



HB 1114 – Expansion of teacher support program

NDCEL Supportive Testimony

Chairman Owens, members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak today. For the record my name is Dr. Aimee Copas. I serve as the Executive Director for NDCEL the organization that supports school leaders in North Dakota.

I am here to share our support of the concept outlined in HB 1114. I’m sure that you’ve heard testimony all session so far about scores of bills that are addressing repercussions of COVID. I remain steadfast that although this is an incredibly trying time, we will come out of this stronger on the other side than we were before. That being said, we still must address the “right-now” and a very real piece of what’s happened in schools is that we have very new and green teachers (and honest new and green administrators as well) that have quite the introduction into the profession this year. In more ways than I can indicate, this was not at all a typical year. There are critical coaching pieces that would normally be addressed in the first-year mentorship program that were likely not discussed, and many more obstacles to overcome than in a typical school year. We are staring head long into yet another very large obstacle in our quest to right our teacher shortage issue. The educational associations and this legislative body has grappled with years about how to address teacher retention – never in my career has there been a more dire time to really partner on this. One of the only things that data has proven out again and again that positively impacts teacher retention is the teacher-mentor program. In speaking with many educational leaders about this as well as this being a piece for the quality educational personnel subcommittee of the K12 coordination council as outlined in their year-end report – it makes sense to strongly invest in something we know works. The teachers who have experienced and are still experiencing COVID in their first year of teaching really do need to have the possible option of a second year in the program to achieve the mentorship they need. Our students in ND need for their teachers to have this experience so that these teachers can continue to grow to their potential and maintain the course in a career in education.



1 We are thankful for the past years of support for the teacher mentor program and we humbly ask
2 your support for that continued and actually heightened support for this biennium. The impact that
3 teachers have on students is paramount, followed closely by the impact that lives in the world of
4 the educational leaders. NDCEL will be supporting continued fiscal support to the NDEAD center
5 for first year administrator mentorship with the appropriations committee. We are asking that this
6 body consider this information support this much needed additional mentorship for teachers as
7 addressed in this bill so we can take the next step together in ensuring the best possible chance to
8 retain our North Dakota teachers and give students the best possibility for success.