SB 328 Proponent Testimony – Jeremy Avins, Arnold Ventures

House Education Committee | June 8, 2026

Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 328.

My name is Jeremy Avins, and I serve as Vice President of Career Pathways at Arnold Ventures, a national philanthropy that works to improve the lives of all Americans through evidence-based policy solutions that maximize opportunity. As I don't need to tell you, Ohio is a national leader in expanding access to high-quality career pathways, and we are committed to continuing to support leading organizations and research efforts in Ohio to build on that track record and to enable other states and federal policymakers to learn from Ohio's successes.

We at Arnold Ventures commend the leadership of Sen. Koehler and the other co-sponsors in advancing a strong, bipartisan vision for career opportunity and workforce readiness – and, in particular, for ensuring that Ohio students, families, and taxpayers receive a strong return on their investment in education and training.

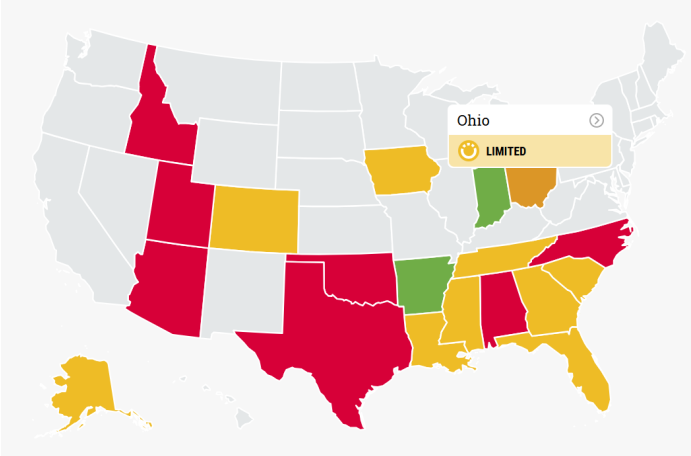
The Importance of Understanding Labor Market Outcomes and Return on Investment

The decisions Ohio students and families make about secondary and postsecondary education and training are among the most consequential in their lives, and for the state's economy. As Ohio Excels has noted, 86% of Ohio parents say it is crucial that their child have a clear plan and pathway to a career after high school or college. K-12, postsecondary, and workforce education account for over 40% of state-source appropriations. Meanwhile, Ohio's labor market continues to evolve quickly, with high and growing economic diversification.

SB 328 builds on Ohio's strong foundation. The Ohio Longitudinal Data Archive (OLDA) and the Ohio Education Research Center (OERC) already link postsecondary education and employment data and publish program-level employment and earnings. The Strada Education Foundation's State Opportunity Index recently recognized Ohio for its nationally competitive data infrastructure.

Fig. 1: Ohio is making progress in understanding the ROI of education and training, but has farther to go

ExcelinEd ratings of states' policies to analyze the ROI of K–12 and postsecondary programs for student outcomes and alignment to high-demand, high-wage pathways.



Source: State Map - Pathways Matter (2025)

The key question is how to maximize the usefulness of those data for personal and policy decisions. Per Figure 1, Ohio has started down this path: Executive Order 2023-05D directed an asset-mapping of programs at institutions of higher education and technical centers and suggestions to increase production of in-demand credentials – a valuable step, but one-

time in nature and not yet examining the *relative* impacts of different credentials and pathways, across secondary, postsecondary, and workforce programs. Ohioans would benefit immensely from a sustained, cross-system look at the relative ROI of varied high school, postsecondary, and workforce pathways, especially as career planning and exploration activities expand.

How SB 328 Drives Results for Ohioans

SB 328 will generate practical insights that students, families, and policymakers can use. The bill:

- **Establishes the Education & Workforce Return on Investment (ROI) Initiative** to make education-to-workforce data more transparent and actionable, with broader cross-system linkages and more capacity to build research and stakeholder tools.
- **Creates sustained governance via a cross-agency leadership team** composed of the directors of Education & Workforce, Children & Youth, Higher Education, Job & Family Services, Development, and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation. The team may include other agency leaders and must meet publicly at least quarterly, resulting in a comprehensive, publicly accountable structure.
- **Requires stakeholder engagement** to solicit feedback on the outcomes, reports, and tools of greatest interest and utility, and barriers to accessing and using outcomes data.
- **Calls for five public ROI-related products** annually: High school, higher education, and workforce program graduate outcomes reports; a talent gap report comparing job openings to the supply of graduates by sector and region; and a report on outcomes for students across the State's industry-recognized credentials. It also requires a stakeholder-informed research agenda to generate rigorous answers on the highest-priority questions for Ohioans.
- **Directs the Initiative to streamline reporting, reduce duplication, and increase the state's capacity to process cross-agency data requests,** all within the framework of state and federal privacy and security laws. In other words, SB328 does not trigger new reporting burdens; rather, it focuses on making existing data work better.

These deliverables will also support other elements of SB 328 – such as the bill's requirement for academic and career exploration and plans beginning in middle school – by empowering counselors, families, and educators with timely information on which pathways and credentials are producing good outcomes, in practice.

Closing

SB 328 gives students, families, educators, employers, taxpayers, and policymakers crucial, ongoing insights about which educational pathways and credentials pay off, and where efforts are most needed to deliver on Ohio's economic priorities. Other states are doing similarly: for example, Georgia's recently enacted HB 1302 establishes a similar statewide Education Data Governance Board. With SB 328, Ohio can set the bar with clear statutory use cases, timelines, and public engagement, thereby improving outcomes and ROI in Ohio while creating a new national frontier. Arnold Ventures supports SB 328 and urges its swift passage.