



North Dakota House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:

Education
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Good morning Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee. For the record, I am Rep. Kelby Timmons from District 26 in McKenzie and Dunn Counties. I put this bill in for the school districts in my area. This bill is to give local school boards of school districts' discretion to designate educational professional development content areas for each school district.

Schools are often looked at for being the place where we can intercept, correct, or prevent any myriad of issues with students and our communities. We are in a place in society where schools are entrusted often with the wellness and education of the whole person.

With that has come a flurry of mandated training over the years. Each year there are a couple additional requests for added training. These trainings are ongoing and, while important, having them completed continually can be outside of the scope of what that district needs at that given time. Sometimes that professional development becomes deemed as redundant and may not be what the teachers and staff have been identified to best serve the students.

Over the last several sessions, there have been various reactionary bills "requiring" certain hours of professional development and levels of training for schools and they do not take into account previous trainings or actual local need. While the required trainings are well intended, they don't account for the ability to address specific needs of a local school district with limited professional development days in the calendar. Professional development should vary with every school district based on their actual needs and the staff demographics; efforts to mandate professional development at the state level often do not return positive results and do not effectively use contract days and state/taxpayer dollars. Professional development is a very local decision made by administration and school boards based on their strategic plans. This bill helps to alleviate the mandates of previous sessions and bring it back to a local decision. Recommendations from the state level are fine, however, mandates can provide unintended consequences for local school districts.

This bill leaves the determination of what professional development will take place to the local district on an annual basis. It leaves in place the opportunity to list important topics that legislatively there is concern and a desire for legislature to have administration ensure that staff are equipped to handle well.

From a field-based standpoint, this will enable schools to spend more time in development of high-quality teaching to directly impact student learning with an ongoing consideration and implantation of the important topics that still need to be addressed.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 1386 and I would urge a do pass. I would be happy to answer any questions you have that I am able to. However, the people behind me, may be able to handle the questions better than I.