



**NDSBA**  
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL  
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 7128  
Bismarck ND 58507-7128  
1-800-932-8791 • (701)255-4127  
[www.ndsba.org](http://www.ndsba.org)

**HB 1386**

**Testimony of Alexis Baxley  
House Education | February 7, 2023**

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Alexis Baxley. I am the executive director of the North Dakota School Boards Association. NDSBA represents all 170 North Dakota public school districts, their boards, and several multi-district special education units.

The North Dakota School Boards Association stands in support of HB 1386. Every legislative session a number of bills come before this body that require professional development of teachers on a myriad of topics. NDSBA is often in the awkward position of opposing these bills. Not because the topics they cover aren't important, but because we believe professional development decisions are best left to local school boards and their administrators. These people are in the best position to understand what continued learning their staff needs in order to achieve the greatest outcomes for their students.

District wide professional development can be expensive and time consuming. The topics currently required in state law are important topics, but may not present the best use of time for every staff member in our buildings, particularly at a time when the difficulty finding substitute teachers is particularly high. Allowing districts to choose topics that are relevant to their district's needs – perhaps addressing a new curriculum, new technology, or new best practices – will allow the district's time and resources to be spent in a way that is most effective for their staff and students.

The topics in this section of code are certainly important topics, but as that list has continued to grow districts' ability to spend time providing PD to their teachers on necessary teaching skills and strategies is lessened. Removing the requirements in this section of code will not mean teachers stop receiving professional development – renewing their licenses will still require college credit hours, and districts will always be looking for ways to increase their effectiveness – it just means that the PD will be able to be tailored to teachers – and their students. NDSBA believes this approach increases the odds of success for our students, our staff, and our districts.

Finally, requiring the board of a district to approve its PD will allow the board to ensure that administrator-recommended PD is aligned with the goals the board has set for the district and its students.

For these reasons, NDSBA supports HB 1386 and respectfully encourages this committee to give it a DO PASS recommendation. Thank you for your time, and I will stand for any questions.