

**House Education Committee**  
Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota  
House Bill 1494

Dakota Breen  
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Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to provide my testimony in support of HB 1494. I am an educator of English learners with over 13 years of experience. I also have 3 years of experience as district leadership for EL programming in a large school district.

This bill would increase funding for English learners in turn helping districts and schools better meet the needs of these learners. The goal of EL programming is to help students become English proficient. This helps not only helps the student and our K-12 schools, but it also helps our state's economy by supporting a future workforce in being more English proficiency.

In regards to the additional expense of teaching English Learners (ELs), the cost varies widely depending on the language development program a school or district implements. However, I would like to highlight some standard costs associated with EL education.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) provides guidance suggesting that for every 20 English learners enrolled in a district, a full-time EL teacher should be employed. Additionally, it recommends a maximum caseload of 40 English learners per EL teacher. The average salary for a teacher in North Dakota is approximately \$49,296, though a more accurate figure, including benefits, may be available.

Beyond EL teachers, English learners often qualify for additional supports such as reading and math interventions, counseling, and social work services, which may require increased staffing. Districts with higher student-to-EL teacher ratios may also need paraprofessional support to better assist ELs throughout the day. Furthermore, administrative tasks related to EL programming necessitate staff such as EL coordinators and administrative assistants. Some districts may also offer adult education ESL courses for EL parents, though these programs may be funded separately.

Additional costs associated with EL programs include translation and interpreter services, professional development for staff to implement best practices, and curriculum materials tailored to EL needs, such as online language development programs, adapted texts, and English language development curricula. Small and large districts alike may also incur travel expenses for EL teachers who must commute between schools or towns.

I hope this information helps illustrate the financial considerations of EL education in our districts. Please let me know if any additional details would be helpful. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dakota Breen". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "Breen".

**Dakota Breen**

West Fargo Resident

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