

Senate Finance and Taxation

Sen. Kannianen Chairman

Testimony on North Dakota Education Funding Formula – SB2066

Presented by Scott Davis, representing Belcourt School District #7, Ft. Yates Public School District, New Town Public School District

Greetings Sen. Kannianen and members of the Committee,

My name is Scott Davis. I am the former Executive Director of the ND Indian Affairs Commission, a post I held for 12 years. I know represent Belcourt School District #7, Ft. Yates Public School District, New Town Public School District.

I am here today in support of SB 2066 in that this Bill will give all North Dakotan's an opportunity to address our property tax bill in providing property tax relief and just as important, to provide adequate funding for North Dakota school districts which include North Dakota public schools on Tribal Reservations.

This Bill reminds me an extension of what was done during the 2013 Legislative Session. Then, Governor Dalrymple in unison with the Legislative Body, passed a substantial property tax bill that aided local political subdivisions and school districts that included schools on Tribal Reservations.

What was added to that Bill at the time was to carve out a school funding formula for schools that have no or very limited tax base. The schools that we are addressing today exist on our Air Bases in Minot and Grand Forks, they also include schools in Belcourt, Ft. Totten, Ft. Yates and within the MHA Nation.

The intent of that Bill formula at that time was to get those schools on Transition Maximum. Since then, we've had a few budget shortfalls due to falling Oil prices, commodity prices and pandemic. So today, many of the schools are not there yet.

We believe with your support that SB 2066 will get our schools back on track regarding the Transition maximum formula and maintain current baseline funding rates and to continue to increase the (transition) maximum percentage in the next 2-4 years.

We also recognize that this property tax Bill is a little different from 2013 regarding utilizing local Mills verses a Cash value on property. This may or may not change the existing Funding Formula we created in 2013. If so, we feel very confident that we can work today with the Committee's, DPI and the Governors office in achieving the correct Funding Formula for our Schools.

Our team would be happy to sit down with Committee members as we move this Bill forward.

Mr. Chairman this concluded my testimony at this time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Scott Davis

SDavis and Associates