Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 328
Friends of Breakthrough Schools
Ohio House Education Committee
June 8, 2026

Chairwoman Fowler, Vice Chairman Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit proponent testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 328, the Education and Workforce Return on Investment Initiative.

Breakthrough Public Schools is a network of five high-performing public K-8 charter schools serving approximately 3,000 scholars in the Cleveland area. Our mission is to empower students with an education that fosters joy, curiosity, and individual growth, preparing them from kindergarten through career for lives of impact and opportunity. Through rigorous academics, personalized support from our Beyond Breakthrough team, and early career awareness initiatives like career fairs and high school placement guidance, we ensure our scholars build strong foundations for future success.

Breakthrough strongly supports SB 328 because it strengthens our K–8 through career continuum by embedding career-connected learning earlier in education. The bill directs the Department of Education and Workforce to develop professional skills standards reflecting employer needs and to create a career coaching framework that can be implemented through existing school personnel. It also establishes academic and career plans for eighth graders and replaces the current middle school career exploration class with 60 hours of career instruction across grades 6–8, allowing CTE coursework to count toward both requirements. These updates align with Breakthrough's mission to help students plan for success in high school and beyond and equip them with essential skills for future workforce readiness.

For Breakthrough Public Schools, this legislation formalizes and enhances our existing efforts—like our eighth-grade resources and Beyond Breakthrough supports—enabling us to deliver even more structured career exploration and professional skills instruction without straining resources. The free tools, professional development, and career pathway resources for grades 6-12 will help us infuse employer-valued skills into our curricula, boosting high school placements and long-term alumni success.

Most importantly, our diverse Cleveland scholars, many from underserved communities, will benefit from personalized academic and career plans in eighth grade to spark early awareness of opportunities and reduce dropout risks through targeted supports. The 60 hours of career exploration across middle grades, aligned to professional skills standards, will build critical soft skills and workplace competencies, setting them up for high school success, postsecondary pathways, and thriving careers—directly advancing equity and opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your dedication to Ohio students' futures.

Susan Ertle
President, Friends of Breakthrough