

## **Testimony of Jon Dryburgh**

### **Hillsboro Public School Superintendent**

#### **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2362**

Chairman Beard, Vice-Chair Lemm, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Jon Dryburgh, and I am the superintendent at Hillsboro Public School District #9. I am speaking in support of **Senate Bill 2362**, which seeks to open additional means for North Dakota schools to be accredited. Please return this bill to the Senate Floor with a “Do Pass” recommendation.

I had the opportunity on January 28, 2025 to sit next to Senator David Clemens during the afternoon session of the Senate. We heard remarks from Commander Trey Kennard, the commanding officer of the USS North Dakota. As I reflected on what Commander Kennard was saying, he was describing a High Reliability Organization. If anyone in a High Reliability Organization sees something inconsistent with what they should see, they have the ability and responsibility to take immediate action. High Reliability Schools are supposed to work in a very similar way. We are constantly monitoring our culture, our instructional practices, and our curriculum. We conduct surveys, have people come in and provide feedback, and set aggressive goals for our staff and ourselves. We analyze data on a monthly basis and track student progress over time. When students are struggling, we ask ourselves what that student needs in order to be successful.

The help that our school receives to be a High Reliability School costs the district money and requires some difficult conversations when things are getting off track. The company that reviews our information is independent of the people we work with. This last summer Hillsboro Public School achieved Level 3 Certification, which means we have a Safe and Collaborative Culture, we have Effective Teaching in every classroom, and we now have a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum. This is constant and consistent improvement.

Senate Bill 2362 would allow us to use this process for our accreditation process instead of using Cognia. I’m sure Cognia helps schools, but my experience has been that schools jump through hoops which allow them to be accredited and then do very little until it is time to be accredited again. Cognia also costs our school money, but the money we spend would be better spent by continuing down the HRS path. The work we do as a High Reliability School requires constant monitoring, just like a submarine, or an aircraft carrier, or an air base. High Reliability Organizations are all around us. Please give schools the freedom to use the same process for accreditation.

Thank you for your time. I ask for your support of this bill and recommend a “Do Pass” vote from your committee.