



**Ohio Senate Finance Committee / State Operating Budget (HB 110)
May 17, 2021**

**Proponent Testimony / Career-Technical Education (CTE)
Keith Horner, Superintendent, Apollo Career Center**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Keith Horner, Superintendent of Apollo Career Center, and I am testifying on behalf of my school, as well as the state's 49 Career Centers (also known as Joint Vocational School Districts or JVSDs), which are represented by the Ohio Association for Career Technical Education (Ohio ACTE), and the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (OACTS).

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 as adopted in the House Passed version of HB 110. **Regardless of the precise school funding formula adopted by this General Assembly, 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 (at a minimum) maintain these funds at current levels, outside of any cap.** Doing so will allow our career centers to regain the ability to expand programming based on increases in regional demand and student enrollment.

Note on Recommended Amendment: The Fair School Funding Plan converts current weighted funding tiered amounts (see RC 3317.014) to a percentage of the (career-tech) statewide average base cost per pupil. The purpose of this modification is to ensure that if and when the average base cost per pupil increases, CTE weighted funding sees a proportional increase. However, career-tech schools / programs could see a decrease in weighted funding under the current language because the percentages in the bill are being calculated from a (possibly higher) estimated base cost and not the (possibly lower) actual base cost (determined after enactment of the funding plan). Any decreases in weighted funding resulting from a slightly lower (actual) base cost per pupil would severely restrict our ability to expand and serve more students (similar to FY20 and FY21 when this funding was frozen at FY19 levels). Therefore, as a way to protect against potential inaccuracies in current funding projections, we would respectfully request that the dollar amounts associated with the five different (CTE funding) tiers currently included in Ohio Revised Code section 3317.014 be included in HB 110 as minimums for each tier (at least for the first two years) to ensure that this funding is not unintentionally reduced under a new or revised formula.

Note on Career Exploration Funding: The Fair School Funding Plan includes supplemental per-pupil “career exploration” funding to expose students in grades k-12 to different career

pathways. These dollars will increase student awareness of employment and educational opportunities through the use of career development plans, career fairs, job shadowing, and other learning activities. We believe it is important that any career-exploration dollars flow through the career-technical planning district (CTPD), so that the CTPD can help inform its member school districts of the best use of funds based on the CTPD's understanding of its regional workforce need(s). For the same reason, we support the state providing these funds directly to CTPDs and allowing them to make allocation decisions, which may include hiring a staff member specifically devoted to coordinating the CTPD's career development objectives.

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, and support the budget amendment added by the House which decreased 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. Ohio Technical Center (OTC) Funding: As you may know, most career centers stay operational on nights and weekends via their OTC to train and certificate adult students. Like the state's colleges and universities, OTCs have struggled in the wake of the Pandemic. Although in the last budget (HB 166, 2019-2020), ODHE proposed to fund OTCs at over \$23M in FY 2021, overarching Pandemic-related budget cuts resulted in this number being reduced to appx. \$20.2M. That said, we are pleased to see ODHE propose a 3% increase in our funding to \$20.8M in each fiscal year over the next biennium. We are also pleased to see the House add another \$1M to our line item over the biennium (\$21.3M in FY 22, and \$21.8M in FY 23). We very much appreciate the strong support of this Administration and legislature during this challenging time and seek to maintain these levels of funding as the budget moves through the Senate.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.