

Written Testimony for Ohio Senate – Finance Subcommittee on Primary & Secondary Education

State of Ohio Biennial Budget: House Bill 49

Testimony of Deanna Strauss, Regional Coordinator for College Tech Prep at Lorain County

Community College given on May 25, 2017

Chairman Hite, Vice Chairman Sykes, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Deanna Strauss and I serve as the Regional Coordinator for College Tech Prep at Lorain County Community College (LCCC). As a first generation college student with a younger brother, we both began our educational journeys at our local community college. One of us, however, had a golden opportunity. An opportunity that ignited a spark in a student who failed to find relevance in high school courses; develop an early connection to a career path through a College Tech Prep program; gain confidence and derive professional satisfaction through high school internships with Rubbermaid and LUK USA; and earn 12 college credit hours prior to high school graduation. Having seen first-hand the impact College Tech Prep had on my brother, Steve Strauss, I personally understand the importance of College Tech Prep in the lives of our young people. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here today to testify on behalf of the life changing work that is connected to the Ohio College Tech Prep network.

In my current role as Regional Coordinator, I've worked closely with secondary schools in the Northeast Ohio Region to create college and career pathway opportunities for career-tech students. All career-tech programs include the opportunity for students to earn college credit through local bilateral articulation agreements at LCCC and/or state-wide agreements through the Ohio Department of Higher Education. Through College Credit Plus, technical and general education courses are woven into many career-tech programs, with students completing courses

at their high school or on our college campus. These high school opportunities transition into higher education options that span from short-term certifications to degree completion pathways including master's degrees, thanks to our University Partnership with four-year college and universities on LCCC's campus. Many Lorain County Tech Prep students take advantage of this opportunity and combine it with their earned bilateral and statewide credit options; reducing the time it takes to complete their degree and providing an invaluable financial break to students and parents.

For example, Lorain High School is currently partnering with Tech Prep and LCCC to offer an average of nine (9) College Credit Plus hours in each career-tech program. Again, this is in addition to the bilateral and statewide articulations that students are already earning in their program. Opportunities like this often happen because Tech Prep brings the key players to the same table so together we can think outside of the box, eliminate barriers, and find ways to intertwine pieces from several programs into one cohesive opportunity that benefits those we serve. In 2016 – 2017, Lorain County Tech Prep students are on track to complete over 3,000 College Credit Plus hours.

Last year, Ohio College Tech Prep impacted 100 percent of career tech students through the creation of more than 2,000 CTE-26's and programs of study. Tech Prep collaborated with the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Higher Education to offer hundreds of workshops and meetings for professional development opportunities to ensure that secondary institutions are compliant with statewide agreements. Tech Prep also facilitated the development of over 1,500 bilateral articulation agreements across the state of Ohio and in the Northeast Region, Cuyahoga Community College, Lakeland Community College and Lorain

County Community College awarded 1,783 Tech Prep students \$1,209,123 through bilateral articulated credit alone.

Another important role Tech Prep plays is ensuring parents and student, particularly first-generation college students, understand the many college credit options that are available to them. If a student doesn't know about or is unable to access their earned credit, the pathways that we develop to assist students with their transition is left to chance. Students are often overwhelmed by the process and learn about their earned credit opportunities via campus visits, high school classroom visits, and individualized student appointments. Tech Prep not only develops the pathways for students, but they are the ones who help students (and teachers) understand what all of this means and how it can be tied together to maximize student success. At many institutions, Tech Prep staff is responsible for ensuring a student meets the requirements for bilateral credit so it can be posted on the student's college transcript after graduation. This is a complex process, with ever evolving curriculum, changing industry demands, and it requires constant attention and updating for maximized student success.

College Tech Prep in Northeast Ohio has partnered with the Regional Information Technology Engagement Board, which is an industry-led collaborative focused on talent development initiatives in Lorain & Cuyahoga counties. This partnership has connected young IT professionals and career-tech students exploring IT through professional panels, one-on-one interactions, LinkedIn, an annual IT summit, and summer camps in Coding, C#, and Cyber Security. Industry partners include The Sherwin-Williams Company, Hyland Software, and Nordson Corporation, to name a few. As a part of the Train OH grant, LCCC has partnered with Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Pre-Engineering Tech Prep programs to offer students an opportunity to earn their associates degree, while working in industry with a guaranteed paid

internship at local businesses focused on Micro Electronic Mechanical Engineering Systems (MEMS). Next year, Tech Prep is spearheading a partnership with the International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Trades Union, LCCC, and local career-tech programs to develop a pipeline of females that possess trades skills upon graduating from high school who can then transition into the trades' apprenticeship programs in an attempt to reach 20% female employment by 2021 in the Trades Union.

In the twelve years I've worked in higher education, seven have been working in College Tech Prep with career-tech students. I've watched students who were unsure of themselves, academically disengaged and barely passing high school come alive with passion for education and grow into engaged, successful young adults. I've cheered on students who didn't believe that college was attainable for them; served as references for internships; seen them excel academically in their associate's degree program; go to University to earn their bachelor's degree and graduate with honors; and have followed their story as they climbed the ranks and became executive level managers within companies that are driving the Ohio economy.

College Tech Prep isn't just about partnering with employers to develop a talent pipeline to meet industry demand or bridging secondary and post-secondary education to ensure all students have access to a quality education. College Tech Prep is about changing lives; it's about offering students, like my brother, that golden opportunity to get a jump start on a successful life.

College Tech Prep is not funded from the Career Technical Education Budget, but is funded in two stand-alone line items in Section 265.200 under Career Technical Education Enhancements on lines 97484 through 97493. As shared with you by Terry Benedict last week,

College Tech Prep was able to survive (and continued to thrive) after a 60% budget cut when we lost our federal funding in 2011 and we were retained with state funding. If our funding is severely reduced and eliminated, the network that supports secondary and post-secondary education, apprenticeships, and workforce systems will be gone. Ohio will be taking a step back as the Tech Prep network disappears and this will impact not only the students that we are called to serve, but the instructors and administrators at career-technical & post-secondary institutions across the state. Tech Prep is perfectly poised to help the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Higher Education take career-technical education to the next level. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, on behalf of the Northeast Region and all of College Tech Prep, I would like to respectfully ask you to consider fully restoring the funding for College Tech Prep.

Thank you for your consideration and I am happy to now take any questions you may have regarding the value of College Tech Prep.