

Adult Diploma Program

To: House Finance Committee

Chair: Representative Ryan Smith

Vice Chair: Representative Kirk Schuring

Ranking Member: Representative Denise Driehaus

Background

Ten percent of Ohioans do not have a high school diploma – that's more than 1 million citizens with few prospects for finishing their education and moving into well-paying jobs. Meanwhile, Ohio employers have openings for skilled jobs they can't fill because of a shortage of qualified workers. This talent gap is costing Ohio's economy billions of dollars.

House Bill 483 of the 2014 Mid-Biennium Review set requirements via Ohio Revised Code 3313.902 for an Adult Diploma Pilot Program. The program's purpose is to create new pathways for adults age 22 and older to earn a high school diploma while simultaneously earning an industry credential or certificate.

This program was developed in consultation with key stakeholders throughout the state, including the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, Ohio Technical Centers and the Adult Basic Literacy Education providers. This collaborative approach aims to create pathways for adults to complete their high school education, earn technical training and gain employment in high-growth, high-demand fields.

House Bill 64

Five planning proposals to address the Adult Diploma Program were funded for January – June, 2015: Stark State College, Cuyahoga Community College, PENTA in Toledo; Miami Valley Career Tech Center in Montgomery County and Pickaway-Ross Career Tech Center in Chillicothe. While I write in support of all the planning grants, the statistics I am presenting are from the Stark State College grant.

Each of these sites is working with local education and industry partners to develop competency-based high school and industry certification programs, i.e., the adults will be able to show what they know and focus their learning in "gap" areas. These learners

will be prepared to enter Ohio's unfilled job opportunities, escape poverty and help fuel a stronger economy.

Utilizing the Ohio Board of Regents-approved list of industry credentials, the projects will identify career pathways for these adults to gain not only their diploma and certification, but also start accruing college credit. Each of the programs is working to build career pathways where the high school diploma and industry certificate are the first steps toward additional certificates, an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree.

Need

Ohio's population is 11,570,808 (U.S. Census Data); our project represents Stark, Summit and Wayne counties where the population totals 1,032,327. The table below shows our numbers, including the percentage and number of adults without a high school diploma (NOTE: U.S. Census data is for adults 25 and older; adults 22-24 are not represented in this data).

2013	US	OH	STARK	SUMMIT	WAYNE	3 County Aggregates
POPULATION	316,497,531	11,570,808	375,432	541,824	115,071	1,032,327
+25 W/O H.S	14%	11.5%	10.1%	9.7%	14.1%	11.3% *
BELOW POVERTY	15.4%	15.8%	15%	15.4%	12.4%	14.3%
WHITE	77.7%	83.2%	88.8%	80.3%	95.9%	
BLACK	13.2%	12.5%	7.8%	14.7%	1.6%	
AMERICAN INDIAN	1.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	
ASIAN	5.3%	1.9%	0.9%	2.6%	0.8%	
HISPANIC/LATINO	12.1%	3.4%	1.8%	1.9%	1.6%	
MULTI RACIAL	2.4%	2.0%	2.3%	2.2%	1.4%	

- Wayne County numbers include an Amish population which typically leaves school at age 14.

All data are from the U.S. Census Bureau 2013 American Community Survey and are aggregated and/or weighted by county where appropriate:

- In Stark, Summit & Wayne counties there are approximately 18,400 people aged 25-44 **without a HS diploma**, representing 8% of the population or 1 out of 12 people aged 25-44 (Note: data include <9th grade and 9-12th, no diploma).
- The **poverty rate** for people aged 25+ across all three counties without a HS diploma is 27%, **more than twice the rate of people with some college/associate degree** (12%) (Note: the initial goal is to move to this 12 % level).

- The **median income** for people aged 25+ across all three counties without a HS diploma is **just 56%** of the median for all people aged 25+. The median income for people age 25+ with some college/associate degree is **91% of the median** for all people aged 25+ across all three counties.
- Earning a diploma and a short-term certificate and/or an associate degree has the potential to virtually eliminate the median income gap and **lift a substantial percentage of the population above the poverty rate**, thus reducing need for costly social services, etc.

According to the 2013 Stark State College Economic Impact Study (from EMSI):

- Stark State students who achieve higher levels of education are statistically less likely to have poor health habits, commit crimes, or claim welfare or unemployment benefits. Improved lifestyles result in a reduced demand for government-supported services.
- For every \$1 of public money spent on Stark State, taxpayers receive a cumulative return of \$2.80 over the course of students' working lives in the form of higher tax receipts and public sector savings.

For example, a person without a high school diploma might earn \$17,000 - 20,000 per year. By earning a high school diploma and a welding certificate, that individual's salary would more than double with entry-level welding jobs averaging \$50,000/year.

In summary

House Bill 64 has money set aside for the five pilot sites to receive implementation dollars for the next two years. Since many more schools have expressed interest in joining the program, the governor's budget proposal expands this grant for up to five additional sites in the next fiscal year. The budget also proposes the payment structure for the existing sites and appropriates \$17.5 million over the biennium to fund adults once they enter these programs.

I urge you to support this legislation that provides undereducated and underskilled adult students with education that leads to employment, career success and a healthier Ohio economy.

Respectfully submitted,

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