



**Ohio Senate Education Committee
State Operating Budget (HB 33)
May 3, 2023**

**Testimony of the Career-Technical Education Associations
(Ohio ACTE, OACTS, Ohio CCS)
William DiMascio, Lakewood City Schools/West Shore Career Compact**

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 William DiMascio, Educational Coordinator of West Shore Career Compact. I am testifying on behalf of my compact, as well as the state's 89 career-technical districts, which include 49 Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs), 24 Comprehensives & 16 Compacts, and 52 Ohio Technical Centers (OTCs)—all of which are represented by the Ohio Association for Career and Technical Education (Ohio ACTE), the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (OACTS), and the Ohio Association of Comprehensive and Compact Career Technical Schools (Ohio CCS). Collectively, these associations represent Ohio's entire career-technical education (CTE) community, including its schools, educators, administrators, and the students they serve.

Ohio offers career-tech through 89 "Career Technical Planning Districts" (CTPDs)—regions established strategically throughout the state to ensure every student can access CTE opportunities. Each CTPD utilizes one of three "delivery models" at the high school level: 1) Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs), which serve several member school districts and provide career technical programming to those member districts; 2) Comprehensives, which are typically large, traditional school districts that are big enough to offer their own CTE programming independently; and 3) Compacts, which are multiple school districts that share delivery and costs for career-tech through service agreements.

West Shore Career-Technical Planning District (WSCTPD) comprises students from Bay Village, Lakewood, Rocky River, and Westlake City School Districts. WSCTD offers 13 CTE programs in 12 career pathways and serves approximately 400 students. Enrollment data for the 2023-2024 school year shows a 10% increase in CTE participation (440 students). Our Automotive Technology and Construction Trades programs have seen substantial growth over the last three years as the advantages of CTE become more evident, and the NEO Region supports and elevates the importance of skilled trades. Through WSCTPD's strong and long-standing partnerships with businesses and industry, we continue to develop work-based learning opportunities for all programs that benefit the local community and the regional and state economy. Examples include but are not limited to the Cleveland Clinic, The City of Lakewood, the YMCA, area pre-schools, auto dealerships, and various spectrums of the hospitality industry—from local restaurants to Wyndham Hotel.

Furthermore, guided by business and industry partners and regional institutions of higher education, WSCTPD is planning for the future. WSCTPD is preparing an application for the Governors' \$200 million CTE expansion grant and hope to add two new career fields: 1) **Welding** and 2) **Micro Electronic Manufacturing Systems (MEMS)**. These programs align with Ohio's Top Jobs list in NEO and the state and the in-demand industry credentials list. These new two-year pathways will create 48 new seats (24 each)(total 488 students) and require physical expansion or renovation of career-technical education facilities to serve West Shore Career-Technical District students.

What an exciting time to be a CTE student, educator, or administrator! Without argument, this is one of the most favorable state operating budgets for high school and adult career technical education in Ohio's history. The CTE community and its leaders are energized by the emphasis placed on our sector and the overwhelming support from state and local policymakers and our communities as a whole.

As part of the state operating budget bill (HB 33), our schools continue to focus on the following issues to strengthen CTE in Ohio further:

1. **Funding for CTE Facility Expansion:** We are incredibly grateful that the DeWine-Husted budget proposal contained \$200M over the biennium to support CTPD facility expansion. Furthermore, we are pleased the Ohio House voted to retain this funding in its version of the budget. Many of our schools have shovel-ready building construction projects that will ensure these dollars have a demonstrable impact and are immediately put to good use. As we have emphasized over the last several years, our limited building capacity is a clear impediment to our sector's growth. CTE facility needs are unique given the extensive space necessary to conduct training across numerous career-technical programs—all requiring large equipment. The cost of any capital project (new build or renovation) is consistently high. To maximize the state's investment in CTE infrastructure, HB 33 proposes a grant program focused exclusively on facility expansion and open to all career-technical schools (JVSD, Comprehensive, or Compact).
2. **K-12 School Funding Formula:** Like our traditional district partners, we support Ohio's current K-12 school funding formula—the "Fair School Funding Plan"—which the legislature adopted during the last operating budget cycle. As this Committee knows, the formula includes a six-year "phase-in" that facilitates gradual implementation over three biennial budgets. We are encouraged that the DeWine-Husted budget proposal continues the phase-in by funding years 3 and 4. We do, however, recommend that policymakers address the following formula-related issues unique to career-technical education supplemental funding, which we believe will help our schools continue to expand over the long term and serve an ever-increasing number of high school students:
 - Fully Allocate CTE Funding: To facilitate long-term CTE programming expansion across Ohio, we would recommend legislators fully allocate CTE supplemental "weighted" funding under the FSFP and remove the remaining phase-in. Weighted funding refers to the most valued category of supplemental dollars career-tech schools receive under the formula used to purchase the expensive equipment and supplies necessary to operate CTE programs. HB 33 contains several highly beneficial programs (described below) that

allow our schools to apply for various funding assistance. But entirely allocating our weighted funds would produce a steadily increased stream of equipment dollars our schools and administrators could depend on each year, facilitating better long-term expansion planning and implementation.

- Establish State Share Floor for CTE Funding: While the Fair School Funding Plan has been generally seen as a step in the right direction regarding equitable school funding, we are concerned about how it affects certain CTPDs. For example, some CTPDs face challenges in meeting the new funding formula's requirements for career and technical education programs, which results in an unintended “funding penalty” via the application of the State Share Index (SSI)

Unlike STEM and Charter Schools, career-tech schools’ weighted supplemental funding is still subject to the “state and local share. (SSI)” And many of our schools—particularly the Compacts and the Comprehensives—are significantly impacted by the low state share of their member districts. For example, out of the 102 traditional school districts served by Compacts / Comprehensives, 61 fall below 50% state share, which means the state funds less than half of the overarching equipment and supply costs for their CTE students. For example, my state share is now the lowest at 5%—a reduction from 32% pre-Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP). Over the six years of the phase-in of the FSFP, WSCTPD will see a decrease in CTE funding from **\$315,000 in FY21 to under \$30,000 if fully implemented by 202???**. To date, we have seen a decrease of \$113,000, totaling approximately 1/3 of our budget. This reduction in CTPDs such as mine will impede future growth and the long-term success of Ohio students’ career-technical programs and, ultimately, Ohio’s workforce. As mentioned, our CTPD is preparing for expansion with Welding and MEMS. Although we are grateful for the Governor’s commitment to CTE facility expansion, all CTE programs require CTPDs to adequately account for their unique needs, such as the high cost of equipment and materials for programs. To remove disparities between different types of schools and facilitate our sector's long-term growth, we recommend that legislators set a floor of 50% for the state share percentage that applies to CTE supplemental “weighted funding.” We note that precedent exists for this change: the FSFP already sets a floor for the state share on transportation funding (37.5% in FY 24 and 41.67% in FY 25).

3. **Grant Funding for Equipment / Supplies**: We are thankful that the Executive Budget proposal also contains \$100M to assist all schools (including charter and stem schools) with CTE equipment and supply needs. These resources will be incredibly valuable and, in many cases, will be used with the \$200M in facility expansion dollars to ensure our sector’s growth and jumpstart our ability to serve more students across our CTPD.
4. **High School Industry Recognized Credentials**: We are similarly excited that the DeWine-Husted budget proposal renews existing programs aimed at increasing the number of industry-recognized credentials earned by Ohio high school students. Specifically, HB 33 maintains funding to reimburse schools for the cost of issuing credentials and funding to operate the existing Innovative Workforce Incentive Program (IWIP)—which offers \$1,250 for each qualifying credential earned by a student in the preceding school year. The budget also includes up to \$10M in each fiscal year to support a Work-Based Learning Incentive Program, which will promote student interactions with business and industry to foster

engagement in career fields as well as alignment with educational programs.

5. **Adult Diploma Program:** We are pleased that the Executive Budget proposal continues to fund the highly coveted Adult Diploma Program, which provides job training and an alternative pathway for adults (age 20 or older) to earn a credential with a state-issued high school diploma. We hope to increase the utilization of this program in the years ahead.

Thank you for listening today. Again, the career-tech community is grateful for the Governor's and Legislature's commitment to workforce development & CTE. Please help us make this sustainable. I welcome any questions regarding my testimony. Thank you.