

Good morning, esteemed members of the House, Senate, Superintendent Lawrence and all who have gathered here today. My name is Grayson Criswell, a freshman from Belmont High School - A Dayton Public School.

Today, I stand before you to address a critical issue that threatens the future of our students - Esteemed members I would like to address the lack of school funding and how it could create deep cuts to our extended programs such as Advanced Placement (AP), College Credit Plus (CCP), and Career and Technical Education (CTE). According to the Dayton Daily News "Dayton Public Schools, ended fiscal year 2024 with nearly \$139.2 million cash on hand, equivalent to roughly 58.2% of its budget, according to the LSC. The district would have to lower that amount by more than \$67 million under the budget proposal."

Esteemed members - Please understand that these programs are not just supplemental opportunities - they are lifelines for many students in our district. Allow me to explain, AP courses challenge students to excel academically, prepare them for college, and open doors to scholarships and advanced degrees. CCP provides high school students with the opportunity to earn college credit, easing the financial burden of higher education and giving them a head start on their academic careers. And CTE equips students with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce, offering them a path to stable, well-paying jobs straight out of high school.

However, without adequate funding, these programs will face deep cuts, cause staffing shortages, and limited access to vital resources. AP classes could be eliminated due to lack of qualified teachers, CCP opportunities might dwindle as partnerships with local colleges would be strained, and CTE programs could become obsolete - if we can't invest in the equipment and training needed for these specialized fields.

Esteemed members - For many of our students, these programs are their chance to rise above circumstances, to take their futures into their own hands, and to achieve success they might not otherwise have had. When funding for these programs is cut, we are directly undermining our students' potential.

We are here today to tell you that we cannot afford to let that happen! I urge you to prioritize funding for our district to allow AP, CCP, and CTE programs to continue. So that every student has the opportunity to succeed, whether that path leads to college, a career, or beyond - we must be given that chance.

Thank you for your time and attention.