

SB 2351

Testimony in opposition

Mr. Chairman Elkin and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Danica Nelson, Bismarck Public Schools Student Support Services Director. I would like to express opposition to SB 2351. Bismarck Public Schools currently has a robust data collection system which collects the requested information of classroom clearings, the cause of student behavior, and if a general or special education student. The requirements of the SB 2351 are already a part of an established process which supports school board policy requirements. Classroom clearings are also reported to the Bismarck Public School Board in an R3 report which occurs in November of each year. School and district teams continuously review school data and make necessary changes to the process, procedure, classroom and/or school wide expectations. An additional reporting stated in SB 2351 would not impact school systems.

So often school districts are asked to collect data and report back to various departments without a clear understanding of the "why". Also, data will be very inconsistent among school districts if common definitions are not established. This bill would collect a wide variety of data points without common definitions and have a higher potential of data collected with no actionable steps. Human resources would be spent entering data and less staff time working with staff and students to improve school systems. Once data is collected how will a timely response from the Department of Health and Human Services support system development? Will the Department of Health and Human Services fund avenues to help support a school districts systems or will it be used to only identify funding? Data collection without ability to apply change is another task vs. system impact.

School districts need supports, services, people, money, and time in order to evaluate and change current practice and systems. SB 2351 would require more time reporting data to the Department of Health and Human Services with no guaranteed return on investment or districts understanding "why" or purpose of the data. As a Student Support Services Director, I strongly urge you to oppose this bill due to a lack of clarity around the "why" and lack of outcomes to strength a schools data based decision making process.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this as you discuss this bill.