

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chairman Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak in support of HB 512.

Introduction

This testimony is not intended to disparage anyone at the Department of Education. We have been very fortunate to be able to work with Paola DeMaria, Steve Gratz and Emily Passius on initiatives such as Prepared for Success, Career Pathway Development and Social Justice issues in the Mahoning Valley. This testimony is intended to highlight the collaboration that takes place among K-12, Higher Ed and Workforce Development in the Mahoning Valley. We strongly believe that in order to advance the idea of career readiness across the state of Ohio, this cooperation and collaboration among the three entities is crucial. We have worked very hard in the Valley to establish a relationship between k-12, higher ed and workforce development. The opportunity for me to serve as superintendent of both the ESC and the CTC in Mahoning County has helped to foster that relationship.

Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber

The ESC has always had a great relationship with the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber. We have relied on them to help us bring business and industry to the table to have conversations through roundtable discussion about what they need in the future as far as a workforce. They have given us input on what industry credentials will be valuable for the possibility of employment as well as working with us to solve the drug issue in terms of employment. The ESC was able to secure a Straight A grant to help with the Prepared for Success indicator that is now part of each district's local report card. The indicator measures career readiness in each school district including career and technical centers. The metrics include ACT remediation free scores, honors diplomas and industry credentials. We have been able to bring local districts, universities and business together to collaborate on best practices to make sure students are equipped with tools to make them as career ready as possible, whether it is successful employment after schooling, or the ability to obtain an advanced degree a reduce the possibility of dropping out.

Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition

In the valley, we are also fortunate to have the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition, a group of manufacturers that have put aside competition to help ensure there is a more skilled workforce for the jobs available in manufacturing now, and in the future. As a result of conversations with the Coalition, we have been able to work with middle schools to establish career exploration and STEM education, exposing students to available jobs particularly in manufacturing. Our local high schools and career centers are helping students gain NIMS and MSSC industry credentials and the opportunity to participate in internships and apprenticeships. We now have opportunities for students to gain college credit in order to advance opportunities

in a career in manufacturing. These programs are all a result of conversations and collaboration among K-12, Higher Ed and Workforce Development, all led by the Manufacturers Coalition.

Higher Education – Educational Triangle in Downtown Youngstown

In Mahoning County we are also fortunate to have great leadership at our higher education partners. There are many universities that we have worked with in our region, but we work very closely with President Tressel at YSU and President Bruce at Eastern Gateway CC because of their geographic location. We partner to explore ways to build a pipeline of students that will remain in the area and take advantage of the degrees and programming offered by our local universities.

Again, because of conversations among the four career and tech centers (Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana & Choffin), Youngstown State and Eastern Gateway Community College, and the Manufacturers Coalition, we have created the Mahoning Valley Innovation and Commercialization Center. The center, which involves multiple facilities all located in the area of downtown Youngstown, will house equipment and education for manufacturing at all levels from entry level industrial maintenance, machining and welding to associates degrees in manufacturing technologies to advanced manufacturing engineering degrees. The idea is to create a pipeline of skilled workers that will meet the needs of manufacturers at every level.

Community Literacy Workforce & Cultural Center

The final example of collaboration that has taken place among the entities involved is occurring in the Campbell City School District. The Community Literacy Workforce and Cultural Center is currently in the design stage. This facility involves numerous entities that have partnered to create a more available and skilled workforce and grow the economy in the Valley. These entities include the Campbell City Schools, the City of Campbell, the Mahoning County ESC, the Mahoning County CTC, the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County, the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, Stark State Community College, Youngstown-Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Surgical Center at Southwoods. These entities have partnered to establish a pipeline and a sustainable educational effort to meet the needs of the healthcare industry as well as the oil and gas industry. The facility will house STEM classrooms, classes that are related to healthcare and oil and gas production, a cultural center with an auditorium that can be used by students for performances as well as large group lecture, maker space, wellness and physical activity space, a working urgent care facility and a branch of the local library.

Conclusion – Importance of Career Readiness

Career readiness is very important for the students across the state of Ohio. No longer can we count on an high school diploma as a means to a job or college education. In the Mahoning Valley we are now interested in what our students do after high school. We have taken the

concept of post graduate placement that is required by CTCs and applied it to all of our students. Now we look at whether students have enrolled in a university, gained employment or enlisted in the military. Soon we will be able to track students beyond high school and measure the economic impact of our students on our local communities as well as in our state.

Any opportunity to establish more collaboration to help all of the entities involved in career readiness for students will help to grow our economy, retain talent in our state, and help underprivileged students find a way out of the continuous circle of poverty.