

Ohio Senate  
Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education  
House Bill 49 State Budget  
Testimony of Rob Speckert,  
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Chairman Hite, Vice Chairman Sykes and Members of the Committee.

Hello, my name is Rob Speckert. I am a retired faculty and former department chair of 21 years at Miami University, co-chair of the Ohio Engineering Technology Educators Association (OETEA) and educational consultant.

During my tenure as department chair, I wrote and received approval for a BS completion degree that articulates with associate degree programs in Engineering Technology.

Today, this ABET accredited program is delivered by interactive video and web to 11 colleges across Ohio. My work on articulation and transfer started with this BS completion program and continues today in my consulting work. My personal academic pathway included articulation of my associate degree from Cincinnati State with Miami

University many years ago. Once I entered higher education, I fell in love with learning and never left.

My consulting work gives me a unique perspective regarding the value TechPrep offers to students who are eligible for college credits as they seamlessly move from secondary to post-secondary technical education. This seamless curriculum pathway is crucial to helping industry fill their growing demand for high-tech jobs. Like most Engineering Technology programs, the Department of Engineering Technology at Miami depends on TechPrep to help us connect with career center faculty and students to align curriculum, arrange information sessions, hands-on workshops, and many other outreach events.

Ohio's career centers, colleges, government agencies, and industries are working hard to find ways to meet the ever-growing demands of industry in fields of engineering, manufacturing, IT, and the sciences. P&G can't hire enough researchers to test product packaging, product production, and more. They use two-year associate degree graduates for these high-wage, high-tech positions. Honda Corporation began a unique partnership with Columbus State Community College and the career technical programs in the Columbus area to help them meet their growing need for high-tech maintenance positions. Today that program has grown to over 15 companies and many career centers. The Ohio Engineering Technology Educators Association (OETEA) is a working group of deans, chairs, and faculty from Engineering Technology programs across Ohio. I work closely with Dr. Dan Burklo of Northwest State Community College in co-chairing OETEA. Last fall, OETEA sponsored a workshop at Columbus State on Building Ohio's

Future Workforce. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together colleges, career centers and high schools, business and industry, and government agencies to talk about the unmet need for high-tech, high-skilled, high-wage workers and to present the Honda model as one example of how we can all work together to help fill the talent pipeline.

TechPrep played an integral role in announcing the workshop to career centers across Ohio and in helping us to organize, manage registrations, and with overall program promotion. We relied on TechPrep to help launch this program and we are continuing to work with TechPrep in replicating the model in other parts of Ohio. In fact, Terry Benedict and I are working with the administration and faculty at Cincinnati State to replicate this model with select Cincinnati companies beginning fall 2018.

Ohio students who choose career tech options in high school typically focus on building skills in a particular technology area—skills that lead to high-value careers. TechPrep builds unique pathways so that so that students are able to move seamlessly from high school to college to workforce opportunity—in less time because they build skills in high school and earn college credit.

Ohio students are able to earn college credit through College Credit + and other options. Middle and high school students take the same courses delivered on the college campus. Usually, these courses fulfill general education requirements.

Not all students qualify for College Credit Plus courses. TechPrep supports additional pathway and college credit options for career-tech students: statewide articulation

(CTAG) and bilateral articulation. Each of these options is a result of collaboration that matches secondary and postsecondary curriculum, engages educators and focuses on workforce need. Credit is awarded based on career tech program mastery and individual scholarship. There is no need to flow funds from one institution to another.

TechPrep creates the strong partnerships required for this alignment. TechPrep is a direct link to postsecondary opportunity. I work with many groups across Ohio and none is as well-suited to connect post-secondary and secondary education as TechPrep. They assist secondary administrators and faculty to align their curriculum with post-secondary partners, they engage business and community to support students and they help bridge the communication gap that exists between secondary and post-secondary educators.

TechPrep is an active network of statewide coordinators that facilitates connections for Ohio's Career-Tech students. They ensure that students, parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors know and understand all of the credit options and career pathways that are available. There are so many college credit options and pathways available to students, that figuring out which option or pathway makes the most sense can be daunting and confusing. TechPrep helps with this process. TechPrep coordinates workshops and information sessions for career tech students—some beginning at very early grade levels.

They plan and implement programs so career center students and teachers can visit technical colleges and industries. They work tirelessly to help with curriculum alignment,

building communications, and simply bringing together key stake holders in the career technical programs at the secondary level with key stake holders in partner colleges.

On behalf of the entire TechPrep Ohio organization, I ask you to consider restoring the funding they have counted on for so many years. They offer help that is not available through other organizations and they are exceptionally positioned to bridge the gap between career technical education, post-secondary technical programs and employers.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share this information with you.

I'd be happy to answer your questions.