



Ohio Senate Education Committee
House Bill 96: Career Awareness Funding
Proponent Testimony from Tasha Werry, Executive Director
Building Bridges to Careers

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 96.

My name is Tasha Werry, Executive Director of the non-profit organization Building Bridges to Careers (BB2C) headquartered in Marietta, which is focused on bridging the gap between education and employment for K12 students in southeast Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony regarding the impact of career awareness funding to our local Career Technical Planning District (CTPD).

When the career awareness funding was announced initially, the six feeder school districts and the Washington County Career Center (WCCC) collaborated and agreed to work with BB2C to collectively fund a 1.0 FTE position to serve the entire county. Year 1 provided \$2.50 per student, which equated to about \$17,500 for Washington County's approximately 7000 students. Increased funding in subsequent years went towards securing the position.

In the 2024-2025 school year so far, the position has served a total of 4609 students through the coordination of Discover Days, Career Speaker Series, educator support, and professional development to increase community and career connected learning for students in grades K-12. This position **multiplies the capacity of school districts** through the sharing of these services and increases knowledge of all career pathways for students, including College Credit Plus, Career Technical Education, Military, and direct employment opportunities. In addition, the position connected with and included 476 employers by **multiplying the capacity of businesses**, especially small businesses (under 20 employees) with no human resource positions. The time and effort needed to coordinate multi-school and multi-business events that create such beneficial awareness of local employment and job opportunities would not take place without this additional 1.0 FTE position funded through the career awareness dollars from the state. Local businesses in all career fields are in desperate need of employees, and the career awareness funds are helping to bridge the gap of awareness that they even exist in this county as an option for students with all levels of education.

SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS • PROSPEROUS BUSINESSES • THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Phone: 740.370.6399
Fax: 740-371-5499

P.O. Box 4095
Marietta, OH 45750

info@BB2Careers.org
BB2Careers.org



The small amount of funding provided to our rural county is maximized and multiplied by BB2C in both matching funds and through connections with other community and career connected learning programs. Career Awareness Funding is critical to the continuation of this much needed work of community and career connected learning which benefits all stakeholders: businesses, students, educators, parents, and the whole community.

I invite any member of this committee to visit the BB2C Epicenter, which also houses a community Makerspace and Small Business Incubator as learning labs for students. Our goal has been the same since we were founded in 2012: to bridge the gap between education and employment for K12 students in southeast Ohio. The Career Awareness Funding brought the level of collaboration between the school districts and the Career Center to a new level which has provided force multiplication to the efforts of us all to have Successful Students, Prosperous Businesses, and Thriving Communities.

Thank you for your continued support for career development for all students in K12, which is very much needed! I urge you to restore Career Awareness Funding in the Senate's version of the budget so we may continue preparing our students to be successful and our businesses to prosper.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Tasha Werry'.

Tasha Werry
Executive Director, BB2C

SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS • PROSPEROUS BUSINESSES • THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Phone: 740.370.6399
Fax: 740-371-5499

P.O. Box 4095
Marietta, OH 45750

info@BB2Careers.org
BB2Careers.org