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March 3, 2021

Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

I correspond to share the impact that Career and Technical Education is having within the state of North Dakota and Grand Forks region. According to the 2020 Consolidated Annual Report, 23,007 students were enrolled in secondary CTE programs across the state (this compares to 21,880 in 2018). CTE students are completing coursework in program areas that are designed to meet our state's workforce needs in areas such as agriculture, health science, information technology, engineering, trades, and many others. Conversations with industries across the state continually highlight the pipeline shortage of future talent, and CTE programs is education's best example of working to meet that pipeline challenge.

Today's CTE has evolved from a limited number of vocational programs into a broad system that is constantly evolving due to the changing global economy and emerging workforce needs. Today's CTE provides students with core academic skills, job-specific technical skills, employability workplace values, career pathways, and career advancement. CTE is makes a positive impact for both the Grand Forks Public Schools and member schools of the Grand Forks Area Career & Technology Center by providing relevant learning experiences for students that align with their future career goals.

Our students are developing leadership skills through their active involvement in Career Technical Student Organizations such as FFA, DECA, Skills-USA, HOSA, FBLA, FCCLA, and TSA. CTE is partnering with post-secondary to align program offerings and expand dual credit opportunities for students. Through work-based learning opportunities, industry certifications, and collaboration with industry, students are provided a competitive advantage in preparing for their future career pathway.

SB2019 provides the critical financial support to support, and expand the availability of high-quality CTE programs to students across the state. The additions of dollars to support district's new and expanding programs, along with the cost to continue existing programs, is paramount to the enhancement of CTE within North Dakota. Now is the time to invest in our state's future workforce. I respectfully ask your support of SB2019, which supports the goals and objectives of Career & Technical Education, so we can continue to provide these important programs for our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Ripley".

Eric Ripley
Executive Director of CTE & Technology
Grand Forks Public Schools
Grand Forks Area Career & Technology Center