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Written Testimony on HB 33
Ohio Senate Finance Committee
Amy Lore, Director of Government Relations
Project Lead The Way
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Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and Members of the Committee: thank you for allowing me to testify on HB 33.

My name is Amy Lore, and I represent Project Lead The Way (PLTW), a 25-year-old company that has a singular focus on preparing PreK-12 students for success in an unknown future. We provide hands-on, project-based learning in engineering, biomedical science, and computer science, introducing even the youngest learners to the concepts and skills that will help them in every step of their journey from education to career.

Here in Ohio, we have nearly 750 programs and have certified more than 4,500 teachers. We work collaboratively with Ohio's career and technical education centers and this year we have rostered more than 50 thousand students across all our programs.

The world our students face is changing rapidly. They are coming of age in a time when most companies cannot find qualified workers. Demand is increasing for foundational and transportable skills that can apply across all industries and occupations. It is our obligation to prepare them for challenges like global pandemics, cybersecurity attacks, and the fourth industrial revolution.

Pre-COVID workforce trends are not only continuing; they are accelerating. Long-term job projections indicate a steady move toward automation – the workforce is moving from blue-collar to professional and technical occupations, and soon as much as 70% of the workforce will need some credential or training beyond high school. High growth areas remain health care and information technology, and the trend toward automation and AI indicates a *massive* need for computer science skills for everyone.[1]

Ohio needs workers who have technical knowledge but also have problem-solving skills, who think critically and creatively, who communicate and collaborate with others, and who persevere when something does not work the first time. This is where PLTW excels.

We are providing an immersive and engaging classroom environment, making lessons compelling and relevant – a class students look forward to and do not want to leave when the bell rings.

We inspire students by setting high expectations. PLTW students test their limits, question what is possible, and learn to believe in their own abilities. We empower students with in-demand technical knowledge, and transportable skills in every lesson.

Our computer science students learn by doing, engaging in real world activities like:

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[1] https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/files/resources/AdvanceCTE_NewSkills_Brief_LMI_COVID19.pdf

Empowering students to thrive in an evolving world.

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- Launch/elementary students build digital animations based on their own short stories.
- Gateway/middle schoolers design mobile apps that help clients overcome obstacles.
- And high school students use automation to process and analyze DNA-sequence data.

These developmentally appropriate activities build computer science skills and help students develop confidence.

But there is a growing urgency to do so much more.

We must be intentional in helping students develop in demand, transportable skills by embedding high-quality computer science education throughout their PreK-12 experience – and right now, you can take a big step toward that goal by creating the policy and appropriating the funding that will set Ohio up for long-term workforce success.

We urge you to restore computer science funding in the budget: $24 million over the biennium. This includes:

- $8 million for the Teach Computer Science Grants, to provide professional development for teachers;
- $8 million for the Computer Science Promise that gives students access to courses their districts don't offer; and
- $8 million for the Computer Science Council that will support after school programs, summer camps, and education partnerships in all 88 counties.

Supporting computer science education complements the other work you have done and are doing to make Ohio stronger.

- In the previous budget, you appropriated historic funding toward broadband expansion. As Ohio gets online fully, you can create a lasting impact and a legacy of prosperity by training Ohio teachers in computer science education and getting Ohio students the courses they need to take full advantage of the online world.
- As you deliberate over SB 1, and bringing education and workforce under one agency, I urge you to think of computer science education as a workforce development issue. Our economy demands skilled workers with robust computer science skills. You can start filling that pipeline.

These are practical steps you can take to prepare for the future.

Thank you for your time and for all you do for Ohio.

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