



1929 N Washington St
Suite A
Bismarck, ND 58501
www.cractc.org
701-415-0453

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Members of the North Dakota House of Representatives Education and Environment Division Appropriations Committee

RE: Support for SB 2019 – Career and Technical Education Appropriations

Chair Nathe and members of the House Appropriations E&E committee,

I write to you today in strong support of SB 2019, a bill critical to sustaining and expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) in North Dakota. I have provided multiple written testimony and oral testimony regarding CTE and this bill as CTE truly is the centerpiece of the early stages of our workforce and economic development in which you desire as state leaders. As I mentioned during my oral testimony, there is not one area of industry and economic development in which CTE does not have a connection.

Thank you for your time, your dedication, and your service to our great state. I know that each of you want what is best for North Dakota—both for today and for the future of our workforce. As legislative leaders, you are investing significant time, often with little recognition or compensation, to ensure our great state thrives. Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a key piece of that puzzle.

CTE is not just another educational initiative—it is an investment in workforce development, rural prosperity, and economic stability. It directly addresses North Dakota's most pressing challenges: affordable housing, daycare accessibility, and workforce shortages to name a few.

Take construction and building trades programs—these students are developing the very skills needed to address our affordable housing crisis. Early childhood education programs are training the next generation of daycare providers, directly tackling the shortage of childcare services in our state. Business and marketing courses are equipping young entrepreneurs with the knowledge to start and sustain businesses that will revitalize our state. Our Work-Based Learning programs help students establish and complete meaningful industry related experiences such as job shadows, internships, capstones, and cooperative work experiences, giving them real-world exposure and experience.

CTE centers provide high school students with real-world experience, industry-relevant training, and career pathways that lead directly into high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations. And unlike traditional college paths, these students are often workforce-ready years earlier—saving them and their families thousands of dollars in tuition while also accelerating our state's economic growth.

Let's briefly talk numbers. As outlined below, in the past three years, an average of over 55% of CTE enrollments within our CRACTC programming come from disadvantaged rural North Dakota students—students who often have fewer educational and career opportunities, due to various reasons. Without CTE Center

Pat Phillips, Director
Pat_Phillips@bismarckschools.org

Lyle Krueger, Assistant Director
Lyle.Krueger@k12.nd.us

Amy Johnson, Registrar
Amy.A.Johnson@k12.nd.us



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and virtual/hybrid CTE programming such as CRACTC, these students may leave the state in search of available opportunities elsewhere as they will be unaware of the robust career experiences and opportunities available to them right here in ND. But with strong CTE programs, and our connection with industry partners at an earlier age, we provide them a compelling reason to learn, stay, build, and invest in their communities and our great state in which you lead!

The CRACTC utilized the funding that you approved to the State CTE Dept last session by not only continuing the programs we had prior but expanding it with more available course programming and with more enrollments. Over the past two years, CRACTC has had a 33.25% increase in enrollments (students who took a minimum of a ½ credit of CTE programming) from 805 in 22-23 to 1,206 this year with an average of 55.54% of those students coming from rural schools, with the remaining 44.46% coming from urban public, private, and homeschool students. Below are some of these statistics:

| School Year | Schools Served | CTE Programs | Courses Provided | Enrollments (Min 0.5cr) | % Increase from Prev Year | Rural Enrollments | Rural Enrollment % | |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 22-23 | 58 | 8 | 27 | 805 | baseline | 471 | 58.50% | |
| 23-24 | 46 | 7 | 32 | 961 | 16.23% | 494 | 51.40% | |
| 24-25 | 57 | 8 | 33 | 1206 | 20.31% | 684 | 56.71% | |
| | | | | | | | 55.54% | Avg Rural % |

Speaking of numbers that should resonate with your work, earlier I spoke about saving students & families time and money. CRACTC, in partnership with area postsecondary institutions like Bismarck State College, through dual-credit opportunities for applicable CTE courses, CRACTC alone helped saved students approximately \$30,000 in tuition costs. That is money that stays in the students’ pockets, in their families’ pockets, money that stays and get reinvested in North Dakota!

These simple numbers tell a compelling story: students want these opportunities, regardless of where they live or the school they attend, and we have an obligation to provide that to them. CRACTC’s motto is: *Helping prepare today’s students for tomorrow’s experiences...*and the numbers above prove it! I ask you today--help us, help you, in reaching your goals as state leaders! Reinstating funding for CTE is not just a good decision—it is the right decision for North Dakota’s future.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience if you have any questions you’d like to discuss.

Sincerely,

Lyle P Krueger

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Central Regional Area Career and Technical Center

Pat Phillips, Director
Pat_Phillips@bismarckschools.org

Lyle Krueger, Assistant Director
Lyle.Krueger@k12.nd.us

Amy Johnson, Registrar
Amy.A.Johnson@k12.nd.us