

Senate Education Committee

Sen. Elkin Chairman

Testimony on North Dakota Education Funding Formula – SB2284

Presented by Scott Davis, representing Belcourt School District #7, Ft. Yates Public School District, New Town Public School District

Greetings Sen. Elkin and members of the Committee,

My name is Scott Davis. I am the former Executive Director of the ND Indian Affairs Commission, a post I held for 12 years. I know represent Belcourt School District #7, Ft. Yates Public School District, New Town Public School District.

I am here today in support of SB 2284 in that this Bill will provide adequate funding for North Dakota school districts which include North Dakota public schools on Tribal Reservations.

This Bill reminds me an extension of what was done during the 2013 Legislative Session. Then, Governor Dalrymple in unison with the Legislative Body, passed a substantial property tax bill that aided local political subdivisions and school districts that included schools on Tribal Reservations.

What was added to that Bill at the time was to carve out a school funding formula for schools that have no or very limited tax base. The schools that we are addressing today exist on our Air Bases in Minot and Grand Forks, they also include schools in Belcourt, Ft. Totten, Ft. Yates and within the MHA Nation.

The intent of that Bill formula at that time was to get those schools on Formula. Since then, we've had a few budget shortfalls due to falling Oil prices, commodity prices and pandemic. So today, many of the schools are not there yet.

We believe with your support that SB 2284 will get our schools back on track to full Formula and maintain current baseline funding rates and to continue to increase the (transition) maximum percentage in the coming years.

Over the last 10 plus years we recognize that Tribal Nations and you as State leaders have shown great progress in partnership and understandings within your Committees, DPI and the Governor's. We value those meetings, face to face talks, questions and answers as we work together in helping all North Dakotans and Tribal Citizens in obtaining an adequate education.

Our team would be happy to sit down with Committee members as we move this Bill forward.

Mr. Chairman this concluded my testimony at this time, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Scott Davis