

**Ohio Senate  
Education Committee  
HB96 – Biennial Budget**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for HB96. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of restoring the Executive Budget’s proposed funding and policy for Career Awareness, Exploration, and Development. As a career-technical administrator, I have seen how critical it is that students from all backgrounds and communities have access to early career exposure and planning.

Career Awareness, Exploration, and Development funding provides the structure and support needed to bring high-quality career exploration activities to all students. At Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, we believe career exploration begins long before high school. Through the support of career awareness and exploration funding, we’ve launched a robust and scalable career exploration initiative that has reached more than 7,000 elementary and middle school students in our district this school year alone. From student-led hands-on experiences like building candy machines and conducting teddy bear healthcare clinics, to teacher-facilitated kits aligned with state academic standards, our programming sparks curiosity and provides meaningful exposure to career pathways in developmentally appropriate and engaging ways.

We have a geographically large career technical planning district, serving 14 partner schools in five counties. These initiatives bring career education directly to the classroom, providing younger students with real-world context for their learning and giving older career-tech students the opportunity to lead and teach. This school year, our programs were completely booked as we fulfilled nearly 100 requests from our partner districts, facilitating over 50 student-led programs and providing nearly 50 teacher-facilitated kits. Feedback from K12 educators consistently said that the career kits not only engage students but also reinforce core curriculum—one middle school teacher noted that our STEM kit directly supported science standards while introducing future-ready skills.

Without funding, the ability to offer consistent, scalable, and high-impact programming that reaches students in their formative years would be significantly diminished. Career awareness funding is not just an investment in programming—it’s an investment in the future workforce of Ohio.

Research shows that early, consistent exposure to career pathways helps students stay engaged, graduate on time, and pursue additional education or credentialing.<sup>1</sup> I urge the committee to restore the Executive Budget’s proposed funding so that students in every corner of Ohio can explore possibilities, unlock their potential, and build a future that is right for them.

I would welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource as you continue to consider this important investment. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for additional information.

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<sup>1</sup> Ohio Excels, *Reality Check: The State of Education in Ohio*, 2024.