

TESTIMONY

Human Services Committee

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Bismarck Public Schools

Chairman Hogan and members of the Human Services Committee – My name is Jason Hornbacher, Elementary Principal at Dorothy Moses in Bismarck. I am here to provide an educational perspective regarding mental health, and the social and emotional impact on student learning.

I have been in education for 25 years as a teacher, principal, and as an adjunct college instructor at the graduate level. I am past president of the North Dakota Elementary Principals Association and Chaired NDNCA now called AdvancEd for two years. I am currently in my 17th year as an elementary principal.

Throughout the last 8 years we (Tracy Famias, BPS Social Worker and I) have been working on addressing the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students in schools all while teaching students the academic standards essential for them to be successful in college or the workplace. What has come from this body of work and research has been presented to Title I teachers and administrators, the Bismarck Rotary Club, and many educators across ND. I have condensed this information down to 10 minutes so this is very superficial and just scrapes the surface of this topic.

SLIDE SHOW - the following information (gathered in a contiguous 4 months span) is used with educators and community members to build a basic foundation of education in today's world. Prior to watching or listening to this I want you to visualize yourself at your current age, current worldly experience, and current jobs. Then put yourself in one of these situations and

ask yourself how productive you might be going to work, learning something new, remembering it and applying it.

Walk, Walk, Walk In Their Shoes

Did You Know

1. 30 students have court orders stating one or both parents are not allowed contact with the child, or can only have supervised visits through the Child Advocacy Center.
2. 181 students (48.8%) are living at or below the poverty level.
3. 5 students have had immediate family members pass away during this school year
 - a. One vehicle accident
 - b. One due to multi-handicapping conditions
 - c. One suicide
 - d. One heart attack
 - e. One accident in the oil fields
4. 87 Students have moved on to other schools or cities, many not having the chance to say goodbye to their teacher, classmates, or friends.
5. 84 students have transferred in from other schools and cities, for many this is just another transition from one school to another.
6. Community agencies visited 130 times to check on and support student and family safety issues.
7. Two girls, ages 5 and 6, have experienced their single parent mom go to jail for the 3rd time within the past month.

8. A 7 year old boy missed the bus. He wandered around until a neighbor became concerned and called the school.
9. Three students didn't have a ride to school. Together, they decided to walk the 3 miles to school, which requires crossing Washington St, Expressway Ave, and 3rd St. A staff member driving by saw them and stopped to help.
10. An 8 year old girl has experienced her mother abandoning her for the second time this year. A single mom within the neighborhood has taken her into their home.
11. On his first day of school, a 5 year old boy leaves his classroom and heads for the front door. He is brought into the office and immediately yells, "He didn't have to be so mean. My dad didn't have to be so mean. He could have just said that he was mad. He didn't have to hit."
12. Students are dependent upon caregivers for the teaching of hygiene, washing their clothing and cleaning the home. Due to barriers, two parents chose to shave their child's head. One 8 year old girl and one 9 year old boy. Both children were proud of their culture and their hair. They were so humiliated; they hid from teachers and classmates.
13. A 7 year old boy is continually bouncing between his mother and grandparents. Three weeks ago, his grandmother passed away. He waits outside each day to see who will pick him up.
14. An 11 year old boy lives with his 87 year old Great Grandmother. She is on dialysis, has broken her leg twice, and has no transportation. Great Grandma showed up for conferences. She had to stop to rest three times while trying to walk from the front door of the school to the classroom.

15. A Dad is trying to provide for his child so he picked up a second job delivering the newspaper. He takes his 7 year old son with him so that he doesn't have to stay home alone. They wake up at 1:30 AM. By the time school starts, this child has already put in a 7 hour day.
16. A 5 year old boy and his two siblings are woken in the middle of the night and put in the car. He doesn't know why. The next day he is in a new state and enrolled in a new school.
17. They experience so much Yet...
- a. They Smile
 - b. They Laugh
 - c. They Try
 - i. They need:
 - 1. Routine
 - 2. Structure
 - 3. Consistency
 - a. They are lucky to have YOU

I wanted you to visualize yourself at your current age, current worldly experience, and current jobs and think about how productive you might be going to work, learning something new, remembering it and applying it. Now remember these are kids from 5 to 10 years old.

BUILDING ADULT CAPACITIES https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urU-a_FsS5Y

Points to Ponder to Improve Outcomes:

Reducing Toxic Stress

Executive Function and Self-Regulation

Active Skill Building – Coaching, Training, Etc

Development of Human Capital

This short presentation is simply an outtake that skims the surface of trying to determine the function of student and adult behavior. If for some reason you would like more information I would be happy to provide it given you are specific about your needs. The issues that are in front of us today will take all of us to work collectively on many fronts but I know WE can do this! Thank you for your time and support for children's mental and behavioral health. If you have any questions I can try to answer them. Thanks for your time, consideration, and efforts related to this endeavor.

Executive Function Skills – Dorothy Moses	Fab 5	Second Step	30 Sec Int.	Fix It	Moses Moment
Response Inhibition: The capacity to think before acting and to resist the urge to say or do something.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working Memory: The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks.		✓			✓
Emotional Control: The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustained Attention: The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Task Initiation: The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning/Prioritization: The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Organization: The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.	✓	✓			✓
Time Management: The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Goal Directed Persistence: The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests	✓	✓	✓		✓
Flexibility: The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Metacognition: The ability to stand back and take a bird’s-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is a person’s ability to observe how he or she problem solves. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking “How am I doing?” or “How did I do?”).		✓		✓	✓