



**Ohio House Education Committee
State Operating Budget (HB 96)
March 4, 2025**

**Testimony of the Ohio Comprehensive and
Compact Career Technical Schools (Ohio CCS)
Becci Bihn, Oregon City Schools**

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Becci Bihn, Director of Career Tech at Oregon City Schools, and I am testifying on behalf my Comprehensive school district, as well as the Ohio Association of Comprehensive and Compact Career Technical Schools (Ohio CCS) as the current President.

Oregon City Schools is located in Oregon, Ohio just across the Maumee River from Toledo. We have 12 high school programs and have seen substantial growth over the last 6 years as the advantages of Career Technical Education become more evident and the NW Ohio Region supports and elevates the importance of skilled trades. We were lucky enough to receive an Expansion grant in the last budget process, but we are still turning away students for programs we recently had 51 students who were not able to be in their first or second choice of program.

Ohio's Career-Tech Education Landscape

Ohio offers career-tech through 89 "Career Technical Planning Districts" (CTPDs)—regions established strategically throughout the state to ensure every student has access to career-technical education (CTE) opportunities. Each CTPD utilizes one of three "delivery-models" at the high school level:

1. **Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs):** Schools that serve multiple districts
2. **Comprehensive Schools:** Large traditional school districts that provide their own CTE programs
3. **Compact Schools:** Smaller traditional school districts that share CTE programs between themselves through agreements

In 2024, over 140,000 students participated in CTE courses, over 91,000 of those students were concentrators in a career technical education pathways. Additionally, of those who left high school in 2023, almost 95% of them were employed, continuing education, in an apprenticeship, enlisted in the military, or in a service program within six months of leaving. The goal of CTE is to ensure every student who graduates from a secondary career-technical program is prepared for their next step, whether that be employment or further education.

The Career Tech Community has been blessed to have such a supportive administration and legislature, through which, in the last budget career technical schools were recipients of \$300 million dollars in expansion and facilities grants, as well as the passage of Rep. Jones' House Bill 432, which will give career-technical schools flexibility when hiring new teachers.

Our Proposals

As part of the state operating budget bill (HB 96), our schools continue to focus on the following issues to further strengthen career-technical education in Ohio:

- 1. Study Committee on Sustained Funding for Career Technical Schools**

Funding: Despite recent investments last budget, there were over \$200 million in career-tech expansion proposals unfunded, reflecting the significant and ongoing need for facility improvements. To address this gap, which would allow career-technical schools to grow access and equip students with the skills needed to join the workforce we propose a study committee to examine the strategies for creating an equitable and sustained funding model for building, renovating, and maintaining career-technical facilities. This committee should consist of representatives from Ohio CCS, Ohio ACTE, and OACTS, to ensure a collaborative and comprehensive approach that would assist all career-technical delivery models.

- 2. Strengthen the Career Technical Planning Districts:** Instruct the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) to adopt rules and issue guidance that formalizes the role of Lead CTPDs as the primary regional entity responsible for directing and supporting the development of new career-technical education programs. Rules should be developed in collaboration with stakeholders from Ohio ACTE, OACTS, and Ohio CCS. As part of this process, DEW should evaluate the current associated service supplemental funding for CTPDs and determine whether modest increases are necessary to fulfill additional responsibilities. As CTE expands throughout the state it is imperative that these new programs are of high quality and the career tech community believe that the CTPDs are best suited to ensure quality and therefore formalizing the roles of CTPD's is a necessary step to ensure ALL career tech in the state remains high quality.

- 3. 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 the DeWine-Husted budget proposal continues the phase-in by funding years 5 and 6. 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:

- 4. Establish State Share Floor for CTE Funding:** Unlike STEM and Charter Schools, career-technical schools' weighted supplemental funding is still subject to the “state and local share.” And many of our schools—in particular the Compacts and the Comprehensives—are greatly impacted by the low state share of their member

districts. 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.

We propose setting a **minimum state funding level—a 50% state share floor for CTE supplemental funding**. This would require an estimated:

- **\$6.3 million at a partial phase-in (66.67%)**
- **\$9.5 million at a full phase-in**

There is already precedent for this approach: the Fair School Funding Plan sets a **minimum funding floor for transportation** (37.5% in FY 2024, increasing to 41.67% in FY 2025). We believe career-tech programs, which are critical for Ohio's workforce development, deserve the same consideration.

We appreciate this General Assembly's continued commitment to Career Technical Education in the State and we hope that these recommendations will be taken into consideration as the budget process continues forward. At this time, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.