

Dear Chairman and Appropriations Committee Members,

I am writing to urge you to continue funding the Red River Valley Writing Project, which is supported by a Department of Public Instruction pass-through grant. As a teacher at North Dakota State University and member of the Red River Valley Writing Project (RRVWP) community, I have seen firsthand the positive impact this program has on our teachers and students.

### **Purpose**

The Red River Valley Writing Project is a professional development program that provides teachers with the training and support they need to improve their writing instruction. By participating in this program, teachers gain new skills and strategies that enable them to better engage their students and help them develop stronger writing skills. This, in turn, benefits our students by preparing them for academic success and future careers.

Furthermore, the Red River Valley Writing Project is a program that focuses on training teachers to increase North Dakota's voice in both written and spoken mediums, ensuring that all students have access to innovative and high-quality writing instruction. This is especially important for students from rural and low-income communities who may face barriers to academic success.

### **Impact**

I was honored to be one of the NDSU instructors who got to participate in the RRVWP summer institute in 2022. This institute provided me with opportunities to collaborate with local k-12 educators while learning about the writing process and ways to incorporate innovative teaching techniques

for writing with both academic and creative purposes. This institute helped me create a unit I used this fall (and plan to continue using for future English courses at NDSU) to teach my students about the different affordances and constraints of communicating through different written, spoken, and visual modes. My students gave me great feedback on the unit and lesson plans I used that will help my students write and communicate in future classes as well as in professional contexts outside of the college classroom, such as their places of work. In addition to allowing the education from the summer institute to trickle down to our students, the summer institute is also a wonderful opportunity for educators to continue learning about our content area, teaching methods, and personally connect with the power of writing. With so many areas in the U.S. facing a teacher shortage, experiences like the RRVWP allow us to reconnect with writing and become inspired to continue being the best teachers we can be. Investing in educators is a big part of investing in our students and children-- the next generation. RRVWP does both of these important actions for North Dakota students and instructors. We should be funding them, not taking those resources away.

### **Request for Funding**

Continued funding would allow the writing project to fulfill its aims and service to North Dakota's teachers, students, and citizens. Without funding from the DPI grant, this valuable program may be forced to cut back its services or even shut down entirely. This would be a tremendous loss for North Dakota and the students and teachers who rely on this program (at a time when our schools need **more and better writing, not less**).

Therefore, I urge you to support continued funding for the Red River Valley Writing Project. Please consider the impact that this program has on our

community and the importance of providing our teachers and students with the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

S.J. Williamson

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English instructor & PhD student