



**Testimony on HB 1431**  
**Presented to the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Prepared by Bernie Dardis, West Fargo Commission President**  
**Monday, Feb. 1**

1           Good morning Representative Delzer and committee members: I am writing to  
2 express my support for HB 1431, which helps key strategic investments in North Dakota.  
3 Growing up in western North Dakota, and now resident and Commission President of  
4 the City of West Fargo, I can see how this bill will benefit residents across the state. I  
5 appreciate your leadership on this to strengthen our state's future.

6           Today, I would like to focus on the Career Workforce Academy project funding  
7 contained in HB 1431. As you may recall, the North Dakota State College of Science is  
8 leading this project, and public entities and the business community are supporting. It  
9 has made significant progress over the past two years, raising nearly \$21 million of the  
10 \$30 million goal. Over 60 businesses, along with the communities of Fargo, West Fargo  
11 and Cass County and the U.S. Department of Commerce have invested in this  
12 workforce development project. Plans are to begin phase 1 of the project this spring.

13           HB 1431 includes \$9 million in grant funding dedicated specifically to a career  
14 and technical education program located in Fargo. The Career Workforce Academy  
15 will be public-private partnership that provides all Cass County K-14 students,  
16 incumbent workforce and new immigrants a curriculum to prepare them for successful  
17 careers. The Academy will help alleviate long-term workforce shortage in our region to  
18 help our communities continue to grow and thrive.

19           These state funds would apply to phase II and complete the funding we need to  
20 complete the local, collaborative public-private partnership project. Included with my  
21 testimony is a project brochure that you may find of interest.

22           I would remiss if I did not also mention the key funding this bill would provide for  
23 the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion. As the chair of the Metro Flood Diversion Authority  
24 Finance Committee, I am grateful for the diligent work of legislative leadership in

25 coming up with this financially sound solution to funding critical infrastructure, like the  
26 Diversion Project. This bill includes the remaining funding necessary from the state to  
27 complete the project. This is critical because it will reduce the burden on taxpayers by  
28 \$20 million by eliminating short-term borrowing. In addition, providing the remaining  
29 funding will allow construction of the project to stay on schedule, eliminating deferrals  
30 that would increase complexity and cost. With the State of North Dakota support and  
31 legal and permitting hurdles behind it, the Diversion Project can move forward. This is a  
32 decision that will not only benefit the people and businesses in the region now, but for  
33 generations to come.

34 In conclusion, I fully support HB 1431 because of the financial support for the  
35 Career Workforce Academy and Fargo-Moorhead Diversion, and ask you to do the  
36 same. I would be happy to answer any questions.

# THE CAREER WORKFORCE ACADEMY

Designed as a public private/partnership that will provide all Cass County K-14 students, incumbent workforce and new immigrants a curriculum to prepare them for successful careers. The Academy will help alleviate long-term workforce shortage in our region to help our communities continue to grow and thrive.



# CAREER WORKFORCE ACADEMY



## THE WHY

- ◆ The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area is the largest and fastest growing area in North Dakota.
- ◆ K-12 enrollment projections indicate significant increases in the near future.
- ◆ The workforce in the region is the largest and most diverse. There is a consistent demand for trained and educated employees.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

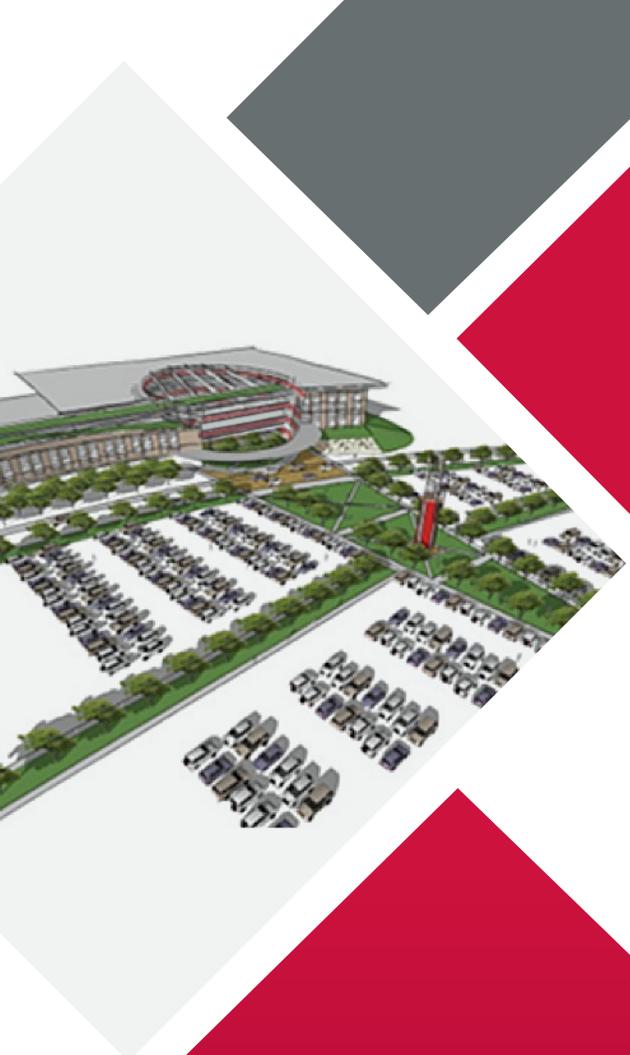
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Fargo Public Schools  
West Fargo Public Schools  
Central Cass School District  
Northern Cass School District  
North Dakota State College of Science



## THE WHAT

### **The Career Workforce Academy will:**

- ◆ Provide exposure to multiple career paths for all levels of K-14 students.
- ◆ Present more opportunities for students to sample and experiment with a variety of careers.
- ◆ Create opportunity for those interested in a technical degree.
- ◆ Create a path for incumbent workers and new Americans for a new career.
- ◆ Provide appropriate facilities and equipment for hands-on career training.
- ◆ Focus on the region's workforce and employer needs.

### **The Career Workforce Academy will provide opportunities for the following demographic groups:**

- ◆ Career Awareness – Elementary Students
- ◆ Career Exploration – Junior High Students
- ◆ Career Pathways – High School Students
- ◆ Career Development – College Students
- ◆ Career Training – Incumbent Workforce and New Americans

## THE HOW

How will we serve those students attending the Career Workforce Academy? By developing curriculum for levels K-14 that will ultimately lead to additional associate degrees in the region. There will be an initial focus on these sectors: allied health, manufacturing, agriculture, information technology, construction, transportation, business, arts and communication. In addition, emphasis will be placed on project-based learning, specialized student support and services, identifying the unique needs of students, and continual support for student success.

## THE WHO

A consortium was formed including K-12 school districts, two-year colleges, and business and industry with a common goal to combine resources to pursue the Career Workforce Academy. The K-12 members are, Fargo, West Fargo, Northern Cass, Central Cass, NDSCS, business and industry partners from sectors such as allied health, manufacturing, agriculture, information technology, construction, transportation, business, arts and communication.

## PROJECT BUDGET & LOCATION

The project is designed as a public private/partnership with a \$30 million capital budget. (\$15 million private and \$15 million public) The academy will offer programs that will provide K-14 students, the incumbent workforce and new immigrants a curriculum to prepare them for successful careers. The program is also dependent on strong partnerships with business/industry leaders from the region that work together to enhance curriculum with relevant learning for successful outcomes.

### **SITE LOCATION PREFERENCE:**

- ◆ 15 acres are available (10 acres donated) which will provide room phased growth.
- ◆ Investment in new facility will allow opportunity for "world-class" programming.
- ◆ The stature of CTE in Cass County will enhance visibility and identity.
- ◆ Allows ease of access and proximity of for K-12 schools.
- ◆ Provides neutral ground for K-12 district students.
- ◆ Positions communities for long-term economic growth.
- ◆ Garners support from business.