Fargo Public School
Northern Cass School

C³TEC
Cass County CTE Center

Central Cass School
West Fargo Public School

March 17, 2021

Members of the North Dakota
SENATE FINANCE AND TAX COMITTEE

Support for HB 1380 - in its ORIGINAL Version – Dr. Denise Jonas, Director of Career and Technical Education

Chairperson Bell and members of the Senate Finance and Tax Committee. My name is Denise Jonas, Director of Career and Technical Education Center, serving Central Cass, Fargo, Northern Cass and West Fargo Public Schools. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the original version of HB 1380. I respectfully ask for a "DUE PASS" of the bill, including a career and technical education support fund, which will aid in new and expanding career and technical education programs for schools and academies.

As Director of CTE, I am approached almost daily by business and industry seeking opportunities to connect with our K-12 teachers and students. These requests are not limited to high school students but extend to elementary and middle school learners. With our State's low unemployment, workforce demands, and natural employee attrition, K12-business partnerships are viewed as a mechanism to create company awareness, expose students to future careers, and provide experiential learning.

In Cass County, we are pleased to offer a variety of career and technical education programs and pathways in our current K-12 educational systems, yet in a 2018 Career Workforce Academy Program and Curriculum study, it revealed program gaps in agriculture education, construction, manufacturing, and transportation. In our region, there is also a growing demand in medical careers, information technology, transportation, and biomedical technologies influenced by Sanford Health, Microsoft, and Aldevron. Despite K-12 efforts, schools are challenged to meet local school district demands, along with workforce demands. Offering new CTE programs, and expanding existing programs could be an option, yet a bottleneck exists through the Department of Career and Technical with funding limits, and cuts for new and expanding CTE programs.

With the promotion of Choice Ready, workforce demands, learner interest, and increasing technical training needs; school district, Centers, and colleges across North Dakota have the desire to grow CTE, yet they are hindered to provide opportunities due to these limitations. **To scale, support, and grow CTE, the legacy sinking and interest fund will provide an on-going, sustainable options for these institutions.**

Based on high school registrations for the 2021-2022 school year, Cass County schools have increased CTE programs requests in aviation, diesel technology, engineering, information technology, health science, FACS, business and marketing education, graphic design, construction, automotive technology, and career education, along with needs for support with work-base learning. Although thrilled by the increases, state reimbursements for these programs may not be available due flat levels of funding under the Department of CTE for new and expanded programming.

Beyond current CTE programming, the career academy vision will also influence new and expanded CTE programming growth for career exploration and workforce development. In Cass County, synergy from this vision has led to collaboration between business partners, K-12 schools, post-secondary leaders, the cities of Fargo and West Fargo, the Cass County Commission, FM Economic Development, FMWF Chamber of Commerce, and local legislators. All are driven to improve education, along with workforce development to support local and state economies.

With our current CTE need, and the anticipated demand through the academy model, I respectfully ask for your support of the original version of HB 1380, which would include a career and technical education support fund. Dedicated funding will provide a mechanism to leverage career and technical education programs and the academy model, creating a systemic workforce pipeline for our region and the future of North Dakota!