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March 3, 2023

Members of the North Dakota Senate Workforce Development Committee

RE: Support for HB1348 – Career and Technical Education Center Boards

Dear Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

Career and Technical Education's (CTE) ability to provide students with career exploration and awareness, hands-on learning experiences, skills and leadership preparations, connections to post-secondary education and dual credit opportunities, prospects to obtain industry credentials, and alignment with industry in providing work-based learning opportunities positions CTE to engage and retain our youth within our state's current and future workforce is second to none.

As one of five (5) ND Virtual CTE Centers approved by the ND CTE State Board, Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center (CRACTC), HB 1348's changes regarding CTE Center Governance has a strong and distinct positive impact for our programming that serves over 600 9-12 grade students within 800 course enrollments with online and hands-on learning days where they are getting opportunities to learn and apply the skills needed associated with the online content. HB1348 provides a distinct definition of what a virtual center means within ND Career and Technical Education, as well, it provides the flexibility related to governance representation within local school boards. Under current century code, requiring a board representative for every 300 students, up to a maximum of three (3) school board members within one school district, impacts not only our CTE center board size and structure, but local school board operations as well. Both Bismarck Public Schools (BPS) and Minot Public Schools (MPS) are members of CRACTC. At this time, the way current century code reads, due to the student enrollment size of BPS and MPS, they would each have the maximum allowed three (3) school board members serving on our board. Due to the fact each of those school districts have only five-member boards, those two districts would have to hold a local school board meeting, and follow century code for school district board meetings, each time our CRACTC board meets if each of their three board representatives would attend CTE board meetings, as they would surpass the quorum requirement. Therefore, allowing the flexibility to have one school board member and other designees to negate that scenario is impactful and necessary.

Lastly, currently CRACTC has 43-member public schools, serving schools from the Canadian border, down to the South Dakota border. Adding language regarding large CTE centers and allowing for the ability for our program to possibly utilize a representative governance structure allows us to function more efficiently without having a 40+ member board! Representative governance structure has been in place within North Dakota's Regional Education Associations (REAs) for several years, approved and provided by yourself or peers during previous legislative assemblies. Such governance model within the large geographical areas the REAs serve, works. The governance structure allowance within HB1348 would help permit for a similar efficient governance structure for large CTE centers such as CRACTC, while still requiring local school board representation and approval by the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education State Board.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill to update North Dakota Century Code 15-20.2 regarding Career and Technical Education Centers.

Sincerely,
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