



**Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee
Testimony of**

**William Bussey, Executive Director, Ohio Technical Centers
(Division of Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents)**

HB 166 Testimony/Ohio Technical Centers

May 8, 2019

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Ohio Senate Higher Education Committee.

My name is Bill Bussey and I am currently Executive Director of the Ohio Technical Centers and have over forty years in Career Technical Education. This includes eleven years as an Ohio Technical Center Director at Eastland Fairfield Career Technical Schools and nearly 14 years as the Superintendent of Mid-East Career and Technology Centers. I am testifying today in support of the Governor's and House's proposed budget (HB 166).

Ohio Technical Centers operate and are funded / regulated through the Ohio Department of Higher Education and provide a host of educational services for adults and businesses. Adults can earn certificates, licenses and other credentials that will assist them in their employment. Although normally housed and always governed by either the Career Center (JVS), or the comprehensive school district of which they are part, each OTC has a separate funding mechanism than their secondary counterpart. At almost every OTC, general funds from local levies or other local funds are **not** used for OTC expenses. Each OTC therefore stands alone except for the use of facilities and utilities. (Although there is a trend that more OTCs are paying for these expenses also).

Last fall the OTC Directors, Career Centers' superintendents and members of the Ohio ACTE adopted a recommendations for OTC funding for the next biennial budget. Recommendations for the OTC budget line item included restoring the budget line item to the level approved in the FY2001 budget. Yes, it is rather alarming that the budget in FY2001 was almost 40% larger than in 2019. The budget was over \$23 million then and is approximately \$16 million this current year. Of course, we are extremely pleased that the proposed budget supports an 18.2% increase in funding each year of the next biennium budget. Bringing the total funding in FY21 up to our requested amount and equal to that of FY2001. The OTCs around the state have different needs so will utilize these funds in different ways but together they will be providing new and

improved opportunities for unemployed and underemployed adults and services and training for business and industries.

OTC Directors, administrators and superintendents are very satisfied with the Performance Based Funding Model that accommodates payments according to Student Retention, Student Program Completion, and Student Placement into employment and credentials earned by students. We are also pleased to see that in 2020 no Ohio Technical Center will receive less than 75% funding based on the average allocation of the previous three years, and that the minimum funding for 2021 will be at 65% of the average of the last three years. Many circumstances have caused some centers to have a reduction in enrollment and therefore less funding. We are working to assist OTCs to make the necessary changes to better address the workforce development needs of their communities and regions so that a guarantee is not a consideration in the next budget.

In the transition from OTCs being funded under ODE to ODHE in 2008, there was a loss of focus and funding for business and industry contract and customized training. There is language in the current budget for \$3 million (an increase from \$1.3 million) to provide business consultation (contract and customized training) with matching dollars from OTCs. The OTC Directors and Superintendents support that amount with matching funds to provide incentives for OTCs to assist in upgrading skills of incumbent workers.

Many businesses can't find workers to fill vacancies and are looking to upgrade current worker skills. OTCs are currently partnering with over 300 businesses throughout Ohio. The minimum amount for any OTC to receive would be \$25,000 with the maximum amount to be determined by the Chancellor. This would not increase the line item.

In summary, we all know that we have a worker shortage in Ohio and want to provide education and training to fill this gap. There are several pathways that adults can take in post-secondary education in order to fill the gap. There are needs for those with Masters and Bachelor's degrees. There are jobs available that require an Associate Degree, but the majority of job openings that can provide a living wage are those that require high level skills and usually require some type of certificate or credential. Universities provide for Bachelors and post baccalaureate degrees, Community Colleges provide Associate Degrees and Ohio Technical Centers are the resource for the majority of adults to learn skills to obtain a job and advance their career and life style. And of course, fill the majority of vacancies in business and industry.

We often have said that Ohioans need to recognize the resources that Ohio Technical Centers provide. This proposed budget is proof that legislators and elected officials realize that learning a skill and earning a credential will be the key to accomplishing the goal of 65% of adults have a credential or degree by 2025. The 54 OTCs around Ohio thank you for your support of our schools and I thank you for allowing me to speak today.