



**Ohio Senate  
Finance Committee  
Reopening k-12 Schools**

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding reopening k-12 schools following the extended campus closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ohio Association of Comprehensive and Compact Career-Technical Schools (Ohio CCS) represents Ohio's 40 Compact and Comprehensive career-technical planning districts (CTPDs). Ohio has a three-delivery model system for secondary career-technical education; Comprehensive and Compact districts are two of the delivery models with Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs) being the third. Examples of Comprehensive and Compact districts include:

- Akron City Schools (Comprehensive)
- West Shore Career-Tech, comprised of Lakewood, Bay Village, West Lake and Rocky River City School Districts (Compact)
- South-Western City Schools (Comprehensive)

Comprehensive Districts provide an all-inclusive experience to students attending their school with academics and career-technical education (CTE) all delivered within their own facilities. Compact Districts share the costs of CTE through service agreements between multiple school districts; the experience of a student in a Compact can vary widely, but in many cases students take their core academic classes at their home school and CTE at a partner school.

First and foremost, our concern must reside with the health and well-being of every student we serve, and reopening CTE at the secondary level presents unique challenges. As we look at reopening, we must balance this concern with the workforce development component, which is the cornerstone of CTE.

*Our ask is simple*, as Ohio policy makers work through the intricacies of reopening k-12, please remember the uniqueness of career-tech. Our labs often look and feel much like their industry counterpart and currently adhere to the same industry recognized health and safety standards, it is important to continue this practice as we reopen.

Our pathways require hands-on, in-person instruction aligning with the industry recognized standards for their field. Students walking the halls of high schools today can choose between various pathways leading to an industry recognized credential, a steppingstone to life-long gainful employment. This includes but is not limited to: State Tested Nursing Assistant licenses, an Emergency Medical Technician License, Firefighter 1 and 2, and welding certifications from the American Welding Society and that is only a few career pathways offered. Students also have the ability to enter pre-apprenticeships in areas of need including manufacturing and the trades. The

pathways we just listed represent more than just acronyms, they represent future Ohio Nurses, Fire Fighters, and Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning Technicians. All of which were essential during the recent business closures.

As you may know, before COVID-19 Career Technical Education was seeing a resurgence in our country due to an increased work force skills gap. Due to these deficits, the need for Career Technical Education has never been clearer and we are excited to say that Ohio is leading the charge at not only acknowledging the deficit exists, but meeting it head on. Lt. Governor Husted had previously said "Ohio's economy has a lot of things working in its favor right now, but if we are going to reach our full potential and make our state more attractive to new businesses, we have to close our skills gap. If we get this right, we will give job creators the talent they need to expand, and we'll give Ohioans more personal opportunity and the chance to grow their career." We believe this continues to be true as students plan their post-pandemic futures.

We hope this experience reinforces the collaboration between education, business, and government, and continue our efforts to address the workforce gap in Ohio and strengthen pathways to rewarding careers for students in Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony and we hope you will look to us as resource both during this time period and in the future.

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