

Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Kimberly Hurst and I reside in District 1. I am asking that you please render a DO PASS on Senate Bill 2244.

I am a mother of four kids who have previously been enrolled in North Dakota public education. It is common to hear that school districts encourage parental involvement, but when a parent actually becomes involved they are either completely dismissed or even publicly ostracized at school board meetings for raising questions of concern; at least this has been my experience. This type of behavior from the school district towards a parent can either discourage parents from engaging in their children's education or, ultimately, motivate them to withdraw their children from public schools altogether; for me, it was the latter.

There are a number of reasons I support this bill and one important reason would be the parental right to request curriculum review. In October of 2022 I requested to review 2 of my 4 children's curriculum, and in return I was provided a fee in the amount of \$615.87. I encourage you to consider why a school district would impose such an unreasonable fee on a parent to simply review their child's curriculum. Furthermore, why was I being charged in the first place? To this day, the rationale for this fee remains unclear, or perhaps they didn't want me to see something. This experience played a significant role in my decision to homeschool my children. The lack of

transparency and the disregard for my involvement as a parent significantly undermined my trust in the public education system.

Later in the school year, when my son was in 8th grade, I discovered that he was receiving classroom instruction that I had explicitly opted him out of. Despite my formal request for my children to be excluded from social-emotional learning, he was still being exposed to this curriculum in his health class under the label of "social-emotional health." Upon raising this issue with the school district, it became clear that they were unprepared to handle such a situation. After reviewing the health class curriculum, they acknowledged the validity of my concerns but failed to provide a reasonable solution. Their only suggestion was for my son to spend each health class period in the principal's office, completing unrelated work. My son finished 8th grade with no credit earned for his health class. It is deeply concerning that the school district's best course of action was not to offer an alternative curriculum or accommodation for credit, but instead to exclude him entirely from the class. If I am being honest, I couldn't help but wonder if this was the reason they imposed a \$615 fee to review his curriculum that year; given that, if my son hadn't brought this to my attention, I would have never known.

Lastly, anyone opposing this bill and parental involvement in their children's education raises serious concerns about the underlying intentions. While local school districts often claim to encourage parental engagement, the arguments against this bill suggest that such involvement should be

restricted. Ultimately, opposing this bill implies that parents should not have a meaningful role in their children's education, a position that is both clear and extremely concerning. I am a strong advocate for Senate Bill 2244 and respectfully urge you to support it, as it will protect parental rights and promote greater parental involvement in their children's education. Thank you for your consideration on this important matter and for your dedicated service to the state of North Dakota.

Kimberly Hurst