

2/11/2025

To Chairperson Heinert and the House Education Committee,

My name is Josh Nelson. I am in year 16 as a public-school teacher in Northwood, ND. As a resident of North Dakota Legislative District 20 I am writing this letter to show support for HB 1516 to allow a voice to teachers on a school board. This letter is of my own opinion and not necessarily the stance of my school district.

I urge the members of the committee to consider a due pass resolution on HB 1516 and encourage their peers on the floor to support the passage of the bill

I do feel the passing of HB 1516 would provide a positive link between local school boards and teachers across our state. With benefits such as.

1. **Providing the board with firsthand knowledge on education issues.** There are times I sit in a board room and do have input to give, but I am not allowed to participate in a meeting until our local associations time on the agenda is called upon to speak. Teachers work more directly with students and have a unique perspective than even administrators and can provide board members with valuable feedback or information they may not currently be accounting for.
2. **Better Communication between the teachers and the board members.** Having a teacher on the board who can actively engage in conversation not only allows the teachers to voice their concerns in a more direct way, but they also allow the staff more transparency in what is going on in the district. Transparency is a key element in a democracy, and HB 1516 provides a manner in which teachers will feel heard, and will be able to voice concerns directly to a board instead of relying on administrators or the current format of giving 5 minutes to the local association to speak, and not necessarily given an opportunity for a rebuttal.
3. **More informed decision making.** A teacher representative on the school board will provide the elected, voting board members with in-depth real-world knowledge. A non-voting Teacher, who is a member, will be able to give direct feedback in real time during the meeting on issues such as budget, policy, and educational strategies and the possible impacts to the district. I have collaborated with amazing and well-intentioned administrators and school boards in my career, but they cannot see what I and other teachers deal with daily and may not have their thumbs on the pulse of a school system the way a teacher does.

Thank you to the House Education Committee for considering the passage of HB 1516.

Respectfully,

Josh Nelson