

Testimony in Opposition

Chairperson Weisz and members of the Human Services Committee. For the record, my name is Larry Derr, Superintendent of Glenburn Public School. I am testifying in opposition to SB 2260.

At Glenburn we believe parents are a huge piece to the educational puzzle. We welcome input from parents and patrons of our district. There are pieces to this bill that are deeply concerning and should be left up to the elected school board members to accept policies that best fits individual districts.

We are in the midst of a teacher shortage in North Dakota. Recruiting and retaining effective teachers to not only North Dakota but to our individual school districts is a challenge. Effective teachers are not only critical to the success of our schools but also to the success of our communities.

Section 2 of this bill would add unnecessary burdens upon our teachers, administrators, and school board members. These unnecessary burdens will only create more of a teacher shortage problem than what we already have. The requirements in section 2 will present a burden on the daily operations of our school district. This would require each teacher to prepare a detailed syllabus for each class no matter the grade level, a procedure to allow parents to review curriculum and teacher training materials, the right to review, copy, and record all curriculum and teacher training materials for each class, the opportunity to meet with the teacher, principal, or other representative from the school to discuss the curriculum and teacher training materials. The timelines of this requirement are very burdensome. I have told my teachers to write grades and lesson plans in pencil and not ink so you can change them as needed. Lesson plans are fluid and need to be adjusted as the teacher assesses the knowledge of the students. Teachers plan, plan, and plan some more. Sometimes you have to adjust your sails as the wind changes direction. This bill does not allow those adjustments to be made. These requirements would expect that the school district drop everything it is doing and focus on the request made by the parent. For example, a class that has 25 students could potentially have 25 requests made by parents. Now not only does the certified teacher have to legally answer to an administrator but also to 25 other non-certified parents.

I have always been a promoter of the education system we have in North Dakota. So much in fact that my daughter is a first-year teacher. Bills like this one will continue to push people away from entering into education and will cause us to lose the great ones that we already have to other careers. We need to focus on recruiting and retaining teachers, not be discouraging and attacking them.

I would urge a do not pass recommendation from this committee on SB 2260. Thank you!

*Larry Derr*