

**2025 HOUSE EDUCATION**

**HB 1498**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1498  
1/29/2025

Relating to the authority of a school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for teachers.
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3:36 p.m. Chairman Heinert called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber- Beck, Representatives, Conmy, Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Heilman, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marchall, Morton, Novak, Osowski

### Discussion Topics:

- Incentives
- Sign on bonus

3:36 p.m. Representative Maki introduced the bill.

3:37 p.m. Amiee Copas, Executive Director, NDCEL, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #32445

3:41 p.m. Rick Diegel, Superintendent of Kidder County School District, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #32681

3:47 Amy De Kok, Executive Director, ND School Board Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32686

3:51 p.m. Nick Archuleta, President of North Dakota United, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #32308

3:52 p.m. Wayde Sick, State Director ND Career and Technical Education, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #32514

3:55 p.m. Carter Gill, Vice President of Governmental affairs, NDSA, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #32615

4:02 p.m. Brandt Dick, President Small Organized Schools, testified in favor.

### Additional written testimony:

Brian Christopherson, Superintendent of New Salem, submitted testimony in favor. #32578

Pat Heinert, Representative, ND House of Representatives, submitted testimony in favor. #33757

4:03 p.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*



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*Great Public Schools**Great Public Service*

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**Testimony Before the House Education Committee**  
**HB 1498**  
**Wednesday, January 29, 2025**

Chairman Heinert and members of the Committee, for the record my name is Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to offer testimony in support of HB 1498, and to urge a ***do pass*** recommendation.

All of us at ND United are in favor of putting more money in the pockets of teachers. With that said, I want to note that sign-on bonuses and other short-term fixes are not our preferred means of doing so. We believe that every effort should be made to dedicate more resources to teacher salaries and benefits so that these short-term fixes become unnecessary. At ND United, we would prefer to see all matters related to salaries and the terms and conditions of teacher employment enshrined in each school district's negotiated agreement after those issues have been bargained in good faith at the negotiations table.

Furthermore, we have concerns about the equitable distribution of bonuses across different schools and districts. What we want to avoid are bidding wars between districts and schools trying to attract educators. If district and school administrators take this too far, they will run the very real risk of undermining the morale of those teachers who have worked in our schools for years and will not receive a bonus for staying.

Having said all that, I think that a friendly amendment should be considered which would limit sign-on bonuses to those filling hard to fill positions for reasons of a shortage of teachers in a given academic area or for geographic hardship. These parameters, I believe, would make sense in this case and be easier for those not getting bonuses to accept.

Chair Heinert and members of the Committee, with that I will close my testimony, urge you to adopt the amendment, give a ***do-pass*** recommendation to HB 1498, and stand for any questions.



1 HB 1498 – Signing Bonuses – Testimony in support

2 Chairman Heinert and members of the committee. We come here today in support of HB  
3 1498 which would bring back an allowability that we removed last session with an  
4 adjustment to the signing bonus bill that we learned was an unintended consequence. This  
5 hopefully is an easy and logical addition back into the law.

6 Last session we made an adjustment to the signing bonus law removing the first year  
7 allowability which indicated it could be used for a teacher that had not taught in a ND  
8 classroom last year (thereby making it their first year in a district. We shifted to a model  
9 where we could incentive bonus a teacher who had been in our district at least two years. It  
10 was very beneficial to add that allowability for year 2 and beyond, but what we learned is that  
11 removing that had unintended consequences for our smaller schools. Hence, we are asking  
12 to keep the language that is currently in law from last session and add back in the language  
13 we had previously.

14 This modest adjustment will keep the current benefits last law put in place for schools and  
15 bring back the competitive edge the prior language gave to our smaller districts.

16 I ask that you also support this bill and give a do-pass recommendation. Thank you!!!



**House Education  
HB1498**

**January 29, 2025**

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Wayde Sick, and I serve as the State Director for the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am testifying today in support of HB1498.

HB1498 simply allows a school board to provide a signing bonus for teachers. Career and Technical Educations teachers are incredibly difficult to recruit, as many of them transition from industry to enter the teaching profession. This often means reduction in pay and additional coursework, to attain a teaching license.

I do ask that the Committee considers an amendment for HB1498. My recommendation is to add on line 8, after a school district, *or an area career and technology center*. Our area career and technology centers are operated, under the governance of a center board, which is comprised of representatives from each of the member school boards. This amendment would allow area career and technology centers the ability to also provide a first-year signing bonus for its new hires.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to stand for any questions.

Thank you.

**January 24, 2025**

**HB 1498**

**Members of the House Education Committee:**

I am writing today to voice my strong support a **DO PASS recommendation for HB 1498** which seeks to reinstate language that I believe was unintentionally omitted during the last legislative session. This bill will provide school districts, such as New Salem-Almont, with the much-needed ability to recruit qualified teachers by authorizing school boards to offer first-year signing bonuses.

Recruiting teachers, especially in rural or small school districts, has become increasingly challenging due to teacher shortages and competitive job markets. This bill provides a practical tool for school boards to attract educators who might otherwise look outside our state or choose larger districts. By allowing a signing bonus, small districts can compete more effectively while remaining fiscally responsible.

The provisions of this bill are well thought out:

1. The signing bonus would only be available to individuals who are licensed or approved by the education standards and practices board, ensuring quality candidates.
2. The bonus applies to those who were not classroom teachers in the state during the prior school year, encouraging new talent to join our schools.
3. Importantly, the bonus would be separate from any negotiated teacher contracts, ensuring the flexibility to recruit while maintaining the integrity of existing agreements and salary structures.

For many small school districts, having the authority to offer a first-year signing bonus can be the difference between filling a critical teaching vacancy or leaving classrooms without a qualified educator. This bill allows districts to address staffing needs in a way that is both responsible and impactful, ensuring that our students have the high-quality teachers they deserve.

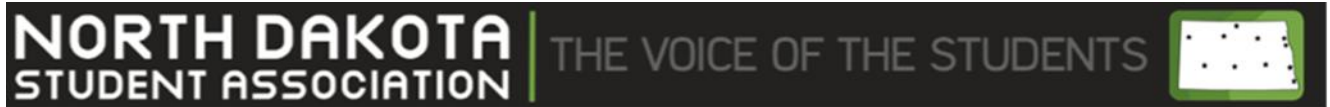
In conclusion, I strongly urge this committee recommend a DO PASS on HB 1498. By reinstating this language, you are providing small schools with the tools they need to attract qualified teachers and, ultimately, better serve our students. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Christopherson

Superintendent

New Salem-Almont School District

**HB 1498**

January 29, 2025

Carter Gill, North Dakota Student Association

(701) 388-7589 | [carter.gill@ndus.edu](mailto:carter.gill@ndus.edu)

Chair Heinert and Members of the Committee: My name is Carter Gill and I am Vice President of Governmental Affairs for the NDSA. I am here today in support of HB 1498.

The North Dakota Student Association is dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice at the table in policy that affects higher education. We consist of delegates from each of the 11 public North Dakota University System (NDUS) institutions, meeting monthly to engage students in discussions about North Dakota higher education policy. Since 1969, our mission has been to empower students, create collaboration between the student bodies of the North Dakota public universities, and to provide a student perspective on higher education policy.

This academic year, the NDSA passed [NDSA-01-2425](#), which laid out our legislative priorities for this biennium. One of our priorities was to ensure that NDUS students enter workforces in emerging technologies with an emphasis on the North Dakota workforce. One of the workforces in this state that now more than ever is interacting and innovating with emerging technologies is education. Teachers are on the front lines when it comes to working with generative AI and implementing it in the classroom and ensuring that their students are ethically and responsibly utilizing AI and other technologies.

However, due to a wide range of factors, new teachers, many who have gotten their degrees from an NDUS institution, are leaving North Dakota to teach in other states. I will say that salary and benefits are not always a driving factor because looking at salaries along the Red River, Grand Forks Public Schools and East Grand Forks Public Schools, along with Fargo/West Fargo Public Schools and Moorhead Public Schools, the North Dakota districts do pay more overall including benefits than Minnesota schools.

As someone looking for my first school district to start my teaching career at, the dollar amount that I see on job openings around the region is what I look at first. I can speak for many prospective first year teachers that although benefits such as insurance and retirement are important factors to look at while searching for a teaching job that total amount is the biggest draw for new teachers.

In the last academic year and excluding non-degree seeking students, education was the 5<sup>th</sup> highest enrolled program in the NDUS at almost 2,400 students. Allowing for this bonus gives upcoming graduates more incentive to stay in North Dakota to teach rather than leave to teach elsewhere. Also, a first year signing bonus would be a great way to draw first year teachers like myself and others in the NDUS to take a second look at those smaller schools that may not have a higher salary than other schools since that bonus could bump that total up to be more competitive with bigger schools.

Allowing school boards to offer these bonuses can also be a way to encourage NDUS graduates who may have graduated without an education degree to pursue the state's alternative means of licensure to help support a workforce that is in critical need.

On behalf of the North Dakota Student Association, I ask that you give HB 1498 a DO PASS recommendation.





# *Kidder County Public School District#1*


**High School Principal**

Michael Wachter

**Elementary Principal**

Ryan Larson

**Business Manager**

Sonya Larson

**Secretary**

Darci Mittleider

**RICHARD DIEGEL, Superintendent**
**Administrative Office**

 PO Box 380 / 101 4<sup>th</sup> St SE

Steele, ND 58482

Phone: 701.475.2243

Fax: 701.475.2737

**Board of Education:**

Jason Schmidt, President

Shawn Nix, Vice President

Jeff Schmidt, Director

Kip Haadem, Director

Jason Braun, Director

Hoyt Wagner, Director

Paula Moch, Director

Good afternoon Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee. My name is Rick Diegel, and I am the superintendent the Kidder County School District and I am speaking in support of HB 1498.

HB 1498 is not a new idea in North Dakota, and actually something that before last session, we had the ability to do for the last 15-20 years. However, last session, when a provision was added to allow us to pay bonuses to our current teachers to move from a current position to a hard to fill position (from a classroom teacher to a special education teacher), the signing bonus bill was inadvertently removed.

We do not want a bill that allows teachers to jump from school to school and collect signing bonuses, which this bill would NOT allow to happen.

The ability to pay a signing bonus to teachers who did not teacher in North Dakota the year before is crucial to small schools in North Dakota. I have used signing bonuses in both Edgeley and Kidder County since they've been allowed. Though we don't use them for every single hire, we do use them if I feel that it is only way that I can get a teacher.

The advantage of having the ability in a small school is that even though a Bismarck would have the ability to use a signing bonus, they probably won't since they usually have plenty of applicants. It is one of the few things that I can offer a candidate that class A school probably won't.

We currently have 3 teachers on staff that started with a signing bonus (usually 3 years or less), including one that received a 3 year signing bonus and is now on year 5!!!

I would ask that you please support HB 1498 and give us back the authority to offer signing bonuses as outlined in the bill.

I will stand for any questions.

**15.1-09-33.1. School board authority - Payment of signing bonuses.**

1. The board of a school district may offer a signing bonus to an individual who:
  - a. Is licensed by the education standards and practices board or approved by the education standards and practices board;
  - b. Has signed a contract of employment in the district; and
  - c. Has never been employed in the newly assigned role by the board of ~~a school~~ the district.
2. The board may pay to the individual the signing bonus authorized by subsection 1 in:
  - a. One lump sum upon the individual signing a contract of employment; or
  - b. Installments over a period of time not to exceed five years from the date the individual signed a contract of employment.
3. A signing bonus paid under this section:
  - a. Is in addition to any amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.
  - b. May not be included in the district's negotiated salary schedule.
  - c. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.
  - d. May not be paid until the individual is licensed and qualified for the newly assigned role by the education standards and practices board.
  - e. May not be used for an individual employed the prior year in the same role by another school district in the state until the individual has been employed in the district for two years.

Hb 1498

**SECTION 2.** Section 15-20.2-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

15-20.2-07. Powers and duties of center boards.

The powers and duties of a center board are as follows:

1. To supervise, manage, and control an area career and technology center established by the cooperating school districts pursuant to this chapter.
2. To provide career and technical education programs approved by the state board.
3. To contract with, employ, or pay personnel to administer the affairs and to teach in the area career and technology center, and to remove for cause any personnel when the interests of the area career and technology center may require it; provided, that personnel employed by a center board shall have the same statutory rights as provided by law for personnel employed by public school districts.
4. To lease, acquire, or purchase career and technical education equipment for an area career and technology center.
5. To lease, acquire, purchase, or sell career and technical education facilities, including real property, for an area career and technology center; provided, that any purchase or sale of real property must first be approved by two-thirds of the school boards of the participating school districts.
6. To receive and administer any private, local, state, or federal funds provided for the operation and maintenance of an area career and technology center.
7. To enter into contracts consistent with the other powers and duties provided for by this chapter.
8. To accept real or personal property available for distribution by the United States or any of its departments or agencies and also to accept federal grants that may be made available in the field of career and technical education.
9. To exercise the powers in section one of the Act.

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Education Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1498  
2/3/2025

Relating to the authority of a school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for teachers.
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10:44 a.m. Chairman Heinert opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Heinert, Vice Chairman Schreiber-Beck, Representatives Hager, Hatlestad, Hauck, Jonas, Longmuir, Maki, Marschall, Morton, Novak, Osowski  
Members absent: Representatives Conmy and Heilman

### Discussion Topics:

- Proposed amendment
- Committee action

10:49 a.m. Representative Hauck moved to amend by adding an emergency clause and create a number nine to 15-20.2-07.

10:50 a.m. Representative Novak seconded the motion.

10:51 a.m. Roll call vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	AB
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	N
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	AB
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

10:51 a.m. Motion passed 11-1-2.

10:52 a.m. Representative Longmuir moved a Do Pass as Amended.

10:52 a.m. Representative Hauck seconded the motion.

10:53 a.m. Roll call vote:

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	AB
Representative LaurieBeth Hager	Y
Representative Patrick R. Hatlestad	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Matthew Heilman	AB
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Donald W. Longmuir	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y

10:53 a.m. Motion passed 12-0-2.

Representative Hager will carry the bill.

10:53 a.m. Chairman Heinert closed the hearing.

*Mary Brucker, Committee Clerk (for Leah Kuball)*



February 3, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1498**

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Monson, Richter

Senator Schaible

2-3-25

JM 1082

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-09 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to the authority of a school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for  
3 teachers; to amend and reenact section 15-20.2-07 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating  
4 to the powers and duties of center boards; and to declare an emergency.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

6 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 15.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
7 and enacted as follows:

**School board authority - First-year bonus - Payment.**

- 9 1. The board of a school district may offer a first-year signing bonus to an individual who:  
10 a. Is licensed or approved by the education standards and practices board;  
11 b. Has signed a contract of employment in the district; and  
12 c. Was not a classroom teacher in the state during the previous school year.  
13 2. A bonus paid under this section:  
14 a. Is in addition to an amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.  
15 b. May not be included in the district's negotiated salary schedule.  
16 c. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.

17 **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 15-20.2-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
18 amended and reenacted as follows:

**15-20.2-07. Powers and duties of center boards.**

20 The powers and duties of a center board are as follows:



JB 2002

1. To supervise, manage, and control an area career and technology center established by the cooperating school districts pursuant to this chapter.
2. To provide career and technical education programs approved by the state board.
3. To contract with, employ, or pay personnel to administer the affairs and to teach in the area career and technology center, and to remove for cause any personnel when the interests of the area career and technology center may require it; provided, that personnel employed by a center board shall have the same statutory rights as provided by law for personnel employed by public school districts.
4. To lease, acquire, or purchase career and technical education equipment for an area career and technology center.
5. To lease, acquire, purchase, or sell career and technical education facilities, including real property, for an area career and technology center; provided, that any purchase or sale of real property must first be approved by two-thirds of the school boards of the participating school districts.
6. To receive and administer any private, local, state, or federal funds provided for the operation and maintenance of an area career and technology center.
7. To enter into contracts consistent with the other powers and duties provided for by this chapter.
8. To accept real or personal property available for distribution by the United States or any of its departments or agencies and also to accept federal grants that may be made available in the field of career and technical education.
9. To offer a first-year signing bonus to an individual who is licensed or approved by the education standards and practices board, has signed a contract of employment with the center board, and was not a classroom teacher in the state during the previous school year. A bonus paid under this subsection:
  - a. Is in addition to an amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.
  - b. May not be included in the center board's negotiated salary schedule.
  - c. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.

**SECTION 3. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
HB 1498**

**Education Committee (Rep. Heinert, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1191.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1498 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.



**2025 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**HB 1498**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1498  
3/20/2025

Relating to the authority of a school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for teachers; relating to the powers and duties of center boards; and to declare an emergency.

10:30 a.m. Chairman Wobbema opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Wobbema, Vice-Chairman Axtman, Senator Boschee, Senator Larson, Senator Powers.

### Discussion Topics:

- Teachers from Out of State
- Recent Graduated Teachers
- Contract Rights

10:30 a.m. Representative Roger A. Maki introduced the bill and submitted testimony #43118.

10:33 a.m. Aimee Copas, Executive Director of ND Council of Educational Leaders, testified in favor.

10:39 a.m. Wayde Sick, State Director of ND Dept. of Career and Technical Education, testified in neutral and submitted testimony #42983.

10:41 a.m. KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, In-House Legal Counsel with North Dakota School Boards Association, testified in favor #43157.

10:47 a.m. Nick Archuleta, President of North Dakota United, testified in favor and submitted testimony #43195.

10:49 a.m. Rick Diegel, Superintendent of Kidder County School District, testified in favor and submitted testimony # 43216.

10:54 a.m. Chairman Wobbema closed the hearing.

*Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk*



**Senate Workforce Development  
HB1498**

**March 20, 2025**

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee. My name is Wayde Sick, and I serve as the State Director for the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am testifying today in support of HB1498.

HB1498 originally as written allowed a school board to provide a signing bonus for new teachers.

We were able to amend HB1498 during the House Education Hearing to include an Area Career and Technology Board to also have this authority. This amendment would allow area career and technology centers the ability to also provide a first-year signing bonus for its new hires. Career and Technical Educations teachers are incredibly difficult to recruit, as many of them transition from industry to enter the teaching profession. This often means reduction in pay and additional coursework, to attain a teaching license.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to stand for any questions.

Thank you.

Chairman and Members of the Committee.

For the record, Roger Maki, District 26.

House Bill 1498 gives the ability to a school district to pay a bonus to hire new teachers.

Rationale : Last session there were changes made to the bonus bill. With good intention it was helpful to school boards and schools. That change was to bonus employees to incentivize them in a district once they have been there at least for a year to take on a new role or project. In that bill the old language of a teacher that was in that first year in North Dakota was removed. There were unintended consequences in removing that. They learned that the small schools were able to use that to recruit teachers and incentivize them to come to their communities. This is an ask to introduce the whole language back into law along with the language that was placed in last session. Both of these pieces of flexibility would be beneficial to schools. House passed this Bill 89-4-1

Please pass this bill.



**NDSBA**  
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL  
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 7128  
Bismarck ND 58507-7128  
1-800-932-8791 • (701)255-4127  
[www.ndsba.org](http://www.ndsba.org)

**HB 1498**  
**Testimony of KrisAn Norby-Jahner**  
**Senate Workforce Development**  
**March 20, 2025**

Chair Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, for the record my name is KrisAnn Norby-Jahner. I am in-house legal counsel for the North Dakota School Boards Association. The NDSBA represents all 168 North Dakota public school districts and their boards. I am here today in support of the concept of HB 1498, with some recommended considerations and amendments.

While the NDSBA has not personally been approached with concerns from our member school districts regarding issues with current legislation regarding signing bonuses, we are supportive of any efforts to eliminate inadvertent effects of past legislation (as identified in other written testimony). However, we would encourage the Committee to consider revising the current law regarding signing bonuses, rather than add a new section to chapter 15.1-09 as recommended in the current version of HB 1498. We would recommend the following redlined amendments to current law located in the “school boards” chapter of the century code:

**N.D.C.C. §15.1-09-33.1. School board authority - Payment of signing bonuses.**

1. The board of a school district may offer a signing bonus to an individual who:
  - a. Is licensed by the education standards and practices board or approved by the education standards and practices board;
  - b. Has signed a contract of employment in the district; and
  - c. Has never been employed in the newly assigned role by the board of ~~a school~~ **the** district.
2. The board may pay to the individual the signing bonus authorized by subsection 1 in:
  - a. One lump sum upon the individual signing a contract of employment; or
  - b. Installments over a period of time not to exceed five years from the date the individual signed a contract of employment.
3. A signing bonus paid under this section:
  - a. Is in addition to any amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.
  - b. May not be included in the district's negotiated salary schedule.
  - c. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.
  - d. May not be paid until the individual is licensed and qualified for the newly assigned role by the education standards and practices board.
  - e. May not be used for an individual employed the prior year **in the same role** by another school district in the state until the individual has been employed in the district for two years.

We are concerned that adding a *new section* to chapter 15.1-09 and leaving 15.1-09-33.1 “as is” will lead to confusion and further inadvertent negative effects when school boards enter into contracts with teachers and consider signing bonuses for those who may (or may not) be eligible. Supporters of the bill may have other amendments to offer to address their concerns should the Committee consider revising current law, N.D.C.C. §15.1-09-33.1. However, we strongly encourage the Committee to consider current law alongside the proposals laid out in HB 1498.

Based on the foregoing reasons, NDSBA is supportive of this bill, but does ask this Committee consider amending the current law, N.D.C.C. § 15.1-09-33.1, rather than adding a new section that may conflict or add confusion. Thank you for your time.



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*Great Public Schools**Great Public Service*

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**Testimony Before the Senate Workforce Development Committee  
HB 1498  
Thursday, March 20, 2025**

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Committee, for the record my name is Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to offer testimony in support of HB 1498, and to urge a ***do pass*** recommendation.

All of us at ND United are in favor of putting more money in the pockets of teachers. With that said, I want to note that sign-on bonuses and other short-term fixes are not our preferred means of doing so. We believe that every effort should be made to dedicate more resources to teacher salaries and benefits so that these short-term fixes become unnecessary. At ND United, we would prefer to see all matters related to salaries and the terms and conditions of teacher employment enshrined in each school district's negotiated agreement after those issues have been bargained in good faith at the negotiations table.

Furthermore, we have concerns about the equitable distribution of bonuses across different schools and districts. What we want to avoid are bidding wars between districts and schools trying to attract educators. Taken too far, bonuses run the very real risk of undermining the morale of those teachers who have worked in our schools for years and will not receive a bonus for staying.

Having said all that, I think that a friendly amendment should be considered which would limit sign-on bonuses to those filling hard to fill positions for

reasons of a shortage of teachers in a given academic area or for geographic hardship. These parameters, I believe, would make sense in this case and be easier for those not getting bonuses to accept.

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Committee, with that I will close my testimony, urge you to consider the amendment, and give a ***do-pass*** recommendation to HB 1498.





# *Kidder County Public School District#1*


**High School Principal**

Michael Wachter

**Elementary Principal**

Ryan Larson

**Business Manager**

Sonya Larson

**Secretary**

Darci Mittleider

**RICHARD DIEGEL, Superintendent**
**Administrative Office**

PO Box 380 / 101 4<sup>th</sup> St SE

Steele, ND 58482

Phone: 701.475.2243

Fax: 701.475.2737

**Board of Education:**

Jason Schmidt, President

Shawn Nix, Vice President

Jeff Schmidt, Director

Kip Haadem, Director

Jason Braun, Director

Hoyt Wagner, Director

Paula Moch, Director

My name is Rick Diegel, and I am the superintendent the Kidder County School District and I am speaking in support of HB 1498.

HB 1498 is not a new idea in North Dakota, and actually something that before last session, we had the ability to do for the last 15-20 years. However, last session, when a provision was added to allow us to pay bonuses to our current teachers to move from a current position to a hard to fill position (from a classroom teacher to a special education teacher), the signing bonus bill was inadvertently removed.

We do NOT want a bill that allows teachers to jump from school to school and collect signing bonuses, which this bill would NOT allow to happen.

The ability to pay a signing bonus to teachers who did not teacher in North Dakota the year before is crucial to small schools in North Dakota. I have used signing bonuses in both Edgeley and Kidder County since they've been allowed. Though we don't use them for every single hire, we do use them if I feel that it is only way that I can get a teacher.

The advantage of having the ability in a small school is that even though a Bismarck would have the ability to use a signing bonus, they probably won't since they usually have plenty of applicants. It is one of the few things that I can offer a candidate that class A school probably won't.

We currently have 3 teachers on staff that started with a signing bonus (usually 3 years or less), including one that received a 3 year signing bonus and is now on year 5!!!

I would ask that you please support HB 1498 and give us back the authority to offer signing bonuses as outlined in the bill.

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Workforce Development Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HB 1498  
3/27/2025

Relating to the authority of a school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for teachers; relating to the powers and duties of center boards; and to declare an emergency.

10:29 a.m. Chairman Wobbema opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Wobbema, Vice-Chairman Axtman, Senator Boschee, Senator Larson, Senator Powers.

### Discussion Topics:

- Payment of services
- Century Code location

10:29 a.m. Chairman Wobbema opened discussion on changing century code.

10:41 a.m. Senator Axtman moved Amendment LC#25.1191.02001 and submitted testimony #44307.

10:41 a.m. Senator Boschee seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Michelle Powers	Y

Passed 5-0-0.

10:42 a.m. Senator Axtman moved Do Pass as Amended.

10:43 a.m. Senator Boschee seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Mike Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Josh Boschee	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Michelle Powers	Y

Passed 5-0-0.

Senator Boschee will carry the bill.

Senate Workforce Development Committee

HB 1498

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10:44 a.m. Chairman Wobbema closed the hearing.

*Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk*

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO  
FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

CO  
3/27/25  
1 of 3

**ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1498**

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Monson, Richter

Senator Schaible

1 A BILL for an Act ~~to create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-09 of the North Dakota~~  
2 ~~Century Code, relating to the authority of a school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for~~  
3 ~~teachers; to amend and reenact section~~ sections 15-20.2-07 and 15.1-09-33.1 ~~of the North~~  
4 ~~Dakota Century Code, relating to the powers and duties of center boards~~ and the authority of a  
5 school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for teachers; and to declare an emergency.

6 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

7 **~~SECTION 1.~~** A new section to chapter 15.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
8 and enacted as follows:  
9 ~~**School board authority - First-year bonus - Payment.**~~  
10 ~~**1.** The board of a school district may offer a first-year signing bonus to an individual who:~~  
11 ~~**a.** Is licensed or approved by the education standards and practices board;~~  
12 ~~**b.** Has signed a contract of employment in the district; and~~  
13 ~~**c.** Was not a classroom teacher in the state during the previous school year.~~  
14 ~~**2.** A bonus paid under this section:~~  
15 ~~**a.** Is in addition to an amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.~~  
16 ~~**b.** May not be included in the district's negotiated salary schedule.~~  
17 ~~**c.** May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.~~

18 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15-20.2-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
19 amended and reenacted as follows:

1       **15-20.2-07. Powers and duties of center boards.**

2       The powers and duties of a center board are as follows:

- 3       1. To supervise, manage, and control an area career and technology center established
- 4       by the cooperating school districts pursuant to this chapter.
- 5       2. To provide career and technical education programs approved by the state board.
- 6       3. To contract with, employ, or pay personnel to administer the affairs and to teach in the
- 7       area career and technology center, and to remove for cause any personnel when the
- 8       interests of the area career and technology center may require it; provided, that
- 9       personnel employed by a center board shall have the same statutory rights as
- 10      provided by law for personnel employed by public school districts.
- 11      4. To lease, acquire, or purchase career and technical education equipment for an area
- 12      career and technology center.
- 13      5. To lease, acquire, purchase, or sell career and technical education facilities, including
- 14      real property, for an area career and technology center; provided, that any purchase or
- 15      sale of real property must first be approved by two-thirds of the school boards of the
- 16      participating school districts.
- 17      6. To receive and administer any private, local, state, or federal funds provided for the
- 18      operation and maintenance of an area career and technology center.
- 19      7. To enter into contracts consistent with the other powers and duties provided for by this
- 20      chapter.
- 21      8. To accept real or personal property available for distribution by the United States or
- 22      any of its departments or agencies and also to accept federal grants that may be
- 23      made available in the field of career and technical education.
- 24      9. To offer a first-year signing bonus to an individual who is licensed or approved by the
- 25      education standards and practices board, has signed a contract of employment with
- 26      the center board, and was not a classroom teacher in the state during the previous
- 27      school year. A bonus paid under this subsection:
  - 28      a. Is in addition to an amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.
  - 29      b. May not be included in the center board's negotiated salary schedule.
  - 30      c. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.



1     **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 15.1-09-33.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
2 amended and reenacted as follows:

3     **15.1-09-33.1. School board authority - Payment of signing bonuses.**

- 4     1. The board of a school district may offer a signing bonus to an individual who:
- 5         a. Is licensed by the education standards and practices board or approved by the
- 6             education standards and practices board;
- 7         b. Has signed a contract of employment in the school district; and
- 8         c. Has never been employed in the newly assigned role by the board of athe school
- 9             district.
- 10    2. The board of a school district may pay to the individual the signing bonus authorized
- 11         by subsection 1 in:
- 12         a. One lump sum upon the individual signing a contract of employment; or
- 13         b. Installments over a period of time not to exceed five years from the date the
- 14             individual signed a contract of employment.
- 15    3. A signing bonus paid under this section:
- 16         a. Is in addition to any amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.
- 17         b. May not be included in the district's negotiated salary schedule.
- 18         c. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.
- 19         d. May not be paid until the individual is licensed and qualified for the newly
- 20             assigned role by the education standards and practices board.
- 21         e. May not be used for an individual employed the prior year in the same role by
- 22             another school district in the state until the individual has been employed in the
- 23             district for two years.

24     **SECTION 3. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
ENGROSSED HB 1498**

**Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1191.02001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1498 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill affects workforce development.

25.1191.02000

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## FIRST ENGROSSMENT

### ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1498

Introduced by

Representatives Maki, Monson, Richter

Senator Schaible

- 1 A BILL for an Act to amend section 15.1-09-33.1 ~~create and enact a new section to chapter 15.1-~~  
 2 ~~09~~ of the North Dakota  
 3 Century Code, relating to the authority of a school board to pay a first-year signing bonus for  
 4 teachers; to amend and reenact section 15-20.2-07 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating  
 to the powers and duties of center boards; and to declare an emergency.

#### 5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

6 **SECTION 1.** ~~A new section~~ Amendments to section 15.1-09-33.1 ~~chapter 15.1-09~~ of the North  
 Dakota Century Code ~~is created~~

7 ~~and are~~ reenacted as follows:

#### 8 **School board authority - First-year bonus — Payment** ~~Payment of signing bonuses.~~

- 9 1. The board of a school district may offer a signing bonus to an individual who:
- 10 a. Is licensed or approved by the education standards and practices board or  
 approved by the education standards and practices board;
- 11 b. Has signed a contract of employment in the district; and
- 12 c. Has never been employed in the newly assigned role by the school board of  
the ~~a school~~ district.
- 13 2. The board may pay to the individual the signing bonus authorized by subsection 1 in:
- 14 a. One lump sum upon the individual signing a contract of employment; or
- 15 b. Installments over a period of time not to exceed five years from the date the  
 individual signed a contract of employment.
- 16 3. A signing bonus paid under this section:
- a. Is in addition to an amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.
- b. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.
- c. May not be paid until the individual is licensed and qualified for the newly  
 assigned role by the education standards and practices board.



- d. May not be used for an individual employed the prior year in the same role by another school district in the state until the individual has been employed in the district for two years.

17        **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 15-20.2-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
18 amended and reenacted as follows:

19        **15-20.2-07. Powers and duties of center boards.**

20        The powers and duties of a center board are as follows:

- 21        1. To supervise, manage, and control an area career and technology center established  
22        by the cooperating school districts pursuant to this chapter.

2. To provide career and technical education programs approved by the state board.
3. To contract with, employ, or pay personnel to administer the affairs and to teach in the area career and technology center, and to remove for cause any personnel when the interests of the area career and technology center may require it; provided, that personnel employed by a center board shall have the same statutory rights as provided by law for personnel employed by public school districts.
4. To lease, acquire, or purchase career and technical education equipment for an area career and technology center.
5. To lease, acquire, purchase, or sell career and technical education facilities, including real property, for an area career and technology center; provided, that any purchase or sale of real property must first be approved by two-thirds of the school boards of the participating school districts.
6. To receive and administer any private, local, state, or federal funds provided for the operation and maintenance of an area career and technology center.
7. To enter into contracts consistent with the other powers and duties provided for by this chapter.
8. To accept real or personal property available for distribution by the United States or any of its departments or agencies and also to accept federal grants that may be made available in the field of career and technical education.
9. To offer a first-year signing bonus to an individual who is licensed or approved by the education standards and practices board, has signed a contract of employment with the center board, and was not a classroom teacher in the state during the previous school year. A bonus paid under this subsection:
  - a. Is in addition to an amount payable under a negotiated teachers' contract.
  - b. May not be included in the center board's negotiated salary schedule.
  - c. May not be included as salary for continuing contract purposes.

**SECTION 3. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.