



Vanguard-Sentinel
Career & Technology Centers

Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

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Superintendent

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**Ohio Senate Education Committee
Proponent Testimony on SB 1
Greg Edinger, Vanguard Sentinel Career and Technology Centers
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Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Greg Edinger, and I am the superintendent of Vanguard Sentinel Career and Technology Centers. Vanguard-Sentinel CTC is located in NW Ohio and we have facilities in Fremont and Tiffin. We serve over 1400+ high school students on campus, another 700+ students through satellite programs, and over 1000+ adult students. At Vanguard-Sentinel CTC we work in collaboration with our local business and industry partners and our 16 local school districts to develop expanding opportunities for students. Because of these partnerships and innovative programming, over the past year we have seen an increase in enrollment of over 400+ students taking advantage of CTE programs in grades 9th – 12th. We have also expanded exploratory options for students in 1st – 8th grades.

We support Senate Bill 1 and specifically the provisions that place a renewed and heightened emphasis on Career-Technical Education. Career-tech is extremely successful in Ohio at both the secondary and post-secondary level. Like my counterpart CTE superintendents and directors, we strive every day to meet the workforce demands of our local businesses and enhance CTE opportunities for all high school and adult students. Career Centers are indeed one of the most valuable resources in the State of Ohio and SB 1 makes improvements to facilitate expansion in this vital education sector.

Under the current model, CTE is just another content area like English, Math, Science, Reading, Social Studies. Whereas we all know, career training can and should be infused in one way, shape, or form with all content areas and more highly emphasized. Currently the CTE pathway is looked at as an alternative pathway if you don't meet "regular" academic standards; in practice, this still causes the CTE pathway to be looked at as a "lesser than" option. You have the academic or "College Pathway" and you have the "CTE Pathway." But the question of "College or Career" should never emerge because the two should be treated equally and not as separate pathways. Students who choose a career pathway can and do go on to post-secondary education. The career pathway should be seen as and treated as equal to the academic pathway.

Ohio's Career Centers were built to be a major regional resource for workforce training. Under the current ODE structure our schools have at times been overlooked and bypassed as a major resource in developing new programs and meeting workforce needs; this has led in certain cases to the expenditure of additional resources without oversight to ensure quality results.

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SB 1 will elevate CTE and facilitate the effective expansion of our sector; it will enable policymakers to be more flexible and able to change more rapidly to evolving workforce needs without having multiple layers of ODE personnel in the decision-making pipeline; it will make CTE more responsive to the demands of the business community in general as the CTE deputy director will be a member of the executive workforce board; it will ensure better alignment and communication with K-12, as well as ODHE and our higher education partners.

SB 1 will also eliminate bureaucratic obstacles to policymaking. Many ODE-conceived policies created under the current structure do not necessarily serve to assist or benefit our schools or students; some do not necessarily make sense for our sector. These include policies like the EMIS reporting requirements, the CTE 26 (career-tech program approval) process, the state's quality program review, certain requirements tied to the Federal Perkins law, and the state's industry-recognized credential list. All of these policies could potentially become more streamlined and effective.

For example, ODE established the current process of assigning a value to each credential based on a 12-point valuation system. The problem is that this credential list has grown so big over the years that the system and associated point values have become convoluted. You may have a "12 point" credential on the list that can be earned online in two weeks with no hands-on training whatsoever. That credential is then equal to another credential that also awards 12 points, but takes 900 hours of hands on training to attain. This has led to students and schools chasing 12 points just for the sake of meeting a graduation requirement, thereby potentially diminishing the value of high-quality training.

Another example relates to state requirements tied to the Federal Perkins program—which offers grant funding to each state for CTE programming improvements. Since passage of the first Perkins law many years ago, the Department has pursued several OH-specific policy changes that may not be necessary or universally supported by the field. One change has been to the definition of a student CTE "concentrator." The state previously defined "concentrator" as a student who made a commitment to their pathway training of choice for more than a two-course sequence. ODE has since redefined the term to mean a student who takes just two courses in a pathway. Watering down this definition de-emphasizes completion of full credential training programs and has skewed the data behind the success of career technical education. SB 1 will be a huge benefit just in terms of having someone at the table for these major decisions. This will lead to a more streamlined career and technical education that is focused on need and quality.



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I also want to emphasize that in recent years there have been many positive improvements from a policy perspective, where career training has been brought to the forefront. But those changes have in part been driven by Executive action and the state legislature, which require the SBOE and ODE to adapt. (See, e.g., budget initiatives like the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program (IWIP), TechCred, and Funding for Short Term Certificates; SB 89 (2019-2020); SB 166 (2021); and SB 135 (2022). SB 1 represents another positive proposed legislative change that will allow education to be more flexible, adaptive, and responsive to the constant flow of workforce changes statewide. SB 1 will also place CTE as a focal point of importance for students to meet the demands of the real world and not just as another content area or alternative “lesser than” choice in their educational future.

I understand some are concerned that policies and leadership under SB 1 would change each time a new governor takes office. In my 15 years as a superintendent I have seen 8 different state superintendents change. All with different ideas and priorities. That spans three different governors. So even if there is a change in leadership with the governor’s office every 4 years that is still more of a focused priority and commitment than we have seen under the current structure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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