

**Senate Appropriations  
HB1395**

**March 26, 2021**

Chairman Holmberg and members of the committee, my name is Wayde Sick, State Director for the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am submitting testimony in support of HB1395, with two requests for additional CRF dollars for the Department of Career and Technical Education, if turnback dollars are available.

The Department of Career and Technical Education is starting a small, but overdue renovation of the 15<sup>th</sup> Floor. The renovation includes replacement of very old carpet, reconfiguring a few larger offices into smaller offices to cut down on shared offices, establishing hoteling space for teleworkers and finally building a large conference room. These decisions were made through results of staff surveys, asking what their future workspace needs were. The results include office space for in office workers, small collaboration space, large meeting space, storage for Career Technical Student Organization materials and teleworking space. Staff were also surveyed what their future work situation should be, whether in office, telework or hybrid. The agency employees are currently either working remotely or in a hybrid telework status. The majority of the staff are working hybrid schedules, working up to three days a week in the office. This decision was made between the employee, their immediate supervisor and me. We also need to take into account, the possibility that in the future, all staff may return to working in the office 100%. We need to ensure space is available. The conference room, I mentioned, would not be exclusive to the Department as it would be open to be shared with other agencies. My testimony is not requesting dollars for the renovation. The Department can do this with existing dollars, from savings through less travel, less supplies, etc. due to the pandemic. This work will be concluded prior to the end of the 2019-21 biennium.

The reason for my testimony is to request CRF funding for audio and video needs of the conference room. The IT equipment within the conference room would allow for staff that are in the office, to hold meetings face to face, allow for social distancing and still enable teleworking staff and other attendees to connect virtually, similar to how our current Legislative Session is being conducted. These expenses, I believe, align with the federal guidelines, which allows funds for expenses to improve telework capabilities for public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions. This conference room will be used for meetings and events such as the State Board for Career and Technical Education meetings, CTE program area specific meetings, Career and Technical Student Organization State Officer meetings, all staff meetings, and as mentioned earlier, open for other agencies to utilize. The majority of the CTE specific meetings and events are currently being held virtually, but as we begin to resume to meet in person, this equipment and conference room would allow for social distancing and virtual participation, again aligning with public health precautions. The original plan for our IT needs were to utilize our existing Polycom system, but it was brought to our attention that it was inadequate for the size of the conference room. The conference room is approximately twenty-two by thirty-two feet in size.

The preliminary estimates from NDIT to purchase and install the necessary equipment and relocate our existing Polycom system into a smaller meeting room is up to \$60,000. The estimate is based on previous installations, in similar sized conference rooms. At this time, we do not have a detailed quote. Again, it is our intent to complete all this work, prior to the end of the biennium.

In addition, the Department of Career and Technical Education would like to request an additional \$300,000 in CRF funds for the state's ten area career and technology centers,

for the intent to continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the fall of 2020, the Department did request and receive \$200,000 through the Emergency Commission and Budget Section for the centers for COVID-19 related expenses. The funds were used for expenses such as PPE, cleaning supplies, touchless water fountains and additional CTE related items to cut down on student sharing. These types of expenditures are allowable under ESSER, but the Centers are not eligible for ESSER funds as they are not considered an LEA.

New funds will be used for expenses such as additional PPE, cleaning supplies, IT equipment for virtual instruction and surfacing of floors to make cleaning more effective. Funds would be distributed as requested.

This concludes my testimony and I will stand for any questions.

Thank you.