

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Education Committee:

Good Morning.

My name is Jessica Baker.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 2254. I will be speaking in opposition to this bill.

I currently work at the Mandaree Public Elementary School as the 8th grade teacher. I have been employed as a teacher by the Mandaree School District for the past two years.

As a member of a federally recognized tribe, as well as an educator within the Indigenous community, I am against SB 2254. I can honestly say that this seems to be another type of genocide against our people, specifically targeted at our young.

This bill seems to be systemically racist as well as discriminatory, at the state level. If the state takes away funding for our public schools and gives to private schools, what will be left for the young people of our Indigenous communities? This is setting a huge majority of our young people up to fail.

This is WRONG!

Our staff and faculty have recently been attempting to turn our numbers around and bring students up to par. The timing we have been given has just not been enough. Just like everyone else, COVID had a huge impact on the learning environment, and may have been the cause of some of our testing numbers to go down. We have every faith in our students to get back to where they need to be and we will not give up on them.

PLEASE do not proceed with this bill.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jessica Baker  
8th Grade Teacher  
Mandaree School District