

Ohio Senate
Finance, Primary and Secondary Sub-Committee
HB 49, State Biennial Budget
Testimony of Madalyn Grace Burley
Ohio Association of Comprehensive and Compact Career Technical Schools
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Chair Gardner, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to provide testimony regarding my career technical educational experience. My name is Madalyn Grace Burley, I am from Grove City, Ohio and I am a senior at South-Western Career Academy (SWCA). I will graduate from my career technical program and high school this June.

I am enrolled in the Health Technologies program at SWCA. I chose this program mainly because I plan to go into the health care field after I graduate and this program gave me a head start in pursuing those future goals. The traditional high school experience requires you to take classes that are not necessarily related to your future career, and the Health Technologies program has allowed me to start learning about something I wanted early. Instead of scheduling multiple study halls or filling my schedule with electives that might not interest me just to fill my schedule, I am able to take classes related to the health field and get a head start on my future career.

There are several reasons I joined a career technical program starting with the fact that I struggled in the "normal" high school atmosphere. I struggled finding people who were interested in the same field and I didn't feel challenged by the classes. Second, I wanted a more hands-on experience and interactive learning. This program gives me a lot of opportunities to get up close and work hands on. Third, SWCA gave me a place to "restart," it gave me a place where my past didn't follow me. It allowed me to get to meet kids from all over the South-Western City School District, and become friends with people I might have never known. I love that they pull from all of the high schools because it creates a diverse atmosphere with kids who are there for the same reasons you are.

I can't stress enough, I want to become a nurse as soon as possible; I love helping people and this program allowed me to start taking the required classes early. I wanted to be able to take classes that pertained to the health field; classes that would give me a boost in college. Due to the embedded College Credit Plus courses in my program, I will graduate with 30 college credit hours, a majority of my freshman year of college has been eliminated. And, while it is one of the more challenging class categories in the program, the pharmaceutical classes will allow me to graduate with the knowledge to get my Pharmacy Technician Certification. I will additionally graduate as a Certified EKG Technician, CPR, First Aid and AED Certified.

One thing I think is really important for everyone to understand is that these programs are more than just an education. It's a place where kids can express themselves through their labs and their work. A school where your being equipped with skills to obtain jobs in the real world. And a place where you come to learn things you are interested in and enjoy.

Kids thrive at SWCA. I struggled at my home high school, but here my grades have dramatically increased. I went from having a 2.8 GPA combined from freshman and sophomore year, to my current GPA of 3.4. As I said earlier, I will graduate with approximately 30 college credit hours, multiple certifications, and the majority of my freshman year in college completed. The career academy has helped me in more ways than one and I am grateful for the opportunity to attend.

Thank for the opportunity to share my experience and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.