



**Ohio Senate Education Committee
State Operating Budget (HB 96)
May 14, 2025**

Testimony of Dr. Joe Glavan, Director of Workforce Development at Lakeland Community College and Mentor Public Schools. Superintendent of Auburn Career Center

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Dr. Joe Glavan, and I serve as the Director of Workforce Development for Lakeland Community College and Mentor Public Schools. I was also recently approved as the next Superintendent of Auburn Career Center, one of Ohio's 49 Technical Centers (OTCs) serving both high school and adult learners across Lake and Geauga counties.

In each of these roles, I've seen firsthand how career-technical education isn't just preparing students, it's empowering Ohio's workforce. Through early exposure, intentional partnerships, and industry-aligned training, we're equipping learners with real tools to succeed. But this progress is only sustainable with continued investment and attention.

Today, I respectfully urge the committee to prioritize three areas:

1. Restore Career Awareness and Exploration Funding

The removal of the \$16.5 million earmark for career awareness and exploration in the House version of the budget is concerning. These funds are foundational to helping students understand high-demand careers and make informed, purposeful decisions about their future and impacts every district in the state of Ohio.

At Mentor Schools, this investment expanded our career exploration platforms starting in middle school and strengthened our Business Advisory Council, which connects students directly to local employers. That work was recently recognized with a 3-Star rating by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

In Euclid Schools, the funding supported new maker spaces that provide early STEM exposure. In Wickliffe, it funded a dedicated career development instructor guiding students through career exposure and postsecondary planning.

Eliminating this funding would disproportionately hurt smaller and rural districts and roll back the last several years of progress due to these funds.. This is not just about innovation, it's about ensuring all students have the information they need to make an informed decision for their future.

We encourage you to reinstate this Career Awareness and Exploration funding.

2. Modernize CTE Facility Funding

We applaud the state's \$200 million investment in CTE infrastructure and the \$100 million CTE equipment grant. I want to specifically thank you for the \$4.2 million awarded to Auburn Career Center and the \$2.2 million awarded to Mentor Schools. However, the needs of our fellow districts and Ohio Technical Centers far exceeded these allocations, leaving many in-demand programs without the space to grow, despite rising student interest and strong employer demand.

Unlike traditional schools, career centers must build high-cost, specialized labs for healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and IT. Yet the OFCC funding model is based on general education facilities and requires local match funding that can be prohibitively high.

At Auburn Career Center, they are ready to expand even more, but they cannot do it alone. The House proposal to create a study committee on sustainable facility funding is a strong step forward. We urge the Senate to support this provision to help technical centers statewide meet 21st-century workforce demands.

3. Strengthen Support for OTCs and the OTC Plus Program

As the incoming superintendent of an OTC, I want to highlight how these centers are essential to Ohio's workforce pipeline. Our short-term programs provide fast, effective training in high-demand fields like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, IT, and public safety, helping individuals quickly gain credentials and secure quality jobs.

OTC Plus is a particularly promising model. It allows high school students, especially those on CTE waitlists—to enroll in adult OTC programs and earn credentials before graduation. In fast-growing regions like ours, this flexibility is essential.

We're encouraged that the House clarified funding language to allow OTCs to access Higher Education Institution (HEI) funds for these students, similar to College Credit Plus. We urge the Senate to retain this amendment to preserve and expand the model statewide.

Ohio is building a career-tech network that connects early awareness, strong technical training, and clear links to high-wage employment.

By restoring career awareness funding, modernizing facility support, and strengthening OTC and OTC Plus pathways, we can ensure every student—regardless of their zip code, has access to the skills, credentials, and opportunities they need to thrive.

Thank you for your leadership and your support of Ohio's future workforce. I welcome any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Joe Glavan,

Director of Workforce Development, Lakeland Community College and Mentor Public Schools, Superintendent of Auburn Career Center