



May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**SENATE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**RE: HB 166 (teacher credentialing, coding as foreign language, and early childhood education)**

**Amy Lore – Director of Government Relations, Project Lead the Way, Inc.**

Mr. Chairman, and other distinguished committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding HB 166.

My name is Amy Lore, and I represent Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is a nonprofit organization that provides a transformative learning experience for PreK-12 students and teachers across the U.S. PLTW empowers students to develop in-demand, transportable knowledge and skills through pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. PLTW's training and resources support teachers as they engage their students in real-world learning. More than 600 elementary, middle, and high schools in Ohio currently offer PLTW programs – and that number is growing fast.

Our programs have been recognized by many industry partners who understand the exceptional training PLTW students receive that prepare them for the workforce. We are the PreK-12 leg of the Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education program, which is growing in Ohio. And we have become a leader in achieving the goals and outcomes championed by the federal Perkins Act. We are expanding access to CTE programs across the state to help more students gain the skills they need to thrive in college, career, and beyond.

**Computer Science Professional Development**

Thanks to the leadership of this body in the previous session, Ohio students will benefit from timely and challenging computer science curriculum. However, for that to happen, there must be trained and ready teachers to lead those classrooms.

Project Lead the way currently boasts nearly 200 trained computer science teachers in Ohio, instructing nearly 1160 students in the 2018-19 school year. Next year, we will add a rigorous cybersecurity course to the program. As you know, demand for programs like ours is ramping up, and teachers need training.

That is why we support the allocation of \$1.5 million for the credentialing of computer science teachers. This is a great start, and we encourage you to consider increasing that amount if possible. Indiana has recently passed a biennial budget that allocates \$3 million per year for computer science credentialing. Florida just passed a measure to allocate an impressive \$10 million. Competition is fierce, and we want Ohio to be a leader in this important work. I hope you will take that into consideration in this current budget cycle and in the future.

**College Credit Plus Credentialing**

We are also strongly supportive of the allocation of \$3M in this budget to support teacher credentialing for Career Credit Plus courses. My colleague, Autumn Barry, who now leads our charge to engage with

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schools across Ohio, previously taught our Biomedical Science programs as a Master Teacher and CCP instructor. This gave her students excellent opportunities through our programs, and we know first-hand how valuable that can be for them.

At Project Lead the Way, we know the teacher truly is the key to student achievement, and we hope you will retain both of these credentialing funds in the final budget.

### **Coding as Foreign Language**

It is also my pleasure to support the provision in this bill that allows computer coding to count as foreign language for high school graduation requirements. This would let students choose computer coding and coding pathways and to continue into courses of increasing difficulty to satisfy foreign language requirements – where those apply.

This additional flexibility will help more Ohio students obtain the CS education they need and prepare them for college and career success. PLTW Computer Science pathways extend all the way to the littlest learners, in Pre-K, and include cybersecurity courses for high school students. We hope that this language will make it possible for more students to be able to fit challenging CS work into their schedules.

### **Early Learning**

Finally, I would like to comment on the funding allocated for early childhood education. Project Lead the Way is an active advocate for access to early learning. We support programs that can be sustainably funded with long-term impact. So, while we would love to see increases in this area, we are encouraged by the stability of this funding in the current budget, and we hope you will protect that funding as you seek to fund sound policies across the board.

There is a wonderful momentum for great education in Ohio. Working across the Midwest, I have experienced that energy whenever I come to the table here. It is evident in the work that has been done to draft an exceptional strategic plan for education – Each Child Our Future; the ongoing and impressive work you are doing in Career and Technical Education; and the trust that is put in local leadership.

I want to close by recognizing the good things that are happening here, thanking you for your leadership, and encouraging you to retain the provisions I've outlined in my testimony today in the final budget.

Thank you.

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