



**Ohio House Economic and Workforce Development  
Committee**

**SB 1 Proponent Testimony**

**Jamie Nash, Superintendent, Buckeye Hills Career Center, SE Ohio**

**March 28, 2023**

Good afternoon, Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the Ohio House Economic and Workforce Development Committee:

My name is Jamie Nash, Superintendent at the Gallia-Jackson-Vinton Joint Vocational School District, also known as the Award Winning Buckeye Hills Career Center. Our career center is located in Southeast Ohio and is the Career Technical Planning District lead for 3 counties and 6 districts. In addition, we operate an Ohio Technical Center (focused on Adult Education), which serves 4 primary counties, including Meigs and 6 secondary counties.

**Introduction & Background on Growth of CTE in Ohio:**

For years, many career centers were known as the best kept secret. Well, not anymore. Career Centers have expanded Career Technical Education (CTE) access across our entire state and region. The key to this expansion is our role as the Career Technical Planning District (CTPD) Lead. We have developed partnerships across multiple stakeholder groups, which include: our CTPD partner schools, school board members, advisory committee members, business and industry partners, apprenticeships both union and non-union and our local leaders. I would like to briefly begin by sharing the following positive developments on our work across the state to expand:

- Over the past several years, career centers and district members have designed, developed, and implemented career exploration courses for all 7th and 8th graders.
- Many CTPDs have expanded CTE satellite programs located at all high schools, which include but are not limited to: Agribusiness and Production Systems, Business and Administrative Services, Networking, Cyber Security, STNA, Family and Consumer Sciences, Interactive Media, Natural Resource Management, Engineering and Design, Hospitality and Tourism and Fire Fighter.
- Just this year, our career center has hired 3 full-time career coaches that serve all three counties and 6 school districts starting as early as the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. In most cases, this work is being led by CTPDs and member districts across Ohio.
- Career Centers are implementing driver's education programs for all CTE students, so we can prepare students for job placement their senior year.
- Currently, our career center is in the process of opening an early childcare center for our staff and students to access while they are onsite receiving in-demand training.
- Many CTPDs are offering and/or plan to offer senior only programs. Our career center is offering these programs in the following area(s): Heavy Equipment Operator Training (Local 18), Masonry (Lang), Firefighter, Broadband Infrastructure Training, STNA, CDL (Destiny) LPN, Surgical Tech, and Medical Assisting.
- Several CTPDs have implemented Drug Free Club Chapters. This is a student lead historical movement to fight the opioid epidemic. Our career center has one of the largest Drug Free Clubs

of America Chapter within our region. (High School 87% and Adult Education 89%). Many of our partner schools are joining these efforts as well.

- All CTPDs have strong Work Based Learning Programs. Just last year, our high school senior class generated over \$1.5 M of new income within this region and we are still collecting data from that class. That is an outstanding ROI.

### **My personal background:**

So you may wonder “why” we are here to provide testimony to support SB 1.

First, it is important that you know my background. I am a product, practitioner, leader, and advocate for CTE.

As a Product:

This journey began for me at 15 years of age, when I went to get on a school bus to visit the local vocational school and my principal/counselor asked me where I was going. I said, that I wanted to visit the vocational school. They told me that it wasn't for kids like me as I watched my two best friends get on the bus. That day changed my entire life forever. I got on that bus and my journey began, which led to my lifelong mission to serve CTE within our great state.

As a Practitioner I have served in the following roles:

- CTE Instructor (Secondary/Post-Secondary)
- Building Administrator
- District Administrator
- ODE Assistant/Associate Director
- CTPD-JVSD LEAD Director
- CTPD-JVSD LEAD Superintendent

As a Leader/As an Advocate:

We now have the attention of Ohio's leaders, employers, and workforce development entities across the state. This is because we have strategically designed our career centers to be innovative, flexible, and adaptable. We move at a speed that is required and needed. At Ohio's Career Centers, we know learning means doing. We provide hands-on training for in-demand jobs so our students can get to work and use their skills to change the world. From high school to adult education, our students are prepared to face any challenge that lies ahead. At career centers we work hard. Think big. And find a way. Because in Career tech .... It's what we do.

### **Our Support for SB 1**

I have reviewed a summary of SB 1 and I have some comments to make based off my comprehensive experiences, especially working in state government with multiple agencies:

- We support the restructuring of the Ohio Department of Education and I like the name change to the Department of Education and Workforce.
- Creating two Divisions within the new Department makes sense because although education and workforce are not the same, both hold value in developing Ohio's economy. We need a workforce

that is reliable, knowledgeable, and skilled. The SB 1 model would provide the governor and legislators a security blanket to make certain all arms of education and workforce development are equally represented at the highest table.

- As far as the State Board of Education (SBOE) and State Superintendent, I would agree with SB 1. The SBOE selects the SOPI and the General Assembly guides their role(s) and duties. The position must serve as an advisor to the cabinet member(s) within education and workforce
- Career Technical Planning Districts are the key to workforce development and the expansion of CTE. We are proven and for years have been the best kept secret. However, it's time for Career Technical Education to have a seat at Ohio's highest table of leadership.
- "WHY" we get it done and provide results "NOW." We know learning means doing. We provide hands-on training for in-demand jobs so our students can get to work and use their skills to change the world. From high school to adult education, our students are prepared to face any challenge that lies ahead. At Ohio's Career Centers we work hard. Think big. And find a way. Because in Career Tech.... It's what we do.