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Testimony on House Bill No. 1251

Jenifer Hosman, Principal, Hebron Public School District

January 25, 2023

Good morning members of the House Education Committee. For the record, my name is Jenifer Hosman and I serve as the K-12 principal for Hebron Public Schools. I am providing testimony today in opposition to House Bill 1251.

Hebron Public School is a school of about 165 students. Our superintendent, Myron Schaff and I work as the administration team at our school. He is also our athletic director and Title IX coordinator in addition to the superintendent. In 2018 we had three administrators and he recognized that we could operate with one. In collaboration with the school board, we went through the reduction in force process and slimmed down our administrative costs to the district. These decisions were made at the local level by our elected officials. Although we are busy with just the two of us, we make it work because ultimately it is what is best for students.

As the school principal it is frightening for me to think of my superintendent not being in the building fulltime as proposed by HB 1251. If this bill passes, our new superintendent will be with me about 1.5 days per week. This will leave much of the work that is currently being handled by my superintendent to me. I am already very happily busy attending to my principal duties and I cannot take on his job as well. My options will be to ask the new superintendent and school board to hire another administrator or to leave my position. If our superintendent and board agree to hire a second administrator we will be worse off financially than if HB 1251 never happened. In our case, we will pay 1/3 of the new superintendent's salary and a salary to the new administrator that would be potentially hired at my school. I can't help but wonder

24 how many administrators we might lose if HS 1251 passes. My superintendent and I work
25 incredibly well together, we love our school, our teachers, our staff, and our students. Our
26 school board should be allowed local decision-making and local control. They should decide if
27 we need more or less and how much. They were elected to do so.

28 I was a teacher for many years before I became a principal in 2017. Teaching is an
29 honorable and highly underrated and underpaid profession. I am thrilled to hear that our
30 governor, superintendent of public instruction, and some legislators are considering ways to
31 pay our teachers more money. This is excellent and I am in 100% support of making this
32 happen. However, as the honorable Ruby proposed in his email to some North Dakota
33 teachers, "shifting dollars away from administrative services and towards classrooms....." is
34 not the answer. Our schools cannot lead themselves. Our administration works tirelessly to
35 run our buildings and finances with oversight from our school board all so that our students
36 may receive the best education possible. I have invited Legislator Ruby to visit my school and
37 talk with my superintendent and I but I have not received a reply. I am genuinely interested in
38 a potential visit from him at our school. I think we could agree on a lot. I propose that the state
39 give our teachers an across the board raise with funding that comes from within the governor's
40 budget and not at the expense of what our local school board's have decided is best for their
41 own schools.

42 I ask that you oppose taking away the local control and decision making that HB 1251
43 would allow. Our elected officials are doing their jobs in their respective communities and they
44 should be permitted to continue to do so.