

SB 2270 Testimony

January 30, 2023

Senate Education Committee

Hon. Jay Elkin, Chairman

Chairman Elkin and Committee,

Good morning. I am Brad Bekkedahl, Senator from District 1 in Williston, here to introduce SB 2270, a Student Teacher Experience Program grant opportunity. Before I start explaining the bill Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce an amendment document number 23.0434.02001 and request the committee adopt it as presented. This bill has been in development for almost a year now, and I've been fortunate to have input from Superintendent Baesler of the Department of Public Instruction, Representative Cyndy Schreiber-Beck, and Stacy Duffield, representing the Teacher Shortage Workgroup, which is made up of administrators, educators, agencies, and teacher preparation faculty in North Dakota. The amendment before you incorporate changes they recommended after reading the final bill text, and the changes really clarify some action aspects of the program. As the amended version of the bill would work, the Department of Public Instruction shall develop grant program guidelines to incentivize licensed teachers to stay in North Dakota following completion of a student teacher experience in North Dakota and graduation.

The grant is set up to further enhance rural student teacher opportunities by paying twice the amount for a rural school student teaching position. The grant would be paid out after the student applies with DPI to participate in the program, and then provides a contract for employment with a public school district in the state within 2 years of graduation. Successful grant amounts are up to \$3,000 for no more than 15 weeks experience in an urban district and up to \$6,000 for no more than 15 weeks experience in a rural school district. There are also preference standards recommended in the bill and language relating to any housing availability that can be offered but not reimbursed to the local school district from DPI.

Mr. Chairman and committee, that is the bill as it exists before you today with the amendment. I want to thank Anna Hoover for asking me about pursuing this program a year ago, as well as her diligence in working with me to get it introduced for your review. She is currently in her student teaching program now outside of Bismarck and is unable to travel here today but has submitted written testimony and has permission from her supervisor to testify remotely if allowed by the Chairman. I think there will be other supporting testimony as well and before relinquishing the podium, would be glad to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. I respectfully request a Do Pass recommendation on SB 2270 as amended.