



June 12, 2023

Chairman Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak with you today on H.B. 71.

My name is Sandy Furano. In October 2016, I was hired as the Lead Career Counselor by the Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio located in Canfield, Ohio. I was hired to implement a Career Counseling Department to support our aligned school districts in tracking graduation data to assist them in preparing for the new ODE graduation requirements. In 2019, I was promoted to the Director of Career Counseling Services for the ESC of Eastern Ohio and currently reside in the position.

I am elated about H.B. 71 and the implementation of the Community Connectors Workforce Program, because the ESC of Eastern Ohio Career Counseling Department is offering all the components that H.B. 71 is proposing. When I first started as the Lead Career Counselor, there were four career counselors serving eight school districts. The Career Counselors were only tracking student end of course scores, ACT scores, and industry-recognized credentials for eleventh and twelfth grade. Fast forward to today, and our career counseling services have flourished since October 2016. We now have five career counselors that service over twenty-two school districts in Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana, and Stark counties. We also provide career counseling consulting services for districts outside these four counties.

The ESC of Eastern Ohio career counseling services offers career exploration for middle school students utilizing OhioMeansJobs, along with courses focusing on soft skills and life skills. In high school, our career counseling department continues to work with students on soft skills and life skills training, along with interview skills, job shadowing experiences, earning OhioMeansJobs readiness seals, and developing and implementing pre-apprenticeship to apprenticeship opportunities for after graduation.

In 2019, the ESC of Eastern Ohio Career Counselors implemented the Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship in partnership with the Builders Association of Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania and the Ohio Carpenters' Joint Apprenticeship in Richfield, Ohio. We are in the process of implementing an information technology, drones and aviation, and special education pre-apprenticeship to apprenticeship programs. These pre-apprenticeships allow students to earn industry-recognized credentials for graduation requirements, demonstrate competency, allow students to stay at their home school, and have a career pathway for after graduation.

The ESC of Eastern Ohio Business Advisory Council plays a vital role in the services offered through our career counseling services along with our partnerships with Youngstown State University, Eastern Gateway Community College, and Kent State University.

#### ALIGNED MEMBER DISTRICTS

Austintown | Beaver | Boardman | Campbell | Canfield | Columbiana | East Palestine | Jackson-Milton | Lowellville | MCCTC | Poland  
Rootstown | Sebring | South Range | Southeast | Springfield | Struthers | West Branch | Western Reserve | Windham | Youngstown

#### GOVERNING BOARD

Marie Dockry | A. Ross Douglass | Jeffery P. Good | Kathi McNabb Welsh | Richard S. Scarsella

Traci Hostetler, Superintendent | Ryan Jones, Treasurer

Career exploration helps our students bridge the gap between education and the workforce by showing students how their interests, academic career, and skill set can translate into the job market, and what steps they can take to reach their goals. Since the ESC of Eastern Ohio already has the foundation presented in H.B. 71, passing this bill will allow the ESC of Eastern Ohio to grow their career counseling services to reach more students in our local school districts and beyond.

Thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony, I will now stand for questions.