



**Ohio Senate Education Committee
State Operating Budget (HB 33)
May 2, 2023**

**Testimony of the Career-Technical Education Associations
(Ohio ACTE, OACTS, Ohio CCS)
Kathrine Greenwich, Superintendent, Knox County Career Center**

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 Kathrine Greenwich, Superintendent of Knox County Career Center, and I am testifying on behalf my school, as well as the state's 89 career technical schools—including its 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 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).

Ohio offers career technical education through 89 "Career Technical Planning Districts" (CTPDs)—regions established strategically throughout the state to ensure every student has access to CTE opportunities. Each CTPD utilizes one of three "delivery-models" at the high school level: 1) Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs), also known as Career Centers, 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 independently offer their own CTE programming; and 3) Compacts, which are multiple school districts that share delivery and costs for career-tech through service agreements.

Knox County Career Center is located in Mount Vernon, Ohio, and serves 6-member districts across two counties. We have 17 high school programs (15 two-year, one senior only, and one sophomore only) and have seen substantial growth over the last several years. Knox County Career Center is also a thriving post-secondary Ohio Technical Center (OTC), offering 13 career programs and serving adults in over ten counties with programs focusing on the significant workforce areas of manufacturing and healthcare.

This year we have worked with more than ten local businesses to offer customized training programs. We offered open labs at no charge through a grant to support local business and industry, a public safety program that trains EMTs and fireman for fire departments across Central Ohio, and a nursing partnership with the Knox Community Hospital. We have also received grants from the Ariel Foundation to decrease the overall debt of the students we serve.

I would like to emphasize that this is a very positive and exciting state operating budget for high school and adult career technical education in Ohio. The CTE community and its leaders are once again energized by the emphasis placed on our sector and the support from state and local policymakers as well as our communities. What an exciting time to be a CTE student, educator, or administrator!

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

1. **Funding for CTE Facility Expansion:** We strongly support (and appreciate) the Executive Budget’s \$200 million allocation over the biennium to support CTPD facility expansion; and that the House maintained this allocation in full. As we have emphasized over the last several years, a clear impediment to the growth of our sector is our limited building capacity. CTE facility needs are unique given the extensive space necessary to conduct training across numerous different career-technical programs—all of which require large equipment. The cost associated with 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 that is open to all career-technical schools (JVSD, comprehensive, or compact). 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.
2. **K-12 School Funding Formula:** Like our traditional district partners, we support Ohio’s current k-12 school funding formula—also known as 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 the course of three biennial budgets, and we are encouraged that HB 33 continues the phase-in by funding years three and four. We also appreciate the House adjusting salary input data from 2018 to 2022, which produces another meaningful increase in funding for CTE students.

To spur even more long-term growth, we continue to recommend fully allocating CTE supplemental funds under the formula (i.e., removing the phase-in), and setting a 50% floor for the state share percentage that applies to CTE supplemental funds.

3. **Grant Funding for Equipment / Supplies:** We strongly support the budget’s \$100 million allocation to assist all schools (including charter and STEM schools) with the purchase of CTE equipment and supplies. These resources will be incredibly valuable and, in many cases, will be used in conjunction with the \$200 million in facility expansion dollars to ensure growth and jumpstart our ability to serve more students across our CTPD.
4. **High School Industry Recognized Credentials:** We are excited that HB 33 renews existing programs aimed at increasing the number of industry-recognized credentials earned by Ohio high school students. Specifically, the budget bill maintains funding to reimburse schools for the cost of issuing credentials, as well as 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 \$10 million 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 to see the budget maintains funding for the highly coveted Adult Diploma Program, which provides job training and an alternative pathway for adults (age 20 or older) to earn a credential in conjunction with a state-issued high school diploma. We hope to increase utilization of this program in the years ahead.

6. **Adult Education:** Although our OTCs will testify on this topic next week in the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, the budget bill contains numerous programs and incentives aimed at expanding adult career-technical education across Ohio.

In addition to the clear value that CTE brings to Ohio in terms of population retention, employment opportunities, and economic advantage, it delivers a vast, positive impact on students by giving them confidence, self-esteem, opportunity, and potential for a great future. Likewise, CTE fosters an environment where students can succeed due to the combination of hands-on learning and the amount of time spent with reliable, caring teachers. The data on attendance, discipline, and graduation rate all support what we do in CTE.

In closing, our schools endeavor to continue delivering for the Ohio economy, the workforce, local communities, educators, families, and for students. The CTE community will continue to demonstrate great return on investments. Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions from the committee.