



COSHOCOTON COUNTY CAREER CENTER

COSHOCOTON COUNTY JOINT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

236 AIRPORT ROAD, COSHOCTON, OHIO 43812-9599

740/622-0211 www.coshoctoncareers.org FAX 740/623-4651

Ohio Senate Education Committee; Testimony on State Operating Budget (HB 96); Restoration of Career Awareness Funding

SUBMITTED BY:

Matt Colvin, Superintendent

Coshocton County Career Center

DATE: May 27, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chaves and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the critical importance of restoring Career Awareness funding in House Bill 96.

My name is Matt Colvin, and I proudly serve as the Superintendent of the Coshocton County Career Center, located in Coshocton County, a rural Appalachian, blue-collar community that has been deeply impacted by the loss of local industry and business. Yet, in the face of these challenges, our mission remains unwavering: to ensure that economic barriers do not limit the potential of our students.

We serve students from three dedicated and resilient feeder districts: Coshocton City, Ridgewood Local, and River View Local School Districts. Together, we are determined to ensure our students are afforded the same opportunities, exposure, and experiences as their peers across the state and beyond.

Career Technical Education is experiencing a much-needed surge in relevance and importance, and it's clear why. In Coshocton County, over 65 percent of our county's juniors are enrolled at our Career Center. Their choice reflects a vote of confidence in the opportunities, training, and support we provide.

We were honored to receive over \$4 million through the CTE Construction Grant to expand our offerings from 13 to 15 programs. This funding allows us to add more than 11,000 square feet to our facility to launch two vital programs: Utility Line Worker and Applied Machining and Advanced Manufacturing. This expansion reflects our commitment to preparing students for the jobs of the future and addressing critical workforce demands in our region.



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Equally vital to our success and the success of our students is Career Awareness funding. This funding has been transformative for our district and continues to power some of the most meaningful experiences we offer.

We use this funding to support our Coshocton C.A.R.E.S. Coordinator, who orchestrates a range of experiences designed to build awareness and pride in career and technical education. One of our hallmark initiatives is the Reading Buddies program, where our students, dressed in their program uniforms, visit local elementary schools to read, engage, and introduce younger students to their career pathway. These moments plant seeds of inspiration that grow over time.

Career Awareness funding also allows us to host K–8 visitations, where younger students from our feeder schools visit our Career Center and participate in hands-on activities within our programs. These immersive experiences spark curiosity and begin shaping future aspirations at an early age.

Another essential initiative made possible by this funding is our Sophomore Hands-On Day, which welcomes all area sophomores, including those from online learning platforms and home-school settings, to explore three programs of interest before our application process begins. These experiences help ensure every student has access to career exploration and informed decision-making.

We also use Career Awareness funding to host Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Nights, a lifeline for many of our families. These events provide critical support during what can be an incredibly stressful process. For many students and their parents, the FAFSA is confusing and overwhelming. Our team steps in to guide them through the steps, helping ensure post-secondary opportunities remain within reach.

Our Manufacturing Days provide students with the opportunity to visit local businesses and manufacturing facilities where they see firsthand what these companies do and the types of careers available. These experiences help students make real-world connections between classroom learning and local industry.

Equally impactful are our College and Career Fairs, which have grown to become some of our largest and most influential events. We regularly host 30 to 40 colleges and universities alongside 25 to 35 local and regional businesses. The demand and attendance have grown so significantly that we've had to move the event offsite to a larger venue to accommodate the volume of participants and ensure a meaningful experience for students. These fairs provide students with invaluable one-on-one conversations, allowing them to explore higher education and career options and gather the information they need to make informed, confident decisions about their futures.



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Our Career Partnership Days are another powerful use of this funding. During these events, we invite staff from our feeder districts to see our students in action. Many visiting educators witness students who may have previously struggled in traditional settings flourishing in our environment. These powerful observations not only change perceptions, they equip our feeder school teams with insight and stories they can take back and share, creating momentum and support for career-technical education across our county.

And finally, I would like to personally invite each of you to visit the Coshocton County Career Center. Come see the difference for yourself. Meet our students. Witness their pride, their passion, and the programs that are shaping them into the workforce of tomorrow. You'll see more than a school. You'll see a launchpad for hope and opportunity.

Career Awareness funding increases student engagement and confidence. It connects learning to meaningful, real-world pathways. It bridges access gaps in rural and underserved communities. It fosters lasting partnerships between families, schools, and industry leaders.

On behalf of our students, staff, and the entire Coshocton County community, I respectfully urge you to restore this essential investment. Career awareness is not a luxury. It is a necessity. It is the foundation on which strong futures and strong communities are built.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to the success of Career-Technical Education in Ohio.

With gratitude,

Matt Colvin

Superintendent

Coshocton County Career Center

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