

January 22, 2023

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Legislative District #20

Chairman Elkin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of SB2328, an amendment to the weighting factors for funding rural schools. Our district is hopeful that the amendment will help solve the puzzle of how to keep quality instruction and opportunities in our school. In response to the new funding formula, my kids' school district (Hope-Page) has combined positions and has reduced online and dual credit course offerings. Our superintendent drives an activities bus after school and also coaches. Other teachers do the same. Hope-Page is already fiscally conservative.

Rural schools struggle to offer the same opportunities found in larger schools. For example, Hope-Page does not offer any in-house foreign language or advanced math classes. The business teacher position has been vacant for over a year. There is no active drama program. Hope-Page does boast strong, although small, core departments and exceptional agriculture and FACS programs.

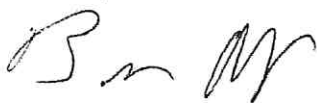
Where should Hope-Page cut expenses? Please don't say Ag and FACS as these programs teach our kids life skills. Cutting teachers when a school only has one teacher per department doesn't make sense, and our staff is already doubling up on roles, so where can rural schools cut?

The consequences of inaction are high. If rural schools are forced to close, young families will be left with the choice of relocating or homeschooling. Fewer young families means a shortage of workers for our manufacturing facilities and fewer consumers at our grocery stores.

Businesses will close. The current funding formula insufficiently funds rural schools; this lack of funds will start a chain reaction that will cripple rural North Dakota.

We appreciate every effort the Senate Education Committee expends in keeping rural schools viable, quality institutions. Thank you for considering SB2328 to improve the funding formula for rural schools.

Sincerely,



Ben Albert



Catherine Albert

