

HB 1562  
House Education Committee  
January 27, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Ruby and members of the Human Service Committee. My name is Rebecca Pitkin, and I am the executive director of the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB). I am here today to provide neutral testimony on HB 1562 which would require, before initial licensure and for each renewal, completion of an interactive training module provided by the department of health and human services for mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect and to provide documentation. My testimony will address the way ESPB could manage the potential requirements. The amended language of the bill requires initial license candidates and those applying for a renewal to complete the training previously completed at the school district level. ESPB could handle this in the same way as the youth mental health competency requirements.

Senate Bill 2048 (64<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly) mandates a mental health competency course for all initial licenses. Those graduating from a North Dakota institutions have this built into their preparation program and some teacher education programs currently require mandated reporter training as part of the student teaching seminar. The board may issue a provisional license for up to two years to a teacher licensure candidate that does not meet the requirements of this mental health competency. If the bill becomes law, ESPB would request additional programming in our ND Teach platform as is customary when changes are needed. The application would then contain language informing the applicant of the training requirements as well as including a place for them to upload their completion certificate. All website licensure information would be amended to reflect the changes so applicants were aware of this as they begin the process.

ESPB asks that several considerations be addressed:

1. Non-public administrators do not need a teaching license, so ESPB could not monitor this.
2. The requirements for Youth Mental Health competencies have the following language: *The board may issue a provisional license for up to two years to a teacher licensure candidate that does not meet the requirements of this section.*

The rationale for this language is to enable an out of state teacher who has not completed the training to begin teaching immediately, which is best for students. *Does the committee believe applicants should have two years to complete the training?*

3. HB 1238 proposes a life license at 20 years; ESPB would potentially not require this training after the 20-year license is issued.
4. ESPB issues a 40-day license to allow teachers to begin teaching when they are missing some element of their complete application. Both applicants and administrators request this license and

acknowledge the missing element in writing. *Does the committee believe the training should be completed before ESPB issues a 40-day license?*

ESPB anticipates a smooth transition, once programming is complete, and seeks clarification on the above items to ensure adherence to the law.

Thank you for your considerations and this concludes my testimony.

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