



House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
House Bill 71 Proponent Testimony
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
Ohio School Boards Association
June 13, 2023

Chairman Bird, Vice Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today as a proponent of House Bill (HB) 71. My name is Paul Imhoff with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators. Joining me in answering your questions are Nicole Piscitani with the Ohio School Boards Association and Katie Johnson with the Ohio Association of School Business Officials. Collectively, our organizations represent public school superintendents, school board members, treasurers/CFOs and other school business officials from around the state. On behalf of our members, we are proud to support HB 71, which establishes the Community Connectors Workforce Program.

HB 71 provides \$8 million in each fiscal year to support Ohio's educational service centers to hire staff to connect high school students to jobs and internships in their communities. These individuals will offer instruction in soft skills and professional skills training and collaborate with OhioMeansJobs and other community partners to identify available jobs and internships in the community, among other responsibilities.

One of the things our members hear most from employers is the importance of soft skills. Can you work collaboratively with others? Can you communicate effectively in a team setting? Can you think critically? Do you have effective time management skills? These life skills serve as an important supplement to the strong educational foundation our schools provide, and HB 71 will ensure there will be additional professionals in our schools to assist students with cultivating these critical skills.

HB 71 also ensures our high school students have access and exposure to career opportunities through a career mentor. In my experience as a superintendent and educator, I have witnessed students who had no idea what their passion might be or the sort of career pathways that existed before them. But once they were exposed to new and exciting career opportunities, their lives were changed. Finding that spark takes time, it takes work, and it takes boots on the ground to ensure we are connecting kids with opportunities. That's why HB 71 is so important,

because it provides a human link between the educational opportunities our schools provide and the workforce opportunities that exist before them.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on House Bill 71. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.