

Testimony for HB 2394
Education Budget Committee

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Chair Grosserodes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. As a Professional Educator of 31 years, my experiences as a Career & Technical Instructor, CTE Program Coordinator, and District Administrator have provided me with vast experiences linking secondary & post-secondary education, and partnerships with business and industry.

My topic of discussion today is related to Senate Bill 155 and the opposition to reducing funding of Business and Industry Credentials. The previous bill provided a \$1000 Incentive for all students successfully completing an industry recognized credential, while the new proposal, House Bill 2394, reduces the incentive 75% to \$250. In addition the new bill would reimburse schools for the cost each successful completion of an industry recognized credential assessment.

The reduction of funding for industry recognized credentialing would negatively impact all Kansas schools, and their post-secondary partners who have worked to integrate SB 155 Free Tuition Program along with the accompany Industry credentials that are aligned to specific programs of study and career/skill based employment opportunities. Three specific areas where earning an industry credential has proven beneficial to students are:

- Earning one credential provides opportunities for stackable credentials leading to high wage and high demand employability
- Employment in career field of interest, while attending post-secondary institution, offers students industry experience and skill building opportunities
- Credential are tied to Kansas workforce needs that are becoming increasing tied to high skill careers

In addition to a high school diploma, earning an industry recognized credential is a valid and authentic measurement of what students know and the essential skills they can perform. Business and Industry has challenged Kansas Secondary and Post-Secondary schools to provide a workforce that is ready to perform the necessary skills required for employability in tomorrow jobs. Earning an industry recognized credential is the first step to meeting the demands and needs of our Kansas workforce partners.

It is our belief that any funding in support of industry credentials is important to continuing the progress made the past two years. However, a reduction in the funding per-earned-certificate could jeopardize CTE programs who have incorporated the funding allotment to support local budgets tied to Career and Technical Education.