



**Ohio House of Representatives**

**Government Accountability and Oversight Committee**

**March 7, 2018 / HB 512 Proponent Testimony**

**Judy Wells, Superintendent of Apollo Career Center**

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the Ohio House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for giving Career-Technical Education (“CTE”) superintendents the opportunity to share proponent testimony on HB 512, which merges the Ohio Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education and the Office of Workforce Transformation into a newly created Department of Learning and Achievement. I am Judy Wells, Superintendent at Apollo Career Center, submitting testimony on behalf of the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (“OACTS”) as well as my own career center. I believe it is possible to increase communication, efficiency and effectiveness through the oversight of this agency and I have hopes that it will actually encourage collaboration between the business communities and the educational communities if thoughtfully strategized and planned.

First of all I’d like to make it clear this in no way is meant as criticism to the three agencies or their boards. In fact I have many collegial relationships and ongoing communications with three state board of education members, two of whom are appointed and one of whom was recently elected. All three have visited Apollo on more than one occasion and are enthusiastic supporters of CTE and adult workforce/post-secondary training. My relationships with ODHE include Gary Cates (senior vice chancellor), Anthony Landis (senior director –college & career access) and Jeff Gove (Perkins compliance) and include many visits and support of Apollo Career Center. Both Ron Matter and I serve on the ODHE’s Ohio Technical Center Funding committee with Anthony Landis. Our own president of OACTS, Dennis Franks from Pickaway-Ross CTC, directly serves on the Governor’s executive workforce board and serves as a liaison between the OACTS membership and OWT’s process of forecasting the need for skilled workers for Ohio employers.

I have devoted 30 years to Career-technical education, the last 9 as superintendent. I spend much of my time with these agencies, testifying several times over the years to legislators on CTE issues and concerns because I'm an advocate of opportunities, choices and marketability of the students in our care. However the very agencies in place are siloed, layered, and inflexible. A personal and specific example is lobbying for a change in the Resident Educator program for licensure of Career-Technical (Route B) experts/teachers. Even with the support of former Senate President Keith Faber, sponsoring SB 3 (2015), it still took over two years to get relief and eliminate the 4 year Resident Educator program and related "RESA" assessment for CTE Route B teachers. Career Centers rely on our ability to attract and retain experts out of in-demand fields, but punishing licensure requirements were driving them out. This is one of the reasons I'm standing before you today. In the analysis of HB 512 as provided by the Legislative Service Commission I am very much in favor of the proposal under the Educator Licenses section which states that the Department of Learning and Achievement will adopt all rules related to educator licenses, including standards and qualifications for those licenses.

From reading the press releases I understand the concerns on possibly creating a less responsive state government model. From where I'm sitting in the CTE field I am doubtful it could be LESS responsive and I'm hopeful communication and engagement between local communities and this new state agency can REALLY work to prepare and continuously retrain Ohioans of all ages for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Attracting capital investments in Ohio companies as well as job creation and expansion must be the focus of ALL educational entities. Just this week I received the Jobs Ohio annual report. To brag on our NW region alone-- in the last two years our Greater Lima Region/Economic Development has boosted the region's economy with capital investments totaling \$125 million, while creating 445 new jobs and retaining over 1,000. Even better news is the media announcement of over \$3 billion in capital investment from Husky Energy and General Dynamics (the only tank manufacturing plant in the country). In our 8 county region the total JobsOhio projects from 2001 to 2017 were 107. The numbers from this report statewide was 272 projects and \$9.6 billion in capital investments with almost 23,000 new job commitments.

Our business and industry partners believe in us and are providing capital investments, enthusiastic collaboration and support to not just CTE but traditional public educational entities at the secondary and post-secondary level. Ohio is poised to move out of "business as usual" and become a state that attracts investment in new possibilities such as smart corridors, disruptive technologies, cybernetics and biotechnologies. What I see happening while serving on several economic development and Workforce Investment Boards is the move into VISIONING and out of regulatory or compliance operations.

Finally, I must voice support for an amendment being considered by HB 512 bill sponsors and co-sponsors, which would recognize our career centers as leaders in workforce development and training discussions (as we already are with our regional ties) as well as the

establishment of a liaison between the DLA and JVSDs, Comprehensives and Compacts. Trust me when I say we are up to the challenge.

Thank you for your time and attention. I'll be happy to answer any questions.