



Kidder County Public School District#1

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Good afternoon Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Rick Diegel, and I am the superintendent the Kidder County School District and I am speaking in support of HB 1498.

HB 1498 is not a new idea in North Dakota, and actually something that before last session, we had the ability to do for the last 15-20 years. However, last session, when a provision was added to allow us to pay bonuses to our current teachers to move from a current position to a hard to fill position (from a classroom teacher to a special education teacher), the signing bonus bill was inadvertently removed.

We do not want a bill that allows teachers to jump from school to school and collect signing bonuses, which this bill would NOT allow to happen.

The ability to pay a signing bonus to teachers who did not teacher in North Dakota the year before is crucial to small schools in North Dakota. I have used signing bonuses in both Edgeley and Kidder County since they've been allowed. Though we don't use them for every single hire, we do use them if I feel that it is only way that I can get a teacher.

The advantage of having the ability in a small school is that even though a Bismarck would have the ability to use a signing bonus, they probably won't since they usually have plenty of applicants. It is one of the few things that I can offer a candidate that class A school probably won't.

We currently have 3 teachers on staff that started with a signing bonus (usually 3 years or less), including one that received a 3 year signing bonus and is now on year 5!!!

I would ask that you please support HB 1498 and give us back the authority to offer signing bonuses as outlined in the bill.

I will stand for any questions.