

Testimony HB 1231
Senate Education Committee
March 7, 2023
Education Standards and Practice Board

Good morning, Chairman Elkin, and members of the Committee. My name is Rebecca Pitkin, and I am the Executive Director of the Education Standards and Practices Board. I am here today to testify in support of SB 1231, specifically Section 1. The stated requirements for K-3 candidates for licensure align exactly with the competencies required for currently practicing teachers, and reflect as stated in line 13, scientifically and research based best practices. Our current state context, not unlike many states, indicates we need to work together with the same goals to foster increased reading competency for our North Dakota children, with a specific focus on grades kindergarten to grade 3 where students learn to read and can then read to learn in the following grades. The language in this section aligns entities so that everyone is spreading the same message regarding the science of reading. Language in a bill does not automatically increase children's reading competency, but it does provide a common path forward for those training teachers who will receive an initial educator's license, and those who are currently teachers. The focus on these concepts in training teacher candidates has been ongoing and was codified last Session in 15.1-13-35.1 but applied to kindergarten through grade 12 teachers and special education teachers. HB 1231 aligns the focus for future and current teachers. North Dakota has been selected to participate in the Hunt Institute Path Forward Initiative and a cross agency group is working diligently to align the K-16 focus of reading to make positive impacts on students' reading ability. As a former reading specialist, I have seen the effect on adults when they cannot read and countless studies indicate the positive impacts an educated citizenship has on the economic well-being of a state, and more importantly, in the life of a child.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on a critically important topic and this concludes my testimony. I am willing to answer any questions relating to my testimony.

Rebecca Pitkin, PhD
Executive Director, ESPB
rpitkin@nd.gov
701.328.9646