



GRANT CAREER CENTER

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Proponent Testimony to the Ohio Senate Finance Committee State Operating Budget (HB 96)

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Submitted by: Mike Parry, Superintendent, Grant Career Center

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on House Bill 96 and to express my support for key provisions and critical restorations related to Career-Technical Education (CTE) in Ohio.

My name is Mike Parry, and I proudly serve as Superintendent of Grant Career Center in Bethel, Ohio. We are a Career-Technical Planning District (CTPD) that serves students from southern Clermont County and the surrounding region. Our mission is to equip students with skills, capabilities, and a sense of purpose to succeed in their lives, preparing students for real-world careers through rigorous technical training, strong academic foundations, and robust partnerships with employers.

I write today to urge this committee to consider the following key priorities as you finalize the budget:

1. Restore Career Awareness and Exploration Funding

The \$16.5 million in career awareness funding that was removed in the House Substitute Bill must be reinstated. At Grant, these funds are not theoretical—they translate into real programs and life-changing experiences. We have implemented 8th grade campus tours; 6th grade Girls with Goggles and Guys & Gears, which encourages students to explore non-traditional career paths; the interactive "Big Build" days for 4th grade students, highlighting careers in the Construction industry in partnership with local industry. Without continued investment, these high-impact, early-exposure programs will disappear.

Career awareness is the first step in building Ohio's workforce. It allows students to envision themselves in a future career and to understand the paths that get them there. When students can see it, they can be it. We must preserve the funding that allows districts like ours to light that spark early.





2. Update the JVSD Funding Formula

We strongly support the Governor's proposal to update the JVSD funding formula to reflect current-year enrollment—just as traditional school districts are funded. At Grant Career Center, our enrollment has increased by 49% since 2020, driven by rising student interest and workforce demand. A funding model based on prior-year enrollment fails to reflect this growth, putting expanding programs like ours at a disadvantage. Updating the formula to reflect the Governor's Executive Budget proposal ensures funding keeps pace with actual student participation and program needs.

3. Support a Facilities Study Committee and Sustainable Capital Investment

Grant Career Center, like many of our peer institutions, has capital needs that cannot be met through existing models. CTE facilities are expensive to build and equip. A modern welding lab or health sciences suite can easily exceed \$2 million in costs. The traditional OFCC matching model is ill-suited for these realities.

We support the House's creation of a facilities study committee to explore a dedicated and sustainable capital funding model for CTE expansion. We respectfully ask this committee to endorse that provision as well.

4. Sustain and Expand Ohio Technical Centers and OTC Plus

We also support continued investment in Ohio Technical Centers and the OTC Plus program. At Grant, this has enabled us to extend training to high school students who are on program waitlists or require flexible, work-based schedules. As the demand for short-term credentialing grows, we need every tool available to keep students learning and progressing toward high-skill, high-wage jobs.

Conclusion

Ohio is leading the nation in its investment in career-technical education, and we are deeply grateful for your support. But continued progress requires sustained funding, smart reforms, and bold vision. On behalf of the students, families, and communities we serve, I urge you to restore career awareness funding, update the JVSD funding formula, support equitable facilities investment, and strengthen our OTC systems.

Thank you for your continued support of CTE. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Parry
Superintendent, Grant Career Center

