

HB 1251 testimony – Josh Ruffo

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 1251. My name is Josh Ruffo, I am the president of the Turtle Lake - Mercer District 72 School Board. Our current enrollment K-12 is 177 students, which is well below the proposed minimum in this bill of 475 students to keep a superintendent in house. 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. 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.

House Bill 1251 proposes to save 13 million dollars by sharing a superintendent. In our school, the 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.

We currently only employ one k-12 principal, if this bill passes we would need to hire an additional principal that would need to assist in all of the added duties that listed before. In McLean county alone, we do not have any schools that would meet the 475 student threshold. This would mean that one superintendent would

have to oversee 2,3 and sometimes 4 school districts. That would mean that the superintendent would have multiple boards to report to, multiple board meetings to attend, and multiple communities address concerns with.

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.