Senate Education Committee
Senator Elkin, Chair
January 23, 2023

SB 2258

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Mark Vollmer. I proudly serve as Superintendent of Minot Public School District #1 and Minot Air Force Base #160. I stand in front of you today to offer our support for SB 2258, A bill for an act to create and enact section 15-39.1-19.3 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to retired teacher benefits if returning to teach in a critical shortage area.

We have all heard stories of teacher shortages in our state. This is an issue that plagues many schools, regardless of size or location.

This year, Minot Public Schools began the year short 2 science teachers and 5 special education teachers. Like many other schools, we scrambled to cover these positions, asked teachers to take on extra duties, and continued to advertise. Regardless of our efforts, we were unable to fill these positions.

Asking teachers to take on additional classes, or to absorb special education caseloads only adds to teachers being overwhelmed

Current regulations allow teachers to return to full-time teaching after a one-year hiatus. SB 2258 would allow a recently retired teacher in a critical shortage area, return to the classroom while collecting their retirement benefit.

A key component of this bill centers on continued payment into TFFR. It is imperative that the teacher and the "employer" and "employee" allotments be paid to NDTFFR.

SB 2258 does not solve the teacher shortage issue. It does, however, allow school districts to explore another option when faced with open teaching positions in the 11th hour. If enacted, school districts have an additional option to find a highly qualified to teach the children we serve. Simply put, SB 2258 creates a win-win

for North Dakota Schools as we continue to explore options for eliminating teacher shortage issues.

Thank you for allowing me to share our story. I offer my support of SB 2258 and will stand for any questions you may have.