



January 6th, 2023

To: Chairman Nathe and Members of the House Appropriations – Education & Environment Division

Today I submit this testimony in support of HB1019. North Dakota faces the growing challenges of workforce shortages and keeping our talent from migrating to other parts of the country. Business, education and elected leaders from Southwest ND recognized this and came together with the vision to start the Southwest Area CTE Academy (SW CTE). SW CTE is currently a partnership of seven area high schools, Dickinson State University, and a robust industry group here in SW ND that is committed to offering high-quality career and technical training for in-demand occupations for SW ND. Having the opportunity to work with this group I see the impact they have and a boost they can provide in helping meet our workforce needs.

SW CTE is just one example of the fifteen CTE expansion projects that are happening around the state and the hundreds of other CTE programs currently operating in our high schools and colleges. Your support of HB1019 and the requests provided by the Department of CTE will be crucial for the success of these programs and continued growth for career and technical education. This appropriation request is very small in comparison to the overall budget you will be working on this 68th legislative session but it could be one that has the most impact with regard to our growing economy and the states biggest challenges.

In addition to the general budget request, I also encourage you to consider the budget change requests from CTE Director Sick. While we are appreciative of the work the 67th Assembly did in allocating funding to support the ND CTE Capital Projects Grant program we have found that is coming up short. I'm unsure we can proceed with the remaining 40% of our planned project as inflation costs are continuing to climb and the margins are razor thin. We've done our best to find cost savings everywhere we can and continue to work on soliciting private partnerships and have raised over \$17.5 million but are finding inflation is hitting our industry partners just as bad. As you approach this session, I encourage you to consider supporting an inflation bump to the ND CTE Capital Coronavirus grant that was approved during last session and make funding available as soon as you can to allow projects like SW CTE become a full reality. SW Area CTE Academy along with the other fourteen CTE projects around the state are scrambling to come to life and help address the workforce challenges our state is facing. That additional funding would put us over the top in meeting our goal and will bring all programs to life for high skill and high demand jobs in western ND.

Thank you for your support of HB 1019 and the next generations of North Dakota's workforce.

Sincerely,

Aaron Anderson
CTE Director
Southwest Area CTE Academy
Dickinson Public Schools