

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Testimony HB 166

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May 22, 2019

In support of SC3200 and SC3201: Increase CCP funding for homeschool students from \$1.5 million to \$4.5 million and allow for the unexpended, unencumbered balance of CCP funds dedicated to home educated students to be shifted to the next fiscal year. Interested Party

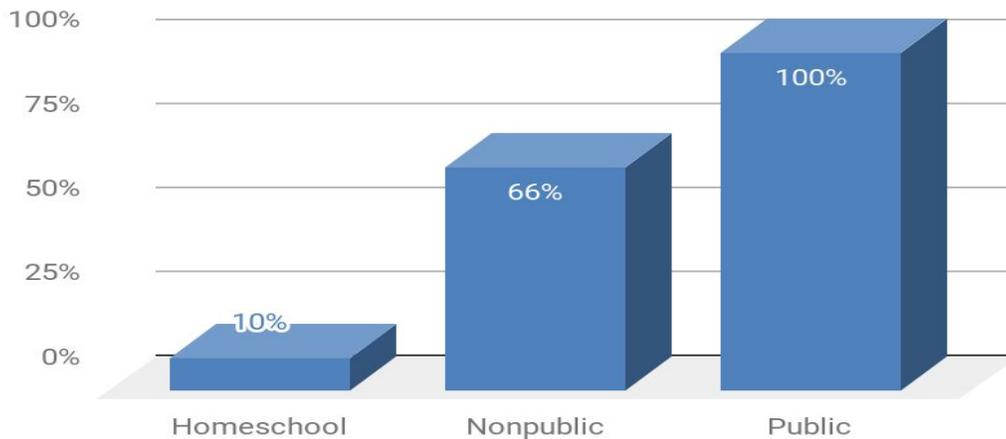
Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Minority Member Sykes, and members of the Finance Committee, we are grateful to stand before your committee and thank you for your wisdom and foresight to invest in Ohio's youth through the College Credit Plus (CCP) program designed to improve the state's economic future and competitiveness. On April 24, Superintendent Paolo DeMaria testified before the Senate Finance Committee extolling the benefits of CCP: "In three years, College Credit Plus students have earned **nearly 2,400 associate degrees and almost 1,200 certificates while realizing more than \$410 million in tuition savings.**" He also added the program has improved from a decade ago when "...Ohio high school students had limited, inconsistent and fragmented opportunities to earn college credit while in high school."

We applaud the program's progress and would like to draw attention to an opportunity to further improve CCP's impressive results. Currently, home educated students remain challenged with inconsistent and fragmented opportunities to earn college credit prior to high school graduation. Our students are grateful for inclusion in CCP and eager to contribute to the Ohio Attainment Goal 2025; however, due to the lack of funding parity with public and nonpublic students and the program's structure, **homeschool students cannot capitalize on this opportunity.**

Under the current structure, CCP fails to create an equitable pathway for qualified home educated students limiting access and participation for the following reasons:

Home educated students receive a substantially lower percent of requested credit hours. According to the CCP 2017-2018 Annual Report, only 9.7% of home educated students' credit requests were fully funded, compared to 66% of nonpublic and 100% of public school students' requests.

Percent of CCP Students Receiving Requested Hours

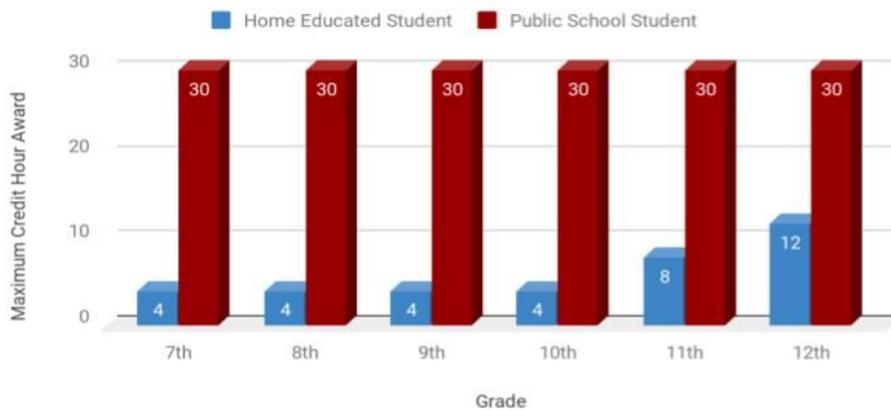


Scarcity of credit hours prevents a home educated student from full program participation.

If a home educated student begins participating in seventh grade, an extremely challenging request, the maximum number of credit hours the student could be awarded prior to high school graduation is 36. For the past academic year, seventh grade through sophomore participants were awarded four credit hours each. Juniors each received either four or eight credit hours based on a lottery system. Seniors were each awarded twelve credit hours. These allocations were for the full academic year. In comparison, public students have access to 30 credit hours annually with a program maximum of 120 credit hours.

Maximum CCP Credit Awards by Grade and Student Program

2018-2019*



Note: Public school students are permitted a maximum of 120 credit hours through CCP.

*Preliminary data, provided by CCP Program Administrator

Lack of financial support to obtain textbooks prevents home educated students from full participation. Many home educated families forego a second income to enable one parent to be the educator. Requiring home educated students to purchase textbooks creates a substantial financial barrier for economically disadvantaged students, in some cases effectively eliminating their access to the program.

Absence of parity limits home educated students participation in rigorous and sequential STEM programs. Presently, a student wishing to participate in STEM curriculum in grades seven through ten, and possibly in grade eleven, must choose between a math or a science class. If the student chooses a math class, another math class cannot be taken for eight months until after the next awards disbursement. This extended time between classes creates a significant learning gap and may substantially subdue the student's academic success and exposure to STEM curriculum.

Program structure limits full utilization of financial resources. As the program is currently designed, once credits are awarded to a student, they are lost if not used by that student during the designated award year. Credits may go unused if a student participates in a three credit hour class as awards are distributed in blocks of four credit hours. This remaining credit hour cannot be used to partially fund a class or shifted to the next fiscal year. Credit hours also go unused if a student withdraws from the program for any reason or uses less credit hours than awarded. **All unused credit hours are lost** to the program and cannot be used for future students.

To continue to improve CCP's effectiveness and create equitable pathways for all student demographics, we request consideration of the following:

Change ASI 200550 to allow Ohio Department of Education funds dedicated for home educated students' participation in CCP to be deposited into a separate fund and the unused portion of those funds to remain in that fund at the end of each fiscal year for use in future fiscal years. Allowing for a future increase of student participation, this suggestion is based on former Chancellor John Carey's Ohio Dual Credit Program recommendations and is currently in place for nonpublic students. While the impact is substantial for home educated students, **the change is budget neutral for the state.**

Increase financial support from \$1.5 million to \$4.5 million. In 2017-2018, the CCP Annual Report indicated home educated students requested 22,001 credit hours. In 2018-2019 according to CCP Program Administrator, the request grew to 24,848 credit hours. At the default ceiling rate of \$166.55 per credit hour, the needed financial support for 2018-2019 to cover all requested hours would have been \$4.1 million. For 2019-2020, the projected program need to cover requested credit hours excluding books is \$4.5 million.

Home educated students are eager to pursue higher education and fully partake in CCP. **The state stands to benefit** from correcting the lack of parity in CCP:

- Home educated students are an **underserved demographic** which will readily contribute to the Ohio 2025 Attainment Goal and the state's economic success.
- Home educated students who accrue credits via CCP are **more likely to attend an Ohio university** as all credits will transfer to the Ohio institution. These students are more likely to remain in the state and contribute to Ohio's economic competitiveness.
- Program parameters ensure **only qualified students participate** in CCP. Home educated students must demonstrate readiness through performance on the ACT, SAT or college required placement tests.
- **Parents assume financial risk.** If a home educated student does not perform as required, the parents are required to reimburse the state for tuition.

Homeschool families choose to home educate for a wide variety of compelling reasons. Like all parents, we strive to provide high quality opportunities to meet each individual's needs. We commend the state for investing in quality school choices and are thankful home education is included among the options. We implore this committee to create parity in CCP to afford home educated students the opportunity to fully benefit from this excellent resource and to more fully contribute to the state's economic success. We thank the committee for its time and consideration of this matter.