

February 13, 2023

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

I fully support HB 1398. The components of this bill are essential to ensure that all students have a foundational understanding of computer science necessary for now and the future.

We are raising children in a tech world. They need and they want to learn more about this. We also need to teach them and make them aware of the dangers of identity theft and scams that are out there. This generation of children, know nothing of the time before computers.

I am a home-grown North Dakotan. My husband is also from North Dakota and is a teacher in the public school in Mohall. I am a business owner in Mohall. We have 3 children who have been born, raised and educated in North Dakota. We love this state! We wouldn't want to live anywhere but this state! I want my children to be able to have career opportunities in this state! My oldest has been trying to figure out what he wants to do when he grows up. He finally found Cybersecurity at BSC. What a hidden gem we have here! He had very little knowledge of computer science or cybersecurity until going to BSC. I want children in our school, and other schools in North Dakota, to have that opportunity! I want them to be exposed to this field before college. I want to give kids the opportunity to explore what they want to do when they graduate high school while still in high school! And without being able to offer this in high school, they might not ever know. This is a growing career field and there are only 44% of the schools in North Dakota offering this. Please change this. I was on our local school board for 9 years and our number one thought in everything we did and every decision we made, is how is this going to impact children.

The other thing that I see in my business (I have a CPA practice), is the new young graduates really struggle with problem solving. If we could offer some computer science classes in high school, this would help with improving problem solving skills. They may not go into computer science or cybersecurity, but this would help build the problem solving skills that they are lacking and use them either in their career field they choose or even real life.

I am asking for your support for HB 1398. I appreciate all that you do and are doing for this great state of North Dakota we all call home. And by giving students in North Dakota the opportunity to learn new and useful skills from computer science instruction, is making this state an even better place to raise a family and live.

Sincerely,

Chantel R Southam CPA
Mohall ND