North Dakota
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Career and Technical
Education

Senate Appropriations
Human Resources Subcommittee
HB1021

March 13, 2023

Chairman Dever and members of the Senate Appropriations Human Resources Subcommittee, for the record my name is Wayde Sick, State Director for the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am submitting testimony in support for HB1021, specifically the funding requested for the operation and expansion of the State Longitudinal Data System or SLDS. The intent of these funds is to appropriate the resources to ITD to provide services to the agencies and the state. Much of this work has been done utilizing federal grant dollars, but the grants dollars are nearing their end. If these funds are not included in the ITD budget, each agency will need to find dollars within its own operating budget to complete this work. Housing the funds within ITD will allow for a more coordinated use of the SLDS and cut down on the need to transfer funds from one state agency to another. Not only will required reporting be completed but this will also enable the SLDS Committee to prioritize SLDS projects and research.

The Department of Career and Technical Education leans heavily on the SLDS for several projects and initiatives. First, on an annual basis, the Department must report to the US Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, or OCTAE, the state's Consolidated Annual Report. This measures how well our CTE programs and students

are performing. The data that is analyzed provides us information of how our CTE Concentrators performed while they are in high school, but also what are they doing following high school graduation. This can only be done by matching secondary student data with post-secondary and workforce data. The SLDS allows that matching to be done in a safe and secure manner. This data can also be reported on the insights.nd.gov website, allowing us to be transparent with our data. By utilizing the SLDS and insights.nd.gov, we can show CTE enrollment data, by school district. The next step is to include accountability measures on each school district's dashboard.

Next, as we are all aware, North Dakota has a workforce shortage. Apprenticeship is an effective way of addressing workforce needs, but apprenticeship has an identity issue. Many people do not understand what an apprenticeship is. If they are familiar with apprenticeship, they may think it is exclusive to the trades, which is no longer the case. Finally, how does a student learn where to find an apprenticeship. That is where SLDS comes in. The SLDS has been working with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, to access information about apprenticeship opportunities and publishing them on the insights.nd.gov website, for students to find.

Another initiative SLDS and CTE is working on together is Digital Credentials. This is a joint effort that also includes Job Service North Dakota, ND Department of Commerce, Lake Region State College, and Bismarck State College. The intent of the project is to recognize students for a series of coursework they have completed, while in high school, that awards a digital credential, that an employer or college would recognize.

Finally, to improve access to Career and Technical Education, NDCTE has asked SLDS to disaggregate data, by regional planning region, to try to determine what opportunity gaps exist. This analysis can potentially determine funding priorities.

Again, North Dakota Career and Technical is supportive of funding for the State Longitudinal Data System. Having a robust SLDS is key to make data driven decisions on not only policy, but also our state's resources.

This concludes my testimony; I will stand for any questions you may have.