

Certification Central

ND's 1st Alternative Educator Preparation Program

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Written Testimony in Support of HB1530

Chairman Heinert and House Education Committee:

For the record, my name is Dr. Katherine Terras, Co-founder of Certification Central (CC), ND's 1st Alternative Educator Preparation Programming. I am in full support of HB1530.

Certification Central focuses on special education. We train special education technicians and teachers, as well as provide consulting services to the field. As a consultant, I work alongside special education teachers 4 to 5 days a week. I service 9 special education units who represent 24+ school districts. I have a field-based understanding about the needs of students and first-hand knowledge about the reasons teachers are leaving, because I work with teachers and students directly. Each year, I have watched the most highly trained, effective special education teachers leave the field entirely or take a position as a general education teacher. If these teachers are leaving, it is definitely not a training issue. If the legislature wants to collect meaningful, accurate data about root causes, ask the teachers and paraprofessionals directly. Letting stakeholder groups speak for them will not illuminate the compassion they have for students with disabilities nor the frustrations they encounter when trying to get students the services and programming they need. Finally, I do recommend one amendment to this study, to include the following research question: *What is the impact, if any, that collaborations with outside agencies have on teachers' decisions to stay in or leave the field?*

This concludes my testimony. I will now stand for questions.