



RIDGEWATER COLLEGE

creating opportunities. changing lives.

March 17, 2023

Senator Bill Weber & Representative Kristi Pursell
State Capital Building
St Paul, MN 55115

Dear Senator Weber and Representative Pursell

On behalf of the Mid-Minnesota Perkins Consortium, in partnership with Ridgewater College, I write to you in support of HF2042/SF2058 –Career & Technical Education Consortium Grant Funding. Secondary career and technical programs plant the seeds of opportunity to enrich Minnesota’s economy. As a member of the LYFT Advisory Committee, as well as championing strong partnerships between industry and high school partners in a rural portion of the state, the ability to expand and grow these programs is integral to a strong healthy Minnesota economy and labor force into the future.

HF2042/SF2058 will provide opportunity for statewide, systematic, student-centered approach to career and technical education (CTE) and exploration that has already reaped massive benefits. Students who participate in CTE traditionally become employed locally at higher rates than other students. CTE programming contributes to workforce retention by connecting students to local postsecondary institutions for continuing education training and skill building.

In June of 2022, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) published Alessia Leibert’s 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”. It goes on to say, “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”.

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. By and large, Minnesota school districts have tailored CTE course offerings to their regional economies. However, gaps exist. The funding provided by HF2042/SF2058 would allow us to continue bridging those gaps.

Sincerely,

Kelley McClure Mork
Mid-Minnesota Perkins Coordinator
College in the Schools Coordinator for Ridgewater College

WILLMAR CAMPUS

2101 15th Ave NW
Willmar, MN 56201
320-222-5200 | 1-800-722-1151
FAX 320-222-5212

HUTCHINSON CAMPUS

2 Century Ave SE
Hutchinson, MN 55350
320-234-8500 | 1-800-722-1151
FAX 320-234-8512

www.ridgewater.edu