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**Testimony of Connie Altier, Superintendent
Tri-County Career Center
Before the Ohio Senate Finance Committee
State Operating Budget (HB 96)
May 27, 2025**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Tri-County Career Center, located in southeastern Ohio and proudly serving a diverse region through both our secondary career-technical programs and our adult education Ohio Technical Center (OTC). My name is Connie Altier, and I have had the honor of serving as Superintendent of Tri-County Career Center, a role from which I will be retiring after nearly three decades of service.

I am writing this today to emphasize the indispensable role that career-technical education (CTE) plays in Ohio's economic infrastructure, and to advocate for sustained and enhanced support for CTE and our state's OTCs.

A Legacy of Workforce Readiness

At Tri-County, we have seen firsthand the transformative power of career-technical education. Each year, hundreds of high school students and adult learners come through our doors seeking hands-on, skill-based training aligned with the needs of local and regional employers. From welding and health science to computer networking and culinary arts, our programs prepare students for immediate employment or further postsecondary education. Our graduates enter the workforce with industry credentials, work-based learning experience, and a readiness that traditional academic pathways often struggle to match.

As I reflect on my years in education, I am proud that our institution has grown not only in enrollment and program offerings, but in impact. We are a center for innovation, student growth, and community partnership.

Facility Funding and Modernization Needs

Despite the progress we have made, our facilities—like those of many career centers across the state—face critical challenges. Much of our infrastructure was not built to accommodate the high-tech equipment and specialized lab environments required in today's industries. Current funding mechanisms, especially through the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), place a disproportionate burden on Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs), particularly those serving economically distressed regions like ours.

I strongly support the proposal for a legislative study committee to develop a dedicated, equitable funding stream for CTE facilities. I am very pleased the House added this language and I urge the Senate to retain it in its budget

Tri-County Career Center has dedicated itself to providing equal admission opportunities, equal education opportunities, and equal employment opportunities to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, religion, gender, economic status, age, disability or military status.

package. Whether through capital grants or a reformed OFCC model, Ohio must modernize its approach to ensure that every student, regardless of zip code, has access to industry-aligned training facilities.

Support for Ohio Technical Centers

Our Ohio Technical Center is a critical part of the local workforce pipeline, delivering short-term certificate programs that are responsive, affordable, and effective. With a job placement rate exceeding 95%, our OTC exemplifies the workforce outcomes the state of Ohio prioritizes.

To further support this success, we respectfully have requested as part of this budget process:

- Legislative clarification allowing OTCs to access Higher Education Institution (HEI) funding for high school students enrolled through OTC Plus (similar to College Credit Plus).
- Continued investment in programs like Work-Ready, Talent-Ready, and TechCred, all of which directly support upskilling and credential attainment.

We are very pleased the House included the HEI clarification and reinvested in beneficial programs that support adult education. We urge the Senate to retain these amendments and programs. In addition, if the legislature seeks to expand the footprint of OTCs, we recommend a collective increase of \$1M to our OTC state subsidy, which could spur growth in various adult technical programs statewide.

Conclusion

As I close this chapter of my career, I do so with deep gratitude for the opportunity to lead a center that changes lives every day. I urge this committee to continue investing in CTE and OTCs—not just as educational options, but as economic necessities for a competitive, future-ready Ohio.

Thank you for your commitment to students, to schools, and to workforce development.

Sincerely,



Connie Altier

Superintendent

Tri-County Career Center