

Testimony of Kirsten Baesler
North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction
Senate Human Resources Subcommittee
In Support of HB 1021
Monday, March 13, 2023

Chairman Dever and members of the Senate Human Resources Subcommittee.

My name is Kirsten Baesler. I am the North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction, and I am here to speak in support of House Bill 1021.

I am here today to express my support for the North Dakota Information Technology budget request for the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to support the Department of Public Instruction's important work for the state's 120,000 K12 students. As someone who values education and transparency, I believe that investing in these efforts will have a positive impact on our students and communities.

The Department of Public Instruction is responsible for reporting data to the federal government and to you, the North Dakota Legislature, to ensure that our schools are meeting the required academic standards. The SLDS provides the information we need to meet this directive. Without adequate funding, this work would be difficult to maintain, potentially leading to inaccurate reporting and

potential consequences for our schools and students. SLDS is crucial to supporting the Department of Public Instruction in their efforts to provide accurate and timely reporting.

In addition to state and federal reporting, the Department of Public Instruction has also relied on the SLDS system to create and update public data dashboards that provide transparency and insight into the academic progress of students and quality factors of schools. These dashboards are an invaluable tool for parents, educators, and community members who want to understand the performance of our schools and how we can work to improve them. Without adequate funding, the maintenance of these dashboards could be compromised, limiting their usefulness to our communities and state policymakers.

Furthermore, the Department of Public Instruction has worked with NDIT creating geospatial maps for K12 school districts. These maps help to identify areas of need and inform decisions about resource allocation. They are an important tool for ensuring that all students have access to quality education, regardless of their location. Without proper funding, the maintenance and updating of these maps could be compromised, limiting their usefulness for decision-makers.

Lastly, I support funding for digital credentialing and the maintenance of the educational data portal. These efforts were previously funded by federal grants that are expiring, and it is important that we continue to invest in these programs to ensure that our students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

In conclusion, I believe that investing in the North Dakota Information Technology budget to support the Department of Public Instruction's work is a wise decision that will benefit our students and communities for years to come. I urge you to support this request and help ensure that our education system continues to thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I urge a “do pass” vote on HB 1021. I welcome any questions you may have.