

February 1, 2021

Chairman Delzer and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to you in favor of HB 1431. In March of 2020, less than one year ago, an informal task force was created to explore the possibility of developing a Career and Technical Educational Academy in Dickinson. Arriving at our current position was a joint effort between area legislators, Dickinson Public Schools, Dickinson State University, and other community stakeholders such as manufacturers and economic development agencies. As it became apparent that the Academy has the potential of impacting a larger geographic region as well as private secondary schools, Dickinson Catholic Schools, the Roughrider Area Career and Technical Center (SWND Schools), and others have joined in our efforts.

The mission of the Southwest Career and Technical Education Academy is: “To facilitate career readiness in Southwestern North Dakota through premier Career and Technical Education in response to state and regional business, industry, and labor needs.”

In early July 2020, with the CTE task force and Dickinson Public School Board advice and approval, Dickinson Public Schools submitted an offer to consider the purchase of the 40-acre, seven-building, Halliburton Campus located in north Dickinson as a possible site for the much needed CTE Center. The assessed value of the property is just over \$10.8 million, but the district believes the value to be significantly higher. Halliburton accepted the district's bid of \$6 million and the final purchase of this property took place in November 2020. The committee considers this purchase to be a significant step forward in fulfilling the CTE’s mission.

The CTE Task Force has held sixteen full committee meetings and numerous sub-committee meetings to 1) create a priority list for programs of study; 2) create a governance board; and 3) develop a business plan, which will be forwarded to you for your review. It is a work in progress and it is our hope that we will offer selected programs in Southwest North Dakota for students in grades 9-16 beginning fall of 2021, with expanded programs to soon follow.

We consider this project to be critical for developing and expanding workforce opportunities in Southwest North Dakota. Career and technical education has evolved from a vocational school model to one that provides academics and skills for higher education in addition to careers in skilled trades, technology, and applied sciences.

The committee believes that the timing could not be more perfect: The combination of Dickinson State University’s new dual mission, the availability of a facility that will more than encompass our training needs, the demand for “up skilling” of today’s adult workforce, the ability to ladder secondary education to higher education, and the willingness of Southwest North Dakota stakeholders to work together toward this common goal.

We sincerely welcome your support and funding to make the Southwest North Dakota Career and Technical Education Academy a reality. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submitted by Vince Reep – Chair of the SWNDCTEA Task Force Committee