



Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
Hearing on House Bill 432

Proponent Testimony of Rick Smith, Ohio Hi Point Career Center
Ohio Association of Career-Technical Superintendents (OACTS)
April 23, 2024

Chair Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Dr. Rick Smith. I am Superintendent of Ohio Hi-Point Career Center and President of the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (OACTS).

Ohio Hi-Point Career Center serves five counties surrounding the Bellefontaine area, educating more than 600 students on our main campus. We also have satellite programs in our 14 partner school districts and currently reach another 5,000 students with career technical education. We recently received the Governor's 5-Star Award for our report card. We appreciate the legislature and Governor's most recent equipment grant that will allow Ohio Hi-Point to open a cybersecurity program on our main campus and an IT coding pathway at Indian Lake Local Schools and Upper Scioto Valley Local Schools next year.

As Career Tech Planning Districts (CTPDs) like Ohio Hi-Point continue to meet the State's goal of expanding access to career technical education in the "access deserts" of Ohio that need workforce development most, our leading policy challenge at the moment is finding workforce development educators (otherwise known as CTE teachers, formerly known as "Route-B"). I have personally witnessed the struggle to find CTE teachers sharply increase over the past few years. This is in part due to salary increases in the workforce, but it also deters potential teaching candidates when we explain the at times onerous process to obtain their teaching license through the current University pathway.

HB 432 will allow us to help with the transition from industry to teaching, in part by creating additional options to secure a teaching license (including through a mentorship program at the local school district). Once enacted, prospective teachers would be able to either 1) enroll in a University Educator Preparatory Program; 2)

enroll in a mentorship program at their employing school district; or 3) pursue a hybrid option that includes both professional development and college coursework. Each option still requires the candidate to have at least 5 years work experience. And the two newly proposed pathways would require one or more lead CTPDs to create and approve the different mentoring and professional development options.

Teaching today is hard, and over the past few years I have lost several new teachers within their twelve months. HB 432 provides prospective educators and CTPDs options to get new teachers licensed and make the smoothest transition for an individual leaving an industry and entering into the teaching profession.

This bill also provides flexibility to individuals already in college with majors outside of education that may have a future interest in teaching and allow them to take CTE courses without already being employed (a requirement under current law). We hope this will expand our pool of career tech teaching candidates in the future.

I hope you will move this bill forward and support its passing.

In conclusion, I thank you for the opportunity to share our support for this legislation from the field and from Ohio's career tech superintendents. I would be happy to take questions.