



**Ohio House Finance Committee / State Operating Budget (HB 110)  
3-10-21**

**Testimony of the Career-Technical Education Associations  
(Ohio ACTE, OACTS, Ohio CCS)**

Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley, and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee, thank you for allowing us to submit written testimony today. We submit this testimony on behalf of the state's 89 public career technical schools—including its 49 Joint Vocational School Districts, 24 comprehensive & 16 compact career-technical schools, and 52 Ohio Technical Centers (OTCs)—all of which are represented by the Ohio Association for Career Technical Education (Ohio ACTE), the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (OACTS), and the Ohio Association of Comprehensive and Compact Career Technical Schools (Ohio CCS). Collectively, these associations represent the entire career-technical education (CTE) community in Ohio, including its schools, teachers, administrators, and the students they serve.

Our great state is one of a few in the nation that benefits from a robust, well-rounded, and effective CTE system / infrastructure. At its core are Ohio's 89 "Career Technical Planning Districts" (CTPDs)—regions established strategically throughout the state to ensure every student has access to career-tech opportunities. Each CTPD utilizes one of three "delivery-models" at the high school level: 1) Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs), also known as Career Centers, which serve several member school districts and provide career technical courses/programming to those member districts; 2) Comprehensives, which are typically large, traditional school districts that are big enough to independently offer their own CTE programming; and 3) Compacts, which are multiple school districts that share delivery and costs for career-tech through service agreements.

The most recent data on file with the Ohio Department of Education indicates our career-tech schools, programs, and students continue to thrive. Approximately 94% of Ohio high school students on a career-tech pathway are either employed, enlisted in the military, or engaged in post-secondary education within 6 months of graduation. Across the state, approximately 87,071 students are "concentrators" in a career-tech pathway, with a total of 133,627 students participating in at least one career-tech course. Approximately 97% of career-tech students graduated in 2019—which is well above the state average of 86% according to ODE statistics.

These numbers tell an encouraging story and showcase the ability of our public schools to enhance workforce development in these challenging times. As part of the state operating budget bill (HB 110), our schools continue to focus on the following issues to further strengthen CTE in Ohio:

1. **K-12 School Funding:** We support the Fair School Funding Plan (HB 1) and are eager to continue discussing the best way to fund our state's public school system. **Above all else, we emphasize the need to "unfreeze" our career-technical education (supplemental) "weighted" funding—used to purchase the equipment and supplies necessary to operate our most in-demand technical programs— and ensure these weighted funds remain outside any cap or guarantee, so that our career-technical schools regain the ability to expand programming based on increases in regional demand and student enrollment. HB 1**

unfreezes weighted funds and places them outside of any cap / guarantee; representatives from career-tech testified in support of that bill, and we will continue to participate in relevant discussions moving forward.

2. Adult Diploma Program: We seek to expand the number of adult students we assist in obtaining a high school diploma via the Adult Diploma Program by decreasing the minimum eligibility age from 22 to 20. ADP provides funding for training as an alternative pathway for adults to earn an industry-recognized credential aligned to one of Ohio's in demand jobs. Under ADP, an adult student may simultaneously earn a state-issued high school diploma at the conclusion of the program. We hope to be able to serve more adults by expanding student eligibility for ADP state funding opportunities.
3. Industry Credential Funding: We are grateful to the Administration and legislature for the various successful streams of industry-credential funding that have again been included in the proposed budget bill. The \$41M for High School Industry Recognized Credentials and \$50M for tech-focused (adult) credentials (in addition to other streams of funding) will continue to assist our schools in responding to the state's diverse regional workforce needs.
4. Other Budget-Related Policy Issues: We continue to work with the Administration, ODE, and ODHE to better understand the proposed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) graduation requirement and address certain concerns. Although perhaps challenging for some schools, students and parents, we support the Administration's goal of increasing FAFSA awareness so more students are positioned to access financial aid that can be used not only for college, but also for post-secondary technical training at OTCs. We would, however, prefer the FAFSA graduation requirement provisions be debated in stand-alone legislation rather than the biennial operating budget bill. In addition, we continue to work with the Administration and ODE to better understand proposed changes to STEM School criteria and ensure career-technical education is aligned and connected with the state's endeavors surrounding STEM opportunities for Ohio students.

Thank you for your consideration.