

Ohio Senate
Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education
House Bill 49, State Budget

Testimony of Terry Benedict

Administrator, Tech Prep Southwest Regional Center

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Chairman Hite, Vice Chairman Sykes and Members of the Committee. Hello, my name is Terry Benedict and I am the administrator of the Tech Prep Southwest Regional Center. I was part of the Tech Prep group that attended the hearing last week. We really appreciate your interest and the additional questions you asked after hearing from our stakeholders. Now that you've had a week to mull over the testimony they shared, we suspect that you may have more questions.

I've been associated with Tech Prep since 1999, entering education after a totally different path in the private sector. The career tech bug bit me and as you come to know us, you'll find that it is contagious. Tech Prep people are passionate advocates for career tech students, their parents and our education family. I've seen indifferent students come alive as they master skills in technology areas. I've seen students explore interests in areas they never knew existed. I've seen extraordinary opportunities –college credit, scholarships and careers offered to students who, like all of my kids, aren't the most academically gifted.

Appearing before you is not a comfortable situation for me or my colleagues. We prefer being behind the scenes- quietly offering support, building bridges and sharing resources. Working under direction of ODE and ODHE, we never saw the need for self-promotion. In hindsight ,we should have done much more.

Let me share just a bit of history. Tech Prep was a national initiative that Ohio implemented in 1991. From 1991 to 2011, 26 consortia offered a variety of services, supported by a combination of federal and state funds. Tech Prep had a specific line item in the federal budget and also earned significant investment in state funding- developing a national reputation for innovation and excellence.

At that time, Tech Prep was a status assigned to students who met academic criteria in programs with an expected college component- such as engineering and health. Our job then as now, was to create the linkages or educational pathways so that students could seamlessly progress through education to career- with benefits.

Around 2011 two big things rocked our Tech Prep world: federal funding, which represented 60% of our budget was eliminated and Ohio opened up Tech Prep to all career tech programs. That meant that every career tech student would have access to high-level academics and every program would have a postsecondary option.

In fact, the Tech Prep-for-all mission is logical, since Ohio continues to receive more than \$40 million in funds under federal Perkins legislation. Perkins mandates that

all career tech programs must have a postsecondary pathway and Tech Prep's mission since 1991 is to build these pathways. Realizing our value, Ohio elected in 2011 to continue funding Tech Prep with leaner organization and very specific deliverables. The state continues to earn national accolades for this proactive approach.

We essentially extend statewide resources at the direction of the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Higher Education. All services are offered without cost to our partners. Since its inception, Tech Prep has counted on funding specified in two line items in the state budget- Tech Prep Expansion Grant and the Tech Prep Support Grant. Cuts proposed for the next biennium are devastating and entirely unexpected. We had been preparing for expanded responsibilities as ODE implements new career pathways and grant initiatives.

I realize all these words still don't give you a sense for what we do or why we matter. So, I'd like to walk you through some of the tasks that consume my colleagues and me in the southwest region. While we share the same mission and required deliverables, each of the six Tech Prep regions has a personality matching its specific service area. My southwest region is headquartered in Cincinnati and incorporates schools north of Dayton and east to Portsmouth. We support two of the largest career tech districts in the state, two inner city-high-need school districts, upscale suburbs and the rural, Appalachian areas of eastern Ohio. We have offices in Cincinnati, Sinclair and Shawnee State.

As I speak for our region, I say with passion that my colleagues may have different operating structures and activities but we're all focused on building the collaboration to support career tech students.

Yesterday, we learned that Proctor & Gamble has agreed to a partnership we pitched a few months ago. Starting next fall, we'll join with the company and Cincinnati State to recruit a cohort of high school students who will elect a track that takes them to college with almost a semester of college credits earned in high school, co-op employment at P&G, and a step-up consideration for a P&G career. P&G associates will engage with these students throughout high school and college, offering career-based guidance, recommending essential skills and aligning curriculum. P&G offers high value careers. Working with students starting in high school opens their doors to a more diverse and prepared workforce as students have time to develop desired skills.

Last week I joined a group of Cincinnati-area tourism employers including the Cincinnati Reds, Museum Center, Hyatt Hotel, and Convention & Visitors Bureau. We have formed a leadership institute to nurture talent to meet industry demand for hospitality workforce. Ohio has more than 70,000 employees in the industry. The employers called on Tech Prep to help them structure collaboration with secondary and postsecondary partners in order to grow the pipeline. We're

planning a June meeting to engage ODE in discussion about curriculum. Focused activities begin next school year.

We're also collaborating with secondary and post-secondary educators and employers to design a specific credential for health- careers; creating a focus-group so that Cincinnati Workforce Development can better target outreach materials to attract students to health and manufacturing careers; and structuring collaboration with the Shawnee State University plastics program to expand the number of southern Ohio students qualified to fill employment in that industry in that region. We hosted a meeting yesterday including high school teachers, ODE and the university. The college is offering entry-level plastics curriculum so that high school students are on an accelerated track.

As you know, Ohio students have an opportunity to complete college-level coursework in high school through College Credit +. It's an awesome opportunity, but there are a few caveats- there is a fee, unsatisfactory grades travel with the students and can impact college options- such as eligibility for admission to select programs. Career tech students have two other totally free and very flexible credit options- bilateral articulation and statewide credit agreements.

My colleague Carrie will discuss these in detail. I refer to them because of a project we implemented to increase portability of these credits from high school to college. Knowing that the current process is cumbersome to the detriment of more students

actually accessing credit, we convened key secondary and postsecondary educators to discuss alternatives. Several recommendations are now being shared with ODE and ODHE by an ODHE rep who has become our champion. Tech Prep linked the education silos to affect statewide change for the benefit of students.

Frequently- we're asked to lend a helping hand on a smaller basis. One of our schools contacted us recently in desperate need for information about end-of-course-assessments and teacher licensing. This district operates career tech programs in a comprehensive school setting and does not have access to staff dedicated to these very complicated requirements. We were able to immediately hook them up with resource they needed.

Community schools and small rural schools frequently contact us for a helping hand to navigate career tech requirements.

This information sharing, in fact, is a key Tech Prep service component. Our region structures collaboration so that those who need ask, and those who know answer. As you heard during last week's testimony, Tech Prep coordinators offer high school and college partners another set of eyes, ears and big hearts to support their vision and mission—We link individual programs to a statewide network of expertise.

Need a college option for cosmetology? When should you submit program approval documents? What should I tell my high school students about transitioning to college? Can I get a list of teachers to invite to my health careers in-service?

Ask Tech Prep. We know people who know things.

I am in the twilight of my career. I've seen good change and great ideas- I've also seen and made a lot of mistakes. At no time have I ever seen a stronger group of young professionals lined up for future leadership roles in our organization. These are the people most affected by these proposed cuts. These are the people rightly concerned about impact on their careers. Our budgets are lean and almost entirely devoted to staffing. The proposed budget cuts will require staff reduction and loss of intellectual capacity needed to effectively serve our partners. Our network is resource sharing will be breeched.

I believe that Tech Prep over 25 years has evolved into a powerhouse of opportunity. On behalf of the southwest Region and the entire Tech Prep Ohio organization, I ask you to consider restoring the funding we have counted on for so many years. We offer help for no charge, we leverage resources beyond our means and we are exceptionally qualified to build systems to support career tech students and families.

Please allow me the opportunity to answer your questions. Thank you again for your interest and continued support.

Ohio Department of Education

Ohio Department of Higher Education

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Career Technical Planning Districts

Butler Technology and
Career Development
Centerville-Kettering-Oakwood
Compact
Cincinnati City School District
Dayton City School District
Great Oaks Institute
of Technology
Greene County Career Center
Hamilton City School District
Lawrence County JVSD
Mad River Local School District
Miami Valley CTC
Ohio Valley Local School District
Pike County JVSD
Scioto County JVSD
Southern Hills JVSD
U.S. Grant JVSD
Warren County JVSD

Regional Resources

- Facilitate professional development on behalf of ODE and ODHE
- Support documentation required for career tech program approval
- Engage faculty and employers to create educational pathways to employment
- Create and promote college credit opportunities for high school students

Regional Support

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Public Colleges/ Universities

Central State University
Cincinnati State Technical
and Community College
Miami University, all campuses
Ohio University, all campuses
Shawnee State University
Sinclair Community College
Southern State Community
College, all campuses
University of Cincinnati,
all campuses
Wright State University

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Tech Prep: Cost-Free Service; Value-Added Collaboration

MISSION: To support, promote and expand student access to quality career technical education pathways by connecting secondary and postsecondary partners and leading the development of state-approved Programs of Study

Launched in Ohio in 1991, Tech Prep is jointly administered by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Higher Education. Ohio invests \$2.8 million to fund essential services focused on five goals:

- Connect secondary (7-12), college, adult and apprenticeship programs in meaningful Programs of Study/ career pathways
- Provide secondary students and adult learners with opportunities to earn college credit
- Ensure students are aware of and take advantage of postsecondary credit options
- Assist school districts, adult Ohio Technical centers and colleges in efforts to adhere to statewide credit transfer requirements and articulation agreement expectations
- Develop exemplary Programs of Study and process program approval and program renewal applications

6 Tech Prep Regional Centers serve as resource hubs to support more than **700 middle, secondary and adult sites within 91 career technical districts and 37 colleges.**

Services impact 100% of career tech students — more than 120,000 students in grades 7-12 and 100,00 students in adult and college programs.

33 coordinators based at 26 colleges facilitate access to quality career pathways and opportunity to earn scholarships, early college credit and credentials

In FY16 Tech Prep **served more than 10,000 educators, students and parents through 400 professional development workshops** and enrichment activities.

Tech Prep creates connections so that **100% of Ohio career tech programs are linked to career and postsecondary options.**

Tech Prep technical assistance supports exemplary career pathways, programs of study and program renewal applications. More than **2,000 applications have been processed in the last two years.**

In FY16 Tech Prep facilitated more than **1500 college credit opportunities** representing thousands of dollars in college credit. In a 9- college sample, Tech Prep students and parents **realized \$2.6 million tuition savings.**