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Introduction and Brief History of Federal Funding For CTE

Good afternoon Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss this important issue. I am Tom Friedemann and I serve as the Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer for the Francis Tuttle Technology Center in Oklahoma City. Francis Tuttle is a premier provider of career-tech education with an enrollment of nearly 35,000 students. With four campuses we provide a wide array of programs and services that include traditional career-tech majors, college-prep career academies, alternative education programs for at-risk students, customized training for industry, and instruction for adjudicated youth.

The Federal Government has had a long history of partnering with the States to provide vocational-technical education dating back to the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, which provided funds for training programs in vocational agriculture, home economics and trade & industry programs, in addition to teacher training for each of those fields. That commitment to career-tech education expanded with the passage of the George-Ellzey, George-Deen and George-Barden Acts in the 1930's and 40's. Then in 1963, the historic National Vocational Education Act was passed as a national security measure to address the shortage of trained technicians that became apparent shortly after the Soviets successfully launched Sputnik and America found itself in the middle of a Space Race. That piece of legislation made funds available to the States to develop their own public education infrastructures that included systems of schools known then as area vo-tech centers or area technical colleges. Their primary focus was turning

out the necessary number of trained technicians this country needed to be globally competitive. More recently the federal government continued its support for what we now call career-tech education (CTE), in the form of the Carl Perkins Act of 1984 and has since had multiple reauthorizations.

Today, our country still finds itself unable to turn out the workforce we need as we are quickly running out of people who know how to do essential work! Perkins funds continue to address that problem with dollars focused on enhancing CTE programs that have direct linkages to employers in an effort to close the skills gap. Perkins seeks to ensure that robust CTE programs are available to all students, creates seamless education transitions between secondary and postsecondary programs, enhances work-based learning opportunities and re-engages disconnected youth through CTE programs that result in positive academic and career outcomes.

The Francis Tuttle Model – How A Local School Uses Federal Funds

So, in the above introduction, we've identified what the Perkins Act is designed to accomplish, but that surely begs the question, how does it really work for a local CTE district like Francis Tuttle? Using our institution as an example, I'd like to share how we are using those funds every day to enhance our stated mission of "preparing our customers for success in the workplace."

1. Francis Tuttle Technology Center strives to ensure that high school students in our district are given assistance in determining career plans after high school by utilizing funding to provide one Career Counselor/Specialist in each of our partner high schools. These counselors assist with career and academic plans for both high school and post-secondary education.
2. Francis Tuttle strives to promote seamless educational transitions between secondary and post-secondary training programs by co-funding a Career Specialist housed at the University of Central Oklahoma to assist students interested in continuing their education at UCO and those at UCO who have made the decision to leave college and would like to transition to Francis Tuttle.

3. Francis Tuttle promotes preparation for non-traditional career fields where one gender is underrepresented by the addition of a Non-traditional Careers Advisor. Utilizing Carl Perkins funding, the Francis Tuttle Women in Technology (WIT) initiative began by analyzing three years of enrollment and completion data from Francis Tuttle's non-traditional programs. The data mirrored industry and displayed very low female participation in programs such as pre-engineering, computer science, programming, automotive and other similar classes. Although trends in the data showed that enrollment in some of these programs had slightly increased over the years, the gender balance remained unequal. After analyzing the data, Francis Tuttle chose to focus their efforts on recruitment and retention of female students in high wage/high demand non-traditional programs. Funds are also utilized to provide professional development workshops and speakers for the participants in the WIT program.
4. In addition to the funds we receive from The Carl Perkins Act, we also utilize other federal funding sources when appropriate. While Francis Tuttle strives to keep its tuition costs low, many of our post-secondary students could not afford school without the assistance of Federal Student Aid. Approximately 30% of our post-secondary students receive Federal Student Aid in the form of a Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, and/or Federal Work-Study. During the 2016-2017 award year, we disbursed $1.35 million in Federal Student Aid to needy students. Not only did this money cover most of the students' tuition, but it also helped to offset some of their indirect educational costs, such as transportation and living expenses. While the majority of our Federal Student Aid comes from the Federal Pell Grant, the Federal Work-Study program has also helped benefit many of our students. This past year we were able to help a student enrolled in our Orthotics/Prosthetics program. The student was working full-time in addition to attending school full-time, and he was struggling to make ends meet. Through the Federal Work-Study program, we were able to offer the student a part-time employment at our on-

campus Orthotics/Prosthetics lab, where he assisted the instructor with a variety of projects that helped enhance his knowledge of the profession. While working in the lab, he helped to fabricate a fully functional and lifelike human arm model that students in our nursing program now use to practice phlebotomy. This hands-on experience helped him to secure two separate job offers before he had even completed his program. The student graduated from his program recently and is well on his way to becoming a successful technician in the field of orthotics and prosthetics.

Concluding Thoughts, Observations and Recommendations

As we explore ways to improve on past Perkins reauthorizations, we would like to make it permissible to use these funds in earlier grades (elementary/middle school), especially for the applied learning of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). We could also see some great advantages to localizing efforts by giving more control to the States, but with appropriate accountability. States are in the best position to use these funds to meet the demands of their regional economies. And finally, more support should be given to career and academic counseling.

A greater federal investment in CTE will support these efforts. Additional resources for Perkins can help to strengthen employer partnerships, provide educator professional development, ensure the latest technology and equipment in the classroom, and promote work-based learning opportunities.

The following data is typical of what we're hearing every day in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area and speaks to how critical it is for our country to continue to seek new and innovative ways to engage more of our young people in educational programs that meet the growing needs of America's workplace.

- Harvard Business School recently reported 92% of senior executives identified a troubling skills gap that plagues the workforce. "Unless we adopt more proactive career and technical education initiatives … we will face a world in which there will be a lot of people without jobs…[and] a growing number of jobs without qualified people."

- Manpower Group's survey on Talent Shortage showed that employers cited the absence of technical skills (48%) and soft skills (33%) as the most significant barriers to fulfilling their workforce needs.
- Accenture conducted a companion survey of more than 800 human resources executives and discovered that 56% of respondents found middle-skills jobs hard to fill. The study also found that more than 70% of the largest companies (those with revenues greater than $2 billion) indicated that their inability to attract and retain middle-skills talent, frequently affected their performance. And this situation will only worsen as 76 million boomers will fall from participation in the workplace from 80% to 40% by 2022.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with my thoughts regarding the federal government's role in helping us create a "Pipeline to the Workforce" that will improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. As we like to say in our State, CTE's goal is to "provide a job for every Oklahoman and a workforce for every company." I look forward to answering your questions.