



**Ohio House of Representatives
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee**

March 7, 2018 / HB 512 Proponent Testimony

Mary Beth Freeman, Superintendent, Delaware Area Career Center

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Mary Beth Freeman and I am superintendent of Delaware Area Career Center (“DACC”). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I submit this proponent testimony on behalf of the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (“OACTS”).

OACTS represents the 49 Joint Vocational School Districts (“JVSDs”) across Ohio. Our mission is to advocate for career technical education (“CTE”) statewide, fostering an understanding among state lawmakers and administrative officials of CTE and its impact on the lives of students, as well as its contribution to the state’s workforce development initiatives.

Along with the other JVSDs, compacts and comprehensive school districts across Ohio, DACC works every day to establish focused, career-based education programs that can change the lives of all students. We routinely work with business and industry to meet with workforce demands of our respective regions. We collaborate with our business partners to ensure we develop training programs specifically tailored to their needs—and we receive great feedback from local employers on the work we do day in and day out.

DACC is located in Delaware County and is contiguous with Franklin County, positioned to its north. We are considered the lead district for our Career Technical Planning District (CTPD), which includes Big Walnut Local Schools, Buckeye Valley Local Schools, Delaware City Schools, Olentangy Local Schools and Worthington City Schools. Numerous open enrolled students attend DACC including those from Westerville and the Ohio School for the Deaf. We serve approximately 800 students in one of more than 25 programs offered on campus and another 600-700 students in satellite programming at our associate districts.

CTE workforce development programs are not electives, they are the students’ majors, and, approximately 50% of their coursework, while on the DACC campus, is directly related to their major program. Our students are prepared for both the workplace and post-secondary education. Of the programs where industry certifications are available, 75% of our students have earned the respective industry credential. College credit for both academic and CTE coursework, and senior projects are considered springboards for post-secondary education as they help students to stand out on a job or college application.

In addition to industry partners, as the lead of our CTPD, we have partnered with our associate districts to offer career technical programming in their schools. They respect and ask for our knowledge and expertise as we collaboratively build successful programming. Within our associate districts we have programs in STEM, Agriculture, Business and Career Based Intervention. We also have programs off-site, such as the Zoo School which is housed at the Columbus Zoo and our students work closely with zoo personnel.

Our law academy has partnered with the Delaware County Sheriff's office to provide countywide training to current law enforcement and to prepare those who want to become officers. Almost 40 teachers have completed Google Apps training for the purpose of integrating technology into their curriculum. As part of our program for students with disabilities, we have partnered with Bob Evan's, Goodwill Industries and Ohio Wesleyan University to provide job sites and job training experiences.

I share these comments to help you understand that we are preparing young people and adults with the necessary skills to be successful at work and in their community. We are not just the *Lead* district in name, we are the *Lead* district in bringing together workforce development and education.

Lawmakers introduced HB 512 with the stated goal of streamlining workforce development, enhancing career-tech, and aligning the state's education system with its workforce initiatives. These are all noble objectives our career centers wholeheartedly support. In addition, lawmakers have recognized changes need to be made in order to achieve the state's goal of increasing post-secondary attainment by roughly 22% over the next seven years.

Our current system can at times make collaboration between each state agency difficult. Similarly, it can make collaboration between our schools and the agencies with which we work onerous. As some have explained to this committee, it is easy to blame perceived shortcomings on another administrative body, rather than work cooperatively to ensure that Ohio's workforce and educational programs are second to none. HB 512 could be an opportunity to maximize the effectiveness of our education system by enhancing agency cohesion.

HB 512 would combine the three main educational agencies in an effort to streamline certain workforce objectives and programs. We believe this could be of great benefit to our career centers and students as it would allow personnel from each of the three agencies to work together towards a common goal, rather than work independently and separately.

Often times career centers feel as though they are overlooked by the state and are not "brought to the table" when the state crafts education policy. At times we also feel ignored when it comes to the state's CTE initiatives and their proposed investments in career-tech. After the introduction of this bill, we met with sponsor Rep. Bill Reineke and co-sponsor Rep. Rick Carfagna to discuss these "systemic" concerns. The legislators patiently listened to our perspective, and drafted language that allows our schools to take more of a leadership role in workforce development discussions moving forward. We thank those lawmakers for their attention and collaboration, as it is indicative of a meaningful legislative process.

We have also discussed with legislators our idea to establish an independent position at the new agency to serve as a liaison between our schools, the agency, and other educational interests. This would seemingly ensure that our perspective is not lost in future workforce discussions. Once again we appreciate the openness and willingness of Rep. Reineke and the other cosponsors to work with us to improve the bill.

Some have opined this bill will create an even bigger bureaucracy and lead to even more red tape and collaboration issues. We feel that if structured the correct way, the collaborative nature of this proposal will actually have the effect of enhancing career-technical education, enhancing cooperation between entities, streamlining workforce initiatives, and increasing CTE opportunities for students across Ohio.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.