

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1386
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
March 8, 2023**

**By Rachel Tabler, Assistant Director of Educational Improvement and Support
701-328-3731
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction**

Chairman Elkin and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rachel Tabler, and I am an Assistant Director in the Office of Educational Improvement and Support with the Department of Public Instruction. I am here to provide information regarding HB 1386.

As it stands now, districts are only required to complete two reports to NDDPI pertaining to professional development: the behavioral health PD report outlined in HB 1386 and science of reading implementation. All districts are required to offer eight hours of behavioral health professional development every two years. Currently, school districts use STARS reporting to report on the behavioral health professional development (PD) offered within their district. However, many districts and teachers do much more than eight hours. High-quality professional development is an integral part of every school and is intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, and data-driven.

The current law also requires that each school assigns a dedicated behavioral health resource coordinator. This individual is identified in the STARS reporting system and is shared on the NDDPI website. In addition, a sister bill was passed in

2019 (SB 2313) for the department of health and human services to offer resources to schools regarding behavioral and mental health services. This is now called the B-HERO program, whose mission it is to engage K-12 Behavioral Health Resource Coordinators in training, technical assistance, and opportunities to facilitate connections. This program utilizes this list as a point of contact for outreach to individual schools and to share resources and information regarding mental and behavioral health.

Currently, responding to behavioral health needs is one of the most common requests from administrators, teachers, and students. Last year, NDDPI updated the report to collect additional data for the B-HERO program to ensure that it provides the proper resources to the K-12 Behavioral Resource Coordinators. I've included a screen shot below of what the report looks like in the STARS reporting system:

Since this bill was originally passed, a report has never been requested by legislators.

As it stands now, if this HB1386 passes the Senate Education Committee, NDDPI recommends striking all of section 1, as there is no reason to include a "may" section of statute since local school districts already have this authority. The same is true of the Professional Development- Discretionary section. School districts already have local control to determine professional development needs beyond Science of Reading and do not need statutory authority to do so. I have

included an example of some language that could be removed from statute if this committee is moving towards a do-pass recommendation.

Chairman Elkin and Members of the Committee that concludes my prepared testimony, and I will stand for any questions that you may have.

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1386

Introduced by

Representatives Timmons, Bosch, Jonas, Mock, Murphy, Pyle, Richter, Sanford
Senators Conley, Lemm, Meyer

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-18.2 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to local boards of school districts' discretion to designate educational
3 professional development content areas; and to amend and reenact section 15.1-07-34 of the
4 North Dakota Century Code, relating to youth behavioral health professional development.

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

6 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15.1-07-34 of the North Dakota Century Code is
7 amended and reenacted as follows:

8 **15.1-07-34. Youth behavioral health training to teachers, administrators, and ancillary**
9 **staff.**

10 1. ~~Every two years, each school district shall~~~~may~~ provide a minimum of eight hours of
11 ~~professional development on youth behavioral health to elementary, middle, and high~~
12 ~~school teachers, and administrators. Each school district shall~~~~may~~ encourage ancillary
13 ~~and support staff to participate in the professional development. Based on the annual~~
14 ~~needs assessment of the school district, those hours must~~~~may~~ be designated from the
15 ~~following categories:~~

- 16 ~~a. Trauma;~~
- 17 ~~b. Social and emotional learning, including resiliency;~~
- 18 ~~c. Suicide prevention;~~
- 19 ~~d. Bullying;~~
- 20 ~~e. Understanding of the prevalence and impact of youth behavioral health wellness~~
21 ~~on family structure, education, juvenile services, law enforcement, and health~~
22 ~~care and treatment providers;~~
- 23 ~~f. Knowledge of behavioral health symptoms, and risks;~~

1 ~~g. Awareness of referral sources and evidence-based strategies for appropriate~~
2 ~~interventions,~~

3 ~~h. Other evidence-based strategies to reduce risk factors for students, or~~

4 ~~i. Current or new evidence-based behavior prevention or mitigation techniques.~~

5 2. Each school district shall report the professional development hours required under-
6 subsection 1 to the department of public instruction.

7 3. Each school within a district shall designate an individual as a behavioral health
8 resource coordinator.

9 4.3. The superintendent of public instruction shall collaborate with regional education
10 associations to disseminate information, training and instructional materials, and
11 notice of training opportunities to school districts and nonpublic schools. This training
12 must qualify for continuing education credits that count towards license renewal.

13 5.4. The superintendent of public instruction shall maintain the contact information of the
14 behavioral health resource coordinator in each school.

15 **SECTION 2.** A new section to chapter 15.1-18.2 of the North Dakota Century Code is
16 created and enacted as follows:

17 **Professional development - Discretionary.**

18 A school administrator shall recommend professional development content areas
19 appropriate for a public school or school district to the board of a school district. ~~The board of a~~
20 ~~school district may designate professional development for a school district. Professional~~
21 ~~development may include content areas, including behavioral, physical, or mental health.~~
22 Professional development must include the professional development training required under
23 section 15.1-21-12.1.