

March 15th, 2023

Dear Representative Pursell and Senator Weber,

On behalf of Redwood County Economic Development Authority and proud partner of LYFT Career Pathways, we write to you in full support of HF2042/SF2058 – career and technical education consortium grant funding. Secondary career and technical programs are the root lifeblood of Minnesota’s economy, and the ability to expand and grow these programs is integral to a strong economy and labor force in Redwood County and across the state.

HF2042/SF2058 is an incredible opportunity for statewide, systematic, student-centered approach to career and technical that has already reaped massive benefits for districts, teachers, and most importantly students. Students who participate in CTE more rigorously become employed locally at higher rates than other students. CTE programming contributes to workforce retention by connecting students to local postsecondary institutions and local employers.

In June of 2022, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) published the article *High School Career and Technical Education as a Workforce Development and Retention Strategy* explaining “investments in high school CTE can help sustain regional labor force growth and thus mitigate workforce shortages in Greater Minnesota”. Alessia Leibert, author of the above mentioned article published by DEED, says “High school CTE represents an important economic development and workforce retention tool. More should be done to engage local employers, as well as existing postsecondary partners, in order to increase the number of CTE courses earning both high school and postsecondary credit. This, along with increasing local work-based learning opportunities, would serve to attract students towards critical workforce pipelines”.

The dual goal of connecting students to local postsecondary providers and local employers is best achieved when CTE programs attract students to fields that support jobs in local industries. The study finds that, by and large, Minnesota school districts have tailored CTE course offerings to their regional economies, although gaps exist. Some fields that support a significant number of jobs – such as Health care and Information Technology – could benefit from increased enrollments. HF2042/SF2058 would allow school districts to close those gaps.

The Redwood County EDA recently adopted a two-year strategic plan. Within the plan one of the highest priority strategies is to provide businesses tools to support their efforts to attract and retain the need workforce. Specific objectives will include the development of a workforce coalition and strengthen partnerships with the school districts. Through these partnerships the desire is to grow the CTE programming, provide students career exploration opportunities and enhance the skills needed to serve the labor needs with the county businesses. In order to carry out this work, the career and technical education consortium grant funding is critical to ensure success.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to support this legislation and urge the committees to include in their respective omnibus bills. Please contact me with any questions.

Respectively,



Briana Mumme
Economic Development Coordinator