

**Senate Appropriations
HB1431**

March 31, 2021

Chair Holmberg and members of the committee, my name is Wayde Sick, State Director of the Department of Career and Technical Education. I am submitting testimony in support for HB1431.

Section 10 of HB1431 would provide funds to the Department of Career and Technical Education for the purpose to grant funds for additional Career and Technology Education Centers, specifically for construction and equipment, for the sum of \$60 million. \$45 million would be set aside for new centers, with \$15 million to existing programs for the purpose of equipment upgrades. I do ask the \$15 million is also considered for renovation or expansion projects for existing CTE programs. Currently the state of North Dakota has ten area career and technology centers, providing Career and Technical Education in a variety of ways, either face to face or virtually via online or the state Interactive Television or ITV system. Five of the centers are considered brick and mortar centers as most of the method of delivery is face-to-face. Five are virtual, meaning they lack a central physical space. They provide their coursework either online or through ITV, but all provide some face-to-face instruction as well. Eight of our area career and technology centers provide some level of virtual career and technical education, either via online or interactive television (ITV). Students that take face to face CTE courses through a center are either bussed into the center, attend satellite sites or have traveling teachers. In addition to the ten centers, there is high quality career and technical education offered by our high schools. The point of

that clarification, or possibly confusion, is to illustrate one size does not fit all when it comes to the needs of the region and school district.

The ten centers serve approximately one hundred school districts and provided instruction to around 6000 students in the 2019-20 school year. Statewide, during the 2019-20 school year over 23,000 high school students enrolled in at least one CTE course. That is 72% of all high school students. Expanding CTE access can help that number continue to grow.

Although our centers and schools do an excellent job in providing CTE, there are gaps within our state, not just in access to a CTE center, but also the programming our existing centers and schools are able to provide. Every student in the state does have access to Career and Technical Education as state statute does require schools to offer CTE. Our comprehensive high schools do a phenomenal job offering CTE, either by providing it themselves or utilizing an area career and technology center. The benefit though of a center is a center can scale programs that many of the state's schools are unable to. A prime example is a health careers program, offered by the Roughrider Area Career and Technology Center out of Hebron. A few health careers teachers can serve all twelve of the member schools. This is just one example the partnership of a center and the efficiency it can provide. Area Career and Technical Education Centers are not to replace the CTE programs that is offered in our high schools, but to supplement.

I am here to state the Department of Career and Technical Education is here to partner with the Legislative Assembly to continue to expand access to more quality CTE programs, through the development and expansion of centers and support the programs offered through our high schools. Additional centers, strategically placed in

various parts of the state, can supplement what member high schools are offering in CTE, bring in workforce training and post-secondary offerings and potentially serve populations with barriers to employment, such as English Language Learners, Adult Education, etc. Future CTE Centers could become a one stop shop for K12 education, Post-Secondary programs, and workforce training.

If passed, the Department of Career and Technical Education will create guidance and a selection committee, consisting of representatives of various entities, such as NDCTE, NDDPI, Department of Commerce, the Workforce Development Council and others, to ensure expertise in the areas of K12 education, post-secondary education and workforce have a voice.

The selection process would be based on availability of matching funds, labor market interest alignment, student interest, school district buy-in and innovative practices and delivery.

This concludes my testimony and I am here to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.