

3/13/2023

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

We are writing to show our support of Senate Bill 2328. As parents, an employee, and community members of the Hope-Page School District, we cannot stress enough the importance of this Bill and the support it will offer our family, school, and communities.

We have been open enrolled into the Hope-Page School District for four years with our children in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, living on the northeast edge of the district. What we love about the Hope-Page School District is that it offers smaller class sizes which allows for more academic opportunities including differentiated instruction, closer relationships with staff, and less travel time compared to surrounding school districts. The Hope-Page District offers a Pre-K program, growing CTE departments, access to dual credit courses, and focuses on building relationship with students. Our district feels like family and has created an environment which allows our children to thrive. Being able to live, work, and send our children to school all within the Hope-Page community has been essential to our family.

Without the bill, our district will be forced to make drastic and potentially catastrophic changes to school operations. With the projected loss of transition aid, our school district would be forced to cut over 35% of our budget. As the Business Manager of our school district for 10 years, I can assure that our district has been and will continue to be fiscally responsible in reviewing operations while being fair to our local tax base, which is largely agricultural. However, we do not think the loss in transition aid funding would allow our school district to operate at a status that would give our students and staff the resources and support they need and deserve. References in Senate Bill 2328 would help our district overcome the unique challenges we face as a small rural school, including covering a large geographical area and operating facilities in two communities, which are 14 miles apart.

Senate Bill 2328 would not only allow our school district to remain viable, but also the Hope and Page communities. In rural North Dakota the local school is the heart of a community as it offers local access to education and resources for families as well as being a social hub for the entire area. The District is also one of the largest employers of our area employing approximately 65 full and part-time positions of which 72% are residents of our community. This legislation is essential to the people in our communities and allows employment opportunities for those who are looking to move in. Living in rural North Dakota often means more travel time for access to resources, events, jobs, and other opportunities; keeping our school district open with adequate state funding would be one less barrier for serving and expanding our communities.

Your review and support of Senate Bill 2328 is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continued work for North Dakota.



Brandon Roller and Ahi Roller, Business Manager

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District 29

