

Representative Finley-DeVille

### Introduction of House Bill 1618

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille. I represent District 4A, which includes MHA Nation. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce HB 1618 as the primary sponsor. House Bill 1618 seeks to provide appropriations to the Department of Public Instruction for Tribal School Infrastructure Grants.

I'd like to take a moment to address a specific request that was made by Spirit Lake Chairwoman Lonna Street in our ND State and Tribal committee meeting—support for improvements to the parking lot at Four Winds School. This request highlights an often overlooked but important piece of infrastructure that directly impacts the safety and accessibility of a school.

While the bill before us is focused on providing broader infrastructure grants for tribal schools, I want to emphasize that we understand the importance of addressing even the most foundational needs, like parking lots. The school in question has an outdated and unsafe parking lot that poses challenges for students, staff, and visitors every day. This parking lot does not meet the needs of the community.

HB 1618 gives the Department of Public Instruction the flexibility to allocate funding for infrastructure projects based on the priorities of individual schools. If parking lot improvements are a critical need for this school, then those funds can be used to ensure that it becomes a safer, more functional space. This would not only address immediate safety concerns but also improve the overall environment of the school.

I ask for a Do Pass recommendation in support of HB 1618. Thank you for your support.