

House Bill 64 Budget Testimony, FY 2016-2017

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Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Phillips and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education, I am Chris Renn, Career-Technical Director at Millstream Career Center in Findlay, Ohio. I am here today to represent the Ohio Association of City Career-Technical Schools comprised of Ohio's high school career-technical programs in 42 of Ohio's 91 Career-Technical Planning Districts (CTPDs).

Programs in comprehensive single districts and compacts educate 58% of Ohio's career technical students. Examples are Lima City Schools, Meigs High School in Pomeroy, Toledo Public Schools, South Western City Schools in the Columbus area, Akron City Schools, Millstream in Findlay serving 14 schools in 3 counties, and Tri-Star Career Compact serving 9 schools districts in Auglaize and Mercer Counties. These are just a few of the 42 CTPDs that hold career-technical education programs inside the walls of the high school instead of the joint vocational school.

We tailor our programs to our local employers workforce needs. Each of our Workforce Development programs has an Advisory Committee comprised of business and industry partners. The business and industry partners' input helps us provide the training that meets our local employers' workforce needs. Our partnerships with business and industry are effective and vital. These partnerships strengthen the economy, strengthen our students' skills, and provide well prepared employees for our business and industry partners.

We applaud the Governor and his staff for their hard work and forward vision to ensure linkage between Ohio's career-technical education, college and the workforce. Our career-technical programs give students the tools to graduate from high school at higher rates and then go on to college, university and jobs at higher rates than students not enrolled in career-technical education.

We are asking that you consider amending House Bill 64 on a number of issues that affect our students.

Revise the Testing Requirements for Career-Technical Students

Career-Technical students have completed skill assessment testing for years. Due to additional testing requirements passed by the Legislature over the past few years for all students, career-technical students are now subjected to duplicative testing. We respectfully request that these

duplicative testing requirements be removed for career-technical students. An industry recognized credential or vocational license issued by a state agency or board that sufficiently measures technical skill attainment should be recognized as a sufficient assessment for a career-technical student. A career-technical student's technical skill attainment can also be measured through a curriculum-based assessment such as, but not limited to: "Project Lead the Way", "High School Business" and "Today's Class". Curriculum based assessments measure student progress in content and knowledge.

Local control should be granted to a school district to decide if an industry credential, WebXam (technical assessment) or a curriculum based assessment would be the appropriate measure of technical skill attainment. In order to address the state's requirement that outcomes be noted on the school's grade card, an industry credential, WebXam (technical assessment), or curriculum based assessment could be counted on the report card as a technical skill attainment measure.

Career-Technical Education Funding

Currently, career-technical funding is tied to the State Share amount that districts receive. As a result, most districts are only able to access a portion of career-technical funding based on their wealth index. In fact, a few districts have no access to career-technical dollars due to a 0% state share.

We are in agreement with the Ohio Association for Career and Technical Education (OACTE) that it is difficult to start new programs or serve new student populations such as middle school students when the state share is tied to the career-technical tiers since many districts are not receiving the full allotment of CTE funding. We agree that the solution is to take CTE funding outside the state share and outside of the cap and guarantee through a "Career-Technical Education Associated Services" funding line item specifically designated for career-technical education programs. This would provide the opportunity to grow and expand CTE programs.

Algebra II Opt Out

Currently, career-technical students have the option to "opt out" of Algebra II until 2016. We believe that continuing this "opt out" provision is critical for our students. We ask that students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 2015 not be required to take Algebra II as a graduation requirement. Instead, we believe that a career-based pathway mathematics course serve as an equivalent graduation requirement to Algebra II for a student enrolled in a career-technical pathway. The current requirements to "opt out" of Algebra II require the districts, parents and students to fill out nearly 8 pages of paperwork. As a result, many do not opt out of Algebra II even though this is not a beneficial course for their career pathway. We ask that a more efficient process to "opt out" be available for our students who do not benefit from Algebra II.

Resident Educator Summative Assessment

We greatly appreciate the Governor's efforts to include language in the budget bill that provides flexibility to the Resident Educator Program for resident educators. In order to complete this program, there is a performance based assessment taken in year three called the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA). We ask that career-technical education instructors who are entering education through an alternative resident educator program be permitted to postpone their entry into the RESA program until their third year of teaching, when they have completed their college or university coursework and have earned their teaching license. CTE educators need this flexibility considering their unique skill set. The majority of CTE teachers come from industry, with no prior training in teaching. In many career-technical workforce development programs, there is less focus on traditional classroom instructional techniques and more focus towards hands-on instruction such as lab work, production, and experiential instructional techniques.

Summary

Career-technical education programs align rigorous academic and technical content standards to prepare students for college and careers. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony and would be happy to answer any questions at this time.