



March 8, 2023

Members of the North Dakota

SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

RE: Support for HB 1348 – Relating to career and technology center boards

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB1348 to approve amendments related to NDCC 15-20.2-01, 15-20.2-04, 15-20.2-05, 15-20.2-06, and 15-20.2-07. HB1348 provides for more flexibility for Area Career and Technology Center governing boards.

My name is Denise Jonas, Director of Career and Technical Education for the Cass County Career and Technical Education Center (C3TEC). C3TEC coordinates career and technical education (CTE) programs and services for its four-member school districts of Central Cass, Fargo, Northern Cass, and West Fargo Public Schools.

C3TEC is a recognized “virtual area career and technology center”, with satellite CTE programs shared between eight high schools and the NDSCS-Fargo campus. Courses are delivered online, through video conferencing, and face-to-face with student that travel between schools. Amendments to 15-20.2-01 and 15-20.2-06 will recognize CTE centers, like C3TEC. It will also clarify the multifaceted delivery methods used across virtual center schools, versus a centralized building, to provide student access and opportunities to participate in CTE programs.

Amendments to 15-20.2-04 will increase flexibility for center governance with large school districts yet maintain the center philosophy of local school board involvement, structures for alignment, and a vote in decision-making.

As CTE Director for C3TEC,

- Local school board representation on the C3TEC Governance Board provides the opportunity for input and aligned planning with local school districts. Maintaining a minimum of one school board member representative is critical to the shared governance model and commitment to the organization as it grows.
- However, current century code requires, “*each participating school district with three hundred or more high school students must be allowed one member for each three hundred high school students or fraction thereof with a limitation of not more than three members from any one school district.*” Based on this requirement and high school enrollments for Northern Cass, Central Cass, Fargo, and West Fargo School districts, this triggers one, two, three, and three school board representatives respectfully, to create a nine-member C3TEC governance board. This requirement increases demands for more local school board members to attend meetings and creates challenges with scheduling. This also raises concerns for local school boards with compliance to NDCC 44-04-20.
- Lastly, over the years, C3TEC Governance Board members have suggested amendments to century code for center governance, 1) stating the need for flexibility in board member representation, 2) recognizing the value in diverse experiences, and 3) appreciating expertise for operational decision-making. If approved, C3TEC would maintain one school board member for each member district, with the ability to appoint school representatives based on the trigger.

Finally, amendments to 15-20.2-05 will allow for increased collaboration for area career and technology centers across North Dakota. Amendment 15-20.2-07 will expand flexibility to contract services as needed in place of required employment of personnel, increasing efficiencies and fiscal responsibility for center operations.

We thank you for your “DO PASS” vote on HB1348 with the proposed amendment.

Sincerely,

Denise D. Jonas

Dr. Denise D. Jonas,
Cass County Director of Career and Technical Education

Cc:

Patti Stedman, C3TEC Governance Board President
Penny Johnson, C3TEC Governance Board
Seth Holden, C3TEC Governance Board
Katie Christensen, C3TEC Governance Board
Nikki Gullickson, C3TEC Governance Board
Todd Sears, C3TEC Governance Board
Joe Morken, C3TEC Governance Board
Morgan Forness, Central Cass Superintendent
Dr. Rupak Gandhi, Fargo Superintendent
Dr. Bob Grosz, Fargo Associate Superintendent
Dr. Cory Steiner, Northern Cass Superintendent
Beth Slette, West Fargo Superintendent
Vincent Williams, West Fargo Assistant Superintendent
Pam Utt, Central Cass Business Manager
Jackie Gapp, Fargo Business Manager
Paige Carlson, Northern Cass Business Manager
Levi Bachmeier, West Fargo Business Manager