

Chairman Sorvaag, members of the Committee, my name is Marty Bratrud, Superintendent of Westhope School and certified ND Be Legendary School Board coach. I am here to testify in support of the full funding of ND Be Legendary School Board training within HB 1013.

I would like to share Westhope Public School's, and my story about the positive impact the Be Legendary Framework has brought to our school to support improving student outcomes.

Like many of our schools in North Dakota, Westhope School, and I as an educational leader personally struggled post covid with student engagement and achievement. It is humbling to have to admit, but as a school leader I failed my students and staff. I allowed us to relax student and staff expectations thinking that was the best strategy to transition back to school post covid. In short, I forgot our core mission and the reason schools exist....To improve Student Outcomes.

We saw our assessment scores drop slightly in SY 20-21 and I failed to respond thinking it was a temporary setback, and they would bounce back next year. Then in SY 21-22 they fell off the proverbial cliff. We identified we had a very real problem with learning loss that wasn't going to fix itself as we put together our NDSA data report in 21-22. I knew I had to act and act immediately. Then on August 12th, 2022, a date I have burnt into my brain, I went to my mail box and opened a letter from the Department that Westhope was put on the TSI/CSI watch list. I felt like I was just hit by a freight train, my heart fell from my chest and I realized I had failed my students, staff, board, and community as an educational leader. And... I didn't know where to start.

By fate, a week later in August of 2022 I saw a grant opportunity offered by the Department in the Weekly Blast for the Be Legendary School Board Institute. I wasn't sure exactly what it was, in fact I thought it was a strategic planning program, not understanding all of the nuances. I will admit freely, I was feeling desperate and reached out to my Board President to get her counsel. She encouraged me to research the training and report back to her. I circled back

to her a month later and recommended the 2-day institute as a starting point to stop our student learning decline and retool our instructional programming.

In April of 2023 Our Board and Administration completed the Be Legendary two-day institute. We all walked away humbled, renewed, inspired, and most importantly, reminded of why school systems exist...To Improve Student Outcomes.

We rolled up our sleeves and got to work immediately, First, my Board and I collaborated to establish 3 SMART student learning goals, aligned to the aspirational goals of the ND DPI State Strategic Vision, to increase our student outcomes in Reading, Math, and Reading for our Economically Disadvantaged student population.

We developed guideposts to support these goals:

1. A Theory of Action...What We are going to do. How we are going to do it.

And what we expect those outcomes to be.

2. Established target goals for the next 5 years.
3. Developed progress measures to support each goal.
4. Developed guardrails to ensure adult behaviors did not become barriers to achieving the Board's goals.
5. Clearly defined Superintendent work and Board Work
6. Streamlined our Board meeting agenda and procedures to ensure our focus was on improving Student Outcomes. "We made THE most important thing OUR most important thing".
7. Re-established student, staff, and board expectations to align with the School Board's goals.

Paired with critical professional development and support services such as instructional coaching and data analysis support from the CREA REA and strategic fiscal planning to ensure we had aligned our resources to support the Board goals, we stopped our declining assessment score trend and realized significant first year gains in year one implementation of the Be Legendary Framework. We saw a 7% increase in reading outcomes on the NDSA assessment, 5% gain in math, and an 11% gain in reading score outcomes for our economically disadvantaged students.

This school year, based on data from the Fall and Winter ND A+ interim assessments, I am confident our district is positioned for more significant gains. And... I predict we will be On Track or ahead of our progress measure goals established two years ago. In fact, I recently shared with my Board I expect we will be raising the bar on our 5-year target goals during the annual review of our goals in June.

The mindset shift we made as a Board, staff and administration, is the difference. We changed our adult behaviors and committed to the integrity of the Be Legendary Mindset. We are now laser focused as a district to our mission and we are equally aligned in our commitment to improving student outcomes.

To circle back, I am here today to respectfully ask you all to please consider to fully fund the Be Legendary Framework. In 31 years of education, I have found, and learned, the mechanism to support student outcomes and to keep my students on a continuous improvement trajectory.

In fact, I am so bought into the Framework, I applied to be part of the first Be Legendary coaching cohort because I am committed to supporting and implementing this mindset across our state to positively impact not only my 157 kiddos in Westhope, but thousands of kiddos across North Dakota.

In conclusion, Be Legendary is not a program, it is a mindset shift in adult behavior to ensure school districts stay focused on the reason our schools exist.....To ensure each student, each year, continuously improves in what they know and are able to do, so they are prepared to be successful in whatever they choose to do after their K12 Journey.....In short, to Improve Student Outcomes.

Thank you for this opportunity to share mine and my District's story with you and I would enjoy the opportunity to answer any questions you may have for me.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marty Bratrud

Superintendent

Westhope Public School