

# Jamestown Public Schools

Jamestown School District  
Gackle-Streeter District

JAMES VALLEY MULTI-DISTRICT  
CAREER/TECHNOLOGY CENTER

910 12<sup>TH</sup> Ave. N.E.  
Jamestown, ND 58401-6513  
701-252-8841

Montpelier School District  
Pingree-Buchanan District

**Adam Gehlhar, Director**  
**Heidi Eckart, Assistant Director**

**Mike Soulis, Counselor**  
**Sheila Naumann, Admin. Asst.**

Testimony in Support of Amending Appropriations within SB 2019  
North Dakota Legislative Assembly

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 2019, the appropriations bill for the Department of Career and Technical Education (CTE). I urge you to reconsider the reductions made by the Senate Appropriations Committee, as they significantly impact CTE funding and the ability to expand critical programs that directly address workforce shortages in our communities.

CTE programming is designed based on a community needs assessment to ensure alignment with regional workforce demands. In our center we are eager to be responsive to local community needs. Industry leaders and community stakeholders have made it clear that there is an urgent need for skilled workers in agriculture, commercial driving (CDL), and childcare. These are not hypothetical needs; they are real and pressing workforce gaps that our schools and CTE centers are actively working to address. However, we cannot meet these needs without adequate funding for new and expanding programs.

For example, our CDL program was developed in direct response to industry leaders expressing a critical shortage of trained drivers. This program ensures that students graduate with employable skills that sustain regional businesses and bolster North Dakota's economy. Without sufficient funding, the expansion of this and similar programs will be stalled, limiting student opportunities and failing to address urgent workforce demands.

Similarly, our efforts in childcare respond to an ongoing crisis. In the last legislative session, childcare was identified as a statewide priority, and our region shares this sense of urgency. We have taken innovative steps to establish a childcare pilot program that not only serves families but also provides hands-on training for students pursuing careers in early childhood education. This program has the potential to serve as a model for other districts, but without proper funding, it risks remaining a concept rather than a viable solution.

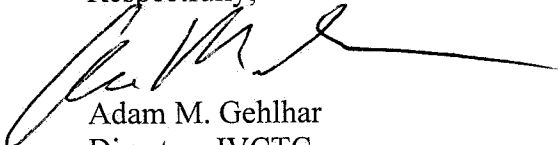
Specifically, Page 1, Line 16 of SB 2019 designates \$7 million for secondary grants, yet only \$3 million for new and expanding programs—despite the department's request for an additional \$22 million. This reduction jeopardizes the launch and expansion of vital CTE programs statewide. In Jamestown alone, we have worked diligently to reinstate our Agriculture program, add a CDL program, and expand childcare and culinary opportunities, all of which depend on these critical expansion funds. Additionally, JVCTC is eager to support CTE experience for students in Carrington, New Rockford, and Harvey through capital improvements that would serve the broader region. Without sufficient appropriations, these efforts will be significantly hindered.

Furthermore, Page 2, Line 10 includes a \$1 million allocation for Virtual Reality Career Exploration, a decision that has raised concerns among CTE Directors. This funding would be better utilized to support baseline CTE programming rather than being directed toward a private company's services, which many centers do not use. This allocation does not align with the top priorities identified by CTE leaders or industry partners and does not directly contribute to students' career readiness.

As the legislative session progresses, securing adequate funding for new and expanding CTE programs remains a top priority for our region. I urge you to support amendments that restore necessary funding to ensure that CTE remains a driving force in preparing students for in-demand careers.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further details on how CTE impacts our local and state workforce development.

Respectfully,



Adam M. Gehlhar  
Director -JVCTC