

May 12, 2025

Member of the Ohio Senate,

For the past 20 years, I have had the opportunity to open my classroom and lab to young people in Greene County and thru open enrollment several adjacent counties. I teach the Power Equipment Mechanics (PEM) program at the Greene County Career Center (GCCC) in Xenia, Ohio.

I have been fortunate to teach hundreds of students and prepare them for careers, college, and/or military service through Career and Technical Education (CTE). Teaching young people for the ever-changing and evolving career as a technician is a very challenging endeavor. Continually trying to create authentic experiences and lessons to help my students grow into responsible adults. In Agricultural Education (Ag Ed), a solid foundation for innovative teaching and learning is achieved through Work-Based Learning (WBL) with Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs. For example, 95% or more of the equipment my students work on is customer equipment. Equipment brought in by community members for maintenance and/or repair. Along with hands-on experiences in the lab, Supervised Agricultural Experiences provide diverse experiences and skill-building opportunities outside of the classroom/lab that greatly help develop a student's skills. Over my 20 years at GCCC, I have advocated for young learners to interact with industry experts and businesses in Ohio and across the country. I am a firm believer that SAEs take learning process well beyond the level of a traditional student just getting seat time in a classroom.

I am a great example of how hands-on learning and SAEs can take a student from struggling to success! Before coming to GCCC I struggled to keep a C/D average at Xenia High School. While at GCCC I was an A/B student and was inducted into the National Technical Vocational Honor Society. I had a couple SAEs during my time in Ag Ed: 1.) Farm hand for a local farmer. I worked on equipment, helped with the cattle, and ran equipment during planting and harvest season. I continued working with the same farmer on and off for 42 years. 2.) Diesel mechanic at Waste Management. During my senior year at GCCC, I worked on trash trucks at Waste Management in Fairborn, OH. Instead of going to lab in the afternoons, I would leave school and go to work. I worked 35 to 40 hours a week. Hands-on learning and my SAE projects made education click for me. Since graduating in 1992, I now hold 3 college degrees, numerous certifications from various equipment manufacturers, ASE, and EETC, and I am the instructor for the CTE program that I graduated from.

Every year for the past 20 years, I 've seen the positive impact that CTE, FFA, and SAEs have had for my students, my son (who graduated out of the PEM program. Teacher and Dad at the same time made for an interesting 2 years) and both of my daughters that took Ag Ed at Xenia High School. The dedication we as Ag Teachers (across the state and country) put into the success of our students, is unmatched. We spend countless hours ensuring that our students get the real-world hands-on experiences (in the classroom and through SAEs) that are going to hopefully make them a successful and productive member of society, whether they continue to post-secondary education, go directly into the workforce, or serve in the US military.

CTE and Ag Ed are foundations for providing future leaders that will advocate for agriculture, feed our growing population, and provide the energy needed to fulfill the growing resources our world needs. Unfortunately, each administration interprets the guidelines for educational experiences differently. SAE programs directly link to WBL and afford students mentors to partner with, educators to increase career opportunities, and awareness for our students.

I have witnessed outstanding teachers across the state advocating for their students to have more opportunities outside the classroom and outside of the scheduled school day. HB 96 will help provide additional opportunities for the youth in Ohio. We keep hearing different interpretations of attendance policies for FFA students and SAE programs. It is frustrating for students, families, and agricultural professionals not having one set of rules that we all follow. We must provide every student with additional opportunities beyond the school walls if we want to survive and thrive as a state and a country. HB 96 will provide the consistency with the interpretation of school attendance policies that is needed for the school administrators. HB 96 supports students who want to go above and beyond, both at school and with their careers. I would greatly appreciate your support and your dedication to our students and future leaders. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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