

Members of the Higher Education Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Michelle Urban and I am a homeschooling mother of a high school freshman in Chardon, Ohio. I am here today on behalf of my family and on behalf of my fellow homeschool community to urge you to see the discrimination in the current funding for CCP towards homeschool students and to reconsider the funding and framework of the CCP program.

Starting in the school year 2015-2016, eligible 7th through 12th grade public school students are allowed to go to college full time in the CCP program. That is 30 credit hours per year/15 credit hours per semester, at absolutely no cost to the family or to the student with their books paid for in full. Private and charter school students used to get 1.7 million dollars per year. Just recently, it was decided to increase their funding by \$900,000 per year, giving them a total of 2.6 million dollars per year. Homeschool children did not get an increase, keeping our funding the same at \$250,000 per year and our books are not paid for either. Wendy Cantrell of ODE told me that the reason we did not get an increase was because there were only 272 homeschool applicants last year for the PSEO program. I have attached a document (see exhibit A) from the ODE from last year stating that homeschool students will **only** receive a maximum of 4 credit hours per year, which is only 1 class, while public school students were able to attend full time. Even if there were only 272 applicants last year, which we have to know those numbers are skewed, homeschool students still did not get the same opportunity as public school students. That needs to change.

Every time I have asked why homeschool students do not get the same funding as public school students, the answer I get time and time again is that the money follows the student, (see exhibit B), or that it was a personal choice to homeschool your child. This is where I am confused. According to the ODE as a homeschooler we are required to notify the superintendent of the school system in which we reside and to get an excuse from attendance to homeschool before we can start our school year. We are required by law to have our children complete specific subjects and obtain a minimum of 900 hours of education per year. We have to follow all of the same rules and regulations that the public school "students" have to follow, yet we are not treated the same way and are not being categorized as "students". In regards to the implication that because we have made a deliberate choice to homeschool our children, we do not qualify for the same opportunities as public or private school families, I have to say this: All parents make a choice as to the best educational options for our children. As parents we need to do what is right for our children on an individual basis. We should not be punished because we are choosing what is best for our children.

If I enrolled my child in our local public school tomorrow, funding would be available for her right away. She will be allowed to attend CCP full time and have it paid for in its entirety.

Money will then “follow the student”. Where did the money appear from and why does it appear for public school students but not homeschoolers?

On March 25, 2015, people gave testimony to you, the Ohio Senate Higher Education Subcommittee. Jack Hershey’s testimony stated that “However, the recent passage of College Credit Plus and the growing savvy of today’s college consumers, are shining the light on a very affordable pathway to a college degree in Ohio that could give our state an enormous economic advantage.” Homeschool students are college consumers too. He also stated that “But potential students have to know about the pathway.” How about just allowing potential students, homeschool students, the ability to utilize CCP like public school students?

John Carey, Chancellor, Ohio Board of Regents stated in his testimony that “The College Credit Plus program will allow high school students the opportunity for no-cost college credit, which also can greatly shorten the time to a degree or credential. This will directly result in reduced costs for students and their families. For example, a student who is able to earn 30 credit hours while still in high school could save 25% of the cost of tuition for a bachelor’s degree.” Homeschool families are citizens and taxpayers too. Why do we not have the same rights as public school parents to have reduced costs for our children’s higher education? Why don’t our children have the right to shorten their duration in college? CCP is supposed to allow high school students the opportunity for a no cost college credit. Why are homeschoolers any different?

I ask this committee to recognize where the discrepancy in funding lies and make a positive change for homeschool students’ futures. Homeschool children are also our future leaders. They should have the same rights to an education as the next. In order to give our children an opportunity at success, we need to give them a foundation of a good education; a higher education. CCP is an excellent program allowing our future leaders a head start in their career paths. Homeschool students deserve the same head start as public and private school students. Here is an opportunity to correct this oversight. Please do what needs to be done and make it so that homeschool children have the same educational opportunities as every other student in the state. Let’s give Ohio a chance at a stronger future full of educated individuals and future leaders.

Michelle Urban

10692 Kile Rd. Chardon, OH 44024

Geauga County

440-319-5217

Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) Program for Homeschool Students
(Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 3365.022 and Administrative Code 3301-44)

Process for Applying to Receive State Funding

Step 1: Student gets accepted by college into its post-secondary enrollment options (PSEO) program but does not have to officially enroll in specific course(s). Acceptance can be contingent on funding.

Step 2: Student completes "Notification of Intent to Participate" and returns it to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) by April 1st. This can happen even if student has not yet been accepted by a college.

Step 3: Student applies to ODE for funding. Due to limited funds, students may not receive funding or may not receive funding for all credit hours requested.

Steps for applying:

1. Student/parent completes application form.
2. Student/parent attaches current year letter from district superintendent excusing the student from compulsory attendance for the purpose of home education pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code 3301-34 or has superintendent sign the application.
3. Student/parent gets representative of college to sign application and attaches acceptance letter (or gets college to stamp the application).
4. Student/parent mails completed application, with proper supporting documentation attached, to ODE by June 15th.

Step 4: ODE reviews applications for completeness and supporting documents then enters information into database. Applications with missing information or supporting documents cannot be processed.

Step 5: ODE processes applications pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code section 3301-44-09 after the June 15th application deadline. Funds will be awarded in units not to exceed 4 credit hours. The process is as follows:

1. All students in grade 12 will be awarded 1 unit.
2. If funding is still available, all students in grade 11 will be awarded 1 unit.
3. If funding is still available, all students in grade 10 will be awarded 1 unit.
4. If funding is still available, all students in grade 9 will be awarded 1 unit.
5. Whenever there are insufficient funds to award all students in a grade level with a unit, ODE will conduct a lottery for that grade level to award the remaining funds.
6. Should funds remain after completing Steps 1-4, the process will be repeated, awarding students with additional units.

Step 6: ODE sends "Award Letter" to the student/parent and the college by July 20th indicating the number of credit hours awarded.

Step 7: Student takes "Award Letter" to college and enrolls in nonsectarian course(s). College can decide if it wants to enroll student for more credit hours than awarded but it will only get paid for the amount awarded.

Step 8: Student completes the college course(s).

Step 9: College notifies ODE of courses completed. (This is done by college submitting the Form 140B.)

Step 10: ODE pays college the lesser of the credit hours earned or credit hours awarded.

Hello Ms. Urban,

College Credit Plus expands the opportunity for all of Ohio high school students who are college-ready to apply to and upon admission, take college courses for both college and high school credit. The state does underwrite the cost of the college tuition for all students, in accordance with law <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3365.07>. Home school students and students who attend a private high school are each funded from a distinct and designated source allocated by the General Assembly. The reason for this (described in law) is that the per pupil foundation value is used to compute the amount of the per credit hour deduction from each district on behalf of the student attending a college course instead of a high school class. Therefore, in the case of a public school student the premise is that the money follows the student. This funding mechanism does not apply to those who choose to be home schooled or attend a private high school.

Under College Credit Plus the procedural distribution of funds to underwrite home school students will operate differently from the previous PSEO distribution. Although the amount in the home school fund remains \$250,000, all seniors will be funded in full and then juniors, sophomores....seventh graders. This will result in students who are closer to completing high school receiving more of the funds toward college credit than those who are in the lower grade equivalencies. You are correct that the fund designated for students attending chartered nonpublic and nonchartered nonpublic schools has a greater dollar value than the home school fund, however there are significantly more students attending the nonpublic schools than there are those who are home schooled in the state. Here is the administrative code that describes how the funds will be distributed. <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3333-1-65.8>

Hope this helps!
Lauren

Lauren T. McGarity, J.D.
Director of Special Projects
Legal, Policy & Legislative Services
Ohio Board of Regents
25 S. Front Street
Columbus, OH 43215
O. (614) 644-6859
C. (614) 207-5232

PLEASE NOTE: This message and any response to it may constitute a public record, and therefore may be available upon request in accordance with Ohio public records law. (ORC 149.43)