



Ohio Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee

House Bill 49 - Budget Testimony

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Good morning Chairman Gardner, Vice Chair Williams, and members of the Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee. My name is Ryan Burgess, Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of the workforce portions of Governor Kasich's budget.

Governor Kasich created the Office of Workforce Transformation with the recognition that the state's workforce system has been historically siloed and fragmented. It's our role to coordinate the efforts of the thirteen state agencies and nearly one hundred programs that touch workforce in Ohio.

To set the strategic direction and ensure the needs of businesses and job-seekers alike are being met, we work with the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, which consists of 24 business, non-profit, labor, and education leaders and four members of the Ohio General Assembly, including Senators Williams and Beagle.

The mission of our office is to grow Ohio's economy by developing a skilled and productive workforce, promoting effective training programs, and connecting Ohio employers with qualified workers.

You have likely heard Governor Kasich talking about autonomous vehicles, predictive analytics, and drone technology and seen proposals in this budget to position Ohio as a leader in these technologies. All of these innovations will have a profound and positive impact on Ohio. They will also impact the future of our workforce, our jobs, and the skills needed for those jobs. Further, the velocity of this change will be unmatched compared to historical standards. To keep up with the needs of business in a 21st century workplace, Ohio must strengthen its efforts to prepare and continuously retrain Ohioans for the technology-intensive jobs of tomorrow.



In the fall of 2016, the governor delivered that very charge to his executive workforce board. In response, each board member individually engaged local community leaders to determine the most pressing workforce challenges Ohio faces. Following extensive discussions of challenges and potential solutions, the board collectively delivered 58 recommendations to the governor in December, 20 of which were included in the budget proposal and can be found attached, and 7 of which are also provisions in Senate Bill 3, which the Senate unanimously passed. I am here to highlight a few of the as-introduced proposals in the executive budget:

Ohio will make it easier for schools to provide work experience by requiring districts to review and update their plans and policies to ensure all students have the opportunity to receive credit for appropriate work experience:

The best way young people can learn valuable, real-world skills and “soft skills” like collaboration and critical thinking *is to work*. The provision in the budget expands upon Credit Flexibility legislation already in place by ensuring all students have the opportunity to receive credit for work experience and building a consistent framework that helps districts provide academic credit for workplace experience. We already have counties and schools in Ohio that are leading the way in providing students the opportunity to gain real-world experience, like Marietta’s “Building Bridges to Careers”, Federal Hocking Local Schools, and Cristo Rey schools. All students deserve similar opportunities to better understand career pathways and develop the soft skills employers seek.

Ohio will position its libraries as “continuous learning centers”, and help adult learners access online programs to gain additional skills:

Nearly nine million Ohioans have library cards. Ohio has the highest per capita library use in the country. Libraries provide computer access in our inner cities and rural areas alike to Ohioans who may not otherwise have access to on-line training resources. Libraries have a “click and mortar” network. They are empowering. By more fully leveraging these assets, we can help develop a “continuous learning” culture and create local hubs where Ohioans can prepare for high school equivalency exams and gain skills that are in-demand among employers. The Office of Workforce Transformation will work with the Ohio Library Council to highlight these resources. Preliminary ideas on how to expand these resources include having OhioMeansJobs centers enter into agreements with local libraries, integrating OhioMeansJobs.com with the Ohio Digital Library, and better connecting basic literacy programs with local libraries across the state.

Schools will provide an OhioMeansJobs-ready designation to high school students who demonstrate job-readiness:

Months ago, during a local school visit, a high school superintendent told me about all the college coaches who visit his high school to recruit athletes. After recruitment, there are elaborate national signing days to recognize the student athletes. But, we never have national signing days for students who are ready to work. This OhioMeansJobs-ready seal is student-driven and will recognize these students for demonstrating the soft skills and job-readiness characteristics that businesses seek. Students will be able to earn a seal affixed to their diplomas or transcripts by successfully exhibiting work ethic competencies (such as teamwork, problem-solving, reliability, punctuality, etc.) validated by three or more teachers and/or mentors. This proposal was also included in the passed-version of Senate Bill 3.

Ohio will award high school students with college credit for approved recognized pre-apprenticeship training:

With this proposal, students in recognized pre-apprenticeship programs will also be able to earn college credit for their work. This initiative will provide students with multiple on-ramps and off-ramps for their selected career pathway, and will reinforce the message that apprenticeship programs and college education are not mutually exclusive. For example, a high school student participating in an electrical pre-apprenticeship program will gain hands-on, real world work experience, work towards an industry-recognized credential (in this case, becoming a journeyman electrician), earn high school and college credit, and will often earn a salary, too.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education will prioritize shorter-term, non-credit certificates for adult learners:

As technology changes, Ohio's businesses are looking for ways to make sure their current employees' skills remain sharp and relevant. But, the challenge remains that adults who are working full-time and raising a family are not often able to take time off to go back to school. Through this provision, the Ohio Department of Higher Education would give preference through the Revolving Loan Fund to shorter-term certificates offered at our community colleges and technical centers. The Office of Workforce Transformation will work with the Department of Higher Education to make sure these certificates are aligned with Ohio's In-Demand Jobs. By prioritizing shorter-term certificates, Ohioans will be able to quickly acquire skills needed to succeed in a rapidly changing workplace.

Ohio will provide transition classes to high school students needing remediation:

One in three high school students in Ohio require remediation in English or math upon beginning a higher education program. Many high school students have a need for remediation but also a strong desire to move onto post-secondary education, whether in pursuit of a credential or degree. The provision included in the budget will provide these students with the extra instruction while still in high school to ensure they are career-ready or college-ready upon graduation. An example where this is working statewide is the Tennessee SAILS model, which provides high school seniors the option to complete remedial work through a blended learning curriculum developed through K-12 and higher education collaboration. This program has shown impressive results in graduating more students career-ready and college-ready. Our proposal is to bring high school and college educators together to develop a program and curriculum for students needing remediation. By doing so, we can better prepare high school students for success after graduation and ultimately upon entering the workforce.

The final proposals that I will discuss were modified during the House's consideration of Governor Kasich's budget, but I would like to share with you the original spirit and intent of the workforce board's recommendations.

Local superintendents will appoint three non-voting, advisory members to each local school board who represent local business interests:

This is a call to action for the business community. The constant refrain heard by both the workforce board and our office is that employers are not receiving the talent they need. This provision provides the opportunity for businesses to engage their local communities and directly communicate their hiring needs to education leaders. Business Advisory Councils, which schools are required to have through the Ohio Revised Code, are a statewide patchwork of successes and failures. Regular engagement from business leaders in conversations with local education leaders, separate from the other topics school board members discuss, will help ensure businesses and educators have a common understanding of in-demand jobs and skills. Uniting business and education leaders in the shared goal of preparing all students for success will only lead to stronger local communities.



Ohio teachers will engage in on-site visits with local and regional businesses as part of their existing, required professional development and continuing education plans:

This proposal will give teachers the opportunity to see, first-hand, businesses operating in their local communities through on-site visits. This will allow businesses to better communicate the variety of career opportunities available locally and the skills needed to fill those jobs. As a result, educators can share this information as part of their lesson plans to ensure that students understand the connection between career and education. Equally important, local business leaders will gain a better understanding of the local education climate.

To be clear, the provision has not ever mandated a paid internship or a part-time job. Rather, it instructs local professional development committees to include, as part of professional development plans, an on-site industry experience with local employers. This could be achieved by touring local businesses and is already occurring in school districts around the state. Through this proposal, educators would have been asked to do this once every five years, as defined by local professional development committees, for continuing education units. This best practice is already strengthening local communities statewide by connecting business leaders with educators at the local level.

We are pleased with the steps the House took to strengthen the accountability of business advisory councils and look forward to continuing to work with the Senate to enhance collaboration between business and education.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with you to move these initiatives forward, as well as the rest of the workforce proposals attached to this testimony. Each proposal aims to better unite the business and education communities to develop proactive and in-demand education and training programs that will create a culture of continuous learning and prepare Ohioans for success in their 21st century careers. I have no doubt that this committee shares our objective of increasing local collaboration in our communities to ensure bright futures for Ohioans of all ages.