



Senate Workforce & Higher Education Committee
June 7, 2023
Ohio School Counselor Association
SB 104 - Proponent Testimony

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Ingram, and esteemed members of the Senate Workforce & Higher Education Committee: thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on SB 104 on behalf of the Ohio School Counselor Association. My name is Steve Bender, I serve on OSCA's Government Relations Committee and I'm a school counselor at Dover High School.

For the members who may not be aware, school counselors are often heavily involved in a school's CCP program. Absent dedicated staff to manage the program, schools usually have our members take on duties associated with the program, including administration and course scheduling, which alone are no small feat. Thus, our members are greatly invested in CCP; we see the value it offers students as well as the opportunities for greater access and success. Since the release of the State Audit last year recommending reforms to the program, we have been in communication with ODE and ODHE to offer our perspective and support their efforts to make sensible improvements to the program. Thus, we are excited to see the introduction of SB 104 and applaud the sponsors' efforts to move forward with program tweaks that will improve student access and outcomes.

Specifically, OSCA strongly supports SB 104's requirement of an orientation program for CCP participants. We see many students who struggle to manage college-level expectations associated with CCP courses, and who harbor unanswered questions about certain course elements. Especially for those middle schoolers who are enrolling, an orientation would eliminate the structural hurdles that hold students back from focusing fully on course content, allowing further promotion of students' success in the program. In addition, OSCA strongly supports the alternative credentialing process established in the bill that allows teachers with relevant experience to qualify as CCP instructors. The cost and time commitment required to meet the current graduate-level coursework standards prevents many teachers with sufficient education from qualifying, despite their high level content knowledge. The ability for schools to offer more in-house courses would also remove the transportation cost factor and has the potential to improve participation rates in higher poverty or rural districts. Given the need for additional instructors, this provision of SB 104 will be particularly impactful for student access and program expansion. We hope this new standard will be enforced with consistency among higher education departments as well, as some of our members have seen that various college departments establish different requirements.

We do want to offer some additional suggestions that would further strengthen our support of the bill. First, we believe there may be some unintended consequences of the requirement to weight all CCP courses equal to AP or IB. We believe local control will have the best outcomes in this case. In addition, while we appreciate the flexibility the semester-based intent form deadlines allow, we believe it could impact other areas such as staffing issues at the building level. Third, OSCA supports the collection of cost information on CCP, but offers that additional data points, such as the transferability of credits, would help shed light on further ways to improve the program. Other information we believe would be helpful to collect are: the extent to which completion of CCP courses actually leads to a reduction in college classes needed, the number of students who graduate college on time or early, the number of students who drop CCP classes after enrolling, and the test scores of students who don't qualify for courses. We offer this information could provide further insight into how to better target certain students for enrollment, any needed reforms to eligibility standards, and whether course completion is actually helping students meet higher education goals versus being merely a default pursuit unrelated to broader career aspirations.

Thank you again to the sponsors for bringing forward this bill. OSCA urges its passage and I would be happy to take any questions.