



Boonshoft Museum of Discovery
SunWatch Indian Village/Archaeological Park
Fort Ancient

House Bill 166
Course Access Amendment
Tracey Tomme
Boonshoft Museum of Discovery
May 22, 2019

Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I write to you today on behalf of the Boonshoft Museum located in Dayton. Boonshoft Museum of Discovery strives to be the premier regional provider of interactive science learning experiences, enriching the lives of children and adults, enhancing the quality of life in our community, and promoting a broad understanding of the world. Additionally, Boonshoft seeks to preserve, protect, and enhance the Museum's anthropology, geology, paleontology, and biology collections, and to make these collections available for exhibition, education, and research purposes.

Over the past two years, the Boonshoft Museum of Discovery has **served 26 school districts, totaling over 148,000 children** through science exploration and education programs. All programs delivered on-site and off-site are **aligned to Ohio Academic Content Standards**. Schools that visit the Museum can enhance their coursework through a variety of exhibits purposefully aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards.

Boonshoft's programs include educator led STEM workshops, astronomy and planetarium exploration, Exhibit-to-Go outreach mobile programming, and distance/virtual learning program, as well as the traditional self-guided museum experience. Courses provided by Boonshoft cover the spectrum from Pre-K robotics through high school advanced mathematics. Their education is done in a unique, hands-on format that is exciting to students.

Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, affiliated with the Association of Children's Museums, and is a governing member of the Association of Science-Technology Centers, there truly is no other museum of its kind in the state of Ohio.

Recently, Boonshoft had a change in its executive leadership team. With the hiring of a credentialed, innovative leader, with experience in the classroom, Boonshoft is well primed to actively engage in education through coursework that leverages the resources and assets of the private sector. For Boonshoft this is master's credentialed educators and a collection of 1.8 million artifacts.

In an era where innovation and hands on experience in education is a paramount to providing a world class education, while preparing Ohio's students for jobs of the future, Ohio's education system is well primed to partner with local resources to deliver real time innovative coursework.

We strongly encourage your support of the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) course access pilot project amendment. This will allow the museum to reach to more students while partnering with school districts to fill the gaps in their STEAM education offerings. This program will ensure that all students, regardless of what school district they attend, will have access to high quality, specialized STEAM education

Course access helps Ohio fill gaps by creating a centralized delivery system for high-need courses from a range of high-quality providers including Boonshoft Museum and Victoria Theatre Association. Schools can engage with students to provide the courses that best meet their needs and pathway goals, without being limited by geography or capacity. This approach will allow for students to gain exposure to specialized coursework that they otherwise may not be exposed to until they reach college.

Partnering with museums and professional arts organizations in the private sector can bring a whole new perspective to fundamentally modernize Ohio's classrooms and the students we serve. A course access program, not only provides flexibility for local school districts and students but can reignite students' interests in STEAM careers and invigorate student work ethic in all academic areas.

Course access providers such as Boonshoft Museum and Victoria Theatre Association with masters degreed scientists and educators, have the expertise to deliver both in person, blended and/or fully online content would fill a need for Ohio's students. By leveraging credentialed instructors, with unique and well developed full courses, Ohio students are bound to benefit from high quality coursework, aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards.

This public-private partnership will help bring the vast resources of the museum to students in all areas of Ohio, including Ohio's most remote and rural areas through blended and digital coursework. This program can help defer the cost of K-12 STEAM education in small districts or low enrollment classes at a district while providing high quality arts education. **Local students and districts retain the authority** over the program by reviewing each request for coursework by a student.

We appreciate your commitment to Ohio's students and ask that you support the STEAM Course Access Pilot Project which will allow private organizations, like Boonshoft Museum of Discovery and the Victoria Theatre Association to create scalable course access content to support STEAM education throughout Ohio.

Thank you for your strong consideration of this amendment and for supporting STEAM as a key component of Ohio students' education.