

House Education Budget Committee

Testimony on HB 2394

Delivered by Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director

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Thank you for the opportunity to appear in opposition to HB 2394, which would reduce and cap the career technical education incentive grant.

In 2012, the Legislature enacted SB 155, which, in part, created the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Incentive program. The program provides \$1,000, subject to appropriation, to a school district for each high school student who graduates from that district with an industry- recognized credential in an occupation deemed by the Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Kansas Board of Regents and the State Board of Education, as being in highest need of additional skilled employees at the time the student entered the CTE course or program in the district.

This committee, just a few weeks ago, recommended restoring funding for the CTE Incentive program **and we appreciate that you recognize the importance of investing in workforce development.**

A report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce suggests that more than 64 percent of jobs in the Kansas economy will require some level of postsecondary education by 2018. That does not mean that every student will need to complete a four-year degree program; many jobs will require a specialized industry certification or two-year degree.

The CTE Incentive program encourages and supports students seeking industry certification *and* responds to the changing needs of the Kansas workforce.

In the past three years, the number of certificates earned has increased nearly 300 percent. In 2013-2014, 1,409 certificates were earned. Students with these industry certificates have acquired the skills necessary to enter the workforce and support the Kansas economy.

While the actual cost of certification and accompanying assessments may vary, the program allows school districts to use any remaining portion of the \$1,000 award for other related operating expenses, such as:

- helping students procure uniforms, tools, textbooks and other required program materials;
- purchasing and updating equipment for programs and courses offered within the school district; and
- developing new courses and programs to meet workforce needs.

In 2010, when hearings were held for this program, there were lengthy conversations about the expenses related to career and technical education programs. While the \$1,000 incentive may seem small when looking at individual districts, those dollars have a real impact on students.

Reducing the incentive funding by 75 percent would negatively impact student participation in these programs and could disrupt a program intended to streamline student entry into the Kansas workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. We encourage the committee to reject HB 2394 and would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the concerns raised in our testimony.

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