going to or from school, he may be assisting that child and/or assuring that child's parents are able to assist him. It means if a child is home sick and something bad is happening in that child's neighborhood that he may be reaching out to the parent to assure they are safe – even going so far as saying that he will run over to your house to assure your family is safe. His daily calendar is indeed packed full of tasks that are outside of the typical superintendent's job duties. The superintendent is not 'just' a school employee, he is a pillar of the community.

As a board president, I communicate with my superintendent at least weekly. There are times that I actually communicate with my superintendent daily, or multiple times a day. This is not because I do not have a seasoned superintendent; in fact, my superintendent has the longest tenures in our region. As a board member I appreciate that he allows me to help him when he feels the need to reach out about issues that he faces, he communicates with me regularly so that if and when I receive a phone call from a patron that I am already aware of issues, and that he feels so passionately about our school district that he is regularly brainstorming ways to make our schools even better. Does this mean that he is not a busy man? Absolutely not. I personally know that he is working far more hours than his contract states that we are paying him for. He is 100% vested in the success of our school. And he knows that our school board, and I, 100% appreciate his efforts and his dedication to our students.

I am **strongly opposed to house bill 1251** which was recently introduced regarding employment and compensation of K-12 superintendents being tied to student enrollment numbers.

The student enrollment number in the bill is listed as 475, as you know. For reference's sake, my school district, May-Port CG has an enrollment this year of right around 500 students K-12. However, this number fluctuates depending upon how many students graduate and how many students are coming into kindergarten. For example, we have 22 students who are seniors this year and 52 kindergartners. Given these numbers, we know that when our 22 students walk across that stage, that we will have over 475 students. We met the threshold to keep our superintendent employed. For fun now, let's say that the reverse was true, and we had 52 students who are seniors, and we have 22 kindergartners next year. Yikes, our enrollment dropped to 470 students on graduation day! As our students walk across the stage, we must also say goodbye to our superintendent under this bill! Does it mean that we don't think he is 'busy' enough or that his job isn't important enough to our district because we dropped below the magic number of 475? Absolutely not! Even in years where our enrollment would drop to say 400 students, he is still extremely important and valuable to our district.

I feel that not only does this bill create great turmoil for schools like us who would be on the bubble each year for hitting the magic number, but it would be difficult for schools to retain a superintendent and assure that he or she feels secure in their own career at the helm of small schools. I feel that this bill puts more importance on large schools, like Bismarck, Minot, Fargo, West Fargo, and Grand Forks. I feel that this bill looks to take away local control from districts. I feel that this bill looks to force consolidations of small districts, bussing children to other cities to assure that they can hit the magic number of 475 students. Now I know your bill doesn't say schools would have to consolidate, but I strongly feel that this is a first step to consolidation. What is the next position you will go after? Principals? Athletic directors? Specialty or CTE teachers?

And speaking of consolidations, I feel that this bill attacks the very feel and livelihood of those small towns. Once a small town loses their school district, it is difficult to attract families to those towns knowing that their children are going to be bussed elsewhere to learn. I feel that this bill would make it more difficult to attract teachers to our small schools for the same reasoning. I look at some of the other small towns in our region and think of how this bill will affect them even more than our own school. I question what the enrollment numbers are in Hatton, Finley, Hope-Page, Central Valley, Northern Cass, Larimore, McVillage, Cooperstown, and Northwood to name a few. How many of these schools are with May-Port CG on the bubble, and how many of them would need to say goodbye to their superintendent? In fact, there are very few of Class B schools in my region that meet the 475 number: Mayville, Hillsboro, Thompson, and Northern Cass I believe would meet the number.

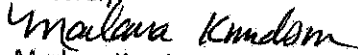
The other misguided information that I see in this bill is the dollar amount that is being used for examples for superintendent salaries. We received the video showing small school superintendent salaries from the legislators who introduced this bill which I don't feel is altogether accurate. There are many of our small schools that pay our superintendent less than was depicted. I would implore you to really analyze that savings number further. I also feel that IF my school district was to lose our

wonderful superintendent to this bill that we would seriously consider downsizing his title to assistant superintendent or head principal or whatever we would need to call him and keep him on at the same salary we are currently paying him and then hope and pray that he would choose to stay in our school. I am a strong proponent for needing to have a point-man; a person responsible for all the things to keep a school (or any business) running smoothly and efficiently.

And really, if this bill does merit further consideration for you, I would implore you to really take a hard look at this salary cap that has been introduced. All teacher contracts in the state are public record – please look at the top tiered teacher's salary and compensation package. Please look at the salaries that principals are making as well. The superintendent, being the CEO of schools, should be making more money than these positions. With the cap that you have in this bill, not only would my superintendent be taking a pay cut, but also my principals and the top tier of my teachers would be receiving more compensation than my superintendent. There is a trickle-down effect that would occur where school boards and their constituents would have to strongly consider reducing principal and teacher pay scales to make your salary cap make any sense at all from a business standpoint.

Thank you for your consideration and for hearing my thoughts as to why I would respectfully ask you to consider voting **NO to HB1251**.

Sincerely,



Marlana Knudson

President of May-Port CG School Board

From: Andrew Johnson <andrew.johnson@centralplainsag.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2023 4:17 PM
To: tmwanzek@ndlegis.gov; cheadland@ndlegis.gov; dwvigesaa@ndlegis.gov
Subject: House Bill 1251 - Limiting Small School Superintendents

Good afternoon, I just wanted to drop a note to voice my opinion on this bill. I think it would be absurd to give this amount of control to the state and take it away from local control. I feel this would do nothing but hurt our school district. Our superintendent has enough on his plate the way it is. This would put too much stress on principals and business managers having to pick up the slack and would require salary increases to be able to sustain those positions. So, the salary money you would save by reducing the number of Superintendents would just be added in elsewhere. I see no benefits from this bill whatsoever. Small town public schools will be torn apart, it's hard enough trying to find school staffing the way it is and I feel this would do nothing but hurt our kids in the end. This would be like having one basketball coach for 4 different teams, being at each team's practice once a week, and think your going to win!

Thanks

Andrew Johnson
School Board Member GCC
701-797-7081

Subject: HB 1251

I am writing this letter opposing HB 1251.

As president of a small rural school board we have shared or had part time superintendents in our school district in the past and it has not gone well. We found that when a situation arose it was a day when the superintendent was not at the school leaving the decision to our staff to make on their own. We have been very fortunate to find a superintendent willing to move to rural North Dakota but she has been asked to do dual roles.

Sharing a superintendent will not automatically generate cost savings. We would need to hire two building principals as we have two separate buildings. One of these positions is now covered by our superintendent. Finding good qualified people to fill any teaching position in rural ND is next to impossible when larger districts can afford to pay thousands of dollars more on their base pay.

Choosing a superintendent should be a local decision made by boards and their patrons. The superintendent is the school boards direct connection to the day to day decision making in the district. Forcing school districts to share a superintendent is the first step toward forced consolidation.

Roberta Hunt

President of the McClusky School Board

McClusky, ND

To whom this may concern,

I am writing to ask you to oppose HB 1251. I have several reasons, first I believe that our Superintendent serves as the face and influence of our district and that would go away with a Superintendent serving multiple districts.

Second, As I review the current writing of the bill, it strikes me as a plan that works better on paper than in reality. The Superintendent must be in multiple places and representing multiple boards this sounds terribly complicated and challenging, both logistically and professionally.

Finally, I would like you to oppose this bill as I think we can be fiscally responsible in each of our districts as a school board as to who we hire and what salaries we provide. If we are doing our job as a school board we will be successful.

Likely the elephant in the room is school consolidation and this bill is presumably a stepping stone. I wholeheartedly oppose any school consolidation at this point.

This is a side note that you might find interesting in the area of government overreach. Sara and I opposed the legislation to put in term limits for our ND legislators, but the majority of the state disagreed with us. We support our tenured legislators in ND as we feel the time lost in training numerous Freshman in a short legislative session is wasteful and costly. I do however feel that regulating schools and how each district hires a superintendent should be left in the hands of each individual school board. My perspective is that this bill qualifies as government overreach.

Regards,
Justin Spickler

--

Justin & Sara Spickler
Spickler Ranch North
8377 7th Parkway NE
Glenfield ND 58443
701-674-3170
www.SpicklerRanchNorth.com



Minnewaukan Public School
4675 Hwy 281 N
Minnewaukan, ND 58351
Phone: 701-473-5306

January 17, 2023

The Minnewaukan Public School Board is strongly opposed to HB 1251. There are many issues and concerns with this bill, however, any legislation which would eliminate local control of a district's school is at the top of the list. We believe this bill would be a legislative first step in requiring small districts to consolidate. While the sharing of services can be a good thing – it is only good when it is mutually beneficial to the co-oping districts and not mandated.

Our district has 300 students. Forcing us to share a superintendent with one or more other districts would potentially take the superintendent out of our building for at least a couple days a week – possibly more. This would require someone else to step up and assume those duties that would get left undone when she is out of the building. The principals are already quite busy, they would be unable to assume these tasks on a regular basis, so that would force the district to hire additional staff.

Should our district, in the future be required to share superintendents, what happens when that person, forced upon the district is not a good fit? Every school board should have the ability and the control to hire the person they believe would be the best person for their individual school. This bill has the potential to remove that ability.

The last point that we wish to make is in regard to superintendent salary. Yes, it is very common for the superintendent to be the highest paid employee. Superintendents contracts are for 12 months, where teachers are contracted for 9 months. There should be a fairly large discrepancy in salary due to both the length of the contract and in the duties of the position. Local decision making regarding the salary of the superintendent should be respected. As a board, we know the needs of our district, we know the value of the superintendent, and we should be allowed to decide upon the salary and benefits we pay to that person.

Michelle T Anderson - President

Amya Tico vice president

David Ambrose

*Walt Hanson
Leona LaRoque*

MONTPELIER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Embracing Success Through Education

Board of Education
Tony Roorda **President**
Scott Harms **Vice-President**
Brock Naze, Robert Froehlich,
Wade Dally, Lynn Boom, Abram Valenta



Phil Leitner, **Superintendent**
Sara Wilson, **PK-12 Principal**
Richard Wright, **Activities Director**
Amy Maurer, **Business Manager**
Melissa Marshall, **Administrative Assistant**

January 23, 2023

Members of the Legislature,

We write this letter in opposition to HB 1251.

We feel that the core of the argument against the bill is the loss of local control that our school board would have when deciding educational matters in our district. Forcing our district to consolidate our superintendent position with other schools actually would have the opposite effect of the desired result.

Our superintendent serves multiple roles and for the last 20 years our board has consistently hired someone who can do so. Our current superintendent is also a licensed school counselor for the district and fills many federal and state positions we are required to provide. With recent changes to state requirements having an additional school counselor presence allows us to fill two hard to fill positions.

It also allowed our district to find a person to be full time in our district instead of having to share a superintendent and a school counselor with someone else. If we had a shared position with another district we would have a superintendent and a school counselor that would not be available to be present in our school every single day. That matters to a small, rural school district like ours, as resources and services are already spread thin.

Besides the official role our superintendent is able to serve he is also a backup to many others in the district like secretary, driver, principal etc. There are many things that come up during our regular school day that we need extra support, but do not have someone hired to do the job. If we didn't have a full time person in the superintendent position we would likely be forced to hire additional staff. The intent of the bill is to provide efficiency and cost savings, but we believe in our district it could actually cost more and at the very least it does not save nearly as much money as is currently being proposed by proponents of the bill.

Our superintendent is a 12 month employee and is the employee charged with upholding our school policies and educational vision established by our board. They also serve as the administrator of required state and federal programs. We don't feel a shared superintendent would be able to devote the necessary time in order to fulfill our objectives as a board.

Mission: Embracing Success through Education

214 7th Ave. Montpelier, ND 58472

Phone 701-489-3348/Fax 701-489-3349

MONTPELIER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Embracing Success Through Education

Board of Education
Tony Roorda **President**
Scott Harms **Vice-President**
Brock Naze, Robert Froehlich,
Wade Dally, Lynn Boom, Abram Valenta



Phil Leitner, **Superintendent**
Sara Wilson, **PK-12 Principal**
Richard Wright, **Activities Director**
Amy Maurer, **Business Manager**
Melissa Marshall, **Administrative Assistant**

We feel a shared superintendent would cost us our identity as a school district. We wouldn't have a person here at our school to handle the day to day matters and we question who would actually be in charge. It would be really hard to expect a person to perform the duties required of the position if they were in another community.

We would likely have to hire an additional person or assign those responsibilities to someone else on staff who is present year round/full time. It would have unintended consequences of costs not included in the financial figures associated with this bill. In turn, not filling the position would lessen our ability to provide services to the students, staff and community of our district.

According to the requirements of the bill we would only be able to contribute about \$25,000 to a potential partnership of having a joint superintendent. We believe this would likely force a partnership with multiple small school districts because the larger schools don't have any real incentive to take on the responsibility for such a low cost benefit. As a result, the position would not be able to attain the high results we desire in our superintendent position.

The loss of local control, unintended consequences in spending as well as loss of services and a bleak outlook for potential partnerships are problematic. This bill simply will not work for rural North Dakota and our district has already proven over time that we can fill this position with more cost savings and better services.

The simple truth is that cost sharing is already happening and it works. It's just best to let the local school boards decide what's best for their school district and fill the position of a shared superintendent in-house. Please vote no on HB 1251.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Montpelier School Board

Members: Tony Roorda, Scott Harms, Robert Froehlich, Lynn Boom, Abram Valenta, Wade Dally and Brock Naze

Mission: Embracing Success through Education

214 7th Ave. Montpelier, ND 58472

Phone 701-489-3348/Fax 701-489-3349



Mott-Regent Public School

Every Student. Every Moment. Every Day.

205 Dakota Avenue
Mott, North Dakota 58646
Phone: (701) 824-2795
Fax: (701) 824-4558

Board Resolution 2023-001: School Board Resolution to oppose HB1251

Whereas: It is the responsibility of the Board of Mott-Regent to interview, select, and evaluate the superintendent of our district.

Whereas: The State of ND legislative body has introduced HB1251, a bill to force consolidate superintendents within the majority of school districts in ND and to limit compensation for superintendents within the state

Whereas: HB1251 would remove one of the primary responsibilities of a locally elected board and place that responsibility on the Department of Public Instruction who has little knowledge of the specific needs and dynamics of each school in the state

Whereas: HB1251 places an emphasis on potential cost savings, Our board believes the exact opposite would happen as a Superintendent that covers two or three schools will only be dedicating a portion of time at each. This will force schools to increase salaries and responsibilities of building principals, athletic directors, busing coordinators, business managers, custodial staff, and board members as the many hats that a superintendent wears would be limited to budgetary. In addition, the loss of educational leadership a superintendent provides would greatly hinder teachers, staff, and students within each affected district

Whereas: The Mott-Regent School Board believes that local control of education is the best solution to solve the needs of each specific district. Utilizing the state standards each district is responsible for the staff, administration and curriculum which best allows them to meet the standards as set by the state.

Whereas: HB1251 could set a dangerous precedent that all schools in the state should be aware of. That legislators and the state DPI would be directly involved in the decision making process of hiring local administrators and confined to salary caps as set by the legislature would greatly hinder all schools ability to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

Be it resolved that the Mott-Regent Public School Board voted unanimously to stand in opposition to HB1251 and requests that this bill receive a do not pass from the House Education Committee

Dated 19 January 2023

President of the School Board _____

Administration

Zachary Slayton
Superintendent (701) 824-2795
Deborah Bohn
Elementary Principal (701) 824-2247
Bridget Greff
Secondary Principal (701)824-2795

School Board Members

Lucas Greff, President
Garret Swindler, Vice-President
Nathan Huether
Tracy Kruger
Nathan Thomas
Julie Miller
Melissa Carlson

I as a member of the Munich School Board oppose HB1251. Our superintendent does much more than just be an administrator. He is a substitute teacher, bus driver and any other temporary fill in the gap position we need to cover. He knows our school's needs and it has his full attention. We wouldn't have that if this bill passes.

Each community also has their own ideas and identity. What one school board thinks may be totally different than the other community's school board. It may take a large area to reach 475 students.

We have that choice already if we would like to share Superintendents. I don't think this should be a mandate dictated to us without knowing our situations.

I just don't agree with this bill in any shape or form.

Kelly Hall
Munich School Board Member

Nedrose Public School District #4

School Board Members

James Vannett, President
Holly Brekhuis, Vice President
Todd Awalt
Robert Kraus
Christopher Sutton



Administration

Matt Norby, Superintendent
Alex Schmaltz, Secondary Principal
Chelsey Raymond, Elementary Principal
Brock Zietz, Athletic Director
Connie Marcellais, Business Manager

January 18, 2023

Senators and Representatives,

In regards to HB 1251, the Nedrose School Board has voted unanimously to oppose this bill. HB 1251 takes local control away from school boards and the people who elected them. While bill sponsors state the intention of this is NOT to begin steps toward school consolidations, co-oping Superintendents WILL push schools toward consolidation. The superintendent is the direct connection between the board to a school's day-to-day operations and network of educators and employees.

If a school district has a shared superintendent, this could create a conflict of interest when searching for open educator positions. If both school districts are in search of the same position or even similar positions.

When comparing salaries, please keep in mind when comparing superintendent salaries to teacher salaries the superintendent is a 12 month contract and the teachers are a 9 month or in our case 182 days contract.

In the past, Nedrose School has had a superintendent that was also the elementary principal. We can attest to the fact that when this position is shared, the results are never good. Superintendent tasks and Principal tasks are never thoroughly completed. This would end up being the case with sharing one superintendent between schools. Neither school would get the full benefit of a superintendent.

One thing that this legislation does not take into consideration is all the duties that a superintendent takes on outside of administrative duties. They fill in for teachers, bus drivers, coaches, kitchen staff, and janitorial staff. That "savings" this bill promises will have to be used filling all of those gaps.

Superintendents interact with students and mentor students struggling to stay in school. We have seen firsthand the impact a phone call from a superintendent to a student can have on school attendance. Things like that won't happen if superintendents are spread too thin.

Nedrose School Board does not support this bill as it is not the best for North Dakota students.

Nedrose School Board President

James Vannett

To: House Education Committee

Attn: Chairman Pat Heinert

Regarding HB1251

I write this letter on behalf of the New England Public School District school board.

Let it be known that the New England Public School District has passed a motion in opposition to HB1251 and formally request that the bill be rejected by North Dakota's 68th Legislative Assembly.

As a small school district in southwest North Dakota, we are incredulous at the introduction of this bill. On the one hand, it is acknowledged that superintendents of small schools wear many hats throughout their day. But in the same breath, it is suggested that splitting a superintendent would be a logical decision because more people could then be hired to fill in for their time away from school. How does that make sense? Schools in small towns are the number one employer. Having a superintendent on campus 5 days a week keeps them in the loop of district needs. When they are only there part-time, their professional interest is only part-time. Their personal interest is only part-time. And how do students, staff, and administration develop a relationship with a superintendent when they are only there part-time? You see, students in small schools have the advantage of knowing their superintendent by name. They see them in the halls and are acknowledged in passing. They recognize them at sporting events and even stop to talk. Small town schools have benefits that cannot be duplicated by larger districts. However, we also understand challenges that are completely unknown to larger districts.

As partners in sports co-op agreements, we are no stranger to the difficulties that surface in sharing *anything* with another school. We have met challenges with sharing a head coach or traveling 40 miles to meet for practice with our co-op school or learning of a cancelled practice or game at the last minute because of "miscommunication". There are challenges with the school districts even being able to agree on a date to meet to discuss shared issues. We cannot *IMAGINE* the difficulties trying to navigate sharing a superintendent considering the huge and varied issues schools deal with daily. No community would feel at one with their school if the superintendent were only a name and not a familiar face.

In surrendering local control of our small schools, we recognize this would simply be the first step in closing a school and ultimately erasing the town. Any legislators of small towns in the 68th Assembly surely would know this. We hope that none of those who represent small towns and their small school districts will even consider giving this bill acknowledgment, let alone approval.

Thank you for your attention.

Constance Jalbert

School board president

NEW SALEM-ALMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT #49

PO Box 378, 310 Elm Avenue, New Salem, North Dakota 58563

Phone: 701-843-7610 FAX: 701-843-7011

Brian Christopherson, Superintendent

Monica Reiner-Pletan, Board President

Lauren Bennett, Elementary Principal

Brian Olson, High School Principal

Marci Gilstad, Business Manager

Mission Statement: "To ensure that each child achieves his/her full potential through student-centered practices."

January 19, 2023

Chairman Heinert and House Education Committee Members:

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the New Salem-Almont School Board. On Monday, January 16, 2023, at our regular board meeting, our school board voted unanimously to oppose HB 1251. We see this bill as an overreach of state government onto our local school district. We also cannot envision this bill meeting the objectives the bill sponsors have laid out.

In our district, we have 363 students split between a K-5 building and a 6-12 building. Each building has their own principal and our superintendent operates between both buildings. We believe this bill underestimates the work of a superintendent in a smaller "Class B" school district. Our superintendent can be busy driving a bus route, working with the business manager on a project, assisting in a classroom, or helping out at the cafeteria. His day can often extend from 7:00 am until 9:00 pm when the last basketball game is over. I don't believe that you can say a larger town superintendent in Bismarck or Minot knows many of the children's names or that the children even know this person's name. The personal level our superintendent has with our district and our students is priceless to us. Expecting our superintendent to add another district or even two districts to his schedule is unthinkable and there is no doubt that we would need to add more administrative staff to help with duties in his absence at another school.

The information provided to support this bill states that 10% of the superintendent's salaries come from the nine larger school districts. Does that number account for the assistant superintendents and all other "administration" needed in these school districts? We value our superintendent and the dedication he provides to our district exclusively. Our whole district benefits from having a strong leader and this person needs to be paid accordingly.

This bill also compares this process of "sharing superintendents" to a local sports co-operative, which couldn't be farther from the truth. There are many factors that play into creating a sports co-op; needs of the sport and school willingness to participate in the process just to name a couple. Most importantly, school boards are able to make co-op decisions in the best interest of their students, without outside input and control from those not familiar with the district.

This bill takes away the school board's ability to make decisions in the best interest of their students. Schools would be forced to enter into, and stay in the process and possibly not even make their own choice if they can't find a partner school.

Please keep the decisions with the local school board and vote no on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Monica Reiner-Pletan

New Salem - Almont Board President



Northwood Public School



January 18, 2023

Attention: House Education Committee

Chairman Pat Heinert,

At the January 18, 2023 Northwood Public School's regular monthly school board meeting, the Northwood School Board of Education voted 5-0 in opposition of HB 1251.

With an enrollment of 336, this bill would have a direct negative effect to our District. As a rural North Dakota school district, our superintendent has many day-to-day roles that keep our District functioning. These roles are all vital and important to the success of our District.

We also believe that it is important to keep the choice of a superintendent at the local level. If the District were to be forced into a partnership with another district, this forced relationship would hurt our community and their local voice.

These are just a couple reasons why the Northwood School Board is opposed to HB 1251. We hope that our voice is heard and that you do not recommend this bill out of committee.

Northwood School Board of Directors,

Brian Twete, Board President
Erik Thorsgard, Board Vice President
Gary Bilden, Director
Nicole Korsmo, Director
Adam Naastad, Director

Handwritten signatures of the Northwood School Board of Directors: Brian Twete, Erik Thorsgard, Gary Bilden, Nicole Korsmo, and Adam Naastad.

NORTHWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL No. 129

420 Trojan Road • Northwood, ND 58267-3001

Phone (701) 587-5221 • Fax (701) 587-5423

www.northwoodk12.com



January 17, 2023

Attention: House Education Committee

Chairman Pat Heinert,

I write this letter in opposition to HB 1251 as an eleven-year school board employee for the Northwood School District, with eight years on our finance committee and four years including the current term as school board president. The proposed financial savings with this bill are grossly overestimated and a poor misrepresentation of rural administrative salaries.

I commend any elected official in Bismarck who tries to save tax-payer dollars, although this is not the right route with HB 1251. Isolating a small sector of the education budget with superintendent cuts will not achieve the proposed, or even suspected, cost savings. The numbers proposed are so grossly skewed in effort to make this appear to be a better option than it actually is. The rural superintendent is not just the person who welcomes the kindergartners and their parent on the first day of school, or who shakes the hand of the graduating senior on the last day of school, but a diversified public employee. Our rural superintendents are not just sitting in their glass office planning board meetings and making budget revisions for their districts. Often, we can see them as a part-time janitor, IT ancillary staff, transportation coordinators, fill-in bus drivers, staff counselors, and even sometimes a school nurse. By trying to consolidate superintendents from multiple districts, we in turn multiply other ancillary staff hires without the accountability we have in our superintendents. I would consider a do not pass or even going as far as withdrawing this current proposed legislation.

Even though the academic requirements are similar across the state, elected school board directive is tailored to the district's needs and delivered through unique superintendent guidance for individuality of success of the district's students with state tax-payer funding. Dissolving district individuality would be gravely jeopardized with passage of said bill. One example of this would be in hiring staff: superintendent employed by two boards who both need to fill similar teaching positions would undoubtedly be a conflict of interest.

These are just some of the very elementary gaps in this proposed legislation. Again, I would hope you will not recommend out of committee. I appreciate you taking your time to review this letter and for your service as an elected official of our wonderful state.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Twete', with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the signature area.

Brian C. Twete, MS, FNP-C
Northwood School Board President

We create an innovative and supportive environment that prepares students for future success.

Shane Azure, Superintendent Sarah Burger, Secondary Principal Cydnee Strand, Elementary Principal

Sonia Meehl
11103 85th St SE
Oakes, ND 58474-9752
Phone: 701-710-0230 **Email: ismeehl@drtel.net**

January 17, 2023

Chairman Heinert, Vice-Chair Schreiber-Beck, and members of the House Education Committee:

I am writing in opposition to HB 1251. I am in my eleventh year as an Oakes Public School Board member and my ninth year as board president. My district currently serves about 485 students. Our 2022-23 budget includes \$1.55 million of local property tax revenue and \$4.15 million of unrestricted state aid, for a total of just under \$5.7 million. Applying the 1.5% limit yields total compensation to our superintendent to about \$85,500.

During my time on the board, we have hired a superintendent four times. In 2013, we hired a first-time superintendent for an annual salary of \$100,000, PLUS benefits including retirement, health insurance, cafeteria plan, professional dues, and a moving allowance. He had previously been a principal in a smaller district, and we could not have hired him for less than we did. In the current school year, we hired a first-time superintendent who was previously our elementary principal, a position for which her salary alone was \$96,000 for a 10-month contract (our superintendent has a 12-month contract). We would not have hired either of these individuals had we been subject to the stated compensation limit. In fact, I doubt whether we would have had a single applicant for a superintendent for our district, let alone two or three districts together! Either of these now-superintendents could have accepted a principal or assistant superintendent position in a larger district for more compensation than they would have had as our superintendent.

Our district already shares administrative services for both Career and Technical Education and Special Education through our affiliations with SRCTC and Sheyenne Valley Special Education. Even with that administrative collaboration, our superintendent is ALWAYS BUSY. NONE of the five superintendents I have worked with have been underworked and overpaid!

Yesterday, a search of my district's policies that contain the word "superintendent" yielded 143 separate results! While not all of these delineate responsibilities of superintendents, many do. These required duties and expectations cover a wide range of topics, from recruiting, hiring, and evaluating both teaching and non-teaching staff; preparing for board meetings; making decisions related to sex offenders; dealing with matters involving violent and threatening behavior; deciding whether to close school due to weather; planning the district budget; reviewing complaints about instructional material. I found these on only the first three of fifteen pages of policies that mentioned superintendents. Many of these policies are in place to assure that our district meets requirements of state and federal laws and regulations. Our small-school superintendents do not have an army of assistant administrators to help them carry out their required duties and expectations.

Further, superintendents in my district undertake duties every day that may not be outlined in policy or their job description, including, but not limited to driving bus, substituting in the kitchen, being on-duty at evening activities, stepping into a classroom when a teacher needs to leave early, and many others. ALL these tasks would have to be done by someone else in the absence of the superintendent who is already doing them with no additional compensation. I doubt that the "someone else" would do these things for nothing.

This bill would limit the number and compensation of administrators without regard to whether a district is growing or declining, the number of students in the district in poverty or with special needs, the number and experience of staff employed by the district, the age and condition of the district's buildings, whether a significant building project or bond referendum is underway, and many other factors. I have always admired superintendents' willingness to help one another out, but in my experience, they simply have no capacity to take on all these duties for another district.

Our superintendents are expected to be our educational leaders and the face of our district in our community. Local school board members in both large and small districts are best suited to determine the number of administrative staff in their district and compensation of their superintendent. With appreciation for your service in the legislature, and with all due respect for your intentions, I ask you to vote DO NOT PASS on HB 1251.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sonia Meehl".

Sonia Meehl

Attention Chairman Pat Heinert

As the Powers Lake School Board President, neither I nor members of the board support the implementation of HB 1251. It is our belief that this bill is an attack on local control, something that North Dakota prides itself on. In order for the Powers Lake School District to achieve the 475 student threshold it would likely have to co-op with at least three other schools. This would raise numerous concerns. How much power would a local school board or community have in that individual's performance? How likely is it that each school would get equal time? Who balances the priorities? What if one board was not satisfied with performance and desired a change in leadership and others did not? At that point you would be stuck. Not to mention each school and community has different challenges and priorities. These issues have the potential to not only drive wedges between school districts but whole communities as well. Currently with our local control we can consolidate if districts see fit. This should remain a choice and not be mandated.


HB 1251 is a one size fits all approach to a presumed ability for school districts to save money. In reality it does not take into consideration the many hats that a Superintendent (or any employee of a small school) wears. In Powers Lake the Superintendent of our school is also our Grade School Principal. Our High School Principal also serves as a teacher, football coach and track coach. The assumption that by consolidating Superintendents we would be saving the district money is not only unrealistic but a pure focus on money and not on a quality education. The real impact would be felt negatively by the students, teachers, and community. The thought that a regional Superintendent would take on three to four times the amount of work for the same or less pay as HB 1251 suggests, is where this bill really starts to fall apart.

What about the students? Let's face it, the reality is our students face more challenges today than they ever have before. Dealing with school safety, discipline, and mental health is becoming more of a challenge in schools every day. The assumption that a regional superintendent will be able to maintain a safe and productive environment is just not reality. These challenges pop up daily and need to be addressed sometimes immediately. Who would this responsibility fall on? It needs to be someone in the school who is available and not 50 miles away. All these duties factor into the Superintendents salary as well.

The Superintendent is an important role not only for the school but also for the community. He/She provides daily guidance for the staff and carries out the vision and culture desired by each community. In a small community the Superintendent is part of the community leadership working hand in hand with the mayor, police chief and city council. Being a part of this leadership is an essential piece of the overall responsibilities that the Superintendent takes on.

In summary, it is the Powers Lake School Board's opinion that HB 1251 is, at the very least, an unrealistic, flawed bill that in the end will not save any money for the taxpayers of North Dakota but will create numerous problems for smaller school districts.

Respectfully,



Jody Schroeder

Powers Lake School Board President

January 22, 2023

House Education Committee (Chairman Pat Heinert)
1501 Eastwood St.
Bismarck, ND

RE: Opportunity Act. HB 1251

Dear Representative Heinert:

My name is Duane Zent, President of the Richardton Taylor Public Schools District School Board. As a member of this school board for 20 years plus, I am writing to voice my strong opposition of the HB 1251, as this bill will negatively impact students and schools in the State of North Dakota. The reasons detailed below explain how I have personally witnessed these negative impacts and anticipate further detriment should this bill pass.

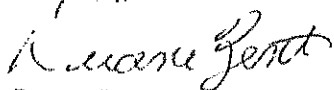
In the mid 1990's the Richardton and Taylor school districts had a cooperative agreement. During this time frame, the Superintendent/Principal of the Taylor school district retired. In attempt to save money and work as a community, the decision was made to share the superintendent. This decision did not go as planned, as it was quickly discovered it does not work for a superintendent to report to more than one school board.

It is very apparent that the passing of HB 1251 will not reduce costs and in fact will have an adverse impact and will limit our candidate pool of qualified superintendents. Superintendents in most small schools not only lead the staff and collaborate with school board, but they are also disciplinarians, athletic directors, bus drivers, etc. There is simply no way we can expect one person to take on all these roles in more than one school for any amount of pay. Superintendent turnover rates will skyrocket, forcing schools to consolidate and students to be on the bus even longer. For example, in the Richardton-Taylor School District we put students on the bus at 6:50 am; if we were forced to consolidate with Dickinson, students would be on the bus at least a half hour to an hour longer each day.

This bill does not look out for the best interest of the students in our state. As representatives and school board members committed to quality education, students must be our priority. School consolidation should be left to local school districts that are involved in the day-to-day structure, management, and leadership of their schools, not up to state government. HB 1251 would force consolidations without any local input.

In closing, this bill does not look out for the best interest of the students and schools in our state. If you have further questions or would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at (701) 290-7659. I thank you for serving as representative for our state and for taking my concerns into consideration.

Sincerely,



Duane Zent

President of Richardton Taylor School Board



RICHLAND #44
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Abercrombie - Christine - Colfax - Galchutt

Staci Schmitz
Elementary Principal

Britney Gandhi
Superintendent/Jr-Sr High Principal

Kendra Dockett
Business Manager

*Educating students to be
responsible citizens and leaders*

www.richland44.com

January 17, 2023

The purpose of this letter is to express our school district's adamant opposition to House Bill 1251. Our school board passed a resolution opposing this bill on January 17, 2023, containing the below key points.

A school board has three primary responsibilities: implement policy, oversee the budget, and hire and evaluate the superintendent. The passing of House Bill 1251 would restrict two of those three responsibilities and would negatively impact the children of the Richland #44 School District.

Superintendent selection and salary determination should be a local decision made by school board members representing their constituents. Taking this decision away from school board members begins to eliminate local control that has been a key factor in our school district making the best decisions for our children. It also limits the voice of our constituents, the voting citizens who elected their school board. This bill weakens the school board's role within the school district: the board will no longer have the sole decision-making authority to select their district leader, nor will they have the full authority to evaluate their leader.

The Richland #44 School District values and prioritizes innovative methods for cost-savings. However, the consolidation and sharing of small district superintendents is not the way to do so. On the contrary, this bill would negatively impact Richland #44 students by removing district leadership without saving any funds. Our school district made a major change to our leadership structure in 2019 when we shifted from three full-time administrators to two: our high school principal became our superintendent while keeping her principal duties. This decision came after much discussion, research, and consideration. We believed this was a fiscally responsible decision that did not compromise our students' learning. If House Bill 1251 is passed, we will not have that option and will have to add a high school principal position. We will also lose our superintendent for half of the time, assuming our partner school district agrees with retaining and sharing her. This is not best for our district's children and eliminates the cost-effective solution our board identified as a responsible use of state and local funds.

An additional major concern our school board has with this bill is finding and/or retaining a quality superintendent who may have to make a pay cut while now reporting to two school boards, overseeing two districts, serving two communities, and supporting two staffs. Our state is already struggling to attract and retain quality employees and leaders. While cutting 60-some positions and potentially saving some dollars seems like a

Richland Jr/Sr High School
101 Main PO Box 49, Colfax, ND 58018
Phone: (701) 372-3713 Fax: 372-3718



Richland Elementary
106 Bdwy PO Box 139, Abercrombie, ND 58001
Phone: (701) 553-8321 Fax: 553-8520

Richland #44 School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs or activities.



RICHLAND #44
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Abercrombie - Christine - Colfax - Galchutt

Staci Schmitz
Elementary Principal

Britney Gandhi
Superintendent/Jr-Sr High Principal

Kendra Dockter
Business Manager

*Educating students to be
responsible citizens and leaders*

www.richland44.com

positive, we believe it is short-sighted and will ultimately hurt the children in our state. We run the high risk of losing the quality leaders we currently have.

We strongly urge the legislature to consider the ramifications and trickle-down effects of this bill. The Richland #44 School District Board believes it is not in the best interest of our children: it will not save our district any funds, it will remove school board decision-making, it will force consolidation, it will risk the loss of quality leaders around the state, and it will require our district to hire an additional administrator. We hope the legislature will continue to value local control and decision-making, a key piece to our democracy that has strengthened our state in so many ways.

Sincerely,

Nathan Berseth, School Board President

On behalf of the Richland #44 School Board

Richland Jr/Sr High School
101 Main PO Box 49, Colfax, ND 58018
Phone: (701) 372-3713 Fax: 372-3718



Richland Elementary
106 Bdwy PO Box 139, Abercrombie, ND 58001
Phone: (701) 553-8321 Fax: 553-8520

Richland #44 School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs or activities.

Fully Accredited

Rolette Public School District # 29

Secondary Principal
Levi Gourneau
Elementary Principal
Levi Gourneau
Business Manager
Michele Grenier

Mr. Terry Motl - Superintendent
901 3rd Ave NE
PO Box 97
Rolette, ND 58366
Email: Terry.Motl@k12.nd.us
Phone: 701-246-3595 Fax: 701-246-3452

School Board
Ryan Pederson, President
Lori Letvin, Vice President
Joseph Graber, Director
Lori Knudson, Director
Brienne Nelson, Director

January 19, 2023

The Honorable Kent Weston,

The Rolette School Board strongly opposes HB 1251 based on the negative effect it will have on small districts across the state. Our district is in a unique position to speak to this bill as we recently had a Superintendent resign mid-year and evaluated sharing a Superintendent with a neighboring district with similar enrollment. Ultimately, the board chose to hire our own Superintendent.

This bill would remove the control our locally elected board has to make that decision. Board members are entrusted to invest the districts money in ways that best serve the students. If the community does not believe this is being done, a new board will be elected that better aligns with the goals of the community.

The cost savings suggested are overstated in the supporting documentation. In the example provided with the bill language, the four schools had an average Superintendent salary of \$164,750, but when merged would have a single Superintendent salary of \$113,000. It is unrealistic to expect a Superintendent to take on four times the workload while accepting a 30% reduction in pay.

Had our district shared a Superintendent the total compensation to that Superintendent would have increased but would have been below the 1.5% threshold. We would have had to create an assistant principal position to perform the day-to-day in-house duties the Superintendent currently performs. Many of the "and other duties" as defined in the Superintendent's contract would have had to be filled by additional ancillary staff. Meanwhile, our principal, teachers and ancillary staff would have less administrative support in house.

This bill would put a geographic and equity strain on Superintendents in the state. In many parts of the state, the area required to meet the 475-student language in the bill would create a situation in which the Superintendent would spend many hours traveling between schools. If small schools work with a large nearby district, it is reasonable to believe that the small district will get less attention causing strain between the boards.

What is identified in this bill is the fact that educating in rural districts is more expensive per student. These students are not provided with the opportunities to take a wide variety of electives their counterparts in large districts have. They do not have access to the same level of CTE training, or the variety of classes and extracurricular activities available. We would ask not to take away the leadership within the district from them as well. Instead work on a funding formula that addresses the base concern identified as the reason for this bill and provide additional dollars to these small schools.

Our district is proud of our Superintendent and the leadership he brings to our district. We are proud that his soul focus is on improving our district. We are proud that his wife is able to work in our district. We are proud that his three children attend our school. And we are proud there is one less empty house in our community.

Sincerely,

Rolette School Board: Ryan Pederson, Lori Letvin, Joseph Graber, Lori Knudson and Brienne Nelson.

Equal Opportunity Employer and Equal Opportunity Educational Institution

The Rolette School District #29 does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, disability, age or other status protected by law.

Rugby Public School District #5
School Board Resolution on House Bill 1251

Whereas the Rugby Public School District is a school district in the state of North Dakota with the purpose of educating students within the district,

Whereas the board of directors of the Rugby Public School District are elected to be the link between the community and the school, as a policy maker for the district, to employ, supervise, and evaluate the role of the superintendent,

Whereas the state of North Dakota legislative body has introduced House Bill (HB) 1251, a bill to limit compensation for school district superintendents, and to limit the number of superintendents in the state of North Dakota,


Whereas HB 1251 will limit local control of schools by the board of directors, who are elected by the voters of the school district,

Whereas HB 1251 will limit the ability of the local school board of directors to establish fair compensation for the local superintendent,

Whereas HB 1251 may force school districts to share a superintendent regardless of local intent,

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved by the Board of Education of the Rugby Public School District that we the undersigned formally oppose HB 1251 and further formally requests that this bill be rejected by the 68th Legislative Assembly of the state of North Dakota.

Dated: January 19, 2023

President of School Board 

Business Manager Sam Hauk

Board Members:

Kris Blensum

Carli Johnson

Nicholas Schwartz

Fran Glasser

From: Michael McNeff <Mike.McNeff@k12.nd.us>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 2:54 PM
To: Aimee Copas
Subject: Fwd: HB 1251

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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Aimee,

Here is what my board president sent to District 14 Leaders. We plan to adopt a resolution at a meeting on Thursday morning. Would you want that too?

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From: Dustin Hager <dhager@hamc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 9:56:56 AM
To: jonelson@ndlegis.gov <jonelson@ndlegis.gov>; jklein@ndlegis.gov <jklein@ndlegis.gov>; rweisz@ndlegis.gov <rweisz@ndlegis.gov>
Cc: Alexis Baxley <alexis.baxley@ndsba.org>; McNeff, Mike <Mike.McNeff@k12.nd.us>
Subject: HB 1251

Good morning gentlemen,

While I understand that HB1251, the bill that has been introduced to limit the number of superintendents along with limited their compensation, is still in committee, I wanted to reach out to you all and let you know my concerns with the bill, should it come to the House and Senate for vote. I am the current president of the Rugby Public School District board of education, these views are that of myself and not necessarily of the entire board of education of Rugby Public Schools. I also wrote to the education committee to recommend a do not pass on this bill.

Tip O'Neill, a former speaker of the US House of Representatives, is often credited with the phrase "all politics is local." North Dakota is a strong state that values local control. HB 1251 is going to effectively put a limit on the local control of the school districts in North Dakota. This bill will push smaller school districts into a 'forced' consolidation at the hands of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. This reduces the local control on education. North Dakota Century Code 15.1-09.33 outlines the School Board -Powers. In subsection 20, that School Boards have the power to contract with, employ, and compensate school district personnel. Further subsection 25 gives the school board the power to contract for the services of a district superintendent, provided that the contract, which may be renewed, does not exceed a period of three years. 15.1-09-55 School district superintendent – joint employment already provides a mechanism for school districts to share a superintendent. If HB 1251 is enacted, these powers are reduced and taken away from many local school districts across the state. Schools already have the option to decide to share a superintendent, based on a local decision, on what is best for the local school, an option which several schools across the state have entered into successfully in the past. Why would we want to force that decision on any school district? If the option already exists for them to decide on the local level to share a superintendent, isn't that enough? Why the push from the state to require this?

Further, it should come as no shock that in rural education it can be very difficult to recruit staff. I work in our local hospital, and I would tell you that is a rural issue that plagues many industries, not just education. I feel that HB 1251 could make it more difficult to attract and retain quality educational leadership. Limiting what a district can offer for compensation could unfavorably limit the number of high quality applications a district could receive. However, I fail to see where the math adds up in this bill. I feel like most districts would look to employ an assistant superintendent to keep some degree of local decision making, which would increase the administrative costs within a local district. Why should the state step in and decide the value of an education leader? If local citizens disagree with the compensation package that is offered by the school board, there is already a mechanism in place to correct that, they can vote us out of office.

I admire the bill sponsors for thinking outside of the box on education, but I am disappointed in how this is being represented. If as a state you wanted to look at putting more money towards education, let's fully fund special education in North Dakota. Let's fund PreK education in the state. Let's pay for student meals. Let's direct money towards mental health services for ND students. Let's put more money towards the aging infrastructure of many North Dakota schools. Let's increase state funding formula payments.

All politics is local, shouldn't education continue to handle on the local level. I urge you to vote Do Not Pass.

Thank you for your time,
Dustin Hager
Rugby, ND

January 18, 2023

Chairman Pat Heinert

House Education Committee

State of North Dakota

House Of Representatives

Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Mr. Heinert:

This letter is to inform you that the entire Sawyer Public School Board **OPPOSES HB 1251!** We are a small school district that has dealt with transitioning from a full-time superintendent to a part-time superintendent and have thrived in so many ways. As much as we would prefer a full-time administrator leading our school district daily, Sawyer School simply can not financially support a full-time position. We are a district that has experienced declining enrollment for over 15 years but we have sustained a viable school delivering a quality education to our students by utilizing our exceptional staff despite efforts to close Sawyer School.

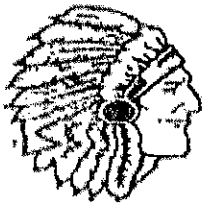
Our position is based on the belief that a superintendent's salary must be the the local school board's decision. Should this bill become law, it will compromise the absolute essence of local control, a fundamental right of democracy North Dakota School's have enjoyed since statehood. All threats to local control are detrimental to education and school success. Why, over time, would Sawyer School not come under the control of another school district and eventually erode the school district in its entirety? We are concerned this is yet another attempt to consolidate schools in North Dakota. We had previously entered into an Education Agreement with a neighboring school district and were able to get back on our feet after three years. We now enjoy a full PreK through 12 grade school.

HB 1251 has far too many unknowns for it to be given any consideration by the House Education Committee. Please consider our concerns as we are currently enjoying our district's progress under its current governance and leadership and hope to do so for years to come. Our students, their parents and our taxpayers deserve this.

We thank you for your consideration and for the work you do in the legislature,

Sincerely

Tim Folden
Board President
Sawyer Public School District



**SOLENS PUBLIC SCHOOL
DISTRICT #3**

Chairman Pat Heinert
North Dakota House Education Committee
State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Subject: HB 1251

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Solen Public School District Board of Education. We write to let you know we strongly oppose HB 1251 and will not serve our Solen/Cannon Ball School District. As a locally elected public school board we deserve the right to retain the making of local decisions about staffing in our schools. Solen Public School District is a small, rural school district in Sioux County on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. There are two schools in the Solen school district, Solen High School, and Cannon Ball Elementary School. The two schools are 15 miles apart.

There are only 3 small school districts in Sioux County. The closest small schools are Fort Yates Public School, 30.8 and Seltridge Public School, 31.1 miles away. If there would be only one Superintendent position per 475 students that Superintendent would spend more time traveling between schools and less time at each school. The Solen School District with two schools, 15 miles apart, may end up having to hire another administrator to be available on a daily basis. This could end up costing the district more in the long run.

If our district is forced to consolidate there are many concerns that will have to be addressed. Such as, students traveling to new area, what school, and longer traveling time for students. Teachers drive great distances already. How many teachers will you be taking employment away from? There will be a need for more bus driver hours and more vehicle maintenance costs. There will be no say for Superintendent of students from our district.

Choosing a Superintendent should remain with the local board of education. Nobody knows their community better than the locally elected board of education. If HB 1251 passes it will eliminate local decision making and local control over the hiring of staff in our school district.

Respectfully,

Board of Education
Solen Public School District #3

The school board of Starkweather Public School is unanimously opposed to H.B. 1251. This looks to be the first step in closing and shuttering many small schools within the state. This will only hasten the demise of many small communities as the school is what keeps many small towns and communities alive.

Speaking for my district it would actually cost us MORE money to consolidate a superintendent. How you ask? As in many small districts our staff is asked to take on multiple rolls and jobs. Superintendent included. It would require us to hire 2 additional employees to fill the jobs our superintendent now does. I doubt anyone in the school system wants to try to find more employees from the already understaffed pool of employees nationwide, education system or any private sector business has to draw from. The numbers you cite in your video seem way off base for every district to me as well. Although I am sure some administrators make those kind of wages many do not, even with benefits and retirement added in. This bill would likely cost our district an additional \$50-75,000 per year in just additional salaries from having to hire more staff. This does not include benefits or retirement on top of that.

Secondly, logistically this could be a nightmare as well. It could take as many as 5-6 schools to reach the number of students required per superintendent. The complete nightmare of having to manage multiple schools like that would be impossible to deal with. Having to answer to as many as 5-6 different boards would be nearly unmanageable. All this would do is put 5-6 times as much work on a single person that was once done by 5 or 6. I doubt any of us are willing to take on 5-6 times the work for the same pay. Now instead of having that person in your building to deal with the unforeseen issues that can arise daily they could be an hour away in another building unable to handle the issue in a timely manner because they are only in the building 1/2 day to one day per week. So here again it may require the hiring of another person to fill that void that could be left by the absence of that person. In some districts the administrator could be one of the teachers so he/she being in another district most days is not feasible again without hiring additional staff to fill the void. And likely having to pay for a full time teacher instead of a half time teacher the superintendent was filling would now cost the district considerably more for that teaching position. Again likely not actually saving any money and possibly costing the district MORE money.

Thirdly, it takes away local control from the district. Should it not be the district boards and patrons to make this decision instead of someone in Bismarck who does not understand how each individual district functions. One size does not fit all. Are there places sharing a superintendent is feasible? Certainly there is. But that needs to be decided locally by neighboring districts not mandated by legislators that want to look like they are saving money but don't see the unintended consequences this bill could cause. Will this lead to administrators retiring because they don't want to deal with this? Having to do 3 or 4 times the work for the same money? Would you do 3 to 4 times the work for roughly the same wage? I doubt many would answer yes here. Leading to more shortages in staff? More possible unintended consequences of the bill.

There are many many places to cut money in the state budget if one only looks. This is not one of them.

I urge you to withdraw this bill from consideration immediately.

Chris Berg
Board President Starkweather Public School

Chairman Heinert,

At best, HB 1251 is a misguided effort to save money – at its worst, an assault on the autonomy of local school districts.

Small schools fill many niches, from being perhaps the only institution in a geographic area with a very low population density, to serving communities that could be described as bedroom communities, or even going so far as to provide an alternative learning environment for students that live in a population center, but fail to thrive in that more populous environment.

We already struggle to find qualified individuals to fill our needs in these rural schools, so it is very common for people to fill multiple roles. In my district, for example, our Superintendent also fills the role of 7-12 History/Social Studies, and Athletic Director. If forced to co-op with other districts, (which would likely be 4-5 other schools to meet the 475 threshold), he would likely just retire, like I imagine many others would as well. We would then be forced to find and hire a new teacher to fill that void, as well as a new principle so that someone would be in charge of the day to day business, in addition to paying a portion in the “shared” superintendent. This would not save any money, it would cost more, especially when you figure having to pay for insurance and TFFR on 3 people instead of 1.

Further, by capping the amount a superintendent is allowed to make, the state would be tying the hands of small districts, many of which have to pay a premium to entice people to the “middle of nowhere”.

While some superintendent salaries may seem high compared to the number of students in the district, several factors must be taken into account, including the above mentioned premium and other duties such as teaching, etc. Every district has a certain amount of paperwork, reports, and other regulatory hoops to jump through regardless of the number of students. The responsibilities and consequences are much the same also.

What it all really boils down to though, is the fact that this would remove an individual district's ability to choose their own destiny. If sharing a superintendent works for a group of districts, good for them. In others it would be deemed unworkable for a myriad of reasons. Each district has its own unique set of circumstances that the Board and its community stakeholders have a right to navigate themselves. If a district's taxpayers are willing to incur a higher per-pupil cost, and pay the taxes required to make it work, then that is on them. By and large, school boards are doing their best to be fiscally responsible and not waste the tax dollars entrusted to them.

In many small towns, the school is one of, if not the largest employer. The school is likely what is keeping the town together. If this bill is allowed to pass, it will lead to consolidation and closing of many small districts. This is not what is desired by the local residents.

I respectfully ask you to consider these points, and not recommend this bill go any further.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Wilhelmi

Starkweather Public School Board Member



Tate Topa Tribal School
7268 Highway 57 Box 199
Fort Totten, ND 58335
Ph. 701-766-1400 Fax 701-766-1471

Website: <http://www.fourwinds.k12.nd.us/pages/FortTotten30>

January 19, 2023

RE: HB 1251

TO: House Education Committee: Chairman Pat Heinert

Dear Chairman Pat Heinert,

Tate Topa Tribal School Board members in Fort Totten, ND, would like to express their concern over **HB 1251**. The Tate Topa Tribal School Board does not support this bill! Rural schools in particularly ours is a community school for our students who live on the reservation. We have a hard time finding staff who want to come to our school or have any part of the school on a reservation. We need to have a Superintendent at the school 100% of the time to handle all the title programs, grants, reports for the state and federal, background checks and to be the adjudicator. The Superintendent in rural schools take on more jobs in the school because of availability of qualified people. They may also be the Principal, Homeless Liaison, El coordinator, order the food for the food service and create the breakfast/lunch menus and other position that can't be filled.

If you have schools sharing Superintendents and capping their salaries, who is going to be able to do all these jobs within schools and be able to do a good job for the students, staff, parents, and community members in completely different communities? A salary cap would also send administrators running out of the state of North Dakota to other states that respect their administrators. South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana are not that far away.

The decision for whether a school wants or needs to co-op with another school should be a local decision and between the different schools who are entertaining the decision to share positions and costs of the Superintendent.

Respectfully submitted,

Tate Topa Tribal School Board

Arthur Carmona
Chair/President

David Davidson
Vice Chair/Vice President

Dixie Omen
member

Penny Yankton
member

Colleen Chaske
member

January 20, 2023

Chairman Pat Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Evie Johnson, and I am President of the TGU School District #60 School Board. I would first like to thank you for all the work you do to support education in North Dakota. I would like to express my opposition, and that of my board's, to HB 1251 due to the detrimental impact it would pose to the school district and the many other rural districts in the state.

TGU operates two K-12 facilities for our students; one in Towner and the other in Granville. These communities are 23 miles apart which makes continuity difficult. This bill would force us to either lose our current Superintendent entirely or share him with at least one other school district that is yet another 20 miles away, at the closest to one of our buildings. I don't see how to make it work logistically when the Superintendent is so involved in the day-to-day operations of the school district and is the direct line of communication to our board.

I'm also concerned about logistics of hiring/firing for this position. If one district and board is satisfied with the performance of the Superintendent and the other is not; how do two boards come to a consensus on whether that person stays or is replaced.

Lastly, I'm concerned about the authority this bill would take away from our local boards. If we aren't able to find a willing partner district or if we're forced out of a partnership, the state has the authority to assign us to another partner district. It is also indicated that the state will have the authority to approve or deny partnership which will completely remove any local authority on the decision. Our local boards have been elected by our taxpayers and those taxpayers expect and have the right to have input on who is running their public school.

Again, I ask that you would kill this bill and leave the selection of a District's Superintendent to the local board who was elected to do so.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Evie Johnson

President

TGU School Board



Turtle Lake-Mercer School



Sheila Schlafmann, Supt.
Kurt Ziebarth, PK-12 Prin.

250 3rd Ave. W
P.O. Box 160
Turtle Lake, ND 58575
Phone: (701) 448-2365
Fax: (701) 448-2368

Josh Ruffo, Board Pres.
Susan Davis, Bus. Mgr.

TO: Senator Shawn Vedaa
Representative Dick Anderson
Representative Paul J. Thomas
FROM: Turtle Lake – Mercer School District 72 School Board
RE: HB1251
DATE: January 18, 2023

District 6 Senator and Representatives:

We are reaching out today as the School Board of Turtle Lake – Mercer Public School District 72 regarding HB 1251. There are two specific points that we would like to discuss on why HB 1251 would not be in the best interest of the Turtle Lake – Mercer communities in which we all live, nor for the greater good of North Dakota.

North Dakotans pride themselves in local control; you hear this term any time federal government steps into our lives and tells us what to do. What surprises us about this bill is that the supporters of HB 1251 are willing to change their perspective on this issue because they feel they know what is best for schools for in North Dakota. School districts already have the ability to share a Superintendent if they feel it is in the best interest of the students in which they serve.

HB 1251 proposes a savings of 13 million dollars by school sharing a Superintendent. What is the additional cost the district will pay for the many small school Superintendents that have dual roles? In our district, our Superintendent also serves as the activity director for our school, substitute teacher, Title Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator, and much more. Our Superintendent also serves on the Souris Valley Special Education Board, Central Regional Education Association Board, and Region 11 Comprehensive Center Board, is the District 10 Athletic Director Chairperson, and McLean County NDSU Advisory Council. With one PreK – 12 Principal in our district we would need to add an additional administrative position to make sure all duties are taken care, student needs are met, and our staff are supported in their roles. With added responsibilities and roles to our principal's position and an additional administrative role, there would be no cost savings to our district.

We kindly ask that you vote "no" on this bill as it is currently written. Thank you all for your time and for all that you do as leaders of this great state.

Sincerely,

Turtle Lake – Mercer District 72 School Board

IT IS THE MISSION OF THE TURTLE LAKE-MERCER SCHOOL TO PROVIDE STUDENTS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS.

Alexis

The purpose of this email is to express my opposition to House Bill 1251.

School Board Members are tasked with evaluating and hiring the Superintendent, overseeing the budget and implementing policy. House Bill 1251 would restrict two of those three responsibilities and would negatively impact children of the Wahpeton School District #37 and many other school districts in our great state.

Creating legislation that mandates that districts smaller than 475 have to share a superintendent is not what The United States of America was founded upon which is Democracy. This House Bill 1251 is taking away the authority and the right of each and every school districts school boards to have their own superintendent and that right to negotiate a salary and benefits for that superintendent that meets the needs of their district. This bill implies that school boards are not competent enough individuals to be able to hire their own superintendent and negotiate wages and benefits with them or to voluntarily share a superintendent with a neighboring district if they chose to do so.

Hiring of a Superintendent and setting the salary and the benefits of the superintendent is the right of each individual School Board and District. If this legislation dictates what the superintendents salary and benefits will be what has happened to the democracy in our country. Each School District has a Business Manager that informs the School Boards what they have for funds available to negotiate a salary and benefits with the superintendent as well as the teachers and administrators and all of the other support staff.

I do not believe that this House Bill 1251 will save all of the money that the video represents. In our district if we were required to share our superintendent with another district we would have to hire an Assistant Principal or a couple of Assistant Principals to help fulfill some of the duties that the Superintendent does such as driving bus, mowing lawn, cleaning, dealing with parents and students, overseeing extracurricular activities and many more duties. Having to hire one or two Assistant Principals would cost our district more money that what we are currently paying the Superintendent and we are only one district, which I would assume that there would be more Districts just like our district that would encounter the same outcome.

I agree that Teachers and Administrators and other support staff all need an increase in their wages to be able to make a comfortable living and support their families. There are other places that funding can come from to accomplish this. North Dakotans voted for and created the Legacy Fund, which has grown to an unbelievable dollar amount. Funding could be taken from the interest off of the Legacy Fund to help increase the wages of Teachers, administrators and other support staff.

Although I am in a district that has a larger enrollment we could be directly affected by this

legislation by having to share our superintendent with one or more of the smaller districts that surround us. We would share our superintendent if we are mandated to but I do not believe that is fair to either district as the superintendent is a vital daily link in every district between the School Board, the Administrative Staff, the Support Staff and the public. The Superintendent is the right arm of the School, the Administrative Staff and the support staff and of the School Board.

I applaud the legislators for trying to save taxpayer money with the proposed House Bill 1251 "Students and Taxpayers Opportunity Act" legislation, but I disagree with trying to save funds by mandating that smaller school districts share superintendents and setting the superintendents salary.

Speaking only for myself as the president of the School District, I do not think that House Bill 1251 the "Student and Tax Payers Opportunity Act" is a good way to try and save money by mandating that School Districts with less than 475 students have to share Superintendents, that should be the choice of each and every school district based upon what they can afford in their budgets and it should not be mandated by the state.

For all of the reasons that I have listed above I urge you to reconsider this proposed legislation (House Bill 1251).

Damon DeVillers
President Wahpeton Public School District.

House Education Committee
Chairman Pat Heinert

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 1251 proposing that smaller school districts share a Superintendent.

We are a small district of 220 students. We have a full-time superintendent currently. She is involved in the day-to-day workings of our school and is there for both staff and students. She covers various needs and responsibilities, as they present themselves.

The choice to have a full-time superintendent or to share one, should be a decision made locally by people involved in the district. These are the people who understand the needs of their students and staff, as well as the budget they are working with. In years past, several years ago, it was tried to share a superintendent with another district. There was never enough time to spend in both schools and a distance to drive between them. This hasn't been a consideration since then, not even when hiring a new superintendent. The input from local patrons would be considered less and less. The authority would go to the state. It could come down to them deciding who you can consolidate with. all local input would be gone.

The salaries paid should also remain local. If salaries are capped by the state, the district loses the ability to attract viable candidates to fill these positions.

The better candidates will look elsewhere for employment. We need to be competitive.

Sincerely,
Jean Wallace
Board President
Warwick Public School
Warwick, ND

**Washburn Public School
District 4**

**713 7th St.; Box 280
Washburn, ND 58577
Ph.: 701.462.3221
Fax: 701.462.3561
Home of the Cardinals**



January 2023

Superintendent
DR. PENNY VEIT-HETLETVED

High School Principal
BEAU ERIKSSON

Elementary Principal
CHRISTINA REYNOLDS

Business Manager
ROBIN LORENTZEN

*School Board
President*
RICK TWEETEN

*School Board
Vice President*
LUKE RETTERATH

*School Board
Directors*
**SANDI ERBER
JEFF KULZER
KELLY SCHATZ-JENNINGS
STACEY SCHERESKY
AARON SOLOMONSON**

*"The mission of the Washburn
School District
is to provide a quality
education addressing the
academic, physical, social, and
emotional well-being of each
student."*

*The Washburn Public School
District #4 prohibits
discrimination and
harassment based on a
student and/or employee's
race, color, religion, sex,
national origin, disability, age
or other status protected by
law.*

Dear Legislators,

We, the Washburn Public School Board, are reaching out to you today to voice our opposition of HB 1251. We are a board of seven that represent sixty-one years of stewardship and experience as board members to our school district. We take our role seriously and want to share with you why we are opposed as well as why we are asking for you to defeat this bill as our elected legislators.

As good stewards, we have tried to share a superintendent in the past with a neighboring school since the partnering school was experiencing fiscal issues. We no longer share a superintendent and have a full time one for our 354 students and 62 faculty, staff, and drivers. Why? For starters, a shared superintendent found us experiencing a declining culture from lack of consistent leadership. Transit time, alone, had our every day operations at a sub-standard level. In addition, half time amongst two or three schools for a superintendent only finds our cost and task burdens to other staff members within our school to increase exorbitantly. The shared responsibilities that are being proposed in HB 1251 will only increase founded deficiencies due to shared responsibilities on annual audits. The sponsors offer TEAMS, Google, and Zoom as options—frankly we use those options for a great many needs in efficiency, yet as a board, we all agree it is not the substitute for the boots on the ground of a leader full time within your school. Both of these scenarios are far from a “win” for building optimal learning environments.

Beyond these issues, the superintendent is the “face” of our school. We believe the best decisions are made when those closest to the issue are present full time. We, as the school board, are active stakeholders in the school and know what is best for our students, teachers, and administration. We are responsible for the school, growth, and finances. With that said, when and if a time comes to consolidate, we will be responsible in that situation. Washburn Public School is not currently in a need to contemplate what HB 1251 would require.

The sponsors of HB 1251 have taken most information from a larger set of schools. Class B is different, and the role of the Superintendent has a great deal more hats to wear due the size of the school yet has the pulse of the culture more in control. Washburn Public School has a positive culture with exceptional students and staff; we urgently ask you to oppose and defeat HB 1251 so that we, as elected board members, can continue to maintain our high core beliefs and student performance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Washburn School Board Directors

*Rick Tweeten, President
Stacey Scheresky, Director
Sandi Erber, Director
Jeff Kulzer, Director*

*Luke Retterath, Vice President
Kelly Schatz-Jennings, Director
Aaron Solomonson, Director*

Dear legislators,

I am a member of the West Fargo Public Schools board of directors. Regardless of the number of learners in a public school district, I firmly believe in local control. I am very concerned about the limits on local control in this bill, with little known benefit from this sacrifice. This bill would limit the ability of a school board to make their most important decision, the selection of their superintendent, the person to whom they singularly provide direction. Additionally, this bill would require some superintendents to take direction from two or more school boards, which would likely limit their overall efficacy if each school board has differing goals and priorities. These limits would result in questionable cost savings, potentially causing minimal return that would not justify the burdens placed on school boards and superintendents. Lastly, I strongly believe the local control of school boards includes the decision of the amount of compensation for their superintendent. Any caps placed on compensation significantly limit the ability to recruit excellent quality candidates for a superintendent. As one of the largest districts in the state, we have been recommended that whenever we need to search for a new superintendent, our candidate search should be nationwide. Our district's ability to attract top-notch superintendent candidates from across the country would be significantly reduced if this bill were to pass.

Sincerely,

Jessica Jones

Board of Directors, West Fargo Public Schools



WESTHOPE PUBLIC SCHOOL

HOME OF THE "SIOUX"
395 MAIN STREET PO BOX 406
WESTHOPE, NORTH DAKOTA 58793-0406
(701) 245-6444 FAX (701) 245-6418



Superintendent: Martin Bratrud
Principal: Christy Lee
Activities Director: Garrett Wible

Business Manager: Barry Trottier
Board President: Liz Tofteland
Board Vice-President: Katie Ogaard

1/19/2023
North Dakota Legislative Council
State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee:

As the Westhope Public School Board President, I write in opposition to House Bill 1251. Our board discussed and unanimously voted to submit testimony in opposition to HB 1251 during our regular board meeting held on 1/18/2023. We ask that you vote in opposition to this bill, on behalf of North Dakota's rural communities, educators, and most importantly, students.

HB 1251 will have a direct impact on our school district due to our student enrollment. Mandating our district to partner with other school districts to employ a superintendent to meet the minimal requirement of four hundred and seventy-five students restricts our ability to consider our local context and be nimble in making decisions regarding matching the necessary resources with the dynamic and ever-changing needs of our district. Additionally, capping superintendent compensation at 1.5% of the total state and local general fund revenue will inevitably restrict talent recruitment and retention.

Appropriately allocating resources to meet the needs of the district is an important role of school board members, both for accountability to our taxpayers and to ensure the educational needs of our students are met. For the past six years, our School Board has been diligently working on reallocating resources with the goal of decreasing the full-time equivalency of our superintendent. This process has required us to build principal and business manager capacity; endure austerity to balance our budget; collaborate and coordinate to establish partnerships for payroll services, educational and student services programming (ex. CDE, CTE Center, REAs, and Special Education Units), share staff with neighbor districts or other entities (Pre-K, CTE, CDE, School Nursing, and REA), co-op student activities; establish and/or update a host of school policies; replace outdated technology; review and update curriculum resources; and improve staff morale, all amidst navigating the increased demands on the local educational system as a direct result of COVID-19. These demands include, but not limited to, fiscal and health-related decision-making, and reporting responsibilities. Our superintendent has been central to facilitation of these processes, given his credentials and experience. HB 1251 would restrict the aforementioned multi-year, multi-step process and produce unknown outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Liz Tofteland
Board President
Westhope Public School
395 Main St
Westhope, ND 58793
701-263-1674

Attention House Education Committee,

My name is Jessica Oswald and I am the current School Board President for Wilton Public School. I am writing to you to express Wilton Public School Board's opposition to House Bill 1251. Wilton is a community that is growing. We are seeing growth in our school numbers, to the point that we recently passed a referendum for a school expansion project. Even with this growth, our current K-12 enrollment is right around 250 students.

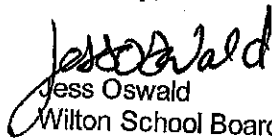
This proposed bill would force us to share a superintendent with up to 2 other area schools in order to reach the magic number of 475. This would pose significant stress on the schools, school culture, school boards, and the communities. This bill is being presented as a way to cut costs. We would like to point out that many school districts may still have to fund an additional position(s) for onsite day to day leadership.

Most importantly this proposed bill reduces local control. Schools currently can share a superintendent now if they choose. This bill would take away this choice. The way this bill is worded the state would have last say on which schools partner together.

Capping superintendent salaries also reduces local control and is a concern of ours. In our instance, we would be asking one superintendent to take on the work of 2 additional superintendents, having 3 different school boards as bosses, less time to get to know and form connections with their staff and students all while getting paid less. The increase in workload, stress and reduction in salary would make these shared superintendent positions quite difficult to fill with a quality candidate.

We ask you to please consider the impact this would have on rural North Dakota as a whole. We sincerely hope that you oppose House Bill 1251.

Sincerely,



Jess Oswald
Wilton School Board President

Dear House Education Committee (Chairman Pat Heinert)

I am writing this letter as I am a resident and school board representative in a small rural school district, and I oppose this house bill 1251. I do not agree there are any benefits from this house bill being passed, the only way I see it is for a way to take local control away from the school districts and a very sneaky way to move one step closer to consolidating all small rural school districts. This is a way for the state to gain power for the sake of power and it is a big overreach by the legislation. Specially, when our North Dakota Century code already has the opportunity for school boards to share a superintendent if they choose to do so as a local decision. So, why are we being forced now with his bill?

Yes, the bill says all the right key words to gain acceptance in the eyes of some: 1. Money can be saved for the tax payor. 2. Frees up estimated \$13M per year so the extra money can be spent closer to the students. 3. Says the local districts could choose what to do with these funds – apply to teachers' salaries, or enhance learning opportunities, course offerings, or expanding extracurricular programs. Yes, this all sounds wonderful, but unfortunately, that is nothing but a bunch of talk and false hope just to get this to pass and to take local control away from the rural schools and patrons. Your talking points are not a guarantee of any benefit to the tax payors, nor the school districts. In fact, in my opinion this bill is only going to raise the cost of expenses for school districts and not decrease the expenses and tax payors will never see a decrease.

Our school district employees a Superintendent/high school principal as one position plus the multiple other hats she wears throughout a day. We do not have the financial ability to have an assistant superintendent nor a full-time high school principal. Our superintendent is not just a superintendent. She is our superintendent, high school principal, event coordinator, substitute bus driver, substitute janitor, substitute cook, Title IX Coordinator, Title Program Coordinator, substitute teacher, emergency coordinator, bus coordinator plus the many any other duties that might arise during the school year. When we hire a superintendent for our school district, we search for an individual that is willing and able to handle all the hats and who is dedicated to our students and has a strong leaderships skill. For our small school our superintendent is unique. Our superintendent has a key role in supporting the students in our district to help them achieve their dreams. With her being in the school daily she has the ability to get to know each student individual and develop a connection with each of them. She can inspire and be that role model for the students she sees every day. Our superintendent can't do it alone, but she has the day-to-day presence and can create a strong partnership with the teachers, parents, and families, so we can make sure that each child gets instruction, guidance, and support they all need. This would not be something that could be accomplished if school districts are forced to share a superintendent because the superintendent would be on the road traveling and possibly be at the school maybe 1 day a week. The shared superintendent would be spread too thin and would have no connection with any of the students, families nor the community. This would result in the failure of the strong partnerships being created to support the student's success of achieving their dreams and feeling like they matter!

Our superintendent is the face of our district. She is held responsible for whatever happens in the district, success, or failure. She makes decisions, enforces policy, represents the district, is responsible for evaluating staff, making recommendations to hire/maintain/terminate staff, she displays leadership, she has limited resources but makes a budget balance, she understands that it's vital to keep on track with our budget, and she builds relationships within the community. Our students, the district's board,

the teachers and staff, and the community all rely on her to help keep our school open and successful. Without a superintendent physically in the school majority days, there is a lack of leadership and that is not good for any school district to go through.

We find it very valuable to have local leadership in our school for the consistent presence to support our staff, teachers, and students. We need a strong advocate for our school district to be focused and understand our values and to know what our school means to our community. Our small school is the backbone in our community, and it needs a superintendent that is willing to be a part of it day in and day out. No small town wants to lose their school and see it close. Our small North Dakota school is part of the class B schools and there is a different vibe and pride that goes along with keeping your school open and the school pride with seeing the goals achieved and success of our students that graduate. Our small school districts school superintendent has a complex and vital job and we need our own superintendent that is willing to fight for our local school district.

With this bill in sharing a superintendent you would definitely lose the school pride, fight and support that is needed to maintain your district. This shared superintendent would be too busy with 4 or 5 boards to answer to, and each board all with different ideas and challenges, the superintendent would have tons of teachers to maintain for hire, fire or evaluating. Multiple miles traveling, only be able to allow limited day or so at each school district, therefore, never being able to connect with staff, teachers, students or be able to support the students whether in school or at any extracurricular activities such as basketball game, football, track, and ect. Students expect and notice when administrators are there to support them, especially in a rural school district. A shared superintendent would send the message to students that they don't matter, that they are just a number. A tough message to send to kids in this world today that already struggle with feeling accepted.

If this bill would pass, this sharing of superintendents would put our district into increasing our expenses instead of saving. Because we would still be on the hook to share the cost of a shared superintendent, plus with the limited availability of that shared superintendent being present in our school we would have to hire additional full time administrative staff like assistant superintendent to help support the duties that our current superintendent does, plus possibly hire additional teacher, staff or another full time principal as our current part-time principal teaches along with doing principal work.

Superintendents in rural school districts are not one fit for all school districts. School boards are elected and trusted by their patrons to search and make local decisions for a good fit for each of their unique individual school districts. Each school district is made up of unique individuals – from the students, teachers, staff, and the administration along with the parents and the community. So therefore, a bill trying to get one shared superintendent for multiple school districts up to 475 students is NOT something I'm willing to agree to and therefore I strongly oppose this house bill 1251.

Sheri Fischer

President of the Wing School District

PO Box 2
Zeeland, ND 58581
January 17, 2023

House Education Committee

Chairman Pat Heinert:

We are in opposition to HB 1251.

As school board members, we feel that this bill seriously reduces our ability to decide what we believe is the best course of action for our school district. It reduces the board's ability to staff the district according to locally determined needs. Additionally, if a co-op agreement cannot be found, the state will decide which district's will be sharing a superintendent, not the local board. Finally, this bill undermines the board's authority to offer a salary appropriate to the duties and region of the school district.

Further, we do not believe the cost savings promised by sponsors of the bill will be realized. For example, the Zeeland School District superintendent also serves as the high school principal, music teacher, and librarian. Eliminating the superintendent duties from her position will not save money because that portion of her salary will now be used to pay the school's portion of the shared superintendent. In addition, in order to keep an administrator in the building on a daily basis, we would likely expand the principal role which would necessitate an increase in that portion of the salary. Should our superintendent be the one selected to serve as the new shared superintendent, the Zeeland district would then be in a position of trying to find a person to fill the other roles currently filled by the superintendent. Given the shortage of teachers and administrators, this would be an added burden to the district with no real cost savings. Again, the district would have to increase the principal compensation to pay a salary competitive to someone filling three roles (Principal, music teacher, librarian) while still paying its share of the superintendent's salary.

We feel that this bill is a first step in attempting to force small schools to consolidate or possibly even close. This is a decision best left in the hands of the local community.

Signed:

Arana Mier
John Rouse
Dee Ann
Heidi Kober
Donavon Bender
Zeeland School Board members

Subject: HB1251

Date: Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 2:35:57 PM Central Standard Time

From: Heim, Steven

To: dickanderson@ndlegis.gov, paulthomas@ndlegis.gov

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.
January 12, 2023

The Honorable Paul Thomas
The Honorable Dick Anderson

Dear Representative Thomas and Anderson

I am writing to you on behalf of my school boards in regards to HB1251.

I do not know if you are aware of the how we operate as the Drake and Anamoose school districts but we currently share a superintendent. Multiple times during the last several years we have been approached by neighboring districts to expand the number of districts our superintendent would administer. The decision was always made to not expand due to a loss of personal touch and connection to the community, staff and students. We also share a business manager and several teachers. We are well aware of the time and effort it takes to administrate multiple districts. The challenges are immense when you consider two of everything: budgets, consolidated aps, negotiations, board meetings, etc. This was a choice we made to better serve the needs of our students and communities. But it was our choice, derived locally, based on our unique needs and expectations. With our educational setup and geographical closeness, sharing a superintendent has worked for us. Forced elimination of superintendent positions is not good for schools or communities and I read how there will be a huge cost savings that can be passed on to other positions. As you remove a superintendent who goes above and beyond to do whatever is needed to operate a school district, and move some of those duties to your principal, are you not just going to be forced to create more positions, example: assistant principals, dean of students and they will require more pay to justify an increased expectation of duties. Our principals are already dealing with so many issues in today's educational environment, how do they take on more responsibility? Capping pay of administrators will only diminish an already limited pool of quality candidates for any open administrative position.

We urge you to oppose HB1251.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Steven Heim, Superintendent Anamoose and Drake Public Schools

Steven Heim

Superintendent- Anamoose Public School

701-465-3258 FAX: 465-3259

Superintendent- Drake Public School

701-465-3732 FAX: 465-3634

Steven.Heim@k12.nd.us

Every Child ~ Every Chance ~ Every Day

"Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."—



BELFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

PO Box 97 308 3rd St. NE

Belfield, ND 58622

Phone – (701) 575-4275

Fax – (701) 575-8533

www.belfield.k12.nd.us

Daren Kurle
Superintendent

Anna Ross
Business Manager

Janine Olson
Elementary Principal

Shannon Meler
7-12 Principal

January 16, 2023

Representative Kempenich,

I am writing this letter in opposition of HB 1251. This introduced bill is a bad piece of legislation that only will hurt the education of the students in our state.

Representative Ruby has introduced this legislation with the false narrative that districts will be saving money that can be used to increase teacher pay. However, the compensatory facts presented are not completely true. He uses the overall superintendent compensation (salary and benefits) and compares it only to the average teacher salary (no benefits) in the district. He also makes no mention of contract length when comparing the two. Superintendents are on a 12-month contract, while teachers are on a 9-month one. During the time in the summer when teachers are not on contract, superintendents run the day-to-day operation of the school. I also work closely with the business manager to wrap up the finances of the district for one fiscal year, while creating a budget that addresses the upcoming school year. If this bill were to pass, who would be responsible for all of that? To put the extra work on the business manager or building principals is asking for trouble as often neither of them are qualified educationally to take on those tasks, nor do they wish to be.

I also take issue with how this bill is a direct attack on the viability of the small districts. It essentially says that Bowman County, along with a vast majority of school districts across the state, including mine, does not have the ability to stand alone as a district, and therefore needs to consolidate superintendents to be viable. Having grown up in this area, you know Bowman is viable on its own, has its own set of needs, and is capable of sustaining a school, with its own superintendent. Sharing a superintendent among multiple districts would be a major disservice to the school district, their respective boards, its staff, and its students.

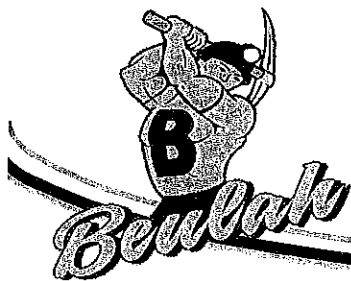
In my opinion, this is a terrible piece of legislation with the end game of eliminating small districts and forcing consolidation with others.

Please be our voice and kill this bill!

Sincerely,

Daren Kurle, Superintendent
Belfield Public School
(701) 426-4767

"Preparing for tomorrow, today"



Beulah School District #27

204 5th St NW

Beulah, ND 58523

Phone: 701-873-2237

Office of the Superintendent

TO: Senator Keith Boehm
Representative Anna Novak
Representative Bill Tveit
FROM: Travis Jordan, Superintendent
RE: HB 1251
DATE: January 13, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Boehm, Representative Novak, and Representative Tveit. As a follow up to my email earlier this week I wanted to reach out to you with a formal letter of opposition to HB1251. This bill aims to strip local control away from communities and school districts across the state and more importantly will disrupt the education of our youth.

Through the eyes of so many, superintendents are just that, superintendents. What most people don't realize is that superintendents wear so many more hats than just that of the districts lead administrator. In Beulah alone, along with the duty of superintendent, I'm the districts Title Coordinator, sub teacher, sub bus driver, janitor, Title IX Coordinator, Emergency lead responder, event supervisor, and so much more. Multiple roles are common in every district of the state for superintendents.

If the bill were to pass school districts that have less than 475 students would need to share a superintendent and I can't possibly imagine how that one person could handle multiple roles for multiple schools. I think about emergency coordination alone. If an emergency took place at one school, while the superintendent was away at the other – how could that one person coordinate all of the events associated with such. The roles of every position underneath the superintendent would assume more duties, and it's the continued piling of duties on these folks that are causing them to leave the profession in a mass exodus.

The belief of this bill centers itself on the idea that more money will go to classrooms or teachers for their salaries. Part of the argument I've heard is that the gap between a teacher's salary and a superintendent's salary is too big. If you actually break out the dollars on a per hour basis – carrying teachers over to a 12-month contract and paying them as such, you will find that teachers and superintendents make similar hourly wages. And this is based on a 40-hour work week. This current week I will have put in 70 hours once I get home this evening.

This bill, in my opinion, is a complete government overstep. Systems are in place in the North Dakota Century Code that grant communities and school boards local control of their schools. Through the democratic process people have a voice and a means to make changes within their schools. School boards are elected to hire and fire superintendents and to set policy and budgets. And it's through those avenues that changes on the scale of what this bill intends can be made.

I kindly ask that you vote "no" on this bill. If school consolidation is the goal, then let's get around a table and discuss what that could look like. But taking away local control and putting more on the plate of others, is only going to continue to decline the education workforce and ultimately lead to undesirable outcomes for our students.

Thank you all for your time and for all that you do as leaders of this great state.

Sincerely,

Travis Jordan
Superintendent

Good morning,

I hope this email is finding you well, as you are gearing up for your session. As educators, we have been made aware of a potential bill that is gaining some momentum. I am writing to voice my concerns over loss of local control, along with other issues that will come to light with the approval of the attached bill. Support for this bill under the guise of saving taxpayer dollars or utilizing these funds for "dedicated educators" is not only insulting to highly skilled, effective professional administrators but also extremely misleading to the general public.

As dedicated educators ourselves, we administrators often wear multiple hats and take on many additional roles within our school districts. This bill's attempt to throw around high dollar amounts in order to distract from the reality of the proposed system is contemptable. By sharing one superintendent with 3 or 4 different schools in our area, none of the involved schools would be properly serviced. The distance alone between schools in our area is just the tip of the problematic iceberg. Communities do not all have the same needs or concerns. Tax payer dollars should always remain under local control and by limiting the opportunity to select their own leader of the district, the tax payers lose that right. Additionally, those "freed up" funds would now just be dispersed to the "dedicated educators" already fully busy with their own professional assignments, who would have to pick up the extra duties that virtually every superintendent is responsible for throughout his or her day. So, whether you are hiring additional staff or tacking on additional duties to an already overworked staff, this is not a viable solution. It is difficult to find staff members now; additional workload would be nothing less than a quick way to burn people out.

Our students are and will remain our top priority. We currently work tirelessly to provide them with the best educational experience possible. "Thinning out the herd" will only put more work and pressure on everyone that is left in the building to pick up the slack. I truly don't see the vision for this bill, but to say it is falling short is an understatement.

As a representative of not only SW North Dakota administrators but also speaking for parents, taxpayers, former students, and forward thinkers...I beseech you to vote **NO** on this bill.

Thank you for your time,

Danielle O'Brien

Assistant Superintendent/Building Principal/IT Coordinator/Behavioral Health Rep./Curriculum Director/Cognia Director/Sports Activity Transportation Driver/Grant Writer/Co-Op Representative/Threat Assessment Team Leader/Assessment Coordinator/DOT Coordinator/Student Council Advisor/Facility Manager/Substitute Teacher
Billings County School District

HB 1251

Manley, Jeff <jeff.manley@cavalierk12.org>

Mon 1/16/2023 4:35 PM

To: jmyrdal@ndlegis.gov <jmyrdal@ndlegis.gov>; kanderson@ndlegis.gov <kanderson@ndlegis.gov>; Monson, David C. <dmonson@ndlegis.gov>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear District 19 Legislative Team,

-I am writing to request a "NO" vote on HB 1251. This is a bill that completely strikes down the core value of a school board, and any board for that matter--elected local control. This bill seeks to give extreme micromanagement to the state and executive branch of government. Is that what we want in a democracy? That sounds like a VERY different kind of government! Not the kind of government that the people of North Dakota and the United States would want.

-Local school boards already have the ability to combine administrators from neighboring districts, if they so choose to do so. Local control is based on what elected officials feel is the right fit for their community and school district.

-The cost savings portrayed by supporters of this bill is false. As a small school superintendent, I wear many hats, including transportation supervisor, substitute route bus driver, activity bus driver, Federal programs coordinator, EL coordinator, 504 coordinator, head Track coach, Cognia committee, Title IX team, lunch supervisor. Not that every duty list has a pay component attached. But, they all have a TIME component attached, that someone else either has to put on their plate (Principal, teacher, counselor, para, etc) or I will have to pay another person to do. No cost saving there! Ask any school staff member if they already have enough on their plate? They will all say they have plenty to do already! Our community already cannot find enough workers to fill jobs, and our school district is no different. Where would I find other personnel to take on these other roles? The answer: No where!

-Finally, I'd love to see teacher pay increase. I was a teacher for 21 years before getting into administration--I've been there. When you look at how teacher pay would compare if on a 12-month contract instead of 9 months, the pay is not as significant as proponents of the bill would lead one to believe. Also keep in mind the responsibilities for all parties being compared. The higher level of education, experience, expertise and problem-solving are all necessities just as the upper-level management jobs for the largest employers in all the communities of our state.

Vote "NO" to keep local control with locally elected officials.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Manley, Superintendent

Cavalier Public School

PO Box 410

300 Main Street East

Cavalier, ND 58220

(701) 265-8417 (w)

(701) 265-8106 (f)

(701) 230-3058 (c)



CENTER STANTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

www.center-stanton.k12.nd.us

2022-2023

C-S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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HS Fax (701) 794-3659
Elem Phone (701) 794-8731

Mr. Tracy Peterson, Superintendent/AD
Mr. Andrew Mondry, Secondary Principal
Mr. Mark Sondag, Elementary Principal

TO: Representative Anna Novak
Senator Keith Boehm
Representative Bill Tveit
FROM: Tracy Peterson, Superintendent/AD
RE: HB 1251
Date: January 17, 2023

Greetings, Representative Novak, Representative Tveit, and Senator Boehm.

I had contacted you earlier last week with an email regarding HB1251. This letter is a formal request for opposition to HB1251. Local control of our school district board and our communities would be stripped away with this bill. I believe that the education process for our youth in your district would be seriously disrupted by this bill.

Within our school district, the Superintendent serves in many different roles including sub bus driver, sub teacher, maintenance, snow removal, Emergency lead chairperson, event supervision, Title IX Coordinator, 504 Coordinator, online student studies director, athletic director, transportation coordinator, game event staff, and many other roles that would be at a cost to the school district that would be of no balance to what is "saved by combining" these district positions with this bill.

Systems are in place within our Century Code that give school boards and districts the local control of their schools. Through the democratic process people have a voice and a means to make changes within their schools. School boards are elected to hire and fire; and, to set policy and budgets. We need to keep local control and decisions with the constituents and the local board.

I do ask for a "no vote" on this bill. Boards and leadership are all for discussion to help save our school taxpayers dollars and use those funds effectively. Taking away local control and putting more on the plates of others, continues to hurt the workforce and leadership within education.

Your time serving our district and the state is valuable and appreciated beyond measure! Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature of Tracy Peterson]

Mr. Tracy Peterson, Superintendent/AD

This email is in response to HB 1251. As a current acting superintendent of a school of 220 kids, I wear the following hats and do the following jobs:

Title I representative; head of food service; athletic director; coach; chair of 4 school committees; clock keeper; ticket taker; bus driver; snow shoveler; facilities manager; community liaison on all issues; countless others.

I strongly feel local control must be recognized and respected when it comes to hiring local administration for school districts in North Dakota. While sharing superintendents may work in certain situations and should be an avenue pursued if local districts wish, I feel this is major overreach to legislate this happening.

Our small schools are vital in keeping our small rural communities rolling. Forcing administrative consolidation is, in my opinion, step one in forcing schools to consolidate. And while at first glance it may appear that costs savings will occur, this will likely force districts to hire individuals to do the many of the jobs I've listed above, along with adding principal time to ensure an administrative presence exists in schools.

I am the direct contact for ALL THINGS that happen in our building with our school board. Furthermore, with the bills wording stating that the state will have the authority to assign an administrative partner, local control is once again overridden.

Regarding superintendent compensation, it is important to note that a superintendent works a 12 month contract, takes responsibility of the all organizational risk and the consequences that those risk have. When we have a leaking roof at Central Valley, it is me that drives here at 11 PM to empty the water bucket. When we are having heating issues with our geo-thermal system, I'm the one coming to campus on Sunday afternoon checking to make sure the pumps are working.

I strongly believe administrative staffing and salaries should be left in the hands of our locally elected officials.

Thank You,

Jeremy W. Brandt

Superintendent/Athletic Director

Central Valley Public School

701-739-0880

701-847-2220 Ext. 203



DAKOTA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Clay Johnson, Principal
Dakota Prairie High School
PO Box 37 • 518 4th Avenue
Petersburg, ND 58272
Phone: 701-345-8233 • Fax: 701-345-8251
Clay.Johnson@k12.nd.us

Jay Slade, Superintendent
701-345-8233
Jay.Slade@k12.nd.us

Jackie Bye, Principal
Dakota Prairie Elementary
PO Box 337 • 101 Nyhus Avenue
McVilleville, ND 58254
Phone: 701-322-4771 • Fax: 701-322-5128
Jackie.Bye@k12.nd.us

To Whom it May Concern;

My name is Jay Slade and I am the Superintendent of the Dakota Prairie School District. I am writing to you all today to voice my concerns on House Bill 1251. I believe the passage of this bill will create seen and unforeseen negative consequences for districts like mine, and many others throughout the state.

Dakota Prairie is a consolidated school district made up of 5 communities (Petersburg, Michigan, Tolna, McVilleville, and Aneta) and spans over multiple counties, Nelson County making up the most area. We like to brag/lament that we are over 900 square miles in size. Dakota Prairie was created over 25 years ago and we exist using two campuses that are 26 miles apart. Dakota Prairie Elementary is in McVilleville and houses grades PreK-6, and Dakota Prairie High School is in Petersburg and houses grades 7-12.

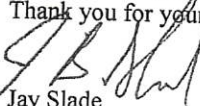
I have been with the Dakota Prairie School District for over 11 years in some form of administrative role. Speaking personally, Dakota Prairie and the area, a consolidated school district, is a wonderful place to work and raise a family. However, there are logistical, financial, and personnel challenges that are unavoidable for districts such as Dakota Prairie. I feel strongly that the passage of House Bill 1251, especially for previously consolidated districts, will only exacerbate those challenges.

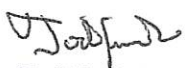
One of those challenges facing all schools are financial concerns, and from what I understand, is a main reason for some to advocate for this bill to be considered. I believe the financial savings discussed to be minimal. A good portion of my week is spent traveling from one location to the other. This coverage of both campuses takes a financial commitment from the school. If I was asked to include one or two other districts my travel costs between the numerous campuses would increase. On a monthly basis this may not seem like a significant amount of money. However, my travel costs on a yearly basis have at times totaled in the thousands. These costs would certainly increase significantly, if I was asked to travel to additional campuses. Additionally, the time and resources used to travel to those various locations is a significant resource drain on individual campuses.

Secondly, if I am diligent in my career goal of overseeing as well as making every campus a priority, my time away from all other campuses would be vastly affected and would be a detriment to all of the districts I would oversee. Quite simply, if this proposed bill passes, there are not enough hours in the day/week to do competent service to each of the districts, their students, and their boards.

Lastly, HB 1251 not only takes away local control from our locally elected school officials, but it takes away basic entitled services. For schools such as Dakota Prairie or areas such as Nelson County we already struggle with basic care services. Services such as social services for our students with difficult circumstances are facilitated through Bismarck. Social emotional care for our students who are struggling at very crucial ages is completed through telehealth. At times basic health care is 15 to 20 miles away. The passage of this bill further insures that stakeholders who live in smaller/rural areas are not entitled to basic services, like an ambulance to arrive in a timely manner, a social worker who knows their name, or a superintendent who is present.


Thank you for your time and consideration with this matter,


Jay Slade
Dakota Prairie School District Superintendent


Todd Jorde (President)


Sarah Anderson


Chanda Arneson


Penny Lippert


Dave Blasey

Dakota Prairie School Board

www.dakota-prairie.k12.nd.us

Dakota Prairie does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or age, in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

DEVILS LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

1601 College Drive North, Devils Lake, ND 58301
(701) 662-7640 (FAX) 662-7646

January 18, 2023

RE: Opposition of House Bill 1251

Dear Chairman Heinert, Members of the House Education Committee, and District 15 Legislators,

As the Superintendent and Business Manager for the Devils Lake Public School District, located within District No. 15, we are writing to you regarding House Bill 1251. This bill relates to the sharing of superintendents with student enrollment less than 475. We are both opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

1. This bill is placing limitations on the decision-making ability of locally elected officials of the board. Our voters have not only elected you to the legislature but have elected our local school board members. Why would you take that power away from the voters?
2. School districts currently already have the ability to share superintendents, which some districts are currently exercising this ability. However, they are doing so because that is what is best for their district and community, not because they are being forced to do so by the state.
3. Communities are proud of their schools, and they have the right to make decisions regarding their staffing and what best fits their needs.
4. The state providing pay parameters is micromanagement at the most basic level. It takes the decision making away from our local officials.
5. Superintendents in most cases are in charge of one of the largest employers in the community. They have the necessary experience and education to lead their districts.
6. As a business manager and superintendent, we work very closely together. We have seen and even worked in districts that have had their own superintendent, but also one that have shared a superintendent. It provides many challenges not only for the district, but the community when the superintendent is pulled in different directions. It's not all about the compensation for districts, it is the ability to represent the district 100%.
7. Superintendents perform many duties needed within their districts. If a district's superintendent is forced to supervise other districts, these other duties will fall to other personnel within the district. This trickle-down impact on business managers, principals and teachers will affect job performance, retention and recruitment at all levels.

In conclusion, we hope you will take these into consideration when voting on HB 1251. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Matt Bakke, Superintendent
Devils Lake School District
701-662-7640
matt.bakke@dlschools.org



Melissa J Haahr, Business Manager
Devils Lake School District
701-662-7640
melissa.haahr@dlschools.org

1251

Frank A Schill <Frank.Schill@k12.nd.us>

Thu 1/19/2023 3:00 PM

To: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Greetings Aimee:

I know you mix it up with legislators on a regular basis. I usually don't promote myself or my school, but in light of Edmore and Frank Schill being the poster child of HB1251 it may be beneficial for you to share some information....

As I am an outlier regarding superintendent salaries with low enrollment, I would like to share some additional outlier stats regarding student performance.

- Since my arrival 2012 50% of my graduating seniors (cumulative numbers) have earned 18 college credits upon graduation. I would like any other school district in ND to show me a year where 50%. Heck, show me a school where 25% of their seniors graduated with 18 college credits.
- [Niche.com](https://niche.com) is a national organization that rates school districts and schools. This is done so people who may be looking to relocate to a community have an idea of how inviting a community may be to live in, but also how their school rates. Edmore has been awarded the number one school district in North Dakota from [Niche.com](https://niche.com) 4 of the past 6 years. Once again, show me a school district in ND that has received this distinction repetitively like Edmore.

I may be an outlier regarding salary, but perhaps an outlier salary gets outlier student achievement in some instances.

I would be selfish to take all the credit. As you know Diane and I work as a team and Diane has worked tirelessly to ensure kids are pushed and achieve. It is a team effort, but I will take the credit in that my selling the vision to the Edmore school board then getting the right people on the right seats of the bus has yielded high student achievement.

Some talking points as you mix it up with our elected officials.

Keep up the good work.

Kind Regards

Frank

"It is never too late to be what you might have been"...George Eliot



EIGHT MILE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

P.O. Box 239
Trenton, North Dakota 58853

Phone: 701-774-8221
Fax: 701-774-8040

District Website
www.trenton.k12.nd.us

Facebook Page
@trentonschool

January 16, 2023

Dear House Education Committee (Chairman Pat Heinert)

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Eight Mile School District #6 in opposition of HB 1251. I would like to share three main points on why I am not in support this bill.

1. This bill will eliminate an essential measure of local control over our community's school. School districts choose superintendents based on the person they believe will best meet the needs of their children and families and we fully believe that choosing a superintendent should be left up to the individual districts and their stakeholders. This bill will force school districts to abide by leadership decisions made by other communities and remove the ability of smaller communities to control who leads the education of their children.
2. While our school district is part of Williams County, our demographics with a roughly 50% Native American enrollment, make us distinct and unique in our region and this is very important to us when selecting school leaders. Sharing a superintendent would not be beneficial to our community and would serve to erode the uniqueness found here. The individual we have serving our school must understand this cultural uniqueness and share in our values. If a person must answer to multiple boards, we would wonder where their allegiance lies? Would they truly be vested in our community and hold the best interests of our students at the forefront of their larger "regional" decision-making?
3. As the current superintendent of Eight Mile School District #6 I feel I meet the uniqueness we have here in Trenton. I have in the past worked with multiple boards and it is truly hard to be vested in one or the other. I also believe our local board knows who they want for their leader and the choice should be up to them to decide. Co-Ops are not new to North Dakota and if our board wants to get into one with a leader again, they should have the ultimate choice.

So, Education Committee members please vote NO on HB 1251

Sincerely,

Matt Schriver, Superintendent
Eight Mile School District #6
Trenton, ND

Elgin
PO Box 70
Elgin, ND 58533-0070
701-584-2374 - telephone
701-584-3018 - fax
www.gcs.k12.nd.us

ELGIN/NEW LEIPZIG PUBLIC SCHOOL

DISTRICT #49

Russell Ziegler, Superintendent



Home of the Coyotes

Terry T. Bentz, Secondary Principal
Jared Bollom, Elementary Principal
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Lamont Gaugler
Chad Gappert
Amanda Petrick
Andy Rosin
Gayle Beyer, Business Manager

January 13, 2023

HB 1251 – Limiting Compensation for School District Superintendents

Dear North Dakota House Representative

I am Dr. Russell Ziegler, the superintendent for the Elgin/New Leipzig School District #49. I am writing this letter on behalf of the Elgin/New Leipzig school board. We discussed HB 1251 at our January board meeting which was held on January 11, 2023. The Elgin/New Leipzig School Board and administrators are opposed to this legislation. The main reason for the opposition is that this bill will eliminate local control when it comes to small school districts employing a superintendent. This bill removes the choice of the board and community, for which the board represents, if they would like to have a resident superintending just for their school. Currently schools can share a superintendent if they so choose. Requiring schools that are under 475 students to share superintendents takes that local control away. This bill is the equivalent to the state telling a city council in a small community that they can only have one city maintenance individual. Just like the city council is voted in by their community members and is at the mercy of the community so is the school board. If the community would like to share a superintendent with a neighboring school district there is no current regulations that would stop that process. These small communities know what is in their best interest and should be given the opportunity to do what they think is best. Just as the state government should not have to worry about federal overreach, the small rural communities should not have to worry about state overreach.

As far as saving taxpayer dollars by sharing a superintendent, I think one item that is missing is the money that will need to be spent to support a school that has a part-time superintendent. For example – currently I am the superintendent for one district, after talking to my neighboring districts it would take all four for us to reach the 475 minimum (Mott/Regent (already consolidated), Elgin/New Leipzig (already consolidated), and Carson and Flasher (who already share a superintendent)). We would have one superintendent over all four schools, which means that superintendents time is going to have to be shared between them all. How many days would the superintendent be in each school on a weekly basis? The superintendent is the lead crisis manager in these communities, what happens if there is an emergency in one town when the superintendent is in a town over 50 miles away (miles between Mott to Flasher). This would mean that the principal would have to pick up some of those superintendent duties, which is not in their job description. They should be working with teachers and students and not have to worry about the day to day operations of a school/building. Or, the school would hire “assistant superintendents” in place of the one that is shared. With paying the principal more for the extra duties and/or hiring for other positions, the supposed cost savings is not there. If the concern is about getting more funds to classrooms and teachers, then my suggestion would be to increase the per-pupil payment to the districts and restrict the increase to classroom supplies, technology, teacher salaries, etc.

Sincerely,

Dr. Russell Ziegler

The mission of the Elgin/New Leipzig Public School District is to promote a positive and safe environment that promotes lifelong learning for all individuals.



Fessenden-Bowdon School District

PO Box 67 · 500 North 2nd Street

Fessenden, ND 58438

T: 701-547-3296

www.fessenden-bowdon.org

Striving to Achieve Excellence Together

January 19, 2023

Dear House Education Committee,

I would like to take this opportunity to voice my opposition to HB 1251. I believe this bill would have serious adverse effects for the Fessenden-Bowdon School District. In addition, it will negatively impact our communities.

This bill will not provide cost savings. Small school superintendents wear many hats in their district. Many of these duties will need to be delegated to other staff. Additional staff such as principal or dean of students will need to be hired. Currently, I am the 504 Coordinator, Title IV Decision Maker, Director of Transportation, School Lunch Representative and Title I, II, III and IV Representative. I serve on the boards of East Central Special Education and Northeast Education Service Cooperative. We have one principal in our district. When he is gone, I cover his duties in his absence. To ensure proper safety and that we are fulfilling our obligations, additional administration will need to be employed. This will negate any savings. It will also increase the work load for other valuable employees such as business managers and administrative assistants.

In addition to the regular duties of a small school superintendent, there are many other duties that need to be done. When needed, I assist as a substitute bus driver, substitute teacher, and IEP team member. I also assist with lawn care, snow removal, activities supervision, lunch supervision and playground supervision. These duties will now need to be put onto others in the building. This will be added responsibility to our teachers and classified employees.

I believe this bill eliminates a core North Dakota belief, which is local control. Our boards are elected by the people to make decisions as to what is best for students. This bill takes away that local control and gives that authority to the state. Our board attend yearly training at the NDSBA convention. School boards represent the patrons of their district. When they are forced to share a superintendent, they lose their autonomy and local control.

I believe this bill is the first step in a process which will require school consolidation. Small towns are the backbone of our state. When schools are forced to close and consolidate, this will have a negative effect on our towns. When the school

Kent Dennis, Superintendent

Aaron Loff, K-12 Grade Principal/Asst. Activities Director

Michelle Johnson, Business Manager

Board of Education

Miranda Kittelson, President

Monica Mason, Vice President

Erin Hagemester, Member

Hans Widicker, Member

Mychal Neumiller, Member



Fessenden-Bowdon School District

PO Box 67 · 500 North 2nd Street

Fessenden, ND 58438

T: 701-547-3296

www.fessenden-bowdon.org

Striving to Achieve Excellence Together

closes, the town begins to die. We have many patrons that call the Fessenden-Bowdon District home. These patrons want to see their schools and communities remain active.

Again, I want to voice my concern for HB 1251. This bill leaves too many unknowns. There will be a negative impact not only for the students of Fessenden-Bowdon School, but also for the entire state. Please vote NO on this bill. If I can be of service or answer any questions, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

Kent Dennis, Superintendent
Fessenden-Bowdon School

Kent Dennis, Superintendent

Aaron Loff, K-12 Grade Principal/Asst. Activities Director

Michelle Johnson, Business Manager

Board of Education

Miranda Kittelson, President

Monica Mason, Vice President

Erin Hagemester, Member

Hans Widicker, Member

Mychal Neumiller, Member

Re: Fessenden-Bowdon House Bill 1251

Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

Sat 1/21/2023 8:13 AM

To: Kent Dennis <kent.dennis@k12.nd.us>

Thanks Kent!

*Dr. Aimee Copas**North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders**Executive Director**www.ndcel.us**701-258-3022 office**605-228-3804 mobile**@aimeecopas*

From: Dennis, Kent <Kent.Dennis@k12.nd.us>**Date:** Friday, January 20, 2023 at 1:44 PM**To:** Klein, Jerry J. <jklein@ndlegis.gov>, jonelson@ndlegis.gov <jonelson@ndlegis.gov>, rweisz@ndlegis.gov <rweisz@ndlegis.gov>**Subject:** Fessenden-Bowdon House Bill 1251

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Representative Nelson, Representative Weisz and Senator Klein,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my concern with HB 1251. I have sent a letter to the House Education Committee,

North Dakota Council of Education Leaders and the North Dakota School Boards Association expressing many of the concerns I have for the bill. This bill will have an adverse effect on the students of Fessenden-Bowdon. I included the letter on this email as well.

I do not believe this bill will save money. Superintendents in smaller schools have many different responsibilities. Sharing the responsibilities will result in shifting the day-today duties to others in the school, which will require the need to add additional positions.

Local control is the cornerstone of government in North Dakota and has been since statehood. I do not believe the state should dictate how districts choose to operate. Our patrons elect them to be fiscally responsible and make decisions that are best for our students. If our patrons have concerns, they can vote them out. That is the premise of local control.

I am disheartened that a member of the legislature sent an email to a large majority of the teachers in North Dakota encouraging them to support this bill. It implies large raises if it passes. I do not believe a representative from Minot should be asking our teachers in District 14 for support. Our state works best when we work together. I believe this tactic does nothing but encourage people to take sides and draw lines.

Again, I encourage you to oppose HB 1251. I believe it will have an adverse effect on the Fessenden-Bowdon School District and the communities it serves. I will be in Bismarck at the hearing on

Wednesday. If I can be of service and answer any questions you have, I will be glad to do so.

Sincerely,

Kent Dennis, Superintendent
Fessenden-Bowdon School
PO Box 67
Fessenden, ND 58438

Office: 701-547-3296
Cell: 710351-5049

kent.dennis@k12.nd.us

HB 1251 (Students and Taxpayers Opportunity Act)

Jeff Larson <jeff.larson@finleysharonschool.com>

Tue 1/17/2023 11:23 AM

To: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Finley-Sharon Public School is in opposition to HB 1251. I have visited with our local legislative representative, Don Vigesaa. We had a very productive conversation / dialogue about the bill and our position. Is there anything else you need from me?

--

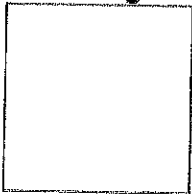
Jeff Larson

Superintendent/Elementary Principal

Finley-Sharon Public School

701-524-2420 ext 131

Educating today's learners for tomorrow's world



FORT RANSOM SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

135 MILL ROAD, FORT RANSOM, ND 58033-4011

PHONE 701-973-2591, FAX 701-973-2491

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES – PO BOX 593, LISBON, ND 58054

PHONE 701-683-4106, FAX 701-683-4414

<http://www.ft-ransom.k12.nd.us>

District 24 Legislators:

Please vote no on HB1251, which would restrict local school boards like Fort Ransom to select their own lead administrator. The Fort Ransom School Board reviewed and discussed this bill during their school board meeting on January 11, 2023. Fort Ransom has only 22 students grades k-6 and we do a great job of meeting the needs of our students and staff. According to this proposal, we would be one of 136 school districts out of the 173 operating North Dakota school districts that would be forced to meet this standard. Let the local Fort Ransom School board make those decisions they were elected to make by the voting patrons of the Fort Ransom School District #6. Please oppose HB1251. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to board members or me. SLJ

Steven L. Johnson, Superintendent

Fort Ransom School District #6

135 Bluff Street

Fort Ransom, ND 58033

Steven.Johnson@k12.nd.us

#IamARuralTeacher #WhyRuralSchoolsMatter #MakeItWorkND

Cell 701.678.3099 Home 701.683.4553 Twitter [@johnson557377](https://twitter.com/johnson557377) "Never in history has a situation improved on its own while people sat there doing nothing"

Cc: Fort Ransom School board members

Alayna Brudevold, President

Sherri Ness, Vice President

Chesley Jones, Director

Stacy Ercink, Director

Lynn Thorfinnson, Director

Pamela Hoistad, Business Manager

Dear Senator Veda,

My name is Larry Derr, Superintendent of Glenburn Public School District #26. I am writing this letter in opposition of HB 1251. HB 1251 is a direct attack on limiting local control. School Boards already have the authority to share Superintendents if they so desire to.

The cost saving narrative that is being pushed is a false narrative. As Superintendent I wear multiple hats every day. The duties would have to be split amongst Secretaries, Business Managers, Principals, or even new positions created to alleviate the work load. Some of the duties that I do but are not limited to: Transportation director, Title I, II, IV, IX representative, grant representative, impact aid, bus driver, sub activities driver, snow removal, part time lawn mower, social media monitor, website coordinator, heating and cooling system monitor, head boys basketball coach, and anything else that needs to be done.

If school boards want to share Superintendents, they can make that decision locally already. This bill insinuates that local elected board members cannot be trusted to make their own decisions about what is best for their communities. In Glenburn, our school is the hub of the community. We are the largest employer in Glenburn. The Glenburn people are very proud of the school and what it represents. The board has the right to make local decisions that they were elected to do. HB 1251 would limit that authority to make local decisions.

Why would we ever take power away from the voters, the same voters who were smart enough to elect you to our legislature also voted for the school board members. This legislation would transfer power from the voters to the executive branch (DPI). When has that ever been proven as a wise decision?

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Larry Derr

Superintendent of Glenburn Public School

GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Inspiring Excellence
Building Character

Superintendent
Darren Albrecht
1548 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-1943 Fax

Grafton High School
Randy Rice, 7-12
1548 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-1943 Fax

Century Elementary
Brad Larson, 3-6
830 15 St West
701-352-1930
701-352-1120 Fax

Century Elementary
Jill Olson, PK-2
1542 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-0163 Fax

Activities Director
Jon Koehmstedt
1548 School Road
701-352-1930
701-352-1943 Fax

January 15, 2023

Honorable Karen Anderson
Honorable David Monson
Honorable Janne Myrdal

RE: HB1251

My name is Darren Albrecht, and I am the Superintendent of Grafton Public School District #18. Please consider this letter as my opposition to the proposed HB1251 Relating to Limiting Compensation for School District Superintendents.

The sharing of Superintendents is already an option in North Dakota as I have experienced firsthand. In 2014 the St Thomas Superintendent retired from his position. The St Thomas District #43 School Board approached the Grafton District #3 School Board to determine if there were any potential options to share duties with the Grafton Administration. It was established that the workload of the Superintendent of the Grafton District would not allow an extension into another district. Having around twenty years of experience in education, most of which was administration, I was approached as the High School Principal in Grafton. With the structure of services already in place in Grafton we developed a plan to allow my time in St Thomas as Superintendent. What this did was further the relationship between both communities while a vision for reorganization was being developed ending with the Grafton School District #18.

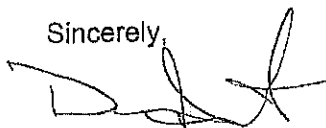
Personally, the level of commitment required to accommodate both positions prepared me for my current position as Superintendent. With that said, having worked as Superintendent in a district of 40 students while being Principal to 275 students for five years I can say that's about the extent of my tenure based on the duties and sacrifice of time to myself and my family.

Board of Education
Donald Suda, President
Sharon Lipsh, Vice President
Chad Bigwood, Nathan Green, Trina Papenfuss,
Maggie Suda and Jennifer Thompson
Cathi Heuchert, Business Manager

I understand the proposed bill would not have an impact on my current position. We have regions in this state that would combine roughly four buildings to reach the 475-student threshold set by this bill. The retention of quality administrators will no doubt be stressed beyond what we have currently experienced over the last couple of years. I reference my colleagues from the northeast in districts with less than 475 students and the additional duties they must consider as a Superintendent leads me to believe the practicality of this bill will do the opposite of its intent. We will need additional resources, additional funding for time lost in those buildings due to the multiple duties vacated by the Superintendent. With the current shortage we are experiencing at all levels of education, taking away local control and leadership from our districts is not the answer to saving money.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony. Your service and commitment to our state is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions on this or other items for consideration.

Sincerely,



Darren Albrecht

Darren.Albrecht@k12.nd.us

Grafton Public School District #18
1548 School Road
Grafton ND, 58237
701-352-1930 Office
701-360-5082 Cell



Dr. Terry Brenner
Superintendent of Schools

Phone: 701.787.4880
Fax: 701.772.7739
fbrenner270@mygfschools.org

January 17, 2023

The Honorable Randy D. Lemm
North Dakota State Senator
623 166th Avenue SE
Hillsboro, ND 58045-9571

Dear Senator Lemm:

Respectfully, I implore you to oppose HB 1251 relating to limiting compensation for school district superintendents as it will have dire consequences for a large number of smaller rural school districts across the state of North Dakota. Perplexing in this bill is the limiting of local control by established school boards that are elected at the local level. It really ought to be the prerogative of local school boards whether or not they want to share a superintendent or to consolidate school districts, which, this bill seems to be aiming at. If efficiency is the goal, there are other ways to address that.

I reflect on the recent swatting occurrence (active shooter hoax) at Red River High School and the necessary leadership required to provide incident command of the situation. Rural school districts, in the absence of a superintendent who typically serves as the leader in such a horrific experience, would be leaning on teachers and, possibly, the school principal (if there is one) to lead through these difficult circumstances.


In my four-decade experience as a teacher, principal, director, and superintendent, I can say with certainty that we are in the most complex educational times, particularly as it relates to student mental health, student behavior, suicide ideation, social media's negative influence, and mass school shootings just to name a few. In the absence of a school superintendent, teachers can expect diminished levels of leadership support.

I recognize the proposal calls for a reinvestment in teachers, however given the aforementioned and the present teacher workforce shortage, the recruitment and retention of teachers in smaller school districts will be adversely affected.


Thank you for your service to and for the people of North Dakota. Your consideration of opposing HB 1251 is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent



Mark Sanford Education Center
2400 47th Ave. S
Grand Forks, ND 58201-3405



PO Box 6000
Grand Forks, ND 58206-6000



www.gfschools.org

Equal opportunity employer

Derek Simonsen

From: Derek Simonsen
Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2023 3:50 PM
To: cheadland@ndlegis.gov; tmwanzek@ndlegis.gov; dwvigesaa@ndlegis.gov
Subject: HB 1251 Disapproval Comment

Importance: High

Representative Headland, Representative Vigesaa and Senator Wanzek:

I wanted to provide a rural district perspective on *HB 1251 - Limiting Small School Superintendents*. Griggs County Central School District has 260 students and I work 7 days a week and what feels like 24 hours per day to keep this district viable and keep this district moving forward which helps keep our small community moving forward. I am on call 24/7 for one school district, one school board, and one community. I have so many roles at the school beyond "Superintendent" including; **Human Resource Director, Title I Director, Title IX Coordinator, Facilities Director, Federal Programs Director, Transportation Supervisor, Homeless Student Liaison, Sports Official, Assistant Activities Director, Assistant Technology Director, Substitute Teacher, and countless other jobs** at a small district.

For a bill to suggest that it would be simple enough to just combine a superintendents with two or three, or in a lot of cases in ND four, other districts to get to 475 students will destroy small school districts and communities. The amount of time and effort I have put into this community and district cannot be easily duplicated in multiple other districts to get to 475. It will force good administrators to retire or go out of the state. It will not help school districts, small towns, or students. It will not bring money closer to students, it will force school district conflicts with other small districts, eventually school consolidations, and students will be riding 60+ miles to their consolidated school district while small towns are crushed.

We are currently in a coop for sports with an area district and we cannot decide on where home basketball games will be played, what are the odds we agree on which superintendent takes over and what town they live in? If we did agree, the superintendent will always be under fire for looking out for the community he or she lives in over the other community. Again, ultimately leading to consolidation.

I would be more than happy to talk to any representatives or senators over the phone about this bill or any other bill or topic that they want an opinion on. My cell phone number is 701-535-1361.

Derek Simonsen
Superintendent
Griggs County Central

Representative Schreiber-Beck,

I can not express how disappointed I am hearing that you are supportive of HB 1251. For the life of me I can't understand how anyone can look at this bill and think it is a good thing for small schools. I encourage you to reconsider you position on this bill. Please reach out to the small schools (and their boards) you represent (and others across the state) and ask them their feelings.

Why is even more local control being taken away from small towns? My Board will combine administrative positions when they feel it is necessary. They will go to a part-time administrator when they feel it is necessary. We have decided not to fill positions that have come open over the past 10 years because the Board felt it was time to downsize in those areas. We have cut back a bus route because the Board felt it was time to downsize. My School Board is elected to represent the community and they do the best they can to make decisions in the best interest of the students, staff, parents, and community. I would like to see these decisions stay where they belong, with the local School Board.

I work hard to build relationships with students and staff in my building. I can't imagine having the same relationships if I am only in the building for a couple days each week, while I am in multiple other schools.

I also work hard building relationships with patrons in my community. I am the commander of the local Sons of the American Legion which puts on any number of community events, fundraisers, and contributes financially to many local organizations. In addition I attend many community events and meetings to further deepen my relationships with the community. I can certainly try to do that in 2 or 3 communities at the same time, but man that would be a challenge and it certainly would not result in anywhere near the same impact I am having in my community.

In my opinion this is an attack on small schools. There is not doubt that the endgame here is forcing small schools to consolidate. That word was used by Mat Ruby himself recently in an interview.

There is a lot of focus on jobs and growing business throughout the state. Schools, especially true for small towns, are often the largest employer in the community. Why is there this need to shut down the largest business in so many communities? Why would the legislature be so eager to support a bill that closes Bobcat in Gwinner, Wahpeton, or Bismarck, or Microsoft in Fargo, or Crystal Sugar in Hillsboro? How do these small communities survive when their school closes? Where do the employees go? What is the impact on other business in the community when the school doesn't need a plumber or electrician or the employees don't shop at the grocery store anymore?


Those of us living in these small communities are desperately trying to grow our communities. Hankinson is well known for its progressive push to add business and housing to the community. We have been quite successful. This has not been easy and has not happened without setbacks and disappointments. I will tell you this. If

Hankinson loses its school it will be nearly impossible to attract new business because it will be difficult to draw families to our community to work at those businesses if there is no school for their children.

The state, including the Governor, often say that we need to “invest” in our state through economic development. We encourage our youth to stay in our state for college and hope they stay when they join the workforce. How does taking schools out of our small towns fit with economic development? Growing up in a small town, living and working in a small town I often feel under attack from the state and larger communities. We are North Dakotans too. We contribute to the economy of the state. It is our rural landowners who drive the agricultural base in the state. We may be small, but we still matter.

Chad Benson, Superintendent
Hankinson Public School

 Reply

 Forward

Representative Mitskog,

I am sending this email to express my concern and disappointment with HB 1251. I do not know if you are supportive of the bill. For the life of me I can't understand how anyone can look at this bill and think it is a good thing for small schools.

Why is even more local control being taken away from small towns? My Board will combine administrative positions when they feel it is necessary. They will go to a part-time administrator when they feel it is necessary. We have decided not to fill positions that have come open over the past 10 years because the Board felt it was time to downsize in those areas. We have cut back a bus route because the Board felt it was time to downsize. My School Board is elected to represent the community and they do the best they can to make decisions in the best interest of the students, staff, parents, and community. I would like to see these decisions stay where they belong, with the local School Board.

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will be difficult to draw families to our community to work at those businesses if there is no school for their children.

The state, including the Governor, often say that we need to “invest” in our state through economic development. We encourage our youth to stay in our state for college and hope they stay when they join the workforce. How does taking schools out of our small towns fit with economic development? Growing up in a small town, living and working in a small town I often feel under attack from the state and larger communities. We are North Dakotans too. We contribute to the economy of the state. It is our rural landowners who drive the agricultural base in the state. We may be small, but we still matter.

Chad Benson, Superintendent
Hankinson Public School

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 Ir ▾

Re: NO Vote on HB 1251

From: Ken Miller <Ken.Miller@K12.nd.us>
Sent: Wednesday, January 18, 2023 10:21:19 AM
To: Novak, Anna <anovak@ndlegis.gov>
Cc: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>
Subject: NO Vote on HB 1251

Good morning, Representative Novak,

I want to let you know that HB 1251 will negatively impact school districts throughout the state and I ask that you consider voting NO on the bill. Below are some examples of how my duties as superintendent of the Hazen School District is not just an office job that involves hours from 8:00 to 4:00.

- Superintendents wear so many hats in a school district. Below are just a handful of important duties I proudly preform at my schools.
 - o I am the Title I, II, III, and IV authorized representatives for these federal programs.
 - o I am the lead emergency responder for my district.
 - o When we do not have a bus driver I drive students to and from school and drive teams to competitions.
 - o I sub when we are short for an evening custodian and help out in the lunchroom when needed.
 - o You will also find me supervising our extracurricular events in the evening.
 - o I serve on 4 local community boards (Hazen Chamber of Commerce, Hazen Community Develop, Energy Capital Daycare, and Hazen Community Health Task Force).
- As the superintendent and the leader of the district it is important to be visible by walking the halls and visiting with students and staff. A superintendent of many school districts will not have the time to establish these positive and professional relationships that are essential in good schools.
- The superintendent cap on salaries to not exceed 1.5% of the total tax revenue would greatly affect the superintendent in the Hazen. The maximum salary in Hazen would be \$79,908 which is currently less than each principal and the superintendent is contracted for 12 months and the principals work for 10 months. It may be hard to find a good superintendent to lead the Hazen District for \$79,908.

These are just a handful of important attributes that would be negatively impacted if HB 1251 was passed. It would be very difficult for a superintendent of two or three school districts to maintain all their duties in each school. For these and other important reasons, please consider voting NO on HB 1251.

If you would like to visit more about this bill, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Respectfully,

Ken Miller
 Hazen School District Superintendent
 701-748-2345

Reply
 Reply all
 Forward

OPPOSE HB 1251

Paula Suda <Paula.Suda@k12.nd.us>

Tue 1/17/2023 7:57 AM

To: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Good Afternoon Legislators,

HB 1251, a bill recently introduced by Representative Matt Ruby that would require a school district of less than 475 students to partner with other districts (one or more, until at least 475 total students was reached) to employ a superintendent. This is direct attack on local control. This should be a local decision. Please oppose this bill.

If you have any questions, please call me at 701-430-0518.

It's a great day to be a *BURROI*

Paula Suda, Superintendent
HILLSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOL

email: paula.suda@k12.nd.us

address: PO Box 579, Hillsboro, ND 58045

phone: (701) 636-4360

website: www.hillsborok12.com



JOE HEGLAND
Curriculum and Professional Development

Jamestown Public School District #1

DR. ROBERT LECH, SUPERINTENDENT
207 Second Avenue Southeast
Jamestown, North Dakota 58401
(701) 252-1950 Fax (701) 251-2011



SALLY OST
Business Manager
Human Resources Director

January 18, 2023

North Dakota Legislators,

As the superintendent of Jamestown Public Schools, I have appreciated the opportunity to share my perspective with legislators regarding issues that impact education. I have always felt heard when I share on proposed legislation or issues that I believe should be addressed, and for that I am appreciative. My intent is to share my perspective again on HB 1251, which would require school districts below an enrollment of 475 to share district administrators. While my district is not below this enrollment threshold, I still feel compelled to share my rationale for why I believe this legislation should be opposed.

The most obvious concern relates to the loss of local control. School boards are elected to make decisions that are congruent with the values and expectations of their community. In my 20 years as a superintendent, I have worked with 90 different school board members. Each of them took great care to represent the community, and to best fulfill their roles and responsibilities. I would hope we would continue to empower those individuals to effectively make decisions that best meet the needs of their schools district and those elected to serve them. It would be a mistake, in my opinion, to take this decision away from school board members, just as I believe federal mandates that infringe upon the ability of state legislators to make local decisions are insensitive to those elected officials. As a general rule, the best decisions are made when those closest to the issue, and those ultimately given the accountability by the voter, are provided the authority.

Much has been said on this bill related to the high salaries of superintendents. Like many salaries in competitive positions, I would contend they are a product of the market. The issue isn't so much what districts are choosing to pay, it is more what the market dictates those positions must be paid. The presupposition that school board members are paying more than necessary for these district leaders, or failing to consider sharing opportunities, suggests that these school board members do not operate with fiscal responsibility or as stewards of their tax dollars. Having been in hundreds of school board meetings in my career, through my work with those 90 school board members, and leading three school districts, this isn't, in any way, consistent with my experiences. These are individuals that take great care to make the right decisions for their community and they know, the next election is the best indicator.

While I believe there is some level of legitimacy to the idea that school districts should take advantage of opportunities to collaborate, share and partner, the more reasonable path to that would be incentivizing districts to engage with other school districts about sharing a district administrator. I have heard of references to previous legislation that incentivized that were ineffective. It is important to note, though, that this, to my recollection, required a superintendent AND business manager to be shared. That is

much more onerous to consider and I am not surprised that districts did not take advantage. Regardless, I believe it is the responsibility of those districts to consider if sharing is right for them.

Prior to voting on this bill, I would strongly encourage you to reach out of district superintendents of those effected school districts to better understand the roles they serve in that district. The bill encourages "horizontal" sharing of duties between school districts, but does not recognize the "vertical" sharing that already occurs in these districts. These are leaders that serve multiple capacities, such as principal, teacher, etc. I would argue that these are already shared positions, they are just sharing internally. I believe it would be problematic to only consider the external sharing that this bill outlines.

Further, as the bill is written, it is my understanding that the Department of Public Instruction could "assign" any superintendent to another district if an opportunity to share could not be found. As an example, despite being a contracted employee with a multi-year agreement with Jamestown Public School District, could be assigned as the superintendent of Montpelier by the Department of Public Instruction. I would question the legality of how the state could overrule an employment contract between a school district and superintendent in this circumstance. I would also be cautious about an obvious executive branch overreach in empowering DPI to making these determinations.

Lastly, the appearance of the bill is that this is a step to closing more of our rural schools. I can't speak if that is the actual intent or just the prevailing perception, particularly of those in rural areas. However, if that is the aim, I would hope that it be done more transparently and in a manner that hears all perspectives to best understand the true impact of that decision.

As always, I am happy to discuss this issue, and any issue, in greater detail. Please feel free to reach out to me via email, district phone (252-1950) or my cell phone (701-870-2636). Thank you for all you do for North Dakota education.

With Regards,



Dr. Robert Lech
Superintendent
Jamestown Public School District #1

The Mission of the Jamestown Public School District is Engaging Students with Challenging and Innovative Experiences to Prepare Them for Future Success.

The Jamestown Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicap in its employment policies/practices.

HB 1251

gblack@daktel.com <gblack@daktel.com>

Mon 1/23/2023 3:50 PM

To: dwvigesaa@ndlegis.gov <dwvigesaa@ndlegis.gov>; cheadland@ndlegis.gov <theadland@ndlegis.gov>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

January 23, 2023

Representative Don Vigesaa and Representative Craig Headland,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 1251 and encourage you to oppose this bill.

In my experience, superintendents in small schools serve many additional roles often as an elementary or high school principal and/or athletic director. They frequently teach classes, coach, are the contact person for multiple federal and state programs and may even have to drive a bus. They are often called upon to fill voids created when substitutes are needed or to cover for unfilled vacancies. Some superintendents are now serving on a part-time basis, which in my case is much less than 50% FTE at Kensal Public School.

To suggest savings could occur by having one superintendent serve multiple districts is not likely to be as much as suggested. Someone will have to be hired to fill the roles that a combination superintendent would no longer have time for. Also, the gaps in teacher to administrator pay is not significant when you adjust the salary of a nine-month teacher contract compared to a twelve-month administrative contract.

School districts and their communities all have their own individual characteristics and dynamics. A superintendent is a respected and integral part of the community, often called to serve in civic and

church organizations. With this in mind, where would the superintendent live and how would he/she split loyalties?

The policy of sharing superintendents is in place, and incentives have been available for several years. Some school districts are now sharing superintendents and after much thought and discussion developed an arrangement that works for them. Other elementary school districts are attached to a larger K-12 school district with a shared superintendent. These decisions have been established and endorsed by local school boards after much discussion and an understanding of their individual circumstances.

Most concerning with this bill is the loss of local control. Taking away power and ability to make decisions from local governments and transferring it to the executive branch (DPI) undermines the principles of our representative republic. Removing local control is not an acceptable option at any level of government.

I ask you to oppose HB 1251 and express your concerns to your colleagues.

Respectfully,

Gilbert Black, Superintendent
Kensal Public School
803 First Avenue
Kensal, ND 58455
Phone: 701-486-2484
Cell: 701-650-1389

Subject: HB 1251 - Letter sent to 6 representatives

Date: Monday, January 16, 2023 at 12:08:11 PM Central Standard Time

From: Steve Hall

To: Aimee Copas

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

I sent this individually to 6 Representative:

Dist. 22: Pyle, Warrey,

Dist. 25: Schreiber-Beck, Mitskog,

Dist. 27: Stemen, Christy

Subject: Superintendent Bill 1251

Dear Representative

Serving Patrons of the Kindred School District.

I write this email to express my concern about HB 1251 and encourage you to vote No on this bill.

After listening to Rep. Ruby's interview on KFGO it is clear HB 1251 is about pay for teachers. His message this was a way to help supplement and increase teacher pay. Just transfer the saving to the teachers. The reality is there may not be much savings when someone else in the district is going to have to do the duties that the current superintendent is responsible for. If you want to increase teacher pay this is a poor approach. If you want this to be the method to consolidate districts this is a poor approach. The best approach is to provide adequate funding to local school districts and let them decide how they are going to compensate staff. This idea of sharing superintendents can be done now by local school districts and it is being done in a number of places. Let the local districts decide.

This bill also is another move toward statewide school control by the state. Through my years as a school administrator it has been my concern that the local control is dwindling as more funding support comes from the state. This extends it even more. What will be next?

It is extremely unfortunate that this bill is another message to North Dakota that education and educational staff are not that important. It may not have been the intent but it has happened.

I encourage a no vote on HB 1251.

Thank you.

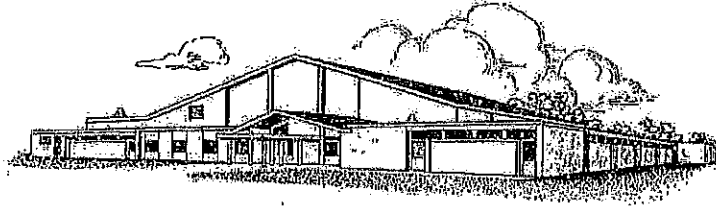
Sincerely,
Steve Hall

Steve Hall
Superintendent

Leeds Public Schools

DISTRICT NUMBER 6

Administrative Office



LEEDS, NORTH DAKOTA

58346

ND House Education Committee

Attn: Chairman Pat Heinert

Education Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 1251. I have been a Superintendent in small North Dakota school districts for the past 21 years and understand all the roles a small school superintendent fills. They are teachers, bus drivers, activity directors, PA announcers, referees, Title I coordinators..... and the list goes on.

Combining school district superintendents would only cause individual districts to have to hire more principals and assistant principals to cover the "extra" roles of the superintendent. This would all but eliminate the "cost savings" that the bill implies.

The salary difference brought up by the bill between a superintendent and a teacher is exaggerated when considering a 12 month superintendent contract compared to a 9 month teacher contract.

Finding a superintendent that is willing to work for up to four or more school boards and prepare separate fall and spring reports for multiple schools is unrealistic and will force more administrators out of the business.

In conclusion, HB1251 is not something that would benefit education. Instead, it would cause an extreme hardship on all ND small school districts.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Robert Thom

Robert Thom

Superintendent

Leeds Public School

HB1251 Correspondence

Chris Bastian <Chris.Bastian@k12.nd.us>

Tue 1/17/2023 9:40 AM

To: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi Aimee... I emailed all three of District 25's legislators... Here is a copy of what I wrote...

Dear Representative Schreiber-Beck,

Thank you for reading my email. I know that you have been inundated with correspondence concerning this bill. In my opinion, this bill is targeting local control and it appears to be taking that right away from the Lidgerwood Public School stakeholders.

I have been the Lidgerwood School Superintendent for the past three years. My job is unique in that I serve a dual role: elementary principal and school superintendent. When I was hired, the school district merged the two roles. In doing so, it saved the district close to \$25,000. This move is not perfect. It is functional but as we progress through the years the job responsibilities in each role increase. There could be a time when additional administrative support will be needed. I feel that this will be the same outcome with HB1251. It may look good on paper but, additional support personnel will likely be needed and could possibly increase costs and FTEs in the long run.

Lidgerwood Public School has held its enrollment over the past several years. We continue to hover right at 180-185 students in grades K-12. Someday our enrollment may start to decrease, and difficult decisions may have to be made such as consolidation. Currently, our local stakeholders have been satisfied with the way the district has been run. I have received little to no criticism on our financial wellbeing or on school tax levies. It should be our stakeholder's decision when the time comes to consolidate. The way the bill reads right now, for our district to comply we would need to merge with two different districts in our area. Consolidating with one district would be bad but doing it with two would be extremely difficult. Just think about the debate on mascot or the name of the district? No town wants to lose their school. Where would the school be located? Would we build a new one? Maintain and continue to use existing? Several questions would have to be answered.

Simply adjusting the superintendent salaries or the actual number of positions cannot pay for teacher raises. There must be a better solution. If schools are abusing the salary schedule for their superintendents, please deal with them directly. We cannot allow the few to ruin it for the whole. Lidgerwood Public School does its best to be a conservative district and utilize its state and local funding to the best of our ability. This consolidation bill will not be good for Lidgerwood.

I would like to thank you for your time. I wish you only the best during this legislative session. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Chris Bastian

Chris Bastian
Superintendent/Elementary Principal

Lidgerwood Public School
28 3rd Ave Se
Lidgerwood, ND 58053

701-538-7341 office
701-640-0598 cell

ADMINISTRATION

Justin Fryer, Superintendent
Patrick Adair
High School Principal
Jared Hoff
Middle School Principal
Benjamin Zahrbock
Elementary School Principal

Lisbon Public Schools

School District No. 19

502 Ash Street -- PO Box 593

Lisbon, North Dakota 58054-0593 Phone: (701) 683-4106

High School Fax: (701) 683-4414

Middle School Fax: (701) 683-4111

Elementary School Fax: (701) 683-4415

"Providing Equal Opportunities for Employees and Students"

January 17, 2022

Chairman Pat Heinert
1501 Eastwood Street
Bismarck, ND 58054-6230

Mr. Heinert:

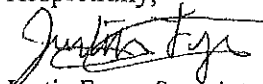
I have a significant amount of concern regarding HB 1251. This bill would be devastating to rural school districts across North Dakota. The bill aims to reduce the number of superintendents in North Dakota. This will directly cause instability in rural North Dakota. School superintendents help provide strength and stability to communities across our state. This was never more apparent than during the Covid-19 pandemic. My colleagues persevered through an extremely difficult situation and delivered a quality education to students across our state. During that time communities looked to their local school district superintendents for strength, and we provided it. We are now facing another challenge in North Dakota. This challenge is the elimination of many rural superintendents. How did we get here? What have my colleagues in these communities done wrong? Rural superintendents manage their district, evaluate employees, monitor the district's strategic plan, desegregate student achievement data, oversee federal programs, ensure building safety, review, and adopt new policies, drive buses, and most important provide leadership for the local board of education.

Most superintendents run the largest business in their community. Reducing the number of superintendents will directly affect student achievement outcomes by distributing additional administrative duties to principals and teachers.

This heavy-handed bill directly erodes local control and undermines the democratic process. This bill assumes that rural school board members do not properly evaluate their superintendent. We all negotiate with board members regarding our salaries. If community members feel that we are overcompensated and not doing outstanding work, they can petition to recall board members or vote them out at election time. At its core, this bill takes the power away from those same people who elected government officials across our state.

This bill will create more work for principals, teachers, and other school employees. The bill will create an exodus of quality leaders to larger communities and to other states. The state of New Jersey tried a similar approach, and the results were disastrous. Rural school districts will find it much more difficult to attract quality superintendents to their communities. Our tribal communities will face extreme consequences from this. It will be almost impossible for them to hire quality leaders. The vast geographical area of these districts and the extreme challenges that exist will make these positions even harder to fill. I can say this having spent 13 years of my career on the Standing Rock Reservation!!!

Respectfully,



Justin Fryer, Superintendent
Lisbon Public School District

Lone Tree School District #6

Golva Elementary School

Golva Elementary School
 PO Box 170
 301 Terrell Avenue
 Golva, ND 58632

PHONE: (701) 872-3674
 FAX: (701) 872-3004



Home of the Tigers

Libby Almy, Superintendent
 Leah Zook, Business Manager
 Jason Bosserman, President
 Brad Maus, Vice President
 Katie Zachmann, Director
 Jennifer Steiner, Director
 Brad Zook, Director

Honorable Matthew Ruby,

I am writing regarding HB 1251 and how it would impact District 39 constituents including those within the Lone Tree School District at Golva.

At Lone Tree School District, Golva, we have a small student population but are you aware of how incredibly efficient our district is despite the difficulties that weigh heavily on our small district? Consider this:

	Efficient Solution
Previously we have not been able to hire Special Education teachers to provide mandated services to the children with disabilities and teletherapy has not provided the quality education the students need as our data collection clearly shows. Statewide SpEd teacher shortage continues.	Our Superintendent was hired from Montana and not only serves as Superintendent/ Principal but also as our Special Education teacher (and IT support, curriculum director, music accompanist, grant-writer, transportation director, professional development provider, etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient use of Dollars and Licenses
Lack of teaching candidates for ANY district in North Dakota	Our teachers all teach multiple grade levels so effectively that parents from out of district inquire regularly about attending here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient, Effective
Mandates from state for Librarian and Counselor but not enough work to justify the hiring of full-time instructor AND no candidates for those positions	We collaborate with Beach to utilize those instructors in a way that is fiscally savvy for both districts. When there is a way to collaborate, the districts are already doing so. When it is not in the best interest of students and/or not feasible, the school boards have opted not to do so. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed Local Control, Efficient Mandate Coverage
Rural location and long bus routes	Landowners and business owners know that without a local school, they will immediately feel the impact hiring families to work because the bus routes will become unbearably long for students. To that end, for decades, community members have volunteered and supported in every way possible to maintain our school and in turn, assure their own business stability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frugal, Involved, Efficient

Our **Vision** of education is to develop critical and innovative thinking skills, positive self-esteem, academic achievement with individual creativity, and promote learning for all people in a positive caring atmosphere.

Textbook and Equipment Acquisition; Funding for Professional Development; Ongoing Building Maintenance; Hiring Professionals	Grant-writing is one of the skills we search for when hiring an administrator. Our Superintendent actively seeks and receives grant monies from many funding sources to purchase key materials for which other districts utilize tax dollars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wise stewardship
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Finally, perhaps this small school seems disposable or easily consolidated but when the Cognia Accreditation team reviewed our Lone Tree School district last year, they found that what we are doing here is not just good, it is EXEMPLARY!

Lone Tree School district was awarded the Cognia School of Distinction, an honor bestowed on only 2 districts in ND (1 of 96 in the USA). They found us to be incredibly supported by our community of tax payers; remarkably efficient in every way; and providing a high level of education with the guiding hand of a Superintendent who the local taxpayers selected who fills multiple roles from curriculum director and special education teacher to professional development provider to technology administration.

Improving student outcomes and being wise stewards of tax dollars drives EVERY decision here at Lone Tree School District from the community to the school board and the Superintendent/Clerk and teachers. Certainly, you are of the same mindset!

Can you see that HB 1251 serves neither to improve student outcomes nor improve tax stewardship and your support for HB 1251 certainly flies in the face of the wise tax stewards who raise their families here and who have spent their lives being frugal while being a model of educational excellence in our state.

We would welcome your explanation for the bill and ask how the data from our district was utilized to come to your decision. Additionally, we would like to hear from you about what the future for our district looks like to you and how that will save our taxpayers money and improve student outcomes.

Awaiting your response,

Libby Almy
Superintendent
Lone Tree School District

Our **Vision** of education is to develop critical and innovative thinking skills, positive self-esteem, academic achievement with individual creativity, and promote learning for all people in a positive caring atmosphere.

May-Port CG Middle & High School
La Lynda Blotsky, Principal
900 Main St W, Mayville, ND 58257
Phone (701) 788-2281
Fax (701)788-2959

Peter Boe Jr Elementary School
Jeff Houdek, Principal
20 2nd St NW, Mayville, ND 58257
Phone (701) 788-2281
Fax (701)788-9115



Michael Bradner, Superintendent

1/19/2023

Dear North Dakota Legislators,

Yesterday I sat in our North East Regional Education meeting listening to information about new artificial intelligence applications that can be used to write poems, book reports and countless other documents. These documents are virtually undetectable by plagiarism software. We were discussing the educational concerns surrounding this new technology. I decided to try it out for myself. This is the response that the artificial intelligence came up with for a job description for a School Superintendent. "A School Superintendent is responsible for the administration and management of a public or private school district. The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer of the district and is responsible for overseeing all administrative functions of the district, including budgeting, personnel, policy, and education. The Superintendent is also responsible for the development and implementation of district policies and plans." This is actually a very nice description from a business perspective.

I have had the honor of serving as an educator for the past three decades. I have been an administrator for twenty-five years and I have been the Superintendent for nineteen years. I have embraced the profession and I wouldn't trade it for anything. My wife and I came to North Dakota because of family values and culture that you find in our small communities. Mayville-Portland has been an amazing place to raise our children. What the artificial intelligence and HB 1251 fail to recognize are the most important aspects of being a smalltown Superintendent in North Dakota. It is about the connections to staff, families and communities.

North Dakota schools serve as the hubs of their communities. My typical day as a Superintendent begins by arriving at the school by 6:00am. When there are adverse weather conditions, I drive out into the country to ensure that roads will be passable and safe for the buses to travel. This is not unique to MPCG. I know this because I call my neighboring Superintendents and they are also out traveling roads and checking conditions. On a typical day, I walk the buildings in order to understand where there are potential issues that could arise. I also connect and greet our kitchen staff and custodians and discuss the day ahead; then I have coffee with our bus drivers and discuss everything from bus issues, student concerns, extracurricular trips, road conditions and concerns; then there is time for communication through email and greeting teachers and other staff members as they arrive for the day. Next comes

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MAY-PORT CG
PATRIOTS

Michael Bradner, Superintendent

the opportunity to connect with students and greet each one as they enter the building or pass in the hallways. Every day is different and involves the items used to describe the superintendent's job duties. It is about ensuring that policies are followed, staff is in place and that they have the tools needed to ensure an engaging curriculum that inspires students. It involves constant planning and preparing for budgetary needs and shortfalls. My job also about doing whatever is necessary to ensure the daily functions of our school. It is about collaboration and filling in where it is needed; it may involve recess duty, subbing in a classroom, driving a bus route or serving lunch when something unexpected happens. It is always about being an example to others that all roles are vital to the efficient operation of a school. It is the demonstration that nothing is beneath you and that you have enough understanding of everyone's role in order to fill in.

Every day is unique and yet all Superintendents can relate to my experiences over the last two days. At the end of the day, once all of our buses were transporting students home or to an extracurricular event, I started out for Wahalla, ND to attend the girls' basketball game. About thirty minutes into my drive I received a phone call from our secretary that a middle school student had slammed into the transformer in front of the school on their snowmobile. She ensured that the student was not terribly injured, but she was having difficulty reaching the parents. Due to our small town connections I was able to reach the parents, who were also on the road to attend an event, to ensure that they were aware of what had happened and what steps were being taken to ensure that the child was getting home safely and that they were released to an adult. I was also able to connect with the local representative for the electric company and highway department. Then last night at about 5:00pm I was contacted by our elementary principal that there were police, a swat team and bomb squad racing into town. I headed to the elementary school to ensure there was no threat to students in the afterschool program and to place them into a soft lockdown. Later on the news I recognized the home where a standoff with police had happened and the father of former students had taken his own life. I had been in that home several times and I was the confirmation sponsor for their disabled child, who no longer lives in the home. However, my role with that family is larger than the School Superintendent. It is now a community member who will need to provide support for a family experiencing an unimaginable tragedy.

Please allow local schools and communities to make the decisions that are best for their communities. Place your trust in local schools, who are already making decisions to develop efficient means to provide the best education for the children in their communities. The role of the Superintendent of schools is vital in all districts. It takes on many forms and is unique to each situation. I am proud to have



MAY-PORT CG
PATRIOTS

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Michael Bradner, Superintendent

dedicated my life to this wonderful profession. We have amazing people working within our schools. Teachers deserve to make more money for their amazing contributions to the lives of their students. We need to continue to make this a priority at the state level. However, cutting Superintendents will not free up additional dollars for state funding. The money realized by making these adjustments may save some money on the local level, but the responsibilities of our local Superintendents will not go away. The roles and responsibilities will need to be filled by others within the school. HB 1251 fails to recognize the importance of the connections that Superintendents make with their staff, students and communities. I stand in strong opposition to the bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Bradner

Superintendent

May-Port CG School District

MONTPELIER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Embracing Success Through Education

Board of Education
Tony Roorda **President**
Scott Harms **Vice-President**
Brock Naze, Robert Froehlich,
Wade Dally, Lynn Boom, Abram Valenta



Phil Leitner, **Superintendent**
Sara Wilson, **PK-12 Principal**
Richard Wright, **Activities Director**
Amy Maurer, **Business Manager**
Melissa Marshall, **Administrative Assistant**

January 21, 2023

Members of the Legislature,

I write this letter in opposition to HB 1251.

I am the superintendent of Montpelier School, a PK-12 school district that currently has 118 students. I am concerned that this bill creates an unnecessary mandate to consolidate superintendents when positions are already being shared among many small school districts across the state like the district I serve in.

I am currently serving as a superintendent and a school counselor. By taking on those roles in my district I am able to be a full time employee at the Montpelier school. If either of those positions were shared with another district the employees hired would not be able to serve in the district for 5 days a week. This mandate to consolidate does not adequately consider that shared superintendents are already happening. They are just being hired within their districts. If our district wanted a shared superintendent with another district they certainly would already have one. However, for more than 20 years our district has employed a superintendent that was able to wear multiple hats and that strategy has allowed for stability in administration over that time period.

The proposed cost savings have not adequately considered that our district will likely have to hire additional employees within our school to fill these positions. Please vote HB 1251 down as it just simply has too many unintended consequences. Rural school districts already have shared superintendents. They just ask superintendents to fill other positions needed within the district. If it isn't broken, there is no need to fix it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Phil Leitner
Superintendent
Montpelier Public School

Mission: Embracing Success through Education

214 7th Ave. Montpelier, ND 58472

Phone 701-489-3348/Fax 701-489-3349

NORTHWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL No. 129

420 Trojan Road • Northwood, ND 58267-3001

Phone (701) 587-5221 • Fax (701) 587-5423

www.northwoodk12.com



January 18, 2023

Honorable Senator Randy Lemm
Honorable Representative Mike Beltz
Honorable Representative Jared Hagert

I am writing this letter in opposition to HB 1251. In reading this bill, I believe the intent is to give more money to teachers by saving funds with fewer superintendents in the state. I have an obligation to be efficient with local dollars just as the state legislature has with allocating dollars for K-12 education. I commend any elected officials trying to save tax-payer dollars, but I don't believe that HB 1251 leads to the preferred efficiency. This bill at its core is a restriction on local decision making by locally elected officials.

I know the daily grind here at Northwood in operating a school district with 336 K-12 students. If this bill were to pass, it would pose more problems with sharing a superintendent with another district. I believe many people would be surprised by the numerous hats that many of the superintendents wear in rural districts. In my district, I help out with bus driving, am the transportation director, assist in the kitchen, work on cleaning and organizing, arrange and assist in snow removal, sub in classrooms, fill in for principals when they are out the building, coordinate federal programs, fill in for the administrative assistant, as well as manage the facility. These are only a few examples of the multiple responsibilities in a rural district. We take on these extra duties because it is what you do in small school districts to run an effective school, even if these areas aren't part of the job description. As a superintendent, you are always on call 24 hours a day. If superintendents are forced to take on multiple school districts, it will increase workload for all school employees.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this bill or any other educational legislation throughout the session. I can be reached by cell phone at 701-238-4254 or by email at shane.azure@northwoodk12.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shane Azure".

Shane Azure, Superintendent
Northwood Public School

We create an innovative and supportive environment that prepares students for future success.

Shane Azure, Superintendent Sarah Burger, Secondary Principal Cydnee Strand, Elementary Principal

Subject: Supt Bill
Date: Saturday, January 14, 2023 at 9:58:37 AM Central Standard Time
From: Jeff D Hagler
To: Aimee Copas
Attachments: Time Card.xlsx, Time Card.xlsx, Time Card.xlsx, Time Card.xlsx, Time Card.xlsx, Time Card.xlsx, Time Card.xlsx, Yearly Time Card.xlsx, Time Card.xlsx

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Aimee,

As I was cleaning the bathrooms, sweeping the floors, and vacuuming this morning at the school (we had a basketball game last night and another game today and my custodians don't work weekends) I was thinking about some information I have compiled over the past 8 years as Supt, with the assumption that someday someone, won't call him what I want to, was going to think we are overpaid. Attached are spreadsheets of the time that has been spent working at the school over the past 8 years. If it is valuable use it and if it is not valuable toss it. Thank you for everything you do for schools.

Thanks,

Jeffrey D. Hagler/Supt
North Star School
Cando, ND 58324
701-968-4416 or 701-351-0402

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
7/1/15	9:00 AM	6:00 PM	9
7/2/15	8:30 AM	3:30 PM	7
7/3/15	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2
7/5/15	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	1
7/6/15	8:30 AM	5:30 PM	9
7/7/15	8:30 AM	4:30 PM	8
7/8/15	9:00 AM	10:00 PM	13
7/9/15	8:00 AM	7:00 PM	11
7/10/15	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	1
7/13/15	7:30 AM	4:00 PM	8.5
7/14/15	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	9
7/15/15	8:00 AM	12:00 PM	4
7/16/15	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2
7/17/15			0
7/19/15	6:00 PM	9:00 PM	3
7/20/15	8:00 AM	4:00 PM	8
7/21/15	8:00 AM	4:00 PM	8
7/22/15	9:00 AM	5:00 PM	8
7/23/15	8:30 AM	3:30 PM	7
7/24/15	8:00 AM	12:00 PM	4
7/27/15	8:30 AM	5:00 PM	8.5
7/28/15	8:30 AM	4:30 PM	8
7/29/15	8:30 AM	10:30 PM	14
7/30/15	8:30 AM	3:00 PM	6.5
7/31/15	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	1
			160.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
8/2/15	2:00 PM	9:00 PM	1
8/3/15	8:30 AM	4:30 PM	8
8/4/15	8:00 AM	12:00 PM	4
8/5/15	8:30 AM	6:30 PM	10
8/6/15	8:30 AM	3:30 PM	7
8/7/15	11:30 AM	12:00 PM	1
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8/28/15	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
8/29/15	2:00 PM	5:00 PM	3
8/30/15	11:00 AM	1:00 PM	2
8/31/15	7:00 AM	4:30 PM	9.5
			183.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
9/1/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
9/2/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
9/3/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
9/4/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
9/5/15	7:30 PM	9:30 PM	2
9/7/15	9:30 AM	2:30 PM	6
9/8/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
9/9/15	7:00 AM	5:30 PM	10.5
9/10/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
9/11/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
9/12/15	3:00 AM	3:00 PM	5
9/13/15	10:00 AM	2:00 PM	4
9/14/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
9/15/15	7:00 AM	8:00 PM	13
9/16/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
9/17/15	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
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9/22/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
9/23/15	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
9/24/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
9/25/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
9/27/15	7:00 PM	9:00 PM	2
9/28/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
9/29/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
9/30/15	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
			279.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
10/1/15	7:00 AM	4:30 PM	9.5
10/2/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
10/3/15	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2
10/4/15	6:30 PM	8:30 PM	2
10/5/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
10/6/15	7:00 AM	4:30 PM	9.5
10/7/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
10/8/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
10/9/15	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
10/12/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
10/13/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
10/14/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
10/15/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
10/16/15	7:00 AM	2:30 PM	7.5
10/18/15	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	2
10/19/15	7:00 AM	10:30 PM	15.5
10/20/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
10/21/15	6:30 AM	4:00 PM	9.5
10/22/15	8:00 AM	2:00 PM	6
10/23/15	9:00 AM	1:00 PM	4
10/25/15	4:00 PM	7:00 PM	3
10/26/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
10/27/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
10/28/15	7:00 AM	4:30 PM	9.5
10/29/15	8:00 AM	10:00 PM	14
10/30/15	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
			238

160.5

183.5

279.5

238

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
11/1/15	5:30 PM	8:30 PM	3
11/2/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/3/15	7:00 AM	10:00 AM	3
11/4/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/5/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
11/6/15	9:00 AM	12:00 PM	3
11/9/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	10
11/10/15	7:00 AM	4:30 PM	9.5
11/12/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
11/13/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
11/14/15	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	2
11/16/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/17/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/18/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
11/19/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/20/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
11/21/15	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	2
11/22/15	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1
11/23/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/24/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/25/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
11/27/15	9:00 AM	12:00 PM	3
11/29/15	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	2
11/30/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
			196.5

196.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
12/1/15	7:00 AM	8:30 PM	13.5
12/2/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
12/3/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
12/4/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
12/6/15	6:30 PM	8:30 PM	2
12/6/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
12/7/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
12/8/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
12/9/15	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
12/10/15	7:00 AM	8:30 PM	13.5
12/11/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
12/12/15	8:00 PM	10:00 PM	2
12/13/15	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	2
12/14/15	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	12
12/15/15	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
12/16/15	4:00 AM	7:00 PM	15
12/17/15	8:00 AM	5:30 PM	9.5
12/18/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
12/19/15	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	2
12/20/15	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	2
12/21/15	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
12/22/15	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
12/23/15	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	9
12/24/15	10:30 AM	12:30 PM	2
12/28/15	10:00 AM	3:00 PM	5
12/29/15	10:00 AM	3:00 PM	5
12/30/15	8:30 AM	11:30 AM	3
			232.5

232.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
1/3/16	9:00 AM	12:00 PM	3
1/4/16	7:00 AM	5:30 PM	10.5
1/5/16	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	12
1/6/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
1/7/16	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	12
1/8/16	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
1/10/16	2:30 PM	7:30 PM	5
1/11/16	7:00 AM	5:30 PM	10.5
1/12/16	7:00 AM	10:30 PM	15.5
1/13/16	7:00 AM	3:30 PM	8.5
1/14/16	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
1/15/16	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
1/16/16	12:00 AM	9:00 PM	9
1/17/16	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	2
1/18/16	7:30 AM	5:30 PM	10
1/19/16	7:00 AM	9:30 PM	14.5
1/20/16	7:00 AM	4:30 PM	9.5
1/21/16	7:00 AM	8:00 PM	14
1/22/16	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	11
1/23/16	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	12
1/25/16	7:00 AM	5:30 PM	10.5
1/26/16	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
1/27/16	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
1/28/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
1/29/16	11:00 AM	8:00 PM	9
1/30/16	12:00 PM	2:00 PM	2
			261.5

261.5

247.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
3/1/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/2/16	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
3/3/16	9:00 AM	11:00 PM	14
3/4/16	10:00 AM	11:00 PM	13
3/5/16	10:00 AM	11:00 PM	13
3/6/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/7/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/8/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/9/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/10/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/11/16	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
3/13/16	4:30 PM	7:00 PM	3
3/14/16	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	12
3/15/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/16/16	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
3/17/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/18/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/21/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/22/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/23/16	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
3/24/16	10:00 AM	2:00 PM	4
3/24/16	10:00 AM	3:00 PM	5
3/28/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
3/29/16	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
3/30/16	7:00 AM	4:30 PM	9.5
			256.5

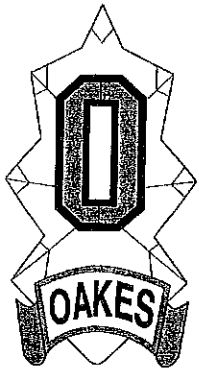
256.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
4/1/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/2/16	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	2
4/3/16	3:00 PM	9:00 PM	6
4/4/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/5/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/6/16	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
4/7/16	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
4/8/16	7:00 AM	8:00 PM	13
4/9/16	8:00 AM	5:30 PM	9.5
4/10/16	6:00 PM	8:00 PM	2
4/11/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/12/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/13/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/14/16	7:00 AM	4:00 PM	9
4/15/16	7:00 AM	8:00 PM	13
4/16/16	5:30 PM	12:30 AM	7
4/18/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/19/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/20/16	7:00 AM	9:30 PM	14.5
4/21/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
4/22/16	7:00 AM	7:30 PM	12.5
			201.5

201.5

Date	Start Time	End Time	Total Hours
5/1/16	5:00 PM	8:00 PM	3
5/2/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/3/16	7:00 AM	9:00 PM	14
5/4/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/5/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/6/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/9/16	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	12
5/10/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/11/16	7:00 AM	8:00 PM	13
5/12/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/13/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/14/16	9:00 PM	11:00 PM	2
5/15/16	5:00 PM	8:00 PM	3
5/16/16	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	10
5/17/16	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
5/18/16	7:00 AM	10:00 PM	15
5/19/16			

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Hours</u>	<u>Length of Day</u> <u>(260 day contract)</u>	<u>Per Hour</u>
2013-14		Did not keep track.	
2014-15		Did not keep track.	
2015-16	2658	10 hrs 13 mins	\$ 34.01
2016-17	2618	10 hrs 4 mins	\$ 35.91
2017-18	2585	9 hrs 56 mins	\$ 37.43
2018-19	2679	10 hrs 18 mins	\$ 36.66
2019-20	2636	10 hrs 8 mins	\$ 37.41
2020-21	2675	10 hrs 17 mins	\$ 37.53
2021-22	2509	9 hrs 39 mins	\$ 42.09
2022-23			



Oakes Public School

804 Main Ave. Oakes, ND 58474
Phone: (701) 742-3234 Fax: (701) 742-2812
www.oakes.k12.nd.us

January 17, 2023

Senator Heinert and Members of the House Education Committee:

As the superintendent of the Oakes Public School, I am submitting this letter of opposition to HB 1251.

This is my first year as a superintendent in our district. Prior to this position, I spent 14 years as a principal and 17 years as a classroom teacher. Each of these positions is unique and holds its own challenges...but yet, each of these positions within each district are codependent on the other parts to make a school successful. I cannot imagine working in a school that did not have a superintendent present and dedicated solely to one school, ensuring their important responsibilities are fulfilled. If that part a school is missing...others must complete the missed tasks, step in to cover responsibilities, and make sure that the huge gap left by their absence is filled.

Many people misunderstand the role of the superintendent and believe that they are only the orchestrator of operations (finance, buildings, transportation, etc...) Perhaps in a large district this may be true, but in our small rural districts, the superintendent is that and so much more. This year as a superintendent, I have come to realize the "behind-the-scenes" responsibilities this job DEMANDS. Many mornings I arrive before 7 am and leave after 9 pm...and I still am forced to leave tasks incomplete on my desk. My dedication is to THIS school and THIS community here at OPS. This, in turn, builds trust in me from my teachers, students, and families knowing that I am here for them for so much more than just a "job".

If a school district chooses to share a superintendent with a neighboring district, that should be THEIR local choice...it should not be forced on them. The role of a superintendent to a school is too valuable to diminish to the level of just a "to-do list" to meet requirements of a "job". They are the head and heart of a school district.

Please send HB 1251 out of the House Education Committee with a "DO NOT PASS" recommendation.

With respect,

Anna Sell

Anna Sell
Oakes Public School, Superintendent

Subject: HB 1251

Date: Friday, January 13, 2023 at 8:57:24 AM Central Standard Time

From: Shane Sagert

To: jkannianen@ndlegis.gov

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Senator Kannianen,

I want to take this opportunity to say congratulations. Thank you for your willingness to represent our people.

I am reaching out to you on behalf of the Parshall Public School District and school districts in general.

HB 1251, a bill recently introduced by Representative Matt Ruby that would require a school district of less than 475 students to partner with other school districts (one or more, until at least 475 students was reached) to employ a superintendent. This means that if your school district's total enrollment is less than 475, the school district would no longer have the authority to hire their own superintendent. If a school district did not meet the requirements of the bill by January 1, 2024, the state would have the authority to assign a partner district(s) in order to employ a superintendent, essentially removing the opportunity for the locally elected school board to choose a superintendent.

I believe this bill is wrong for not only our reservations schools but also for small schools across the state. Mandaree, White Shield, Parshall, and Twin Buttes would definitely be impacted. If they cannot find a school to align with then they would be assigned a partner school by the state. I can't imagine where the state would align them. White Shield would share a superintendent with Garrison? Twin Buttes would share a superintendent with Killdeer or Beulah? Does Parshall go with Plaza and Berthold or Stanley? Mandaree would share a superintendent with Killdeer? I can't see how these alignments would support our cultural instruction and special cultural events. Even if the reservation schools banded together with or without New Town, none of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Schools would want to lose their own superintendent. Most superintendents do more than just the superintendent position. In Parshall, I am the Human Resources Manager, Facilities Manager, full-time bus driver, and athletic director. All areas need to be covered so most superintendents go the extra mile to ensure that these other types of duties are taken care of. The savings that a school district would actually save are minimal compared to the completion of duties needed to have a successful school.

I am asking that when the time comes for the vote to please vote against HB 1251. I would be glad to visit with you more about this. I can be reached at 701-989-4817. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Shane Sagert

Superintendent

Parshall School District

601 Main St NW

(701) 989-4817

Pingree-Buchanan School District

High School

111 Lincoln Ave
Pingree, ND 58476

Phone: 701-252-5563
Fax: 701-952-2245

Administration

Amber Krapp, Superintendent/High School Principal
Robert Young, Dean of Students
Terrie Neys, Elementary Principal
Carrie Wolsky, Assistant Elementary Principal
Kylee Ingebretson, Business Manager

Elementary School

208 3rd Ave
Buchanan, ND 58420

Phone: 701-252-4653
Fax: 701-252-4660

January 17, 2023

To whom it may concern:

As the superintendent/high school principal of Pingree-Buchanan Schools, I am writing this letter to express my opposition to House Bill 1251. Below is a summary of the many reasons why I think this bill would be detrimental to North Dakota schools, especially small schools such as Pingree-Buchanan.

- The bill has a direct impact on local control and is an example of micromanagement at the state level. School board members are elected officials that are trusted with making decisions that are in the best interest of their communities, including hiring and setting salaries for superintendents. With this bill, locally elected officials lose that power.
- This would require one person to manage several different schools and meet with several different school boards. I can imagine there would be a great deal of work and travel involved. It would also be difficult to act in the best interests of all school districts they would be working with in the same geographical area.
- Many superintendents, including myself, hold multiple roles (principal, athletic director, bus driver, etc.). If multiple schools shared a superintendent, school districts would be required to hire additional staff to fulfill the multiple roles that the superintendent held. In turn, this would reduce the amount of money that is allegedly being "saved" by introducing this bill. I believe that it would actually cost more money to fill these positions and extra duties. It can also be extremely difficult to find people to fill these positions, which is one of the reasons why many superintendents currently hold multiple roles.
- Superintendents are hired to act as the CEOs of their local districts. All superintendents are required to have at least a master's degree and many of them have PhD's along with numerous years of experience. They also work for one of the largest employers in their communities. They should be compensated accordingly.
- Having multiple school boards join together to hire a superintendent would be a nightmare. All schools have different needs, making it difficult to hire one person to meet

Mission Statement

The Pingree-Buchanan School District instills life-long learning through ownership, respect, and pride in education.

Pingree-Buchanan School District

High School

111 Lincoln Ave
Pingree, ND 58476

Phone: 701-252-5563
Fax: 701-952-2245

Administration

Amber Krapp, Superintendent/High School Principal
Robert Young, Dean of Students
Terrie Neys, Elementary Principal
Carrie Wolsky, Assistant Elementary Principal
Kylee Ingebretson, Business Manager

Elementary School

208 3rd Ave
Buchanan, ND 58420

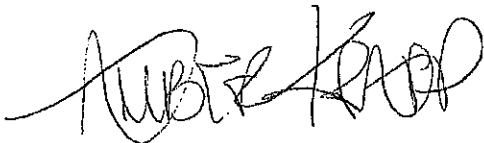
Phone: 701-252-4653
Fax: 701-252-4660

the unique needs of several districts. If a shared superintendent were successfully hired, I can imagine a conflict of interest would arise in several instances while making decisions for multiple districts in the same geographical area.

- Some schools have already chosen to share a superintendent because they have decided it was the right choice for their community. I agree with school districts and their locally elected officials having the choice to make this decision. I do not agree with it being forced upon them.
- I would love to see pay for educators increase, however I do not believe this is the way to achieve that. Due to the number of additional jobs that would be created, I do not think that this bill would free up money for an increase in educator pay.
- Over the past couple of years, I have gotten to know several of the superintendents around the state. They are hard working individuals that care about the communities they serve. Many of them also act as mentors for new superintendents like me. They take on several additional responsibilities without questioning compensation because their number one concern is the best interest of the school and community that they serve.

These are just some of the many reasons why this bill would have a negative impact on all schools in North Dakota. I appreciate your consideration of the issues listed above and hope that you will stand up for North Dakota school districts by opposing this bill. Please feel free to contact me directly if you wish to discuss this matter further (701)252-5563.

Thank you,



Amber Krapp
Superintendent/High School Principal
Pingree-Buchanan Public Schools
701-252-5563

Mission Statement

The Pingree-Buchanan School District instills life-long learning through ownership, respect, and pride in education.

Senator Elkin and Representative Hauck:

I am writing to ask your support to vote **AGAINST** the Superintendent Elimination Bill - **HB 1251**.

- A. This is a "big job" for someone to do at multiple schools. Each school report is different, each bus route is different, and each calendar and/or professional development is different.
- B. The Superintendent would "never be at the right school at the right time." You would be at School B, but you are needed at School A.
- C. Multiple schools mean multiple School Boards, multiple School Board Meetings, multiple policy manuals, and trying to meet the needs of multiple stakeholders in multiple communities.
- D. Depleting the number of professional opportunities for future school leaders. What incentive is there for a young educational leader to advance his/her degree and his/her profession if there are not positions open? I saw this firsthand when I was in Velva, and it really backfires.
- E. Takes away a leader or professional in the small communities. If you take the Superintendent out of the community, you lose a local educational voice in the community. The new combined Superintendent is going to be so busy working with multiple schools, multiple school boards, and multiple towns - he/she won't have time to attend city council meetings or meet the "church circle" when they have questions about the school.
- F. Small schools never have "just" a Superintendent. Small school administrators wear many-hats. In our district I am the transportation coordinator, one of the bus drivers, I have been one of the school counselors, and I am on every curriculum committee and advisory group (such as CTE). I know many Superintendents that also pick up daily bus routes, they coach, they are the AD, they help serve breakfast/lunch, and some even help with janitorial or maintenance duties (moving snow - which we have all helped with this year).
- G. This will takes away a lot of our local control by mandating small schools to share their top school administrator, and it limits the compensation for that important position.
- H. The cost savings the bill sponsors are promoting is false. If districts are required to share superintendents, many responsibilities will fall on the building-level principals and/or lead teachers. This extra work will come with a price tag which means extra compensation to those individuals.

I am asking you to protect our small schools, our small communities, and our local educational control by voting **NO on HB 1251**.

Thank you for all your do for our community,
Kelly

Dr. Kelly D. Peters, Superintendent
Richardton-Taylor Public School District
Cell: 701-740-9583
Office: 701-974-2111
Fax: 701-974-2161



**Richland County Office Of
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Dr. Timothy W. Tharp, County Superintendent

January 20, 2023

To the members of the North Dakota House Education Committee,

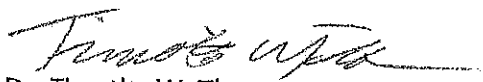
I am writing to express my strongest opposition to House Bill 1251. I am a career educator having worked for 25 years in the State of Montana when I retired as the Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction. After retirement and becoming a full-time pastor, I came out of retirement to help out a rural district in western North Dakota—Golva Elementary, or legally, Lone Tree School District. During this same time, I also served as an elected school board member in Savage, Montana.

Today, I am the elected County Superintendent of Schools in Richland County, Montana. In addition to that, I serve as a gubernatorial appointee on the Montana Board of Public Education and am the chair of that body's Accreditation Committee. We are the ones in Montana who set the minimum ratios of administrators and other school personnel and leave it up to the local control of school boards to decide if they want to go above and beyond in hiring more personnel. I am writing you to share my experience and expertise on both sides of the Mon-Dak and to offer expert testimony in serving as an administrator in rural schools in both states. One of the schools that I now oversee here in Montana has four students---so trust me, I understand rural.

While in Golva, this small school had 36 students during my two years (2020-21 and 2021-22). I served as a half-time administrator taking on the roles of Superintendent and Principal in addition to filling in as cook, secretary, custodian, and bus driver when necessary. As a retired Deputy State Superintendent with four college degrees including a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and 17 years of experience in administration, I believe that I brought much more experience to that role than would be typical for a tiny rural elementary. Anyone who knows me can testify to my efficiency and knowledge of paperwork, grants, and compliance issues, but it STILL required me to work about half-time just to stay on top of all of the paperwork requirements demanded by the state and federal governments while simultaneously trying to be of service to the staff, students, and board. Mix in that we also had our Cognia accreditation review during my tenure in Golva and I can assure you that there is no way that the job could have been accomplished by simply mashing small schools together into lumps of 475 students. By the way, we were identified as one of only two Cognia Schools of Distinction in North Dakota during my time at Lone Tree.

Please oppose HB 1251.....it is short-sighted and will destroy rural schools in North Dakota.

Sincerely,



Dr. Timothy W. Tharp
Richland County Superintendent of Schools

January 20, 2023

I am writing this letter in opposition of HB 1251 relating to school districts being forced to jointly employ and limit the compensation of superintendents.

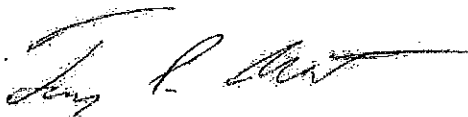
One of the most important items in education is local control in decision making. Locally elected officials have a great understanding of what the area needs and is constantly thinking about how each decision they make affects not only the school, but the community, as well. The pride and commitment that the local area and locally elected officials have in the schools keep them constantly improving and striving for the better. By essentially removing the local decision making of the district, the negative impacts will be far more reaching than in just the school building.

Additionally, there is already an option for schools to jointly employ a superintendent with a neighboring district. The local decision for many, including our school district, has been to keep an independent superintendent, due to the many different roles that it requires, as well as not having to prioritize which district is primary. Our school district, with our trusted locally elected officials, researched in the past year the opportunity of jointly employing a superintendent and it was determined that was not in the best interest of the district or the students.

Currently, education is facing shortages in the profession. Teachers, principals, support staff, the list goes on with unfilled positions. When removing a position, it will put even more strain on the remaining administration and teachers. Superintendents have a long list of duties and removing this support to smaller school districts will be detrimental to the learning environment and the community as a whole.

I appreciate your time and look forward to you supporting schools and ensuring local control continues in North Dakota education.

Sincerely,



Terry Motl
Superintendent
Rolette Public School District #29

HB 1251

Wayne Stanley <Wayne.Stanley@k12.nd.us>

Tue 1/17/2023 4:02 PM

To: jayfisher@nd.gov <jayfisher@nd.gov>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Representative Fischer,

I am writing in opposition to HB 1251 proposed by Representative Ruby. This bill is a direct attempt to micromanage school districts and eliminate local control.

In my 27 years of working as a school leader I have never been more insulted by a legislator not knowing or understanding what a school leader does. I wish my job was simply putting data down on a report for DPI. From watching over the schools' purchases, finances, busses, personnel and students, no day is ever the same.

With over 540 students in my district, my district is not directly affected by this bill. We are affected by the attempt to set limits on salaries. As my board and I have discussed, when you wear as many hats as I do, if I were to be in charge of 2-3 school districts, it will cost more money to hire someone else to take on the task I would no longer have time to do.

HB 1251 infringes on a local boards ability to recruit and hire qualified staff. Putting maximum salary levels for boards to pay is one step closer to making all teachers state employees.

Thank you for your time in serving the people of North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Wayne Stanley

Superintendent

Donna & Kent,

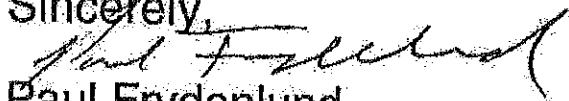
I realize that I have already reached out regarding my issues with HB 1251. It is my opinion that this bill would be a detriment to small schools. The savings that this bill claims would not happen. Schools will have to restructure their administration to cover for time loss in sharing Superintendents. Superintendents are a vital clog in a smaller community and carry many different hats that would be difficult to replace when sharing this position with other communities. Why the legislature would remove the decision from local control of an elected board is a troubling path to go down. Our School Board has gone on record against HB 1251 as well as the St. John teaching staff.

As you know many schools in our area have consolidated ex. Border Central, Rock Lake, Bisbee, Egeland, Wolford, Willow City, Upham, Souris and Osnabrock to name a few since I started in education (Yes, I'm old). My point is, that all of these schools made a difficult but local decision.

I truly thank you for your support in opposing HB 1251 and if you have questions please call our e-mail.

550-0107 & paul.frydenlund@k12.nd.us

Sincerely,



Paul Frydenlund
St. John School Superintendent

Subject: HB 1251

Date: Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 9:34:47 AM Central Standard Time

From: Sveet, Erik M

To: Aimee Copas

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Good Morning Aimee,

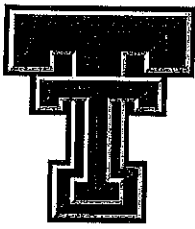
I have a few thoughts on this bill that I did not want to share on list serve, as I don't wish to volunteer information for other people or districts. I know you're busy so I will be brief.

First, I have always been concerned about part time superintendents inadvertently diluting the importance of this position. I understand it's a win/win for those involved, the district saves money, and the Superintendent collects retirement and a salary, so makes more money than they would with a regular position. However, does Mitch Carlson really work less than 20 hours a week in Lamoure, and if he does are there other positions that need to be hired to fill in the other duties that all "Class B" administrators are asked to do?

Secondly, this road seems to be leading toward building consolidated districts like the one I lead. I would privately say that this plan provides far more challenges than benefits and would strongly discourage the state from endorsing such an idea. I think if you were to ask the other two districts like mine you would get a similar response. I don't know the current superintendent of North Boarder but have spoken with Marc Ritteman from Lewis and Clark and our experiences seem similar. I'm not willing to speak about it publicly, but this arrangement has not had a positive impact on either community. It may be easier for someone like Brian Wolf or Debby Marshall to speak to the issues of leading multiple communities simultaneously, as they are no longer serving in those positions. Steve Heim's situation is a little different, but he could also provide some insight on working for multiple boards.

Thanks for your time, and all you do for our profession.

Erik Sveet
Superintendent
TGU School District
(701)537-5414



Thompson Public School District #61

424 3rd Street
Thompson, ND 58278-4213

Phone: 701-599-2765 | Fax: 701-599-2819
www.tps-k12.org

January 16, 2023

Honorable Senator Randy Lemm
Honorable Representative Mike Beltz
Honorable Representative Jared Hagert

I am writing to discuss HB 1251. I believe the intent of the bill as I read it is to be more efficient and redirect the saved funds with less Superintendents in the state and give that back to teachers or taxpayers. I have an obligation to be efficient with local dollars just as the state legislature is determined to be efficient with the percentage of dollars allocated to K-12 education. I understand that fact but I just don't believe that HB 1251 is the bill that leads to that desired efficiency. I know how much of a daily grind it is here in Thompson as the 24th largest school district in the state but those same challenges of operating a school are still there for my colleagues in school districts much smaller than 475 students.

I think many would be surprised at how much bus driving, serving meals, cleaning, and snow removal is done by superintendents just to name a few examples. These are some of the many things that aren't in my official job description but things I have done in the last month without extra compensation. We as Superintendents do these jobs because it is part of what needs to be done to run an effective school district for our community. There is no overtime for the job and I am on call 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. I was technically on vacation on Christmas Day when a sprinkler burst and flooded our new construction but I couldn't wait until the next day to take action. I've seen firsthand as a son of a former Superintendent and now doing it myself there are no days off in this profession. Taking on multiple schools will lead to fewer Superintendents in the state but also increase the workload of the rest of the school employees.

I would love to sit at the table for ways to be more efficient but I believe this bill is a step backwards in the progress we have made in K-12 education.

I look forward to having lunch at the capital with you District 20 leaders on January 30 and just know I am available to discuss HB 1251 or other educational legislation throughout the spring. I can be reached by email at john.maus@tps-k12.org or by cell at 701-540-8263.

Sincerely,

John Maus, Superintendent

Thompson Public School

Subject: House bil 1251

Date: Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 1:10:26 PM Central Standard Time

From: Carolyn Eide

To: Aimee Copas

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi Aimee,

This is what I sent to our house members yesterday afternoon:

Good afternoon,

Concerning HB 1251, I oppose this bill mostly because of the principle concerning school districts being governed under local government and exercising local control.

Each and every school district is different; Divide County is different from Stanley, and both are different than Tioga. Through my 22 years as a superintendent, I have often thought the superintendent from the neighboring town and I could never trade places. We were hired for our own unique characteristics and skill set. I have found personality and the ability to "fit" in a district is one of the most important attributes for a successful superintendent/community "marriage."

Tioga and Stanley appear to be safe from sharing with another school at this point, but Divide County is a little smaller; Ray is a little smaller. What if Tioga fell below the 475 student enrollment? Would they be forced to share?

If a school chooses to share, that is their decision. In my former South Dakota school district where I was a superintendent, they share a superintendent with another district now. Last year, one of the teachers commented to me that they didn't see the superintendent very often. He lives closer to the other district than the one I was employed. It appears to me that there's usually a "loser" when two schools share.

Thank you for allowing me to share my opinion, and like always, I appreciate your willingness to listen and take input from us.

Take care, and thanks for serving and representing us. Please contact me if you have any questions.
Carolyn

Carolyn Eide, Superintendent
Tioga Public School District #15
PO Box 279/303 N. Linda St.
Tioga, North Dakota 58852
T: (701) 664-2333
F: (701) 664-3356
Carolyn.Eide@k12.nd.us



UNDERWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 8
123 SUMMIT STREET · PO BOX 100
UNDERWOOD, ND 58576-0100
TELEPHONE (701)442-3201 · FAX (701)442-3704
underwoodschool.org



Underwood School District #8 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Administration

John Gruenberg, Superintendent
 Kyle Hunt, Secondary Principal
 Katie Heger, Elementary Principal
 Angela Riehl, Business Manager

School Board

Michael Heger, President
 Brent Charging, Vice President

School Board Directors

Amanda Haseleu
 Jim LeRoy
 Sarah Ness

January 19th, 2023

Chairman Heinert,

As I'm sure you are aware of the opposition to HB 1251, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House Education Committee of Governor Burgum's State of the State address on January 3rd, 2023. It stressed innovation over regulation in many areas. In education, these innovations include the Learn Everywhere policy, ND Choice Ready, Graduation Pathways, Virtual Schools, Innovation Waivers, Full-Service Community Schools, etc. All of these transformative programs had administrators at the table in their design and creation, inspired locally by hard working educators. The advancement that North Dakota has made in education has been a direct result of deregulating educational red tape for communities, school districts, and school boards.

The result of HB 1251 would be the overregulation of our local school districts and school boards. It takes away the choice for school boards to choose who is their superintendent and how much to pay them in salary. It is also removes local control from elected school board members of any school district in ND. As our governor stresses the importance of school choice for both students and parents, where is the flexibility for school boards to make a similar decision of school superintendent choice?

The impact at Underwood Public School without a daily Superintendent presence would be tremendous. In our school of 230+ grades PreK through 12, we collaborate our education with our community, families, teachers, and students with the thought of how all are affected. Superintendent is the face of the largest employer in town, chosen by the school board to represent their community and school. We are the CEO of our school, and that identity is woven into the fabric of our small towns. We are part of our church boards, economic development committees, and booster clubs and we positively promote all aspects of our communities. How does that look without that Superintendent there representing that community each and every day?

Lastly, a typical day for a small-town Superintendent does not exist. It is a snowflake, each day different from the previous and different from any other day in the future. For example, the day of the writing of this letter included student and staff investigations, attorney phone calls, school board meetings, NDHSAA decisions, budget concerns, CRP report cards, elementary subbing, high school meetings, etc. A superintendent that takes care of three different school districts, budgets, and school boards would not be able to do all these tasks to the best of their ability simply due to logistics. We would end up supporting our rural schools less by taking away their choice to hire a community leader and advocate.

Last night, the Underwood School Board unanimously approved opposition to HB 1251 due to government overreach and loss of local control. I would hope that you take this letter as proof that the approval of this bill will have dire consequences for small, rural schools in the state of ND.

Respectfully,

John Gruenberg
 Superintendent
 Underwood Public School



Velva Public School District No. 1

101 Fourth Street West • P.O. Box 179

Velva, North Dakota 58790

Phone 701.338.2022 • Fax 701.338.2023

1-18-2023

ND House Education Committee

Chairman Pat Heinert

HB 1251

I am the business manager in the Velva Public School District in Velva, ND, and have held this position for over 22 years. We currently have 470 enrolled students here in grades K-12. My husband and I are graduates of the Velva School, as are our 3 grown children. I also have 5 grandchildren enrolled in this school.

I am greatly opposed to HB 1251.

Our local patrons elect school board member(s) every year. Those patrons put their trust in those school members to make local decisions for our students, parents, staff, and community. In turn the school board hires a superintendent for their school district.

I see no reason for interference with those tasks, as they are part of the role those school board members are expected to fill for our school district and its students. Legislators are elected to their positions, and probably don't want any interference from others in completing and carrying out the tasks that they are expected to fulfill.

The legislative assembly meets every other year, for 80 days. Our local school board meets for regular meetings every month. Imagine how much information regarding their own school district is available to the school board, and all in a timely manner.

I feel the balance of power needs to stay with the local school board for each school district.

They know their community, students, parents, and administrators. They are fully equipped to handle their designated responsibilities without interference from any branch of government.

Board of Education Administration

Bryan Dean, President

Dave Schoch, Superintendent

Lance Sczler • Angie Heilman

Kelly Mogen, High School Principal

Maria Effertz-Hanson • Wesley Halseth

Nancy Dockter, Elementary Principal

Teri Kvamme, Business Manager

Corrine Heilman, Administrative Assistant

The Velva School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, disabilities or sex in admission or access to, or treatment of employment in its educational programs/activities or employment practices.



Velva Public School District No. 1

101 Fourth Street West • P.O. Box 179

Velva, North Dakota 58790

Phone 701.338.2022 • Fax 701.338.2023

The role of the district superintendent is enormous and varies dramatically from school to school, but in all schools it is an essential role in keeping the district running smoothly, effectively, and in a manner that is acceptable to the district patrons as well as state entities. I believe the presence of the superintendent in the school building each and every day is crucial to all people within that building. Staff, students, and parents all know who they can go to with any concerns or problems, and that is the leadership of a superintendent. The superintendent knows his or her students, staff, and families. As for superintendents wage compensation, it is not comparable to business and industry standards. Their roles have a completely different objective than the role of a ND public school. Each school board is elected to decide what their teachers and administrators will be paid. Teachers work 9 months a year, and superintendents work 12 month a year. Their roles are also quite different, and certainly all of those roles are very important.

It is time to redefine what "small school" means. We here at Velva ND don't feel small. Our school is the largest employer in our city, employing nearly 70 full time staff, and over 25 part time staff. These people support our small town businesses, with do so with pride. Those businesses in turn support our school, student, and staff alike.

I urge a no vote on HB 1251. I feel that forcing school districts to share a superintendent is forcing consolidation. We all know that consolidation is difficult enough without it being forced on school districts. That would in turn lessen the amount of time and effort a superintendent would have in each school, which only hurts the districts and students.

I would argue that the cost savings is estimated is not realistic. I believe other staff would have to be hired to help fill in some of the gaps that would be created. Those costs would be difficult to estimate, as some needs can't be anticipated. The current system isn't broke, so why try to fix it? There are many factors for the legislature to consider regarding this bill. Please vote no.

Thank you,

Teri Kvamme
Business Manager, Velva Public School

Board of Education

Bryan Dean, President
Lance Selzler • Angie Heilman
Maria Effertz-Hanson • Wesley Halseth
Teri Kvamme, Business Manager

Administration

Dave Schoch, Superintendent
Kelly Mogen, High School Principal
Nancy Dockter, Elementary Principal
Corrine Heilman, Administrative Assistant

Representative Mitskog,

I'm reaching out to you today to let you know that I am opposed to Rep. Ruby's proposed legislation to limit the number of superintendents in the state. While this bill will not directly impact me and Wahpeton Public School District, it will affect the small school districts in Richland County / District 25. As you know, I worked as a small school superintendent (in Ellendale, ND) before coming to WPSD. The small school district superintendent is a complex job as they wear all of the hats for central administration. I honestly don't know how I could have done my job in Ellendale and another district to meet the 475-student threshold in HB 1251.

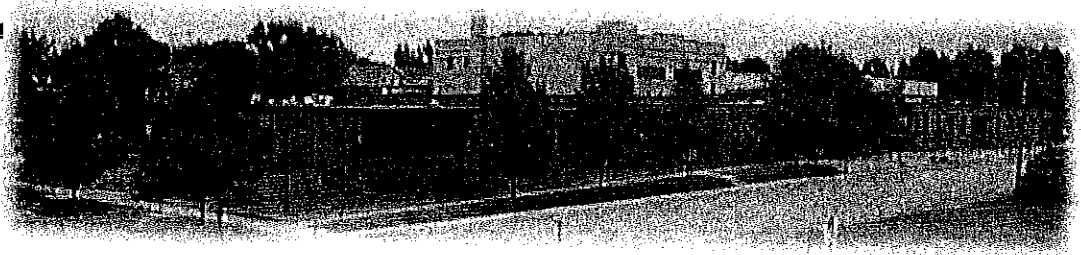
Thank you for your time and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael Kaiser, Superintendent
Wahpeton Public Schools

**Washburn Public School
District 4**

713 7th St.; Box 280
Washburn, ND 58577
Ph.: 701.462.3221
Fax: 701.462.3561
Home of the Cardinals



January 2023

Superintendent
DR. PENNY VEIT-HETLETVED

Dear Legislators,

High School Principal
BEAU ERIKSSON

I am writing to you today in opposition of HB 1251. This is my twenty-ninth year in education where I am currently the superintendent of Washburn Public School. The enrollment of my district is 354 where I have 60 faculty, staff, and drivers along with two principals. Administration, per the sponsors presentation, would be inaccurate for us since it equates to 4% at Washburn. Putting our statistics aside, because frankly, opposing sides can make the same set of numbers change context to their favor, I would like to share with you why this bill would be damaging.

Elementary Principal
CHRISTINA REYNOLDS

Business Manager
ROBIN LORENTZEN

As the Superintendent of this district, I work closely with fellow superintendents in McLean County. The culture of my school is VASTLY different than those around us—I'm grateful to be here and proud of what we have. I am a full-time superintendent here, currently covering a bit of business manager duties until the position is filled, serve as the CTE Director, the Title 1 Coordinator, the Title IX Coordinator, grant writer, and human resource officer. I've served lunch, subbed as a bus driver, subbed as a teacher, investigated allegations into a Title IX incident that led to the arrest of a teacher, identified a student exhibiting suicidal ideation, and snaked a drain in a kindergarten classroom all in the first semester of this year. Why is this important? Because that is what a leader of a school SHOULD do—be present, lead, and care about what is going on by DOING.

*School Board
President*
RICK TWEETEN

*School Board
Vice President*
LUKE RETTERATH

*School Board
Directors*
SANDI ERBER
JEFF KULZER
KELLY SCHATZ-JENNINGS
STACEY SCHERESKY
AARON SOLOMONSON

The bottom line is that if HB 1251 is not defeated, the roles of every position underneath the superintendent would assume more duties, and it's the continued piling of responsibilities that will deprive schools of quality educators. Education has been a fulfilling career for me. Yet, as a hiring manager within this field for the past twenty years, I have seen incredibly gifted teachers, principals, and superintendents leave this profession due to burn out and lack of support within their personal development—not due to the love of teaching and the love of kids. HB 1251 will perpetuate the already vicious cycle of finding enough faculty and staff as well as leaders due to retirements and those leaving to work in industry for greater pay.

*"The mission of the Washburn
School District
is to provide a quality
education addressing the
academic, physical, social, and
emotional well-being of each
student."*

I implore you to vote **NO** to this bill. Taking away local control and putting more on the plate of others is only going to continue to decline the education workforce. That is NOT good for kids. HB 1251 is a sure way to ultimately lead to undesirable outcomes for our students' performance.

*The Washburn Public School
District #4 prohibits
discrimination and
harassment based on a
student and/or employee's
race, color, religion, sex,
national origin, disability, age
or other status protected by
law.*

Sincerely,

Dr. Penny Veit-Hetletved, Superintendent

Richard 
Faidley <richard.faidley@willistonschools.org>

To: Aimee Copas

Mon 1/23/2023 4:34 PM

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Aimee,

I am planning to send this as testimony.

January 23, 2023

To the members of the North Dakota House Education Committee,

I am writing in opposition to HB 1251. Williston Basin School District # 7 is in its 2nd year as a newly reorganized school district.

Today Williston Basin School District #7 educates over 5,000 students. Within our district, we have 13 schools, 12 Principals and 6 Assistant Principals, six Directors, one Assistant Superintendent, and one Superintendent. We also employ 750+ employees across the district.

Reading this bill, it is clear to me that those who support it also support taking away local control. Local voters want a say in what's best for their community. There are some schools who already share Superintendents because they have decided it was the right choice for their community. We are not opposed to the concept of district sharing, however, that decision should be made by the local community to see if it is a good fit for them. In rural communities, the school is often one of the key centers of the community, rural communities are vested and proud of their schools and what is going on within the schools. They have the right to make local decisions about staffing in their schools.

Many proponents of this bill think that this is a way to trim costs. It will not. For each Superintendent that is shared, affected districts will have to add additional duties to other members of their staff to help with the workload, which in turn, typically equals an increase in compensation to those staff members. If they do not disburse duties among other staff, then double or triple the load will fall solely onto the shoulders of the shared Superintendent. Again, the additional duties typically come with an increase in compensation. Having so many duties can also lead to burnout, and could cause a shortage of Superintendents and Superintendent candidates in North Dakota in the long run.

Please vote NO on House Bill No. 1251.



Wing Public School District
1 4th Avenue East
Wing, ND 58494
(701)943-2319

To: Representative Jon Nelson,
Representative Robin Weisz,
Senator Jerry Klein
From: Cari Kramer, Superintendent
Re: HB 1251
Date: January 16, 2023

Good afternoon Representative Nelson, Representative Weisz, and Senator Klein. I am reaching out to you with a formal letter in opposition to HB 1251. This bill aims to strip local control away from local school boards and districts throughout the state. Most importantly, this bill will detrimentally disrupt the education of our children.

To most people, superintendents are viewed as “just superintendents”. Most people do not even realize all the hats that local superintendents wear. In Wing, along with the role of superintendent, I am the high school principal, Title IX Coordinator, Title Programs Coordinator, substitute teacher, substitute bus driver, janitor, event supervisor, emergency coordinator and so much more. I am not unique. Multiple roles are common in our districts across the state.

If HB 1251 passes, and schools are forced to share superintendents, I cannot begin to imagine how one person will be able to handle the multiple roles for multiple schools. From emergency coordination to all the duties superintendents fill within their districts. If a school was to lose its superintendent many of those duties will fall on another person, and districts would be forced to hire additional staff, more than likely another administrator, to fulfill these duties. Many of our lower enrollment school superintendents have a combination role and fill the role of those such as a principal, athletic director, or technology coordinator.

When a local school board selects the superintendent for their district, it looks to select an individual who will be a good fit for the school and community. That individual must establish and maintain positive relationships within the community. With the passing of this bill, that would not be possible as there could potentially be one superintendent assigned to multiple school districts.

This bill is being brought about stating that it will free up money, \$13,000,000.00 to be exact, that can go directly to teachers for their salaries or classrooms. Supporters of this bill outline and use the salary gap between a superintendent and teacher. If one was to compare apples to apples and calculate what a teacher were to make on a twelve-month contract instead of a nine-month contract and break that down into an hourly wage, the hourly wage is not so far apart as one might assume. This would be based on a forty- hour week. I am confident that you would have a very difficult time finding a superintendent who works forty, even fifty, hours a week. Let’s not forget the additional education and preparation requirements for superintendents.

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a support staff employee in a rural school, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,



Alexander Public School

Admin. Assisstant

01/15/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

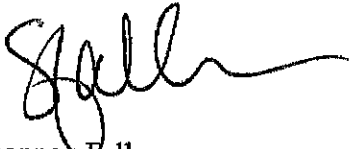
I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a staff employee in a rural school, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Paller', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shannon Paller

High School Principal

Alexander Public School

HB 1251

Taryn Sweet <Taryn.Sweet@k12.nd.us>

Sat 1/21/2023 6:46 PM

To: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>; Kevin Hoherz <kevin.hoherz@ndcel.org>

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Could you look over my letter from our NDASSP region? Still working on testimony. Thank you!

January 19, 2023

Honorable Members of the House Education Committee

My name is Taryn Sweet and I am the Region IX representative for NDASSP (North Dakota Association of Secondary School Principals). We have 31 schools in our Region over the southwest geographic region of North Dakota. We met as a group to discuss how HB 1251 will affect us in our duties as Secondary Principals. We want to share with you some points as to why we oppose the bill.

We live in a rural Region. Dickinson, Watford City, and Mandan are our only Class A towns. We are geographically spread out, which if you look at our travel schedule for sports you will understand. Not only would this be difficult in terms of local control but the geographic difficulty this would present for the individual in charge of at least three separate schools would be onerous. The numbers in our area are clear in that an individual Superintendent may be looking at having to lead four schools. Beach would not even meet the criteria for three schools, if we combined with our two closest schools, Lone Tree, and Billings County. We would still need another location. This would take away fiscal control from local school boards, districts, communities, and counties of a large geographical area. If you are with three schools, who has the ultimate say in hiring a Superintendent then? What if they cannot agree on a candidate? In my region, out of approximately 31 schools, 22 districts would be affected.

We recently hired a Superintendent at Beach, one of the questions asked was if they believed in visibility in the community. Superintendents are expected to go to functions, know their towns/areas, local business and be an active member of the community. Our administrative team goes to meetings at city hall, chamber meetings, county meetings and are members of improvement boards. It will hurt a community to not have them as a visible part of the community. They work hard to create partnerships with local businesses and relationships with our constituents. In rural towns, the school is the lifeblood of a community. Lose the school, lose the town. We are often the largest employer in the city and sometimes county. We are often the locus of entertainment for the local constituents.

Who will this affect? Contrary to what the advertisements say, this will affect Principals and Business Managers. At a class A school, they have a director of Teaching and Learning, Communications Coordinator, Social Worker, SRO and Communications Director, assistant superintendents, a business office consisting of a team, assistant principals, just to name a few. And they should have that large staff to deal with more students. In small schools, we already wear multiple hats. This would force us to have to wear more hats, or force teachers to take on some admin duties. Some of the grants that are administered to schools require a team effort of the business manager and the superintendent to handle which would be difficult for someone juggling multiple schools with vastly different needs and make ups. We have a school in our district where the Superintendent and Secondary Principal are the same person. He is already wearing multiple hats, adding another school to his responsibilities would be exceedingly difficult.

Extra duties added would take us away from providing quality service to kids. - Our job as Principals is to be visible in the classrooms and hallways. We are needed by staff and students alike to listen, help, and mentor. These extra office duties we would have to take on would take away from the time we all spend helping our staff

and students. We will lose communication and coverage for events and problems. We would lose a needed team member in the collaboration. We are a team that works for the best benefit of our kids and the communities we serve. The Superintendent is a strong part of our team.

Thank you for your time. I would appreciate a "do not pass" on HB 1251.

Taryn Sveet

*"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." -
Malala Yousafzai*

Taryn Sveet
Secondary Principal
Beach Public School
Beach, ND 58621
701-872-4161

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Subject: Fwd: HB 1251
Date: Monday, January 16, 2023 at 12:10:59 PM Central Standard Time
From: Jennifer Sundby
To: Aimee Copas
Attachments: Outlook-jy1325b2.png

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Here is the email I sent last week.

Get [Outlook for IOS](#)

From: Jennifer Sundby <Jennifer.Sundby@k12.nd.us>
Sent: Thursday, January 12, 2023 8:56 AM
To: rlemm@ndlegis.gov <rlemm@ndlegis.gov>; mbeltz@ndlegis.gov <mbeltz@ndlegis.gov>; jhagert@ndlegis.gov <jhagert@ndlegis.gov>
Subject: HB 1251

Good Morning,

I am reaching out to you three about a recent bill introduced by Representative Matt Ruby, HB 1251. This bill requiring school districts of less than 475 to partner with other districts is a step in the wrong direction for local control and our valuable small schools. Being a principal in a small school, this would tremendously affect my position. The leadership and decisions that my superintendent makes on a daily basis would then be transferred to me while my work load is already more than a full time job allows. In my last position as principal I had a part-time superintendent and was required to handle many situations as a superintendent. This takes away from my ability to do my role as leading the teachers and students effectively. Would the savings in money then need to be only transferred to pay assistant superintendents and principals more compensation due to added positions and responsibilities? Would these "shared" superintendents have to be compensated even more for travel requirements? How do these superintendents invest into the building, the personnel, the students, and most importantly the communities when spread thin between several communities? I understand completely wanting to find more money for our teachers. They deserve to be paid an honorable salary. This is not the right approach to solving this problem. As I consider my own school and who we would have around us to partner with on this issue, how do these communities come together to pick one superintendent when they all have qualified and valued administrators already? How does a school district give up their own superintendent to then pay for one who lives in a different town and isn't invested in their community? Please do not support this bill. There is nothing positive for a school district like Central Valley and the several other school districts in our same position! I would welcome more conversation on this matter if needed or wanted. Thank you for your dedication to our schools and our state.

Jennifer Sundby

K-12 Principal
701-847-2220 Ext. 202
jennifer.sundby@k12.nd.us

DEVILS LAKE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

1601 College Drive North, Devils Lake, ND 58301
(701) 662-7640 (FAX) 662-7646

January 13, 2023

Honorable Kathy Frelich
8827 54th St. NE
Devils Lake, ND 58301

Dear Representative Frelich,

The purpose of this letter is to share our opposition of House Bill 1251. First, this would be a drastic overreach of local control. Our state and local districts have emphasized the importance of local decision making by the locally elected officials for many years. Every school and district has specific needs to provide quality education to all students. Taking the control away at the local level to make every school or district fit into a one-size fits all model would not be in the best interest of students, families, and staff.

Every district operates and manages the responsibilities in different capacities to meet the needs of students. With this bill, superintendents who will be required to share the role with other schools, will ultimately need to delegate tasks and duties to someone else. Principals in our district already have multiple responsibilities beyond the building level. Having additional duties will add more to the roles of principals and directors, which would lead to requests for higher pay. It would not be saving money for the district as proponents suggest. It may even lead to the hiring of an additional administrator, an assistant superintendent for Devils Lake Public Schools, to take care of these duties. Again, this would not be cost-saving for the district.

There is already a shortage of teachers and fewer and fewer applicants for administrators. Taking the local control from the districts will only serve as a detriment for people entering the education field. Districts in our state want the very best leadership for schools, at times having to hire outside the state. They have advanced degrees and experience to match compensation. Administrators will not want to come to North Dakota if there are "caps" for the compensation. This bill begins with superintendents and the anticipation is that principals and teachers will be next. Compensation is an area that should be determined by the local school board, not the state.

We strongly oppose House Bill 1251 and believe that it would not be in the best interest for providing quality education in North Dakota School Districts. We appreciate your support of education in our schools and we look forward to our continued work with you to meet the increasing needs and demands of providing the best education possible for our students. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Devils Lake Public School Administrative Team

Ryan Hanson, High School Principal
Dan Kaffar, Central Middle School Principal
Jason Wiberg, DLPS Activities Director
Kim Krogfoss, Minnie H Kindergarten Principal
Jake Wateland, Central Middle School Assistant Principal

Christa Brodina, LACTC Director
Nick Kavli, Technology Director
Deb Follman, Sweetwater Elementary Principal
Sara Thompson, Prairie View Principal



EIGHT MILE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

P.O. Box 239
Trenton, North Dakota 58853

District Website
www.trenton.k12.nd.us

Phone: 701-774-8221
Fax: 701-774-8040

Facebook Page
[@trentonschool](https://www.facebook.com/trentonschool)

January 16, 2023

Dear House Education Committee (Chairman Pat Heinert)

As the grades 7-12 Principal of the Eight Mile School District #6, I am writing this letter in opposition of HB 1251. I am going to share three main points on why I am not in support this bill.

1. Like many small, rural school districts in North Dakota, our school is the lifeblood of the community and I see this bill as one that will ultimately force our school district, and many like ours, to consolidate with a neighboring school district. While the sponsors of this bill deny this, they also would place requirements that small school districts will be forced to submit co-op agreements to the DPI for their approval.
2. I also believe that this bill will eliminate an essential measure of local control over our community's school. School districts hire school administrators based on who they believe best meets the unique needs of their children and families and I believe that the important hiring decision of a superintendent should be left up to the individual districts and their stakeholders. This bill will force small school districts like ours to abdicate the important decision of who will lead the education of their children to larger, and most likely, more detached larger communities. I do not believe this, in any way, represents what is best for our kids and our families.
3. Finally, while Eight Mile School District #6 is part of Williams County, our student enrollment is much different than any other county district. Roughly 50% of our students have Native American heritage and that makes us distinct and unique in our region. This simple fact is critical to our stakeholders when selecting school leaders. It is my belief that this bill would simply make superintendents nothing more than power-wielding bureaucrats who may not have our students' best interest in mind when making decisions and most certainly would not be beneficial to our community and would serve to erode the uniqueness found here. Any person leading our school must understand this cultural uniqueness and share in our values. If a person must answer to multiple boards, we would wonder where their true allegiance lies. Would a multi-district superintendent from outside Trenton truly be vested in our community and hold the best interests of our students at the forefront of their larger "regional" decision-making?

As a school administrator who cares deeply for the quality of education for Eight Mile School District #6, I strongly encourage all Education Committee members to vote NO on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Steve Morben, 7-12 Principal
Eight Mile School District #6
Trenton, ND

Gackle-Streeter Public School District #56



Mark Berg, Superintendent
Myla Buckeye, Principal
Lisa Zenker, Business Manager

300 2nd Avenue SE
Gackle, ND 58442
701-485-3692

Jeff Williams- Board President
Cennia Rivarino- Board Vice President
Linda Hollin- Board Director
Jon Meitz- Board Director
Thomas Wilson- Board Director

January 19, 2023

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter to express my strong opposition to the HB 1251. The idea of small schools, those under 475 students, being required to combine with another district to reach this threshold and share a common lead administrator in my opinion is not in the best interest of our students or smaller rural schools. Our small district administrators are already spread as thin as they can get. Pulling a lead administrator out of our buildings would put a substantial amount of pressure on our building principals. The role of our building principal is to provide educational leadership and management while overseeing building personal, in implementing educational programming, curriculum, instruction, safety, and district policies and procedures in the building. How can we effectively do this by adding more to their plates? Right now, we have a shortage of teachers in North Dakota. K-12 workers have the highest rate of burn out in the United States. The rate in which educators, whether they are classroom teachers or administrators are leaving the educational profession is going to cause a huge devastation to our state. I strongly feel that by voting for HB 1251 this is going to lead us into an educational crisis. You are going to lose some of the best in the business. Those who have devoted their life to their vocation, their communities, and most importantly their students. Please do not vote in favor of HB 1251.

Thank you,

Myla Buckeye
Gackle-Streeter K-12 Principal

Afternoon,

I would like to first off Thank you all for your service to the state of North Dakota. It is greatly appreciated.

I am reaching out today to discuss HB 1251. This bill would ruin rural North Dakota education. When we talk education in the state of North Dakota we all have common goals, but in order to reach them rural and urban North Dakota have to operate in completely different manners. If this bill passed it would cripple already depleted educational staffs in our rural schools. As all of you know, in a small-town ND community everyone wears multiple hats to be able to get the things done that you need done. This is absolutely no different in our small-town schools. We all have wear many different hats to give our students the opportunities to be successful.

As an educator I am all for our teachers getting more money. I do not think anyone would argue that, but at the expense of a superintendent being in our schools, I am not ok with. Our superintendent in our building is much more that a superintendent that just sits in his office. He drives a bus route, he coaches boys basketball, he substitute teachers, he fills in for the janitors, he helps cook in the kitchen, he is our snow removal guy, he's at every activity at our school, I could go on. If we were to take him out of our school, we would not find just one person to fill the extra roles that he does, we would have to find multiple people to those jobs when we already can't find people to do those jobs.

Leadership: That is a term we throw out all the time, whether it be to our staff or our students, we want to develop leaders. With this bill, it would take all advancement out of our educational field. If you look across ND, most, if not all superintendents in ND have been a principal. Those principals have been teachers. We are taking a person with years of experience in education that people rely on for advice and expertise out of our building. Not only that, what would entice teachers to try and move up, when principals now have way more responsibilities and really nowhere to advance to, as principals would be making more than superintendents with this bill using the formula in this bill for pay for Superintendents.

This bill states that teachers would be getting more money. I would like you to see roughly what it would do for Glenburn School District.

Our Superintendent makes roughly \$100,000. According to the formula based on 1.5% for just Glenburn. He could max out at \$39,000.

Net save of \$61,000

Right away have to pay \$20,000 for a full time bus driver, plus the \$6000 for him to get his CDL. (Thats another issue that should be discussed)

Have to increase Principals because of more responsibilities within the school building. Lets just roughly say \$5000 for Elem and \$5000 for HS to keep math easy.
The other hats that our Superintendent wears that we would have to hire someone new or pay someone more to do, lets just say that \$5000.
We add all that up at we are at \$41000.
Net gain for our teachers of \$20000.
We have 26.5 teachers, so that equals a one time raise of \$754.
The next year we would have to find our own money for a raise on top of that.
Just so you know the math, thats \$62.88 a month. \$31.44 a paycheck.

Now lets get to the superintendent salary. We would have to share a superintendent with someone that is very similar in size so lets just say we find a school exactly the same and that gets us to the number. He would make \$78,000. Who is going to take a \$22,000 hit and double all the superintendent duties? What Principal is going to take a pay cut to become a superintendent? They say in their flyer that it will increase the candidates for these positions. The candidate pool will become smaller.

In my eyes this bill is forcing more people in education out of the education workplace. It already is extremely hard to fill all our positions at our schools, hence all the different hats we all have to wear. This bill is not the answer to the teacher monetary problems. This bill is a threat to us losing more people in this field of work. The education world is an extremely important field because we are molding our youth to become successful and I do feel like this bill threatens our profession even more.

Thank you for your time!

Layne Fluhrer
Glenburn Elementary Principal
Athletic Director
Work Phone: 701-362-7426
Cell: 701-822-2363

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Derek Simonsen
Superintendent
Lauren Ressler
High School Principal
Francine Tunseth
Elementary Principal
Tamara Cushman
Business Manager
Rich Danielson
Activities Director

Griggs County Central**SCHOOL DISTRICT #18**

1207 FOSTER AVE NE
COOPERSTOWN, NORTH DAKOTA 58425-7037

TELEPHONE (701) 797-3114
FAX (701) 797-3130

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Scott Saxberg
Chairman
Lynn Haugen
Vice Chairman

Directors
Stacey Aarestad
Todd Edland
Andrew Johnson
Patrick Larson
Hope Stadler

January 11, 2023

Education Committee

Re: HB 1251

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Lauren Ressler, and I am the high school principal at Griggs County Central in Cooperstown. This is my fifteenth year in education and my sixth year in administration. I am writing to oppose HB 1251, which would place my school district in the low enrollment category, requiring that we partner with neighboring districts to jointly hire a superintendent to serve as our school leader.

In a small school district, the superintendent often fills many roles. In my experience working in small schools, superintendents have also served as activities directors, bus drivers, classroom and substitute teachers, coaches, lunchroom supervisors, drivers education instructors, and part time custodians. To combine superintendents with another district, therefore removing him or her from the building on certain days of the week, removes a key member of the educational team within the school setting.

As a principal, I work closely with the superintendent to keep the school's focus on our educational goals. If the superintendent were removed from the building on certain days to serve in another district, I would be pulled away from key aspects of my role, such as supervising teachers, assisting with student concerns, and meeting with parents, in order to manage building maintenance issues, human resource decisions, or community relations concerns. If this bill seeks to free up fiscal resources to pursue educational gains, it will come very short of that goal because you will be burdening the other professionals in the building with the job roles of the superintendent whenever he or she is out of the building serving another district.

Finally, and most importantly, this bill undermines the local control of our students' education. We elect a board of local school board members to guide our district, and a key role of the school board is to select and supervise our superintendent in pursuing those goals. A bill that arbitrarily combines superintendents with another district based on geographic location and enrollment size without any regard to the district's individual goals, long term plans, or community standards is not a bill that will create educational gains. If this bill were to pass, I predict it will create unnecessary chaos within small districts. We have had enough chaos in our educational system; I would kindly ask you to oppose this bill. By doing so, you will be supporting the educational leaders in our small school districts in providing quality education.

Sincerely,



Lauren Ressler

Griggs County Central Public School District #18 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, National origin, sex or handicap in its Educational Programs/activities and Employment Policies/Practices.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM
Derek Simonsen
Superintendent
Lauren Ressler
High School Principal
Francine Tunseth
Elementary Principal
Rich Danielson
Activities Director
Tamara Cushman
Business Manager

Griggs County Central
SCHOOL DISTRICT #18
1207 FOSTER AVE NE
COOPERSTOWN, NORTH DAKOTA 58425-7037

BOARD OF EDUCATION
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Todd Edland
Andrew Johnson
Patrick Larson
Hope Stadler

TELEPHONE (701) 797-3114
FAX (701) 797-3130

Thursday, January 12, 2023

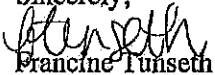
To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Francine Tunseth and for the last three years I have been the elementary principal for Griggs County Central in Cooperstown, ND. I am writing to express the strong opposition of HB 1251 - Limiting Small School Superintendents. When reading this bill, it is my understanding that if total enrollment is less than 475 students, districts would no longer have the authority to hire their own lead administrator. Rather, the state would have the authority to assign a partner district(s) in order to employ a superintendent. Not only is this a direct attack on local control, this is an extreme measure that would have lasting impacts on the stakeholders of small school districts. Principals, teachers, families and students would feel the consequences of having a district administrator who is not in the district on a day-to-day basis.

Rural administrators have some of the most multifaceted jobs in education. In a small district, there are many hats to wear. This week alone I have watched our superintendent, Mr. Simonsen, monitor air handlers, investigate personnel and title IX complaints, collaborate with contracted services, identify and problem solve leakages in the ceiling, and manage community building meetings. By handling these issues, Mr. Simonsen assures that the high school principal and I can continue to effectively do our roles. I worry about the impact that HB 1251 would have on all schools, but specifically GCC. Many of the items that Mr. Simonsen so easily deals with on an daily basis would now be my responsibility which in turn takes my time away from teaching and learning.

As you prepare to listen and discuss HB 1251, I encourage you to really consider the effects on people -- superintendents, principals, teachers, and students. In my opinion, there are extreme ramifications that this will have on our small area schools. If you have further questions about the specific ways this will impact our small North Dakota school districts, you can reach me by email at, francine.tunseth@k12.nd.us, or by phone at 701-797-3114.

Sincerely,


Francine Tunseth

GCC Elementary Principal

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Derek Simonsen
Superintendent
Lauren Ressler
High School Principal
Francine Tunseth
Elementary Principal
Tamara Cushman
Business Manager
Rich Danielson
Activities Director

Griggs County Central
SCHOOL DISTRICT #18
1207 FOSTER AVE NE
COOPERSTOWN, NORTH DAKOTA 58425-7037

TELEPHONE (701) 797-3114
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BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Hope Stadler

January 11, 2023

Education Committee

Re: HB 1251

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

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In a small school district, the superintendent often fills many roles. In my experience working in small schools, superintendents have also served as activities directors, bus drivers, classroom and substitute teachers, coaches, lunchroom supervisors, drivers education instructors, and part time custodians. To combine superintendents with another district, therefore removing him or her from the building on certain days of the week, removes a key member of the educational team within the school setting.

As a principal, I work closely with the superintendent to keep the school's focus on our educational goals. If the superintendent were removed from the building on certain days to serve in another district, I would be pulled away from key aspects of my role, such as supervising teachers, assisting with student concerns, and meeting with parents, in order to manage building maintenance issues, human resource decisions, or community relations concerns. If this bill seeks to free up fiscal resources to pursue educational gains, it will come very short of that goal because you will be burdening the other professionals in the building with the job roles of the superintendent whenever he or she is out of the building serving another district.



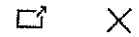
Finally, and most importantly, this bill undermines the local control of our students' education. We elect a board of local school board members to guide our district, and a key role of the school board is to select and supervise our superintendent in pursuing those goals. A bill that arbitrability combines superintendents with another district based on geographic location and enrollment size without any regard to the district's individual goals, long term plans, or community standards is not a bill that will create educational gains. If this bill were to pass, I predict it will create unnecessary chaos within small districts. We have had enough chaos in our educational system; I would kindly ask you to oppose this bill. By doing so, you will be supporting the educational leaders in our small school districts in providing quality education.

Sincerely,



Lauren Ressler

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Opposition to HB 1251.eml  Download  Save to OneDrive

Opposition to HB 1251

BS Beau Snyder <beau.g.snyder@gmail.com> ...
To: cheadland@ndlegis.gov

Mr. Craig Headland,

I'm writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 1251. As the current high school principal at Lakota Public Schools, I witness firsthand all the responsibilities and duties our current Superintendent has on his plate. I also have many responsibilities and duties on my plate. This bill will not reduce the workload, instead it will shift responsibilities and in most cases increase the workload for principals and other staff members in smaller schools. Burnout in education is a real problem in today's era. Support for educators and administrators is not what it used to be. Instead of cutting the number of educational leaders, we should be encouraging people to become educational leaders.

North Dakota's rural education does not follow the typical urban education scene we tend to hear about in the media outlets. Yet our rural education in North Dakota seems like it's put on the backburner. Is our goal to consolidate and urbanize the state of North Dakota? Are our legislators tired of the small towns and communities that make up this great state? If not, then why are we mandating cuts to directly affect our rural schools in an effort to free up more money for the large urban districts? Our rural Superintendents do not operate like urban Superintendents. Our rural Superintendents are very hands-on in the schools, building relationships with each of our kids, staff members, parents, and community members. They take on duties such as transportation director, food service director, activities director, bus driver, title coordinator, and much more.

I worry about the future of education and the direction it is heading, especially for our rural communities in North Dakota. Why aren't we focused on growing these small communities instead of consolidating them? What incentive is the state providing for families to want to set their roots in small town North Dakota? I strongly encourage you to stand up for small town communities and school districts by voting "no" on this bill. Allow our local school boards to make these decisions based on what the stakeholders believe to be best for their own communities. We don't need another mandate, we need educational leaders and we need continued support.

Thank you so much for your time and the work you do for North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Beau Snyder

House Bill 1251

Steph Hochhalter <Steph.Hochhalter@k12.nd.us>

Tue 1/17/2023 10:04 AM

To: cfegley@ndlegis.gov <cfegley@ndlegis.gov>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Representative Fegley,

I'm writing to express my concerns regarding House Bill 1251. This passage of this bill would have a negative impact on the Lewis and Clark School District. As you know, we currently have two K-12 buildings 30 miles apart. Our superintendent does his best to spend time equally at each building, but when he cannot, the principals willing to help out. However, I cannot imagine adding a second district to his job. We do not meet the 475 student requirement, so we would share a superintendent. That would mean that more work would fall on the principals.

Personally, I cannot add daily superintendent duties to my current work load. I'm already the head volleyball coach and teach driver's education in the summer. I attend almost every home sporting event when I'm not at my child's events. I either keep the book, run concessions, or supervise the event. You've personally witnessed my busy schedule during ambulance meetings. I often have to switch coverage on Friday nights or weekends to attend football, volleyball, prom, etc..... If I were responsible for more work, I am not sure I could balance school, community, and home life. My son plans to play football in college, so my weekends will remain busy. I also have several other administrator friends in the same boat. I am not an isolated case.

I am also concerned that this bill undermines the fundamental ideal of local control. The local school board is responsible for the fiscal management of a school. If a community is unhappy with the board's decision, they can elect someone else. This bill undermines democracy by taking power away from voters and putting it in the hands of another; the Department of Public Instruction.

Please vote no on House Bill 1251, or at the very least, push it to a committee to study the impact.

Thank you for your time,
Steph



ADMINISTRATION

Justin Fryer, Superintendent
Patrick Adair
High School Principal
Jared Hoff
Middle School Principal
Benjamin Zahrbock
Elementary School Principal

Lisbon Public Schools

School District No. 19

502 Ash Street – PO Box 593

Lisbon, North Dakota 58054-0593 Phone: (701) 683-4106

High School Fax: (701) 683-4414

Middle School Fax: (701) 683-4111

Elementary School Fax: (701) 683-4415

"Providing Equal Opportunities for Employees and Students"

January 23, 2022

Chairman Pat Heinert
1501 Eastwood Street
Bismarck, ND 58054-6230

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express significant concerns with bill HB 1251. It is my understanding that this bill seeks to reduce the amount of funding and/or number of superintendents in North Dakota. This bill would significantly impact rural school districts, trickling down to affect principals, teachers, non-certified staff, and then most devastatingly, the students and their future outcomes.

If the number of superintendents were to be consolidated over multiple (two or more) districts, providing for less pay for the amount of considerable duties they fulfill, this would cause instability for rural school districts across the state. There is already a teacher shortage and a looming administrative shortage as well. With the way the bill is projected to set the superintendent salaries, superintendents would assume (projectively) more duties for less pay than that of the administration and a large group of educators as well.

Superintendents are responsible for balancing and proactively projecting the current and future needs for the foreseeable future, operating with a budget of millions of dollars that have to be mindfully allocated in the most fiscally conservative manner possible to keep school districts running. In essence, they have duties similar a CEO of a large corporation. They manage personnel, keep the district in compliance with federal programs, report to a board of directors, keep the district informed of current and projected legislative action, write grants to bring in more funding to provide better and more educational opportunities and technology for students, and most importantly perform continual evaluation and needs assessments with personnel to strive for the best possible student outcomes in their schools.

In rural districts our superintendents fulfill other duties as necessary to keep the school year running as smoothly and seamlessly as possible, including but not limited to: teaching during teacher and substitute teacher shortages, driving bus, acting as the principal, acting as LEA representatives at special education meetings when necessary for pertinent cases, and numerous other duties that are too many to name. Our superintendents are called upon at all number of hours before, during, and after the school day, often putting their personal lives on hold for the sake of the school district that they serve to fulfill the demands of the role and responsibilities of their position.

This bill is not acting in the best interest of community stakeholders, superintendents, principals, educators, or non-certified staff. This bill will further compound the shortage already being experienced in the state and is not in the best interests of student achievement outcomes. This takes choice away from the school boards, parents, students, and staff in providing the best management from a locally selected official to operate in the best interests of the district. There are procedures in place for the school board to set the salaries. If salaries are set by the board and/or negotiated within the district, then that is district choice. If there are concerns with acting superintendents, then the school boards are responsible for action. This bill limits the acting governance of the community selected board members operating in the public interest. If there are outlier positions whom this bill is aimed at limiting, then

maybe the outliers should be audited rather than penalizing the whole of superintendent positions, roles, and responsibilities across the state.

This bill will directly impact rural schools, projecting more responsibilities and roles onto already busy and hardworking principals, teachers, and other school employees. It will create further hardship and teacher and administrative shortages. I am not in support of bill HB 1251. I appreciate the time and consideration of this letter and the impact it will have on rural schools within our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Andrea I. Johnson, Special Education Coordinator
Lisbon Public Schools

Re: HB 1251

Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

Sat 1/21/2023 8:14 AM

To: Renee Bowen <renee.bowen@k12.nd.us>

Thanks Renee!

Dr. Aimee Copas

North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders

Executive Director

www.ndcel.us

701-258-3022 office

605-228-3804 mobile



@aimeecopas

From: Bowen, Renee <Renee.Bowen@k12.nd.us>

Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 at 1:20 PM

To: rerbele@ndlegis.gov <rerbele@ndlegis.gov>

Subject: HB 1251

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Honorable Robert Erbele,

I am writing in opposition to HB1251 which would combine and eliminate Superintendent positions across rural schools in North Dakota. As an aspiring Superintendent, I have real concerns about the impact this will have on all of our rural districts. The idea of sharing Superintendents may seem like a financial solution, but this is more than a financial situation. This impacts the quality of education, staff support, and overall well-being of a District. Each District is very unique because of our community needs and to understand and respond to those needs, a Superintendent that would be shared across Districts could not physically or mentally do this. I could not even imagine the amount of work involved in running multiple districts and only being physically in the district one or possibly two days a week. Litchville-Marion is one of those unique Districts that has two buildings in two different towns. Six years ago, the School Board made a decision to fit the needs of the district by hiring a principal for each building and a part-time Superintendent. This allowed the administration to better meet the needs of each building. In saying that, our Superintendent that is Half-Time truly works 24/7 for our school district. The principals have taken on more responsibility, but our Superintendent does not get a day off even if he is not scheduled to be here. The reason that I am giving you a small snapshot of how our district works is to give you an idea of how much responsibility is taken on by our Superintendent. He has been able to pass a bond referendum, support our staff, and build relationships in our community. This is spending two to three days a week in our District. He would not be able to do this if he was working in three or four other districts as well and only physically being in our communities one day a week. This solution fits the needs of our District, but it does not fit the needs of every district. Having local control, the

Litchville-Marion School Board made the right decision for their community. If HB1251 was passed, this would not allow our School Board the local control to make these decisions that best fit the needs of their District. What works well for us would not necessarily be the best for another.

The multiple hats that are worn by staff in rural districts, especially administrators, is already being done by so many. I have taken on every role in my building when we have not been able to find a substitute or a person to fill a vacant position. Not only am I the elementary principal and technology coordinator, but I am sometimes the classroom teacher, custodian, after-school program teacher, paraprofessional, bus driver, and kitchen helper. I have also taken on the Title I reports, Science of Reading, Cognia, and other areas because our Superintendent is part-time. He has to share the burden with the principals because he is technically part-time working 24/7. We have all worked together to write \$300,000 in grants for each of our buildings. The time it takes to write extra grants would not be available if we did not have the administrative staff that our School Board decided best fits the needs of our School District.

In the past, school districts have been able to share a Superintendent or Business Manager, but that decision was based on local decisions that best fit the needs of each School District. I have only known about this happening between two districts for only a small amount of time because of emergency situations and not a long-term solution. I also do not believe that the cost savings will be as impactful as projected. The need to hire additional administration to cover the loss of a Superintendent will be necessary because of the additional duties placed on Principals that are already wearing so many hats. I believe that this will also be detrimental to the State of North Dakota because there will not be many current Superintendents or aspiring Superintendents willing to place themselves in a position where they are not able to best serve their communities. I would not feel confident in taking on this additional responsibility as a new Superintendent. I think on paper this seems like a wonderful solution, but in reality, it is going to cause much greater problems finding personnel for our education system.

I am hopeful that this will help you in your hard work as a North Dakota Senator to make an informed decision on HB 1251. Please know that I would be willing to help clarify any questions you may have about my work and the work that we do in the Litchville-Marion School District to educate our students.

Educationally yours,

Renee Bowen

Elementary Principal

Technology Coordinator

Litchville-Marion Elementary

Litchville, ND 58461

701-762-4234

Dear Legislator Davis and Legislator Henerson,

I am writing to you in opposition to HB 1251 and I am encouraging you, as my local representatives, to vote no on this bill.

First, I believe this to be an egregious overreach of our state legislature to enact control over a school district's right to local governance and decision-making. Local school boards are elected by the public to make governing decisions for their district. Therefore, this piece of legislation looks to strip those local school boards of their rights and responsibility in choosing appropriate and effective leadership for their local district.

Second, the legislature should not lose sight of the fact that superintendents in smaller districts are responsible for many more roles than just that of superintendent. A perfect example of this is the district where I serve. Our superintendent, Mr. Robert Bubach, also serves as the high school principal, physics teacher, transportation coordinator, elementary and junior high basketball referee, and frequent bus driver just to name a few. Through the forcing of superintendent sharing between districts, not only would these responsibilities need to be covered by other individuals, but there would be a loss of district leadership which comes with having an in-house superintendent. It would become a distinct probability that shared superintendents would give priority to their larger districts or preferred schools/school boards and leave the smaller districts to fend for themselves resulting in principals and business managers to cover important superintendent issues.

Finally, I can see where this piece of legislation may look appealing on paper. However, this will create a logistical nightmare for school districts and ultimately be detrimental to our greatest resource, our students. Our local school boards know what is best for their districts and communities. Please allow them the opportunity to govern as they see fit.

I strongly encourage you to vote no on HB 1251.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mr. Curt Kram
Elementary Principal
Munich Public School
701-682-5321 (ext. 217)

School Board
Crystal Johnson, President
Jeff Schneider,
Vice-President
Shawn Puklich
Taylor Grunefelder
Tori Gross

Fully Accredited School
Napoleon Public School District #002
Logan County
615 3rd Street East
PO Box 69
Napoleon, North Dakota 58561
Telephone 701-754-2244 Fax 701-754-2233

Superintendent
Richard Bjerkle
Principal 7-12
Chad Berger
Elementary Principal
Whitney Weigel
Business Manager
Brandi Wald

January 18th, 2023

Dear 68th North Dakota Legislative Assembly:

I am writing this letter in regard to HB 1251 by stating that I am opposed too. I strongly encourage you to vote NO on HB1251 because it is what's best for our schools within our state.

Coming from a relatively small school in ND with an enrollment of 250 students K-12, I cannot support HB1251. This would be a huge disadvantage to small schools and how they operate and take away local control of how we run our school. I have been at our school for 8 years in which I have been a teacher and 3 years ago switched to Elementary Principal. I think of my own journey in education and how much our superintendent has done to keep our school going. I personally would have never become a principal at a school without a superintendent at the school. There are many responsibilities and decisions to run a school that falls upon the superintendent. I can be an active principal with my teachers and in the classrooms because of our superintendent.

Within leadership, there are many different qualities you need to acquire to have a successful school running and build community with the staff and students. Some people think leadership is telling people what to do but leadership is really casting a vision, integrity, praising your team, use of influence, self-awareness, listening first and speaking last, and empathy. Our local school boards hire a superintendent to help run the school and advise all the employees, students, and parents in the community. Within many small towns in the state, the school is one of the largest employers in the town. Taking the superintendent out of the school to share schools and travel takes that person out of the building to make the final decisions. Superintendents deal with discussions daily that affect everyone in our school. Superintendents within small schools also take on multiple roles within the school. This will be putting more roles on the building principals and teachers. With having a superintendent of the school in the building only one or two days a week you will take that stability away from dealing with issues. The principals always consult on issues going on with their superintendent before making any important decisions.

Small schools in our area are not necessarily near each other. Our co-op school is 40 miles away and the other closest school is 30 miles away. This puts a large distance between superintendents and a school if an emergency comes up. Like I said at the beginning, I would have never taken a principal job at a school without a superintendent present. There are many duties and responsibilities a superintendent takes on that I would not want. Good leadership is very hard to come by and keep within a school. I personally feel we will lose principals in North Dakota if HB 1251 passes.

I think this bill would be very hard on all the small schools in our state. Our state thrives on small communities, farming, and ranching. We need to help local school districts take a step forward in education not hinder their ability to run their school properly. I would strongly encourage you to vote NO on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Whitney Weigel

Whitney Weigel
Elementary Principal

Opposition to Supt. Elimination Bill

Bob Beaudrie <Bob.Beaudrie@k12.nd.us>

Tue 1/17/2023 2:24 PM

To: dickanderson@ndlegis.gov <dickanderson@ndlegis.gov>

Cc: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

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Representative Anderson,

My name is Bob Beaudrie, and I am the HS Principal at the Newburg United School in your legislative district.

I would like to give you some insight on why I would be overwhelmingly opposed to the new Superintendent elimination bill.

We did - for many years, here at Newburg United School District, share a Superintendent with the Bottineau School District. We would contract services for one day a week and our district paid 20% of the Supt. Contract. It did work - but it was by no means, the most adequate or efficient way to administer either school district. We had an excellent Superintendent, but there were many instances throughout the years in which one or the other school suffered from not having a Supt. in the building full time, all the time.

I was also serving as the K-12 principal throughout this entire time. Besides those duties, I was also AD, a classroom teacher, MTSS teacher, coach, substitute teacher, bus driver, and at some points during those years; acting Superintendent when ours was not in the building. There are at least a dozen or more jobs or activities that I myself have covered or constantly cover over the years, and as a result, it does affect student success as we are stretched very thin in a small school.

This year, we have hired a full-time Superintendent/Elementary principal with myself taking the HS principal duties along with teaching duties and everything else that was previously listed. This has been extremely beneficial for our students, staff, and our district. We have seen gains in student achievement at all levels as teachers and myself no longer have to fill as many roles in our day-to-day jobs.

In a nutshell - if the goal of our society is to produce successful young men and women, why would we try to eliminate one of the pieces that help put that puzzle together. In my extensive experience on both sides of the process - I fully believe that extending Supt's by force throughout many different districts is a disservice to the community, the staff, and the students of those schools.

Furthermore - if the end result of this plan is to eliminate the small and rural schools in this state - I could list hundreds more reasons why that is an absolute disservice to those students.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter

Mr. Bob Beaudrie

Bob Beaudrie

K-12 Principal

Newburg United School

Westhope-Newburg Sioux

Dear North Dakota Senators,

As a PK-12 principal of a rural North Dakota school, I am writing to share my adamant opposition to the proposed HB 1251.

This bill is INCREDIBLY unfounded by any experience in the field of education. The range and plethora of responsibilities rural administrators handle on a day-to-day basis is nearly insurmountable as it is. It takes everything we have and all hands-on deck to stay afloat.

This school year, I am fulfilling the roles of the PK-12 principal and school secretary. Just this week alone I have been a substitute teacher, have supervised evening athletic events, attended our monthly school board meeting, and met every requirement of my principal role in terms of state and federal reporting, IEP meetings, teacher mentoring requirements, professional development requirements, parent meetings, student meetings, and the list continues.

Rural school administrators CAN NOT be spread any more thin than we already are. It is incredibly frustrating that Senators, fellow leaders in our state, would take such an outrageous stance without spending a day in our shoes. The bottom line is that this bill would have a trickle down effect that would directly and negatively impact teachers and students.

You are all more than welcome to observe the hard-working, multiple role fulfilling staff at our school on any day. Please consider meeting with people these decisions would directly impact before voting yes to this utter nonsense.

Sincerely,

Justine Gruenberg
PK-12 Principal
North Border - Pembina School



NORTH BORDER PEMBINA SCHOOL

JUSTINE GRUENBERG

PRINCIPAL

155 3rd St. Pembina, ND 58271

Phone: 701-825-6261

www.northborder.k12.nd.us

NORTHERN PLAINS

SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT

January 16, 2023

Honorable Bert Anderson
PO BOX 604
Crosby, ND 58730-0604

Dear Mr. Anderson,

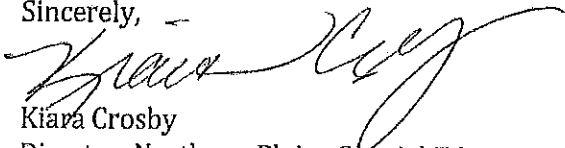
I am writing to you to oppose House Bill 1251. With the proposed action, our local control for students, education, and community will be limited. Rural residents of our state know the school is the heartbeat of community. The building itself houses opportunities for people to come together, our quality of life depends on human connection. What House Bill 1251 lacks is the reality check of the nuances of a Superintendents daily work and the impact it will force on our rural quality of life.

Our work as a special education unit brings five school districts together (Divide County, Burke Central, Powers Lake, Bowbells and Stanley). If these schools were to be forced into consolidation of administrative management, four of these districts would lose out. Divide County would need to consolidate, and all three Burke County schools. The reality is each superintendent wears many hats of coordination. Some are also principals, athletic directors, teach classes, drive busses, and more in addition to their duties of superintendent. Forcing districts to partner with another district to meet a state mandated number of enrolled students exasperates our current hardships in schools, including:

- stripping the districts of staff to support and manage other duties and roles (who will do all the other duties?! We will need to hire more staff to compensate and there is a national shortage of educators with the credentials and skills for this)
- takes away local control and puts leadership top down from the state versus decisions driven based on community needs (how can someone who doesn't live in a community know what its needs are?)
- limits the best interest of community (sharing might be positive for districts working together in co-ops or otherwise, but they still may not meet the enrollment numbers in the bill, if forced/coerced into consolidation we lose freedom)

House Bill 1251 takes away more than it provides for the best interest of children, their families, and communities. Please don't take more away from our rural people. Our top school administrators work to coordinate all the community needs of this vital link that supports a rich quality of life for North Dakota families.

Sincerely,



Kiara Crosby
Director, Northern Plains Special Education Unit

NORTHERN PLAINS SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT
PO Box 10 | Stanley, ND 58784
P 701.628.3811 F 701.628.3358

Dear Senator Janne Myrdal, Representative Karen Anderson, and Representative David Monson,

I am writing to you all today to share my concerns about House Bill # 1251 that mandates the consolidation of school superintendents. I have read the bill and seen advertisements for the bill stating how much money can be saved if the bill passes. While I am all for saving money in places we can, I strongly feel that this bill will hurt an extensive amount of school districts within our state and stretch people thin even more than they already are.

The bill does not address how many responsibilities are on a superintendent's shoulders for one district. School districts that share superintendents will have to all agree on a hiring/firing process, compensation within the new guidelines of the bill, how much time they would spend at each district, and the all of the responsibilities the superintendent would have at each district. When a superintendent would be at one district, the other district(s) would not have their district leader available. Many small districts rely on the superintendents to do a variety of things along with the administrative duties such as driving bus, handle title IX investigations, 504 Coordinators, Athletic Directing, supervising events, coaching, Homeless/Foster Liaisons, teaching classes, building schedules, some double as principals, and many others. Many of the current duties of the superintendents would need to shift to other people in the district, most likely the principals

The duties of a superintendent are quite vast. The state of North Dakota mandates that each school goes through many processes to ensure the school is being run properly. For accountability reasons, these are filed with the state and each is different because each school district is unique and many of these processes are very time consuming (civil rights data collections for example). This bill would have superintendents doing these tasks multiple times for multiple schools and eat up a tremendous amount of their time. I believe that this bill would run people out of the profession and make it even more difficult to fill already hard to fill positions.

I think one of the greatest things about North Dakota is that we believe in local control in our government. If a district believes that a full time superintendent is needed, a locally elected school board can make that decision, after all, they know the situation best. If they think a ½ time or ¾ time person is needed, they can also make that decision and compensate any of these scenarios as they see fit their own unique situation. Blanket for all districts will only complicate the workings of the schools.

I personally believe this bill does not take into consideration all the impacts it will have on our students as it would drastically affect the look and feel of the school structures in so many of our rural schools. For this reason I am asking for your opposition to HB #1251.

I would like to thank you for all you do for all of your constituents and hope you have a great legislative session this spring.

Thank you for your time,

Frank Justin
HS Principal
Park River Areas Schools

Dear Representative Lefor

I am reaching out with my concerns regarding the House Bill 1251. As a current principal in a district of 446 students I am alarmed at what this would mean for my district and my position in the district as well.

I am currently the elementary principal of 247 students. My position also includes the supervision of 22 professional staff members and 8 paraprofessionals. In addition to these responsibilities, I am the MTSS coordinator and the curriculum director. I sub in classrooms on a weekly basis, supervise the lunchroom and attend numerous IEP meetings each week. I depend on the superintendent in our building to take care of district wide issues, assist in more severe discipline issues and cover some of my duties if I need to be away from the building. Without the superintendent regularly in the building, some of the duties that position is responsible for will undeniably fall on my shoulders making my position so overwhelming that it would be nearly impossible to be effective. The dollars that would supposedly be saved by reducing the amount our district allocates to a superintendent salary would need to be spent on another type of administrative position to assist the two principals in our building in the absence of an in house superintendent.

In addition to the stress that the passing of this bill would put on the already overloaded principal positions, I am concerned about the reduction in local control that it presents. All school districts currently have the ability to enter into cost savings agreements by sharing admin, teachers, etc with other districts if they choose. I strongly believe that we should leave that control with the people (schools boards) that were elected by the patrons of the district to make the decisions that best suit the economic and educational needs of their local community.

I urge you to consider the negative impacts that this bill would have on many schools.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Perdue
Elementary Principal
Ray Public School

North Dakota Legislatures

January 18, 2023

Principal Chip Anderson
St. John High School
St. John, North Dakota
58369

Dear North Dakota Legislature,

I am writing this letter in regards to House Bill #1251. I am currently the high school principal at St. John High School in St. John, North Dakota. I have 20 plus years in education in North Dakota as: a teacher, coach, and administrator.

I am planning to apply for a superintendent job in the next year or so. I feel with the experience I have gained in elementary, middle, and high school, I have earned an opportunity to become a superintendent. I have paid my dues.

House bill #1251, if passed, has the potential to mandate who I do my job with (number of schools to work for because of attendance) while limiting compensation(1.5%) that I would possibly have earned with my years of experience and the additional degree I had to earn(master's or doctorate) to be qualified.

My day if I stay in rural North Dakota as a superintendent is:

- Drive to multiple communities weekly to be at work at each school,
- Since I will be at each school probably only a couple days a week, I will probably be dealing with a list on my desk of major issues, disgruntled staff, parents, board members, community members, meetings with business manager and principals, and not much else,
- I will attend multiple board meetings trying to please multiple boards that want me to be "present and engaged" more in the school and community while being a major influence for the community as normally the school and staff are all while being around for a couple days.

BASICALLY WE WILL BECOME MANAGERS AND NOT SUPERINTENDENTS. We will not have time to get to know families, staff, students, community. Since when is this what North Dakota is about if we are talking about education or any other profession?

Thank you,

Chip Anderson

Chip Anderson

Dear North Dakota Legislation,

I am writing in opposition of House Bill 1251 the Superintendent Elimination Bill. I am currently the elementary and secondary principal at Strasburg Public School in Emmon's county. We are a rural school with two administrators; who hold several job titles and duties to keep our school functioning properly not only by law, but to give the utmost support to our teachers, students and communities.

In addition to being our only principal, I teach junior high writing, keyboarding in the primary grades, and administer state required testing throughout the school year and fill other state required roles. Our superintendent is also the school-wide counselor and Behavioral Health Coordinator (B-HERO); which are both required by law to have on staff. She teaches two classes a semester to provide elective and dual credit opportunities to our students. As administrators we do what is necessary to keep our school and students growing academically to aid in their post-secondary future. Being a rural school elective offering can be problematic due to staff shortages. This is being felt at all schools across our state as we navigate a well-known teacher shortage and House Bill 1251 will only increase this issue for us, as our superintendent fills several roles within our building.

Since our school does not meet the enrollment of House Bill 1251, our superintendent would be demoted or have to travel to support other schools in order to stay in a superintendent position. In the possibility of losing our Strasburg superintendent to one or two days a week our students would be facing the loss of their in-house counselor, teacher and mentor. While the rest of the staff would have to add more duties to an already full agenda.

When the superintendent is in the building, they would only have the time to meet with staff to discuss upcoming events or be informed of any issues that have arose from the building and community. This means the only other in-building administrator who already has several assigned job duties would be in charge to cover superintendent duties while they are physically absent from the building. She would no longer have the capacity to meet and build relationships with teaching staff or students. I cannot comprehend how a superintendent who is constantly traveling, in and out of the building can benefit a school and its community to keep growing. Additionally, to meet the many demands left open when the superintendent is attending another school, we would have to hire an assistant superintendent or additional principal.

To accommodate and follow the requirements set forth by House Bill 1251 it will negatively impact our staff, community and students who are my main concern. As stated above we have stretched ourselves to our max ability and I have confidence adding more job duties, less support and less pay will only cause our teacher shortage to increase.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dayna Bartlette".

Mrs. Dayna Bartlette
M.Ed

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural school business manager, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. I work closely with our local superintendent in our shared office area. It is not in the best interest of our staff, students, or constituents to have someone outside of our area making financial decisions with our taxpayer's money. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

Jamie Hudson
Business Manager
Alexander Public School



Ashley Public School

703 W Main St
Ashley, ND 58413
Phone: 701-288-3456
Fax: 701-288-3457

Web Site: www.ashley.k12.nd.us

Jason Schmidt
Superintendent/Athletic Director

Chris Doane
Elementary/Secondary Principal

January 13, 2023

Dear Legislators:

I am the business manager for the Ashley school district and am writing regarding HB 1251 that proposes combining superintendents for "low enrollment" schools. Although Mr. Ruby is correct when he says that small schools are the backbone of the community, he fails to recognize that superintendents are the backbone of those small schools. Superintendents need to be engaged with their communities, patrons, students, teachers, ancillary staff and board members. If we were forced to combine McIntosh county schools (Ashley, Wishek, Zeeland), we would still be about 80 students short of the required 475. The next closest schools would be Strasburg, Napoleon or Ellendale. So that would require one person to run four schools. How is it possible to be visible and effective with the community, patrons, students and staff of four different schools all at the same time? Is it reasonable to expect one person to take on the duties and responsibilities of four people? Where are you going to find quality candidates willing to take on those positions for potentially less pay?

This bill would result in situations where building principals, business managers and secretaries have to take on more of the burden to fill the void that having an absentee superintendent creates. Also, many small school superintendents have other duties such as principal, athletic director, coaching, substitute busdriving. Those jobs would have to be picked up by someone else as well because no doubt a superintendent running four different schools would no longer have the time.

This bill takes local control away from our school boards. School board members are invested in the district's students and they are the ones who should determine what is in the best interest of those students. Sharing a superintendent with four other schools certainly isn't fair to the students, staff, or the communities.

I believe HB 1251 is detrimental to small school districts and I am urging you to vote no on this bill.

Respectfully,

Teresa Dockter, Business Manager
Ashley School District #9

Dear North Dakota Legislators,

My name is Misty Farnstrom. I graduated from Dickinson State University with majors in Accounting and in Business Administration. I am a school business manager and have been for almost 24 years. The business manager is an integral part of the budget and school year financial planning and implementation process. The proposed HB 1251 will directly affect the business office. A school district business manager works **for** the board and **with** the superintendent. Without the daily presence of a superintendent, the duties of business manager in a small school would become more than a one-person business office could accomplish. Absorbing superintendent duties would become part of the daily workload in the business office. Simply stated, assistant business office staff would need to be hired, making this mandate, unfunded.

Have the North Dakota Legislators looked at the job descriptions of superintendents? These documents are available in all school districts in North Dakota. When reviewing this document, one can see that the requirements and duties of the job are not part-time. There's another page not even on the job description that comes with the position, also known as, other duties as assigned. These duties are not listed, as it is well known in the profession that the position requires devotion, presence and doing what ever it takes, how ever long it takes to accomplish the district's goals. The hours are not listed. The position is salaried for a reason.

A true leader knows leadership isn't part time, leadership is being present all day, every day. The superintendent position is not an 8-4, Monday through Friday. In administration, we were the essential workers, per say, a few years ago. Always here, always present. Regardless of conditions in our state or our nation. If school districts thought they could operate with part time superintendents, we would have already tried it, and implemented it. As business manager, I work very closely with the superintendent, **daily**. We all have our "plates" of duties we are responsible for. We have multiple roles and multiple shared roles. Some plates are a shared plate between the business manager and the superintendent. Other plates are shared between the principals and the superintendent. We work together, **daily**, project by project. Relying on each other for our areas of expertise. This is **daily** teamwork, a crucial puzzle piece for our school.

Are we simply going to leave the fulltime superintendent plate of duties behind? No, we will have to hire additional administrative staff. The financial aspect of this bill, has been marketed as a money-saving opportunity. Simply stated, this bill reallocates the money and saves the district's zero. This bill targets superintendent duties as non-essential and disposable.

Being a superintendent is not a job, it's a lifestyle. The lifestyle is also the expectation of the patrons, parents and community that rely on a visible, present superintendent who has the heart devoted to do what needs to be done, whenever it needs to be done.

In closing, please do not take away the captain of our ship. Captains are not part-time, they are full time. They live on their ship. In smooth sailing or in rough angry seas, we need a full-time present leader we all can rely on for our Beach Buccaneers.

Sincerely



Misty Farnstrom
Business Manager

Beach Public School District #3



BELFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL

PO Box 97 308 3rd St. NE
Belfield, ND 58622

Phone – (701) 575-4275

Fax – (701) 575-8533

www.belfield.k12.nd.us

Daren Kurlle
Superintendent

Anna Ross
Business Manager

Janine Olson
Elementary Principal

Shannon Meier
7-12 Principal

January 16, 2023

Representative Vicky Steiner
Emailed to vsteiner@ndlegis.gov

Representative Steiner:

My name is Shannon Meier, and I am fortunate to work as the 7-12 principal at Belfield Public School. I work in district 39 while living in district 37. House Bill 1251 concerns me. Should it become law, my ability to perform my duties would be significantly hampered as the duties of the superintendent must fall somewhere. I can tell you it will fall to the administrator in the building. My district does not meet the 475-student threshold; consequently, this law would put our school in a position where we would need to work with another district to share a superintendent. It's a hare's breath from consolidation. I'm happy to have the conversation about consolidation with you, and if that's what's on the table, I'll clear my schedule to have that conversation at your convenience. A superintendent covering the responsibilities of multiple rural districts isn't feasible, for there are emergencies that arise that demand the immediate presence of a superintendent. The superintendent is the leader of a district, and what works about our current system is that school boards maintain their autonomy: their local control. North Dakota remains legendary because of our fundamental belief in local control. This bill casts a dark hue over a proud tradition in our state.

Representative Steiner, I am in my 4th year as an administrator, and I would not have made it past my 1st year without the thoughtful guidance of my superintendent. That welcomed counsel and mentorship would not have been possible if he would not have been in the building with me. As superintendents retire in the next five to ten years, principals are the next line to step up, but we will not be there without strong and most importantly – readily available – mentorship.

Ma'am, there is no one in my building who knows my school, our families, and our community better than my superintendent. He knows the routes students and staff must travel to get to school. He takes this all into consideration when deciding if it is safe to have school. How will a shared superintendent have that intimate knowledge of each of their districts when making such crucial decisions? Simply put, they won't.

I grew up in a small town. I graduated from Richardton-Taylor High School. A Raider forever. There is beauty in small towns. I've seen small towns come together and rally. I still go to the weddings and funerals of my classmates, childhood friends, and former teachers because it's the right thing to do. That's what you learn in a small town, Representative Steiner. I also know that when a community loses its school, it loses its community. Small towns make North Dakota; it's what makes us legendary. Please consider a negative vote on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Shannon L. Meier
High School Principal
Belfield High School

"Preparing for tomorrow, today"

CENTRAL OFFICE
102 EIGHTH AVENUE SOUTHWEST
PO BOX H
BOWMAN, NORTH DAKOTA 58623-0128
PHONE: 701-523-3283 • FAX: 701-523-3849

**Bowman County
School District #1**
Accredited by Cognia

RHAME CAMPUS
210 FOURTH AVENUE EAST
PO BOX 250
RHAME, NORTH DAKOTA 58651-0250
PHONE: 701-279-5523 • FAX: 701-279-5750

WAYNE HECKAMAN
SUPERINTENDENT

TYLER SENN
7-12 PRINCIPAL

KELLEY OURADNIK
PREK-6 PRINCIPAL
BOWMAN & RHAME CAMPUS

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CAMIE JANIKOWSKI

TREVOR KULSETH

ANDY MRNAK

CHAD NJOS

DEBBIE BUCHOLZ
BUSINESS MANAGER

January 20, 2023

Representative Mike Schatz,

I am writing in opposition of House Bill 1251. I believe this would be detrimental for all small school district for many reasons, but also would negatively impact the Bowman County School District. It not only limits local control but would be detrimental for our school district.

Like many others in my role as Business Manager, my plate is extremely full with my duties including budgeting, payroll, state/federal reporting, fulfilling grant requirements, supplying the school board with necessary financial and other information, contracts, school board minutes, paying vendors, etc. The list is much longer. I work very closely with the superintendent throughout the day. If HB1251 gets approved, I would have less contact with the Superintendent and my workload would increase as I would be forced into taking up some of the duties the superintendent takes care of as he would be attending to issues at other school district(s). This would be unacceptable for the school district.

I urge you to oppose House Bill 1251 as it erodes local control and has a very negative impact on small school districts.

Sincerely,



Debbie Bucholz
Business Manager
Bowman County School District #1

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Homepage www.bowman.k12.nd.us

Bowman County School District #1 is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability or non-disqualifying handicap in its education programs/activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups and employment practices.

January 16, 2023

Chairman Pat Heinert
House Education Committee

I am writing expressing strong opposition to HB1251.

I see this bill as a means of forcing small school districts to consolidate. I have been a School District Business Manager for 40+ years and I remember well the many times we attended hearings on bills that would force small school districts to consolidate and join a high school district. Apparently, we as a group were strong enough to get our point across to the legislators. I see this as going against the free market and also taking local control away from the local school boards by setting a specific salary for a shared Superintendent.

In Burleigh County, we already share a part-time County Superintendent for five school districts. Parents and students are apparently very happy with our Burleigh County rural schools as is apparent in the growth of those schools. The enrollments have increased to a point where two districts have closed open enrollment. I would recommend the House Education Committee visit our rural Burleigh County Schools and see what they are all about. I would venture to guess they would be surprised. We will fight for our schools especially when there is a threat of forced consolidation and taking away local control, which is what this appears to be.

By passing this bill, it would make sense that many school districts will have to hire additional personnel to cover the many things that the current superintendent probably does on a daily basis. Therefore, I'm not sure passing this bill will save the school districts money. Furthermore, there is currently a need for superintendents and principals in various ND schools. With the salary set, those same individuals may decide to go elsewhere to find employment creating an even bigger shortage.

Sincerely,

Shirley Ryberg, Business Manager
Burleigh County Special Education Unit
Naughton School District #25
Menoken School District #33
Sterling School District #35
Apple Creek School District #39

January 23, 2022

TO: ND House Education Committee

RE: HB 1251

Chairman Heinert and the Education Committee:

I write this letter in strong opposition to HB 1251.

I am currently serving as the principal/business manager in a rural North Dakota school. I am the only person in the state of North Dakota to hold both a principal and business manager position. Let me tell the story of what a mom, who didn't want to see students ride a school bus 1 ½ hours to school each way like her, did to support her community. You see, I already had a professional career and was raising twins in this small school. As I saw teachers leave the community, for greener/larger pastures, or more opportunities to begin their own family, I saw the need to do whatever it takes to keep a school in our farming community. I began as the assistant business manager in 2008. As I saw the need arise, I went back to college and attained my elementary education degree from Mayville State. Our school librarian was going to retire, so I then went on to receive my librarian certification. We also needed a Title I reading person so, again, I got my Title I certificate (which was required at that time). The superintendent encouraged me to continue on with my education and get my master's degree in educational leadership. I did this on the side, all the while being the business manager, and using my teaching degree to meet the needs at the school. I graduated with that degree and in 2015 became the principal/business manager and filled in the needs of librarian, Title I coach, Homeless Liaison, athletic director, bus driver, to name a few. Once again, my superintendent encouraged me to continue on and get my superintendent credentials, which I also completed in 2019. I love my little school....I love my children who would have never gotten as far as they have if they weren't in a small school setting, and I know that most of our families could not successfully support their kids being 40 miles away if our school closed. We go above and beyond to meet the needs of our farming families, our less fortunate families, our children who are community has chosen to support through tax levies.

But this letter is more than a focus on what I have done. It is on the fact that HB1251 is suggesting that we don't need a superintendent in our building, that I could possibly have time to take on more responsibilities, that some superintendents are being overpaid. Let me turn my attention to our superintendent.

This superintendent came to our school after the previous superintendent did a very poor job of running a coop between 2 schools. I was assistant business manager then (for both districts), and it did not work well to have the superintendent 25 miles away when something came up. During this time, he was required to answer to two very different school boards, with two different community cultures and beliefs. I can tell you that this superintendent is very dedicated to the field of education. He has, besides his teaching license, a special education degree, a specialist degree, a masters, and a doctorate. He continued to show the students the importance of lifelong learning, all while leading the district. He has 39 years of experience in this field. He is the superintendent, but he also is the career advisor,

teaches welding, is the ELL specialist, refs JH basketball games, mows the lawn, shovels the sidewalk, snow blows, does janitorial work, is the handyman for all the teacher residences, runs a morning and evening bus route, to name a few. He serves on numerous boards for the field of education. He also serves ID21 assessing for administrative graduates for UND. He gives back to the field of education more than anyone I know.

On the average, we work a minimum 60 hours per week. We are at the school at 6:15 a.m. and do not go home until busses are in at 4:45 p.m. We work all ballgames, events, and usually at least one day each weekend. Unlike teachers, he is contracted for 270 days.

I believe when you put the pencil to the paper, and consider the number of years, the level of education, and the hours worked, you will find that there is no overpayment to administration in smaller schools. The same amount of federal, state, and local reporting is required, it is just different numbers. We put in countless hours making sure to meet all of our deadlines, recruit qualified teachers, provide quality instruction, and building strong relationships with our kids. Our rural kids deserve it. The amount of people it would take to replace the positions currently being served by 2 administrators would be much more costly.

Our community and school board should be the ones making the decision on how to best serve the educational needs of our students. I strongly oppose this HB1251 and hope these insights provide you evidence as to why it should not be supported.

Yours in Education,

Diane Martinson, Principal/Business Manager



EIGHT MILE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6

P.O. Box 239
Trenton, North Dakota 58853

Phone: 701-774-8221
Fax: 701-774-8040

District Website
www.trenton.k12.nd.us

Facebook Page
[@trentonschool](https://www.facebook.com/trentonschool)

January 16, 2023

Dear House Education Committee (Chairman Pat Heinert)

As the Business Manager for the Eight Mile School District #6, I write this letter in opposition of HB 1251 and am sharing three main points on why I am not in support this bill.

1. Small, rural schools across this nation so very often serve as the lifeblood of their community and, while I can understand and respect the importance of the wise use of public taxpayer dollars, I see this bill as one that will ultimately force our school district, and many like ours, to consolidate with a neighboring school district. While the sponsors of this bill may deny this, they have also declared an intent to force district to submit co-op agreements to the DPI for their approval. It is evident that this bill intends to slash public school administrative costs by centralizing decision-making with a larger, regional coalition of schools. I believe this is extremely ill-advised. As a Business Manager, I rely on the day-to-day availability of our superintendent to assist in the fiscal responsibilities of our district. Having a superintendent many miles away in a remote and detached office to which I do not have necessary access is very concerning to me.
2. North Dakota's Constitution ensures a measure of local control to school boards, and I believe this bill will serve to eliminate a significant portion of this control over our community's school; specifically, the authority relating to who leads the educational programming of their students. School districts hire superintendents in response to who they believe best meets the unique needs of their children and families and I believe that the important hiring decision of a superintendent should be left up to individual districts and their stakeholders.
3. Finally, while Eight Mile School District #6 is part of Williams County, our student enrollment is much different than any other district in the county. 50% or more of our students have Native American heritage and that makes us distinct and unique in our region. We have needs and circumstances that the other districts simply do not have. In addition, I do question whether a single person responsible for multiple school districts can truly provide the operational effectiveness needed to ensure for the unique needs of each subordinate district. What may end up happening is that a single, larger district will be required to hire more staff to coordinate multi-district efforts, thus creating more costs than if this bill were to never have been considered.

I strongly encourage all Education Committee members to vote NO on HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Janae Ladue, Business Manager
Eight Mile School District #6
Trenton, ND

TRENTON SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT
Nurturing Values that Empower Students to Succeed

WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Gackle-Streeter Public School District #56

K-12 Principal

Myla Buckeye

Superintendent—Mark Berg

300 2nd Ave E

Gackle, ND 58442

School Board

Jeff Williams—President

Connie Rivinius—Vice President

Business Manager

Lisa Zenker

Email: Mark.berg@k12.nd.us

Phone: 701-485-3692 Fax: 701-485-3620

Lindi Heflin—Director

Jon Metz—Director

Thomas Wilen—Director



January 19, 2023

Jim Grueneich,

House Bill 1251 would be detrimental to all small school districts for many reasons, but I will focus on Gackle-Streeter School and the Business Manager in this letter.

Being the Business Manager in a small district I wear many hats and have many duties which include budgeting and levying, payroll, distributing land rent contracts, state/federal reporting, following requirements for grants and filing claims, taking minutes at board meetings, overseeing the free/reduced meal program, coordinating school elections, collecting building inventory and preparing contracts. These items listed are just the tip of the iceberg and do not include my daily activities such as distributing the mail, answering phone calls, printing AP checks, ordering for the pop machine, collecting new student paperwork and being the school nurse (bandages, medicine, etc.).

If HB 1251 gets approved I would no longer be able to complete my duties listed above because I would be picking up the slack from a superintendent who is only physically in our district 1 out of 5 days of the week. I work closely with the superintendent on many things throughout the day and not being able to have contact with that person would make my job much more difficult; things would be bound to fall through the cracks.

HB 1251 is not a feasible option for our small, but necessary, school district.

Please leave local control where it was meant to be... on the local level.

Sincerely,

Lisa Zenker

Business Manager

GLENBURN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 26

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Scott Heit, Vice President
Dianne Hensen
Amy Cunningham
Jamee Hansen

"Panther Country"
PO Box 138
Glenburn ND 58740
Phone (701) 362-7426
Fax (701) 362-7349

SUPERINTENDENT
Larry K. Derr
PRINCIPALS
Layne D. Fluhrer
James P. Swegarden
BUSINESS MANAGER
Jennifer Hansen

Letter of Opposition to Bill HB 1251

Dear Chairman Pat Heinert and Members of the House of Education Committee,

My name is Jennifer Hansen. I am the Business Manager at the Glenburn Public School. I have been with the school for four years. I am a former graduate of Glenburn as are my three children.

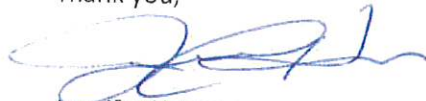
I oppose Bill HB 1251, reducing Superintendents in schools. This bill will not save money by forcing schools under 475 students to combine with other schools. It will push work to someone else, who will deserve/expect compensation. Not only will we lose a Superintendent, we will lose a bus driver, coach, snow removal, teacher, administration, and sometimes a dish washer. Our superintendent steps into multiple roles in our school. No superintendent is going to combine schools and do all the things our superintendent does for our school and make less money while trying to run multiple schools.

Our superintendent is the school board's direct connection to day-to-day decision making in our district. By eliminating a full-time superintendent in schools will force the district to hire an assistant superintendent so he can answer to the board directly and communicate to the head superintendent what is taking place. The superintendent will now have to answer to multiple boards which will make running multiple schools very difficult as no two school boards run their schools the same, which then will create more work for the superintendent trying to keep straight rules/ policies at different schools, and remember for less pay. We need to remember that superintendents' contracts are based on twelve months, not nine months. A superintendent should be making more money than administration and teachers in school. No one in a management position, weather public or private should make less many than average employees. They have multiple responsibilities to handle every day. And many of their days are ten plus hours per day. No superintendent is going to be able to split his time between multiple schools and be able to do all the work they are required to do in a day. You will eventually burn them out and they will quit. They will spend at least an hour or two everyday travelling to multiple schools, which will not be cost effect to schools as they will need to be compensated drive time and mileage.

Decisions need to be left at local control. Removing local control from districts is the first step to consolidation, which eventually destroys small towns. I am originally from a small town that choice to consolidate with other schools, but this was a local decision. No schools should be forced into consolidation.

I urge our chairman and legislatures to recommend Do Not Pass on House Bill 1251.

Thank you,



Jennifer Hansen

Business Manager

1/20/2023



HEBRON PUBLIC SCHOOL
400 CHURCH AVE.
HEBRON, ND 58638
PHONE: 701-878-4442
Fax: 701-878-4345

www.hebron.k12.nd.us

Myron Schaff - Superintendent

Jenifer Hosman - Principal

January 16, 2023

Honorable Jay Elkin,

My name is Paulette Elder and I am the business manager for Hebron Public School in Hebron, North Dakota. I am writing to you today to please vote NO on HB NO. 1251.

Sharing a superintendent will not automatically generate cost savings. Many of the districts, including ours will need to hire principals or change the title of superintendent to assistant superintendent to ensure there is leadership in the building every day. We would be spending more money on administrator salaries now. They may also need to hire other positions that the superintendent is covering like transportation manager and athletic director.

Choosing a superintendent should be a local decision made by our school board and their patrons. If districts must share the decision with other districts or the state, local patron input carries less weight.

My superintendent downsized our principal positions from two to one to save money for our school. In our current situation we would have to combine with two other schools to meet the 475 students they are suggesting. If we do that our superintendent might be in the building one or possibly two days a week. That is not feasible. We would have to pay 1/3 of a traveling superintendent's salary, plus our school board would hire another administrator in our building because one principal cannot do all the work. Where are the cost savings? We would be spending more money on administrative salaries.

Schools are the pulse and heartbeat of small communities. Forcing districts to share a superintendent is the first step towards consolidation. Small communities should be able to have local authority to decide when they want to consolidate and how they are going to do it.

Please vote NO on House Bill No. 1251. This is North Dakota. We are better than that! Thank you.

Paulette Elder,

Business Manager
Hebron Public School

Darin Seamands
Superintendent
Secondary Principal

David Erickson
Elementary Principal

Heather Ebert
Business Manager

Hettinger Public School

District 13

209 Eighth Street South
Hettinger, ND 58639-1188

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on Facebook: Hettinger Public School

January 19, 2023

RE: House Bill #1251

Dear Honorable Kempenich,

I feel House Bill #1251 would be very detrimental to all small school districts for several reasons.

I have been a School Business Manager in a small school district for 11 years now and the duties continue to be extended yearly, if House Bill #1251 would pass it would compromise my duties and may lead to having to hire another assistant to help with the extended duties. This would not save any funds in the school district. Some of the many duties I am responsible for include budgeting and levying, payroll, state/federal reporting, following requirements for grants and filing claims, taking minutes at board meetings, overseeing the lunch program, coordinating school elections, collecting building inventory and preparing contracts. These items listed are just the tip of the iceberg and do not include my daily activities such as distributing the mail, answering phone calls, printing AP checks, taking patron and employee complaints and trying to steer them in the correct direction.

If HB #1251 gets approved I would no longer be able to complete my duties listed above because I would be picking up the slack from a superintendent who is only physically in our district 1 out of 5 days of the week. I work closely with the superintendent on many things throughout the day and not being able to have contact with that person would make my job much more difficult; things would be bound to fall through the cracks. HB 1251 is not a feasible option for our small, but necessary, school district.

Not only interrupting and making my job unmanageable. This is taking away local power from our voted patron rights by micro managing at the state level and takes decision making out of the hands of local elected officials. This undermines democracy and the balance of power. Locally elected officials are losing their power, the legislature is relinquishing theirs while taking it from locals and the power is shifting and being given to the executive branch.

Please leave local control where it was meant to be... on the local level.

Sincerely,



Heather Ebert
Business Manager
Hettinger School District #13

Subject: HB 1251 Opposition

Date: Monday, January 16, 2023 at 2:23:55 PM Central Standard Time

From: Rhonda Zastoupil

To: dpatten@ndlegis.gov

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Good afternoon Mr. Patten:

I'm writing to you to express my grave concern regarding HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on local control in North Dakota's school districts. A good majority of small school districts would lose their Superintendent and would force these small districts to consolidate with larger districts many miles away. A Superintendent's role in a district is immeasurable and to state the reason for this bill is to save the state \$13M is absurd. If small districts are forced to consolidate and share a Superintendent, this does not make the work of the Superintendent's office go away. It merely redirects the workflow. Other administrative positions would need to be added to cover the workload.

If small districts lose their Superintendent, what are the options for those individuals holding that role? What does this highly experienced and educated workforce now do? To eliminate these individuals from ND school districts would have long-term damaging effects on the education of our children. The leadership of our Superintendents is needed to make our districts successful.

A proposed \$13M savings is a very small fraction of the approved \$18.4 BILLION budget. It will do more harm than good.

I encourage you vote NO on HB 1251.

Thanks!

Rhonda Zastoupil

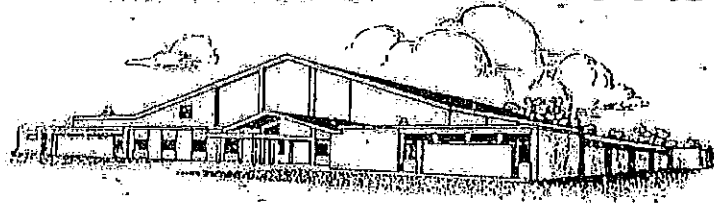
Business Manager

Killdeer Public School District #16

Ph: 701-764-5865

Leeds Public Schools

DISTRICT NUMBER 6
Robert Thom -Superintendent
Robyn Eberle - K-12 Principal



530 FIRST STREET SE
P.O. BOX 189
LEEDS, ND 58346
Phone 701-466-2461
Fax: 701-466-2422

Transforming students by instilling 21st century skills and inspiring lifelong learning in every student.

Dear Representatives:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Leeds School District in opposition of HB 1251. We are a very small community with a K-12 enrollment of 120 children and are 25 minutes from the nearest community with a school (in all directions). Being a small school, everyone wears "many hats" outside of their regular/contracted responsibilities. We are already stretched as thin as possible and are looking at losing Transportation due to cost, and lack of qualified drivers.

Larger schools (larger markets) can share administrative staff because they are:

- Close in proximity
- Have the same tax base
- Have a multi-tiered support staff
- Do not have front line (day-to-day) responsibilities

This bill will not save our Schools or State money. In our situation, we would need to share with three, if not four schools. That puts a Superintendent in our building one day a week. How can you build rapport with the staff and community? How can that person know what we need on a day-to-day basis? How can you be productive dealing with three or four school boards, parent groups and staff? How will this Superintendent be paid for the hundreds of miles and hours put in travelling every year?

This bill is coming from a larger district point-of-view and is not considering that schools already have the option of sharing administration. This may feel like a financial decision, but in the end, you will destroy Class B Schools and force unnecessary consolidations.

I respectfully ask that you vote "No" on 1251.

Thank you for your time,
Becky Haagenson
Business Manager
Leeds Public School

Munich Public School District #19

410 7th Avenue / P.O. Box 39 / Munich, North Dakota 58352-0039 / Telephone: (701) 682-5321 / Fax: (701) 682-5323

Robert Bubach, Supt/HS Principal
Curt Kram, Elem. Principal
Lois Tohm, Business Manager



Susan Harder, Board President
Chris Pankratz, Vice President
Bobby Foster, Director
Kelan Goeser, Director
Kelly Haaven, Director
Kelly Hall, Director
Jason Wirth, Director

Mission Statement

Student Engagement + Positive/Safe Environment + Effective Instruction + Student Success

Vision

Develop all students into productive citizens

Representative Donna Henderson

I am writing this letter in opposition to HB 1251 which would require every Superintendent in the State to cover 475 students. It is my feeling that this is the first step towards consolidation or even closing down smaller school districts.

I am a former student of the Munich School and I believe there are educational advantages of a small school. There are already students who are on the bus for over an hour each way. If small schools are to disappear those students would face even longer distances and spend so much of their day on a bus.

Beyond the issue of distance and the fact that small schools are the very heart of their community, there is the fact that this legislation implies that local school boards are not able to govern their own schools. I have been involved in the hiring process of Superintendents and to be told by the legislature that I and our school board cannot hire who we choose and pay them what we choose, flies in the very face of local control.

The very structure of this bill which would require, according to the supporters of this bill, some superintendents to cover up to four different schools. I have worked with sharing a superintendent with one other school and that has been hard enough. It is important that the business manager and superintendent are able to communicate effectively with one another. I cannot imagine dealing with a superintendent who is here once or twice a week. It is already hard enough to find time to meet with the superintendent during the day when he has multiple jobs within the one building. I also cannot imagine the superintendent's part dealing with four different business managers, boards and staff.

Finally, I would like to close by stating that our superintendent's contract is for half time superintendent and half time high school principal. So even with this double duty he also drives bus, is teaching one class (physics), and is the Senior Class Advisor and Student Council Advisor. In addition, of course, he is the person who makes the "on spot" decisions, which sometimes cannot wait until the next day. If Munich were to have to share a superintendent, who is only here one day a week, those duties would fall to other staff members, which would mean a less meaningful educational environment for the students, and speaking of myself, a greater workload.

Again I stand in opposition to HB 1251.

Lois Tohm

Business Manager



Newburg United School District No. 54



400 Libbie Street PO Box 427

Newburg, North Dakota 58762

Phone: (701) 272-6151

Fax: (701) 272-6117

Hadlee Brandt-Superintendent/Elem Principal

Darcy Lamoureux – Business Manager

Bob Beaudrie – HS Principal

Nathan Boll – Board President

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Dear Pat Heinert,

I am writing to oppose HB 1251 and express my opinion that it is NOT in the best interest of our students, staff and our local community members. Our patrons have elected school board members to run our school district and trust in them to make sound fiscal and managerial decisions with taxpayer monies. HB 1251 will limit our local control and will not end up saving our district money!

We are a small, consolidated school district with a school board of elected officials who have always put our students & patrons' interest at the forefront while making sound fiscal decisions for our district. In the past our school board voted to have a part time Superintendent from 2005 to 2022 where we either shared a Superintendent with a neighboring school district, had a Superintendent/Teacher or the Superintendent was just simply a part time Superintendent. These decisions were made by our local board who based it on the financial and educational factors at that time. Over the course of those years, we were able to make it work but as times changed and the duties & requirements for this position increased, our school board decided to go back to a full-time position this school year. This was in the best interest of our students & staff in making a better learning environment for our students. Who knows, in the future we will be back to sharing a Superintendent but that should be a decision that is made by our local school board.

I am a Business Manager with eleven and a half years of experience and have seen firsthand all the changes to our educational system. I have worked in school districts with fewer than 475 students and know firsthand that in a small district, a Superintendent, along with several other employees, are required to wear multiple hats and must step in wherever needed to make sure a school day goes well. Requiring a Superintendent to be shared will only require school districts to hire additional staff to help fill the gaps or pay existing employees more for taking on additional responsibilities. We already have trouble finding people to apply for work, so who knows if we would even be able to hire additional staff.

I firmly believe that capping the Superintendent pay would be a grievous error. A Superintendent position is a twelve-month contracted position, compared to a teaching contract that is for nine months. Capping it at 1.5 percent of total state and local general fund revenues would result in such a low wage that nobody would even apply for this position when considering the enormous number of responsibilities that come with this position for such a minimal wage.

HB 1251 would be a detriment to our local economy and all our local businesses. By passing HB 1251 you are closing small rural school districts! This will then eventually lead to businesses closing when they no longer have the students, staff and families coming to our town to do business with them.

Please vote NO to HB 1251.

Respectively,

Darcy Lamoureux

Business Manager

Newburg United School



Oakes Public School

804 Main Ave. Oakes, ND 58474
Phone: (701) 742-3234 Fax: (701) 742-2812
www.oakes.k12.nd.us

January 19, 2023

House Education Committee
Chairman Pat Heinert

I am writing you to express opposition to HB 1251 as currently proposed before the 68th Legislative Assembly. I would ask that you please provide this bill a "do not pass" vote in committee and vote to defeat this legislation on the House floor.

This enactment will place an undo burden on small school districts throughout the state. Many rural districts already struggle to find highly qualified superintendents, and should this legislation pass, it would only increase the burden placed on rural districts to fill this vital role in the education of our future North Dakotan's.

Secondly, this bill would take away control of the local elected school district boards by limiting superintendents' compensation to a percentage of the general fund for each district. What is not captured in this legislation is the un-told realization that in many rural district's superintendents hold several other hats, such as principal, bus driver, or certified teacher. These decisions should remain the fiduciary responsibility of the local school board.

As a business manager in a rural district, and together with the elected board, we take our responsibility to manage public funding with the utmost regard. I urge you to defeat this bill.

Sincerely,

Shannon Jepson



RICHLAND #44 SCHOOL DISTRICT

Abercrombie - Christine - Colfax - Galchutt

Staci Schmitz
Elementary Principal

Britney Gandhi
Superintendent/Jr-Sr High Principal

Kendra Dockter
Business

*Educating students to be
responsible citizens and leaders*

www.richland44.com

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1251.

January 20, 2023

While I understand the large picture of the Bill to have a purpose of being efficient with administrators in North Dakota Schools, the Bill as it stands now would be detrimental to most schools in the state.

Our School Board recently passed a resolution stating their strong opposition to the bill; and while they shared their concerns with you as a whole, I also wanted to share opposition from my stand point as Business Manager.

I have been the Business Manager at Richland #44 School District for just under 20 years now. Over this time I have seen roles of Superintendents, Principals, ADs, and especially Business Managers change and evolve. And trust me, these changes are not in the way of reduction. On our own (without mandate), our school board saw the opportunity to reduce admin from 3 full FTE's to 2. Our Superintendent also serves at Jr/Sr High Principal and we have a full time elementary principal. Naturally, this combination caused some of the shift in roles and duties over the years.

In my role as Business Manager in a small district I wear many hats and have duties that many people are unaware of. Not only are Business Managers asked to run payroll and A/P checks (which is what most may think of), but many have to worry about budgets/levies, inventories, hot lunch (including free and reduced meal program), school elections, board meetings, keeper of all records, new hire processes, audits, state/federal reporting, workers comp and unemployment claims, enrollment reports, legal notices, posting job openings, and issuing contracts. And while I won't list all the extra duties, please know this list is even longer for a school our size when the Business Manager takes care of non-traditional duties of the position (answering phones, administering medications, stocking concessions pop, and creating the district newsletter).

I don't share this list to have anyone feel bad for the Business Managers around the state, but to point out that with an already full plate, if House Bill 1251 passes, this plate will overflow. HB1251 would require our school to share a superintendent with at least one, if not two, other schools to meet the 475 threshold. Time in each school will be limited and will likely shift many reporting items from Superintendent to Business Manager. The Business Manager/Superintendent relationship is one that meets daily, working closely on many things. Not having that contact or chance for communication would make my job more difficult.

HB 1251 claims to be a cost saver. I disagree with this statement as well. Yes, in theory, it would require the compensation of a superintendent to be less. But, how do we take care of the role and duties of that person without now hiring in other positions? How are we going to find quality leaders who want to even step into a roll with restrictions as the bill is currently written?

Richland #44 found a way to be efficient with administration, without a state mandate. A way that was cost efficient and fit our needs. If the urgency is to have schools reduce their administration, push for something similar to our solution. One that allows schools/school boards to find efficiency in their administrators without the state mandate that is "cookie cutter" in concept causing concern and detriment to most schools in its design.

Respectfully submitted,

Kendra Dockter

Kendra Dockter
Business Manager
Richland #44 School District

Richland Jr/Sr High School

101 Main PO Box 49, Colfax, ND 58018

Phone: (701) 372-3713 Fax: 372-3718



Richland Elementary

106 Bdwy PO Box 139, Abercrombie, ND 58001

Phone: (701) 553-8321 Fax: 553-8520

Richland #44 School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs or activities.

Dear Representative Henderson,

I am writing today to oppose HB1251, which clearly seeks to eliminate rural schools and consolidate into one county school. This bill may seem to "save" counties and the state money, but at what other costs? This will destroy small communities, which are the backbone of this state.

This bill not only will destroy small communities, but it takes away local control of locally elected officials. As a state official, I'm sure you concur when the federal government seeks to take away state control. While sharing may work for some districts, it is not the perfect answer or right answer for all districts and these decisions should be left to the communities and local elected officials who know what is best for their local communities. This bill is the state micromanaging local school districts. This bill seeks to tell those elected officials that they are not trustworthy enough to make those decisions. This undermines democracy and the balance of power. What does this say to the voters who not only voted for the local board members, but also YOU about how you believe in their decision making?

I believe the cost savings are a false narrative. Superintendents in small districts wear multiple hats, of which those duties would have to lie elsewhere within the district, including teaching classes. Districts would be forced to hire people for these positions, including other building administrators to cover those duties. If schools were forced to consolidate, there would be a mass hiring of principals, assistant principals, deans of students, additional counselors, etc. While one could say those positions would be filled with the staff of the closing school, that isn't necessarily the case. Not only would this leave a plethora of unemployed people, but it would also likely be the demise of many small towns in the state, including my own, Rolette. Schools are the hub of a community. Schools keep people living here, which in turn, keeps businesses open, which in turn keeps people employed, which keeps money in the state coffers. Small schools would be forced to close, maybe not immediately, but certainly in time. Closing down rural North Dakota is not the right thing to do. North Dakota IS a rural state, it is part of its charm and draw and what makes North Dakota so great. Closing schools ruins the draw, the charm, and its value. This is a bigger cost than saving a few bucks on small school superintendents.

My understanding is that the savings would be passed on to teachers, of which, seem to be in short supply these days. I work in a rural school. I do not believe it's hard to find teachers because the pay is so horrible. Rolette's base salary for a first-year teacher is \$41,025 for a 9-month contract. Calculate that to a 12-month contract and that is \$61,536 a year. People do not go into teaching to get rich monetarily, they go into teaching to get rich with the value they are adding to the world. The reason, I believe, teachers are disgruntled and leaving the profession is lack of respect and support from parents, students, administrators, and society. Until those things change, you could give them a starting salary of \$100,00 for a 9-month contract and they would still be disgruntled in the end. Money isn't the driving factor in teacher satisfaction. They absolutely want a decent living, where they don't have to scrape by, paycheck to paycheck, but they also want a safe, healthy, constructive work environment in which they are respected, have a voice, and are valued.

Finally, capping superintendent pay will only harm the state as a whole. Individuals with the qualifications for superintendent will flee the state to other states where legislators aren't trying to micromanage schools. Common sense can tell you that this won't work.

I urge you to talk to small school districts, not only the administrators, but the board, the teachers and other staff. Please vote no on HB1251, this is not good for the state of North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration and mostly for your dedication to our state.

Sincerely,

Michele Grenier

508 John St
Rolette, ND

January 18, 2023

The Honorable Shawn Vedaa
P.O. Box 550
Velva, ND 58790-0550

RE: HB 1251

Dear State Senator Vedaa:

My name is Lorie Werle. I am the business manager for the TGU School District as well as a community member who resides in your district. I am a proud citizen in small town North Dakota.

I am writing to you in opposition to HB 1251. One of my biggest concerns to this bill is the local control it will take away from the local school board and community they serve. This bill takes the power away from the local school board and the voters that elect them. These are the same voters that elect you. I also feel that this bill is an overreach of power by the state legislature.

Another concern I have is whose board would have the power if this bill were passed? If we are co-employing a superintendent and one district chooses to let the superintendent go, but the other district wants to keep the superintendent, who has the power? One district would lose their governing authority in this situation. This once again is taking power away from the local school board and the voters of the school district.

As stated, I am the business manager at the TGU School District. I work closely with the Superintendent. I witness on a daily basis how many directions he is pulled. If we would have to share a superintendent with another school that adds even more job responsibilities to his already full day. I am concerned how many items will fall with no one able to pick up the pieces. The demands that are put on a superintendent are constantly increasing. I do not see how adding additional boards for the superintendent to answer to would benefit either school district involved.

This bill will not create opportunities for teachers like the bills representatives are portraying. This bill will only shut more schools down in small communities across the state as there will be no one to fill the role that our superintendents fill. If schools can fill the positions, more money will be spent on salaries and compensation than what is currently spent on superintendents now. These communities are struggling to survive. This bill will eventually take away the largest employers in these communities.

My final concern is the pay parameters. The superintendent is the CEO of schools. In any business, the CEO is compensated more than other employees due to the nature of their work. Superintendents have more education and responsibilities than other staff at the school. They are also one of few employees at school districts that are employed for 12 months compared to

9 months that teachers work. Due to the longer hours and more contracted days, there should be a pay gap between teachers and superintendents.

I hope I have been able to convey to you exactly why I am opposed to HB 1251. I feel this bill is taking away my rights as a voter. It takes away the rights of our community to run our local school district in a way that is best for students, teachers, administrators and stakeholders. I am asking you to vote no on HB 1251 and keep the right to run schools as they see fit in the local small communities that North Dakota is built on.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lorie Werle".

Lorie Werle
307 Lincoln Ave SE
Granville, ND 58741



UNDERWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 8



123 SUMMIT STREET • PO BOX 100

UNDERWOOD, ND 58576-0100

TELEPHONE (701)442-3201 • FAX (701)442-3704

underwoodschool.org

Underwood School District #8 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Administration

John Gruenberg, Superintendent
Kyle Hunt, Secondary Principal
Katie Heger, Elementary Principal
Angela Riehl, Business Manager

School Board

Michael Heger, President
Brent Charging, Vice President

School Board Directors

Amanda Haseleu
James LeRoy
Sarah Ness

January 19, 2023

RE: House Bill 1251

Mr. Grueneich,

I have been a Class B School Business Manager for ten years and believe that House Bill 1251 would have an adverse effect on many of our rural North Dakota Schools.

As the Business Manager of a small district, I have the responsibilities of payroll, accounts payable/receivable, budgeting/levying, establishing procedures and complying with financial record keeping and security of such records, receiving/managing/maintaining custody of all moneys for which the District is responsible, state/federal reporting, inventory, administering all employee benefits policies/programs, maintaining permanent records of the District, provide information on working conditions/benefits/policy/procedures, process Workforce Safety and Insurance claims/payments, process unemployment claims/payments, comply with open records requests, and administrate annual school elections. And that is just a small sample of some of my core job duties. If our District was forced to consolidate the position of Superintendent with another rural district, I guarantee that not only will you need to hire additional principals you will also be needing to add an assistant business manager or human resources manager.

As a former School Board Member, I believe that HB 1251 is a blatant erosion of local control and a usurpation of our rural officials' powers by the executive branch. Our elected school boards are the best representatives to determine how our schools need to be staffed and are perfectly capable of making decisions regarding compensation packages for administration. I request that we do not undermine the authority of our school boards as they know their own students and communities the best.

Sincerely,

Angela Riehl

Business Manager

Underwood Public School District # 8

WING PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #28
1 4TH Avenue East
Wing, ND 58494
(701) 943-2319

TO: Representative Jon Nelson
Representative Robin Weisz
Senator Jerry Klein

FROM: Rebecca Bernhardt

RE: HB 1251

DATE: January 19, 2023

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to share my concerns regarding HB 1251. I am the Business Manager/Secretary of the Wing Public School. I have been with the district for 32 years and have gone through several Superintendents in my years with this district and have learned so much from each one of them. Along with my role as Business Manager/Secretary, I am also the ITV Facilitator and I am a sub bus driver. With these many roles, I feel I could not have accomplished them effectively without the help of our Superintendent being in our building every day.

We are a small district, but our Superintendent is a very important and vital piece to the every day education of our students and the running of our facility. Superintendents have many roles in a small school/community. Large schools have Head Cooks, Transportation Directors, Activity Directors, Safety Coordinators, etc. who take care of the integral parts of their school so the Superintendent can focus on their one job. This does not happen in a small school. Our Superintendent wears many hats. Our Superintendent is also the High School Principal so she is continually meeting with students, staff, parents, community members, etc. Also, with being a small school, we have a small community where everyone knows everyone. Our community is very involved with our school and our Superintendent. Our Superintendent attends community functions and visits with community members during athletic events. Our community supports our school and is always visiting with our Superintendent about various topics and issues regarding our school. I know that our community will not be happy if there is not a Superintendent in a school that they are sending their children to on a daily basis.

As a Business Manager/Secretary in a school district, I take care of the financial aspects of the school, I work with students in their ITV classes, I help parents/community members when they call or come to the school, I report to the Superintendent and the School Board, etc. From my understanding, if this HB 1251 passes there will be one Superintendent for many school districts which means that we may have a Superintendent in our building one day a week (if we are lucky). I have worked with a Superintendent in our district that was part-time and I feel our school, students, teachers, staff, etc. suffered because of this.

Also, I feel that if there is not a Superintendent in our building then who will do all of the duties that our Superintendent currently does. Those people trying to push this bill through, have not spent one day in a small school to see what a Superintendent does. They should walk in the shoes of our Superintendent for one day and they will see how ridiculous this bill is. If they would spend a day as a Superintendent of a small district, they would see how underpaid some of our Superintendents are. It also states that this bill will free up money that can be given to teachers for salaries and classroom supplies. School districts are going to have to pay someone to take over the extra duties that our Superintendent does and also, pay the one Superintendent dealing with multiple schools a substantial salary. I have yet to hear of a Superintendent who would be in charge of the daily functions of many school districts doing this job for nothing.

The Superintendent and Business Manager work very closely together to make sure the budget, finances, grants, etc. meet the needs of our school. I can't do this if my Superintendent is not in my building. If such concerns arise such as disciplining of a student, safety issues within our building or safety issues of students, another COVID 19 outbreak, etc., how am I (who will be the only one in the office/building) supposed to handle these situations. If these duties fall on Business Managers/Secretaries who are already overwhelmed with their day to day duties, an increase in their pay will need to be discussed – there goes the money that people pushing this HB 1251 think they are saving.

Thank you so much for your time and allowing me to voice my concerns regarding this HB 1251.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Bernhardt
Business Manager/Secretary

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

MaKenna Sandvik

2nd grade teacher

Alexander Public School

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,



Alexander Public School

PE Teacher !

01/15/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony Morris".

Anthony Morris

Pre K-12 Music Teacher & Band Director

Alexander Public School

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

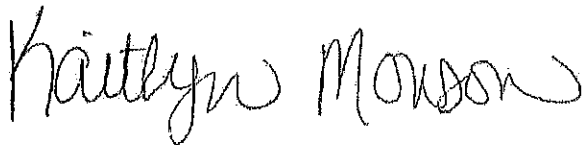
I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a support staff employee in a rural school, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaitlyn Mowson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

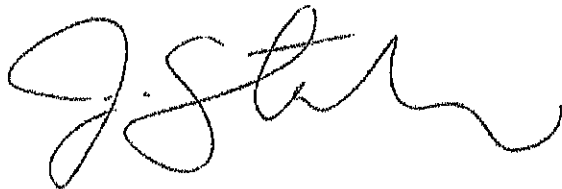
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Starn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

PK-12 Art teacher Alexander Public School

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

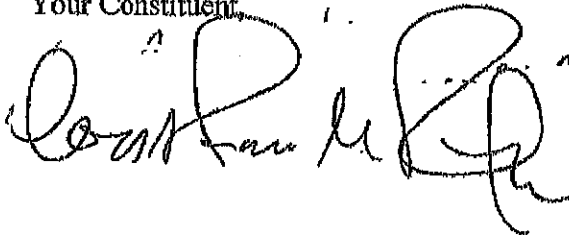
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna K. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial letter.

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

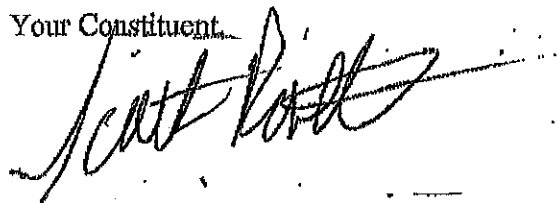
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Patten", written over a horizontal line.

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,


I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a long-term substitute teacher in a rural school, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Chris S.", written over the typed name "Your Constituent".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

Handwritten signature of Nicole Gettel in cursive script.

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

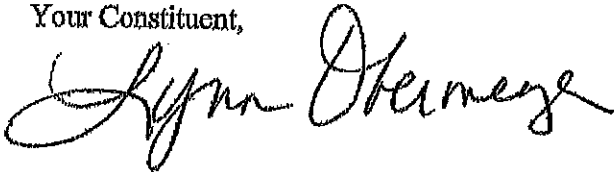
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lynn Obermeyer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Your Constituent,".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

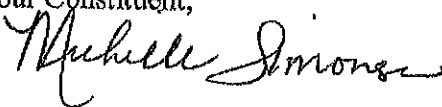
I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a teacher in a rural school, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Simonson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Michelle Simonson".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

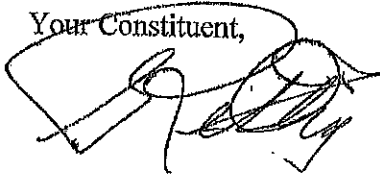
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Kelly", written over a faint, illegible stamp or background.

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

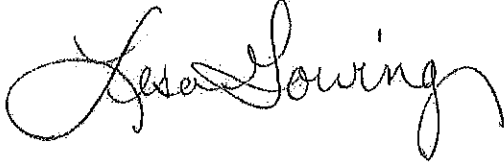
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse Gowing". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Your Constituent,".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,


I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

Samantha Veira

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,


I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. Patten", written over a horizontal line.

01/13/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Received by
Your Constituent,
Sandra Crusch
Sandra Crusch

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

Tristae Kuhn

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Taryn Neumann". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Taryn Neumann".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

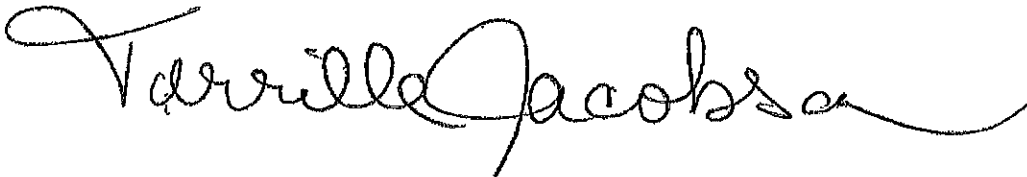
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tarrilla Jacobsa". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Your Constituent,".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

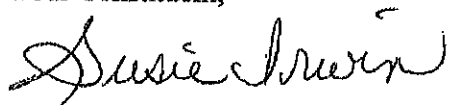
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The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susie Irwin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Susie Irwin".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

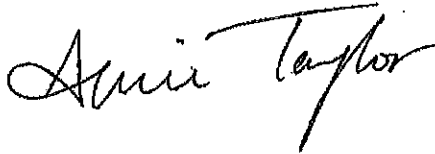
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As a rural teacher, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annie Taylor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Annie Taylor".

01/12/2023

Dear Honorable Patten, Timmons, and Olson,

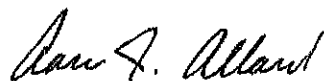
I am writing in opposition of HB 1251. This bill is a direct attack on our local control. The local school board currently has the authority to share a superintendent with another district if they deem fit for our district.

As a rural Elementary Principal, I do not want to share a superintendent with another district. Our local superintendent makes decisions and recommendations to the school board based on our local needs.

The decision whether or not to employ a superintendent independently or jointly (and their compensation) is a LOCAL decision that should be under the authority of the locally elected school board.

I ask that you vote NO to HB 1251.

Your Constituent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aaron J. Allard".

Aaron J. Allard

Subject: Fwd: House Bill 1251

Date: Monday, January 16, 2023 at 12:01:12 PM Central Standard Time

From: James Bear

To: Aimee Copas

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

This is what I sent to my legislators. Craig Headland did respond and we did have a few words back and forth. It should be noted that I know Craig fairly well. Taught and was administrator when his daughter was in school. Went to church together. My feeling has always been that Craig's main emphasis is saving tax payer dollars which I tend to agree with (which separates me from many administrators).

Terry Wanzek responded, but he's a senator. We did discuss back and forth a little.

Chet Pollert didn't respond.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: James Bear <james.s.bear@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jan 12, 2023 at 1:30 PM

Subject: House Bill 1251

To: <cheadland@ndlegis.gov>, <tmwanzek@ndlegis.gov>, <cpollert@nd.gov>

Dear Legislators,

I would like to weigh in on House Bill 1251.

I live in your district southwest of Montpelier. Currently, I teach at University of Jamestown but spent 6 years as high school principal in Montpelier which is a district which would be impacted by this bill. I do still serve as tech coordinator at Montpelier as well.

Administration has changed structure in Montpelier over the years. At times the superintendent was also elementary principal or high school principal. Currently, the superintendent is also the counselor and we have a K12 principal.

I'll suggest that a school the size of Montpelier at 125 kids should never have a full-time superintendent. I would guess this is the purpose of this. But, it should also be noted, it never has had a full-time superintendent at least in the last 20 years.

I would predict this -- if this bill should go through as it is, Montpelier would end up sharing a superintendent with a few surrounding schools. But, that would not change the number of administrators in the building. Two administrators are needed. So, that 'overarching superintendent' would end up being an extra administrator.

This bill would end up being something that simply creates more bureaucracy and more tax dollars spent on administration. As a local tax payer, that bothers me.

January 19, 2023

RE: Supt. Elimination HB 1251

Dear Ms. Anderson, Mr. Monson, and Ms. Myrdal:

My name is Justine Masloski, and I am an instructional coach at North Border School District in Pembina, ND which is located in your district.

As a teacher who works closely with my administration, **I strongly oppose House Bill 1251.**

House Bill 1251 would undermine local decision making by our locally elected officials. The ability to do this is already an option and the decision to implement something like this should be left to our local communities. House Bill 1251 does not recognize the importance of community that our small town relies on so heavily. Our current superintendent is a community member, and a familiar face to our students, parents, and staff. This bill would strip our community of this position.

Within our small school our superintendent fills many more roles than what his contract states. He often drives bus, subs when we are unable to find a substitute, and is even an extra set of hands to monitor recess. Therefore, the idea that this would save money is not necessarily true as it will create voids that will have to be filled by hiring additional district employees which already proves to be a difficult task.

Please vote in opposition of this overreach of a bill. I, like so many teachers, need this bill to be voted down as we are already spread thin and House Bill 1251 will only spread us thinner.

Sincerely,

Justine Masloski
North Border, Instructional Coach

To: Representative Matt Ruby
From: Tonya L. Hunskor
Re: HB 1251
Date: January 20th, 2023

Dear Representative Matt Ruby,

Hello, my name is Tonya L. Hunskor, I am a retired K-12 Principal. I served my entire administrative career in a rural school district. I'm writing to express my deep concerns regarding House Bill 1251. The passing of this bill would have detrimental impacts on rural schools and education in the state of North Dakota as a whole.

The school district I worked in my entire career, TGU School District, has two K-12 school sites, 22 miles apart. One superintendent serves both schools. The Superintendent does his best to spend time equally at each facility. However, when he cannot, the principals, teachers and staff must step and in to fill help out.

I cannot fathom adding a second or third school district to his job duties – with the expectation of being able to do what is **best for students** and families. Money is not the motivation behind this bill – there are other ways to pay our teacher better. The "plan" that is being proposed will drive administrators and teachers out of education. Schools employees do extra on a daily basis, doing what is **best for kids** – by supporting HB 1251, you would be cutting the legs out from underneath schools.

Schools are dealing with mental health issues, student safety, high educational expectations with less funding and supports – paired with a teacher shortage. I worked a career in education sharing a Superintendent – it is hard. I was asked on many occasions to step in because our Superintendent was spread thin. Forcing superintdents to manage multiple districts, schools, building and budgets doesn't leave time for educational leadership. Is this really what we want our educational system to look like?

I have been fortunate to work for caring, hardworking Superintendents who have students best interest in mind. I am **scared** of HB 1251 and its impact on education in North Dakota. This bill undermines the fundamental ideals of local control, something are proud of in North Dakota.

Please do what is best for North Dakota Schools - "VOTE NO" on House Bill 1251.

Sincerely,
Tonya L. Hunskor
Retired K12 Principal

Re: Bill HB 1251

Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

Sat 1/21/2023 8:13 AM

To: Seth Engelstad <seth.engelstad@k12.nd.us>

AWESOME!

Dr. Aimee Copas

North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders

Executive Director

www.ndcel.us

701-258-3022 office

605-228-3804 mobile



@aimeecopas

From: Engelstad, Seth <Seth.Engelstad@k12.nd.us>

Date: Friday, January 20, 2023 at 1:53 PM

To: Aimee Copas <DrAimee.Copas1@ndcel.org>

Subject: Fw: Bill HB 1251

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Another email/letter to our representatives from one of our teachers.

Seth Engelstad
Superintendent
North Border School District

"A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new."
- Albert Einstein

From: Rebecca Hornung <Rebecca.Hornung@k12.nd.us>

Sent: Friday, January 20, 2023 1:48 PM

To: Engelstad, Seth <Seth.Engelstad@k12.nd.us>

Subject: Fw: Bill HB 1251

From: Rebecca Hornung

Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2023 10:50 AM

To: jmyrdal@ndlegis.gov <jmyrdal@ndlegis.gov>; kanderson@ndlegis.gov <kanderson@ndlegis.gov>; dmonson@ndlegis.gov <dmonson@ndlegis.gov>

Subject: Bill HB 1251

Dear Senator Myrdal, Representative Anderson, and Representative Monson,

As a teacher at the North Border School District in Walhalla, I am writing to you to voice my opposition to bill HB1251. I do not feel this bill is what's right for small town North Dakota.

As an educator who has taught both pre and post Covid, I can tell you that no one in any educational position, teaching or administration, needs more added to their plate. I feel that this will do

just that to our administration and office managers.

When voting on this bill, please think of the schools and educators you represent. We don't need anything else taken away from our communities. Please vote NO to HB 1251.

Thank you,
Mrs. Rebecca Hornung
7th Grade teacher

January 22, 2023

Representative Heinert and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stacy Duffield. I graduated from a rural North Dakota school and taught English in two small, rural schools in ND. I have worked my entire career as an educator in ND, first in the service of K12 schools and then in preparing educators for ND's K12 classrooms.

I am writing in **opposition** to HB1251 for the following reasons.

- **Local control** is a hallmark of ND education, whereby local school boards and the communities they represent are empowered to make decisions to best serve their children based upon deep understandings of the stakeholders they serve. HB1251 overrides local authority in regard to one of the most important and impactful educational decisions—the leadership that guides and supports their school.
- Decisions about consolidations and shared services need to be approached thoughtfully—not in a rushed and forced manner—to do what is best for the students and other stakeholders. **Rushed and forced decisions** are likely to result in instability, creating stress and untenable working and learning conditions. We are already experiencing an **unprecedented teacher shortage**, and this bill is likely to further exacerbate that problem.
- It is common for rural superintendents to hold **multiple roles** for the district, often as principal, school bus driver, substitute teacher, and more. These roles will still need to be met, **negating the cost savings** predicted as a premise of HB 1251.
- The rural nature of ND and size of many districts will require a single superintendent to **oversee multiple schools covering a large geographical area**. The superintendent will only be able to be in buildings possibly once a week, or even once every two weeks, decreasing effectiveness, and increasing the **need to hire additional onsite leadership**.
- **Hiring superintendents for such roles will be very difficult** because of the extreme amount of travel and responsibilities for numerous buildings, staff, and students, especially given the proposed salary cap.
- The **cost of travel** will also need to be figured in, again negating most, if not all of the bill's purported cost savings.
- The **argument of large districts having a superintendent for multiple buildings is a false equivalency** because these districts are staffed with extensive networks of administration including assistant superintendents, curriculum coordinators, instructor support staff, deans of students, and more. If these systems need to be put in place to make a single superintendent possible, there will be no cost savings.

Sincerely,

Stacy Duffield
stacykayduffield@gmail.com

Michelle Pfaff

January 16, 2023

North Dakota Capitol Building,
Bismarck ND

Dear Representative Jason Dockter and Representative Matt Heilman:

I am very concerned with House Bill 1251 to limit the number of superintendents in the state of North Dakota. I work for a state agency that runs one of our state schools as a superintendent. It is concerning that there is nothing noted in the bill language that would refer to the three state schools: School for the Blind, School for the Deaf, and the Youth Correctional Center. However, it even more so frustrates me as a parent of children that attend Bismarck Public Schools that this bill would take away my voice as a voter in the district you represent.

This bill seems to me that at its core it would take away local control of the elected officials (school board members) in each school district. The premise of cost savings is not true. Many superintendents across the state, including myself, wear multiple hats to keep business as usual running in the district. I run a middle and high school as well as being director of an adult learning center across 7 sites in ND. I sub in the classroom when a teacher is sick or proctor assessments when students need to take them. I am special education director, CTE director, and help lead my staff through the personalized competency-based education initiative.

The ability to share superintendent positions is currently an option for districts. There are a few districts that choose to do that. However, to take away the decision-making process for those that live in the community and know its

needs best, is wrong. Is this bill saying that locally elected officials are not able to be trusted to make those decisions for themselves? And for the state to set pay parameters for school districts is extreme micromanagement. This concept undermines democracy and the established balance of power. It takes the power away from local officials and shifts it to the executive branch (DPI).

Administrators are only a fraction of the whole of educational personnel in the state, 4.7%. That is a small percentage compared to other business and industry percentage is.

Please oppose this bill. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michelle Pfaff

Good Morning

I am writing to ask you to strongly oppose HB 1251. This bill will require school districts with less than 475 students to combine with another district or districts to reach that threshold and share one common lead administrator. This would be extremely counter productive in smaller districts like Gackle-Streeter where the administration also serves the district in many other key roles as well as being superintendent. Every community is unique in culture and expectations for education. Recognizing this uniqueness combined with the state and federal mandates and assurances required to operate a school district is daunting. This bill would cripple local control. The expectation that one person could possibly do justice to this position in 2,3 or 4 districts at one time is unreasonable. What will happen is principals who are in the hallways and classrooms meeting with teachers and ensuring a quality education for students will now be busy in the office trying to keep up. This bill would result in districts hiring additional office staff to shuffle papers and the superintendent overseeing this coop would simply become a traveling rubber stamp. Please oppose this bill.

Thank you;

Senator Robert Erbele
Representative Brandenburg
Representative Gruemneich

rerbele@ndlegis.gov
mbrandenburg@ndlegis.gov
jgrueneich@ndlegis.gov

701391-1330
701 709--0237