



**House Higher Education Committee
June 25, 2024
Ohio School Counselor Association
SB 104 – Interested Party Testimony**

Chair Young, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and esteemed members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 104 on behalf of the Ohio School Counselor Association.

For those who may not be aware, school counselors are often heavily involved in a school's CCP program. Absent dedicated staff to manage the program, schools usually have our members take on duties associated with CCP, including administration and course scheduling, which alone are no small feat. Thus, our members are greatly invested in CCP; we see the value it offers students as well as the opportunities for greater access and success. Since the release of the State Audit in 2022 recommending reforms to the program, we have been in communication with DEW and ODHE to offer our perspective and support their efforts to make sensible improvements to the program. We'd like to take this opportunity to highlight our perspective on some of the provisions.

Specifically, OSCA strongly supports SB 104's requirement of an orientation program for CCP participants. We see many students who struggle to manage college-level expectations associated with CCP courses and who harbor unanswered questions about certain course elements. Especially for middle schoolers who are enrolling, an orientation would eliminate the structural hurdles that hold students back from focusing fully on course content, allowing further promotion of students' success in the program. OSCA also strongly supports the alternative credentialing process established in the bill that allows teachers with relevant experience to qualify as CCP instructors. The cost and time commitment required to meet the current graduate-level coursework standards prevents many teachers with sufficient education from qualifying despite their high-level content knowledge. The ability for schools to offer more in-house courses would also remove the transportation cost factor and has the potential to improve participation rates in higher poverty or rural districts. Given the need for additional instructors, this provision of SB 104 will be particularly impactful for student access and program expansion.

However, we do harbor concerns about the continued workload CCP places on school counselors with no additional support. In particular, SB 104's addition of a second CCP intent deadline in November would create a significant scheduling burden for school counselors, who will now need to process and update a second round of intent forms. This may seem like just one more piece of paper to collect and send to the higher ed institution; however, in reality, for many

schools, this also means a second round of some or all of the following tasks: helping students apply for college, collecting the college IDs of the students, checking the GPA for students to see if they meet the 3.0 eligibility requirements or if they need to take placement tests, verifying with the college which students have the 3.0 GPA, organizing and registering students to take placement tests, proctoring the placement tests, and allowing for make-up testing and retakes. All of these things have to occur before a student can be registered for a CCP class. Without additional support to lessen the CCP burden on school counselors, this has the potential to pull us away from the places where we are very much needed, like supporting students in their career exploration and mental health needs.

It's important to note that the CCP program looks different across school districts and can have a vastly different impact on some than others. For example, counselors working in smaller schools with a large CCP participation rate and no in-house CCP offerings need the ability to manage participation in CCP to properly schedule classes, which would be far more difficult if a second intent deadline were added. In certain situations where we have witnessed the increase in CCP courses, it has reduced students' options for Advanced Placement courses at their high school. Finally, school districts *already have* a mechanism in place that permits them to make the decision locally to allow for an additional deadline by accepting intent forms after April 1. By keeping this as is, some schools could choose to implement additional due dates, while schools that need to have the ability to plan and manage their offerings more closely can do so with only one deadline.

As the General Assembly moves forward and looks to streamline CCP in the future, we would urge consideration of ways to standardize the program to reduce the workload placed on school counselors, including transferring responsibility for entrance testing administration to higher ed institutions; requiring forms from colleges to be uniform statewide; and requiring that higher ed institutions contact students directly with any supplemental information requests instead of going through school counselors.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to testify.