

March 7, 2023

RE: SB2340

My name is Jennifer Lunde and I have been a school counselor for 16 years with my masters in school counseling. I earned my masters in May of 2005 and fulfilled two- 16-week internship with both an elementary and high school counselor. Prior to that I was a classroom teacher for 5 years. I cannot tell you the importance of having the education of a school counseling program, the prior experience of teaching, and an internship. I do not take the role of a school counselor lightly and a mental health provider is not a school counselor. Our responsibility is not only mental health. We also have the responsibility of academic success and career/college/military readiness.

I do understand the demand for school counselors however I do not believe that can be filled with mental health providers with fidelity. I value our profession, both education and counseling where substituting one profession for another is not acceptable. Please value us with keeping the integrity of school counseling intact. I am thrilled with University of Mary's grant to educate our future school counselors. This is where our legislators are needed in providing funding for graduate level school counselor education opportunities and funding our schools to not only be competitive in hiring school counselors but also qualified educators.

I am very proud of our education system in North Dakota. I have worked in school districts outside of North Dakota and I have a pulse on students transferring from out of state school districts and based on my experiences North Dakota is the best state to be educated in. We have high expectations of our students and of our education system. Please keep the standards of our school counselors and educators top notch.

Best Regards,

Jennifer Lunde  
Minot High School  
Magic City Campus School Counselor