

**Proponent Testimony for HB62**  
**House Education Committee**  
**4/1/2025**

**Superintendent Kyle Newton, Warren Local School District**  
**Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools**

Chairwoman Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Kyle Newton, I am the Superintendent of Warren Local School District in Washington County and the President Elect of the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools.

Our Coalition and its member superintendents are in favor of all provisions included in the HB62.

Chairperson, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 62 and the impact of College Credit Plus (CCP) on students in small, rural school districts like Warren Local School District.

The impact of College Credit Plus on our students is profound. I firmly believe in the value of providing high school students with the opportunity to experience college-level coursework, gaining valuable perspectives, academic growth, and preparation for their future educational and career paths. In rural districts like ours, where access to advanced coursework and resources can be limited, CCP plays a crucial role in leveling the playing field and fostering equity in education.

That said, I strongly support the updates outlined in HB62, as they will reinforce the original intent of College Credit Plus while addressing significant challenges. These provisions will enhance the educational culture of all school districts, particularly small and rural ones. They will also improve the quality of education, modernize an outdated system, and establish a more sustainable and realistic cost structure.

**Impact of College Credit Plus at Warren Local School District**

In the 2023-2024 school year, Warren High School students earned a total of 1,726 semester hours through CCP. Seven students successfully earned Associate Degrees before even graduating from high school. Of those 1,726 semester hours, 718 were completed online,

comprising 42% of the total coursework. The cost to Warren Local Schools for CCP in 2023-2024 was \$181,042, with online courses alone accounting for \$119,582—66% of the total cost. This data highlights a troubling disparity: lower-quality online courses are costing significantly more than in-person instruction.

### **The Challenge of Online Learning**

When CCP legislation was first enacted, online instruction was virtually nonexistent in its current format. Platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams did not exist in the way they do today. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to adapt to virtual learning, but we have since realized its limitations. The workforce is now seeing a shift away from remote work, with employers recognizing the need for in-person collaboration. Similarly, in education, online learning does not provide the same rigor, quality, or engagement as traditional in-person instruction.

Beyond academics, online learning deprives students of essential social and emotional experiences. Communication, collaboration, and soft skills—critical for success in the workforce—are significantly diminished when students are absent from the classroom. Furthermore, students engaged primarily in online courses miss out on the full high school experience, including leadership roles, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and the overall culture that shapes their personal development. The absence of our most capable students from school buildings has a noticeable impact on school culture and student engagement.

### **Addressing Cost Disparities and Inefficiencies**

HB62 proposes a necessary adjustment to the cost structure of online courses, aligning them with the rates for in-person instruction provided by an IHE instructor on a high school campus. This adjustment makes sense, as online instruction does not require a physical classroom, infrastructure, or associated capital expenses. Equalizing these costs is a logical and equitable step forward.

Additionally, Warren Local Schools had to create a half-day secretary position solely to manage the purchasing and coordination of textbooks for our CCP students. This position oversees more than 150 students enrolled in CCP at any given time, ensuring they receive necessary materials at no cost to them or the IHE. However, this process cost our district no less than \$30,000 in 2023-2024, including personnel expenses and textbook purchases. The reforms in HB62 will streamline these processes, reducing administrative burdens and ensuring a more efficient and effective system for students, institutions, and districts alike.

## **Projected Impact of HB62**

Using 2023-2024 data, Warren Local School District would save more than \$100,000 under the provisions of HB62. Beyond financial savings, I believe this legislation will encourage more students to return to in-person instruction, revitalizing our school culture and enhancing students' social and emotional learning opportunities. This shift will ensure our students receive a high-quality, comprehensive education that prepares them not just for college, but for life beyond high school.

I urge the committee to support House Bill 62 and its much-needed reforms to College Credit Plus. By making these changes, we can continue to offer valuable college opportunities while ensuring a fair, cost-effective, and high-quality educational experience for Ohio's students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.