

House Education Committee
Chairman Pat Heinert
January 22, 2025
HB 1188

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee, my name is Pam Stroklund, and I serve as the Career and Technical Education Director for Minot Public Schools and the Minot Area Workforce Academy (MAWA). I offer written testimony in support of HB 1188, an amendment relating to the assessment of fees for area career and technology center expenses.

As a new brick and mortar Area Career & Technology Center located within the Minot area, the current assessment of member school districts cost sharing total expenses based proportionately upon high school enrollment as compared to the total high school enrollment of all participating school districts does not easily support and encourage districts to become members of the Minot Area Workforce Academy.

When forming the area center and determining programming, the MAWA Center Board heard from several school districts they were deficit spending. The board members quickly realized we would need to start with fewer programs to keep the total cost sharing at a minimum if we were to attract members. This limited the numerous CTE opportunities that could be offered to area students as we strive to fill workforce shortages.

The Minot Area Workforce Academy Center Board chose to offer the trade programs of Auto Collision, Auto Technology, Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Early Childhood Education, along with Career Development services. While these programs prepare students for certifications and entry level positions, they are not cheap to provide for high school students. Purchasing and maintaining the equipment and consumables, employing multiple highly qualified industry instructors, and operating facilities to train students drive up the costs within the area center.

An example is our new CDL program which prepares high school seniors in one semester with theory, simulation, obtaining a permit, completing range and over-the-road driving, to becoming proficient in obtaining a CDL Class A intrastate

license. This program maintains CDL simulators and a semi-truck and trailer. Class sizes are kept low to assist students with completing all competencies on their path to a high need, high skill, high wage career. Similarly, the Auto Technology and Auto Collision programs maintain ASE certified facilities outfitted with industry equipment.

At this time, the ND Department of Career and Technical Education does offset the cost of the programs by reimbursing the area center at a rate of 40%. New programs are reimbursed at 75% for new programs for a limited time. The remaining expenses are to be shared proportionately with all member schools.

Minot public and parochial students take full advantage of the MAWA offerings from the area career and technical center. Due to some scheduling conflicts and transportation issues, outlying school districts do not have the same opportunity to utilize all the services and programs offered by the area center, yet ND CC 15-20.2-08 mandates they are expected to share in the entire costs proportionately based on their high school enrollment.

To encourage area center membership and increase student participation, the MAWA Center Board supports having the flexibility to assess a center membership fee based on high school enrollment and then, assess a fee based on the member district's access and use of the programs. Our community has other workforce shortages of which the area center could provide the training for more area students. With the flexibility to charge member schools on access and usage, more CTE opportunities will become available through the Minot Area Workforce Academy.

On behalf of Minot Public Schools and the Minot Area Workforce Academy, I request your support of HB 1188 as introduced by Representative Lefor and encourage a "DO PASS" recommendation:

- Remove the proportionate total cost sharing based on high school enrollment.
- Provide the flexibility to assess a center membership fee based on high school enrollment and a fee based on access and use.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 1188.