

March 15th, 2023

Chairman Dever and Members of the Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division:

Good morning, your time in Bismarck is short with the duty of ensuring North Dakota's needs are met. One of the principal topics you will have to address is workforce needs for the state, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) serves as a vital component in the development of our state's workforce pipeline. CTE's mission is to provide students with career awareness, hands-on learning experiences, connections to post-secondary education, opportunities to obtain industry credentials, and alignment with industry in providing work-based learning opportunities. CTE has been and will remain a vital component of the educational system, providing career awareness and preparing learners to be Choice Ready and Life Ready. CTE is our states best resource to engage and retain our youth to fill our state's high demand careers.

As Director of the Southeast Region Career & Technology Center, I am providing written testimony in support of HB1019. Your vote backing this request is critical to the Department of Career and Technical Education. The support helps to sustain the current programming for career education, technical training, and workforce development. It also provides funds to support new and expanding programs. Over the past two years several requests for CTE funding have been approved without funding from the State CTE board. This is a concern, because of the added costs associated with running CTE programs, and the specialized teaching staff that are required to offer such programs. HB 1019 provides support for CTE's growth, and expands access to CTE for students across the state through area career centers for workforce development and retention of North Dakota students. Our CTE Center celebrates 50 years of connecting students to the workforce this year. We are a great example of how CTE centers operate, effectively, and efficiently provided cost effective on-site CTE opportunities to over 1900 students this past year in Southeast ND. We are able to provide our 14 member schools great CTE options. Career/Tech classes offered by SRCTC include Agriculture Education, Automotive Technology, Career Development and Counseling Services, Chef Training, Construction Technology, Cyber Security/Mobile Applications, Diesel Technology, Emergency Medical Technician Training, Marketing, Medical Science and Health Careers, Patient Care Technician, and Welding Technology. Today's workforce is changing exponentially faster than years past and our students need CTE. CTE provides students with core academic skills, job-specific technical skills, employability workplace values, career pathways, and career certifications. The ability to launch the work-based learning throughout the state is key to connecting students to employment.

In 2021, legislators saw the need to expand career & technical education and earmarked funds for the construction of area career and technology centers. This past year our center was one of several that were awarded Federal grants to broaden our offerings. These funds have yet to arrive, creating a stalemate on several projects. Yet we are moving forward doing what is in the best interest for our community and students with the funds we have, we will not be able to complete all our goals. Our original goal was to expand opportunities in Lisbon, build new construction / offerings in Hankinson, build new construction in Edgeley to be a hub to allow us as a center to fully meet our community and students needs. Original price tag for our projects was 5.9 million, with costs increasing daily due to inflation and supply chain demands our new projected budget is 9.4 million. Our member schools were excited about the grant and the opportunity to expand our facilities and reach areas with limited or no CTE options, but now with the delays we have experienced with the federal grant, our schools and NDCTE need support from ND legislators. I ask that you fully consider HB1019's original request and **amend to restore the one-time ask of \$40 million for the 13 projects to combat the inflation** we experienced. Overall HB1019 has the critical financial support to support, and expand the availability of CTE programs to students across the state. Specifically, an increased allocation of funding being requested to support the new and expanding programs of the approved CTE Centers, along with the cost to continue existing programs, and is paramount to the enhancement of CTE.

As a member of the 68th Legislative Assembly, you will have the opportunity to support CTE as an investment into meeting our state's workforce challenges. With 18,000 job openings in North Dakota, skilled labor shortages, and North Dakota's thriving innovative ecosystem, strengthening CTE will serve as your legacy for intentional, sustainable career education and workforce development.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB1019, with the additional funding amendment for inflation, this will support the goals and objectives of Career & Technical Education.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dan Spellerberg
CTE Director
Southeast Region Career & Technology Center

