



Ohio Senate
Finance Committee
Sub. HB166 Interested Party Testimony
Testimony of Tim Buschur
Tri-Star Career Compact

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Ohio Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony for Sub. HB110. My name is Tim Buschur, and I am the Director of Tri-Star Career Compact in Celina, Ohio. Tri-Star is a Compact Career-Technical Planning District which includes the districts of Celina City Schools, Coldwater Village Schools, Fort Recovery Local Schools, Marion Local Schools, Minster Local Schools, New Bremen Local Schools, New Knoxville Local Schools, St. Henry Local Schools and St. Mary's City Schools. Additionally, I am the current Treasurer of the Ohio Association of Comprehensive and Compact Career-Technical Schools (Ohio CCS) and past-president of the Ohio Association of Career-Technical Education (Ohio ACTE). Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today regarding HB110 and Career Technical Supplemental "Weighted" Funding (ORC 3317.014).

k-12 Funding: We support the Fair School Funding Plan (HB1) and are eager to continue discussing the best way to fund our state's public school system. **Above all else, we emphasize the need to "unfreeze" our career-technical education supplemental "weighted" funding—used to purchase the equipment and supplies necessary to operate our most in-demand technical programs— and ensure these weighted funds remain outside any cap or freeze so that our career-technical schools regain the ability to expand programming based on increases in regional demand and student enrollment.** As Mr. Horner noted, we do have a concern if the projected statewide average per pupil is lower than estimated; if that were to be true, it will cause our weighted funding to decrease. We reiterate our need to maintain our current levels of funding as a base, outside of a cap or freeze, no matter the funding model.

As I am sure you are aware, education funding was frozen at the FY19 levels for FY20/21, which was interpreted to include career-technical education (CTE) "weighted" funding. In 2015, to achieve the state's workforce development goals and grow CTE, "weighted" funding was moved outside the cap/guarantee. By moving these funds outside the cap/guarantee, CTE providers have been able to serve more students with more programs.

I would like to explain how this funding freeze specifically impacted Tri-Star Career Compact at a critical point in our growth. Tri-Star opened the new Tri-Star 2.0 facility for the 2019/2020 school year. This new facility brought all our CTE programs together under one roof, allowed us to expand our programs and increase our ability to serve students. Since opening the new building, we are serving 194 new students and added a new career pathway with Cyber Security. Under the previous budget, we did not receive any new funding to serve these students and were expected to serve them at our FY19 funding level; this represents approximately \$650,000 in lost funding since the beginning of the freeze.

Our community and business partners believe in the value and mission of Tri-Star. We passed a \$16.7m levy with 75% approval to provide for a new state of the art building for our students; the new building consolidated locations at 3 different schools in 6 different buildings. Additionally, our business partners stepped-up and contributed over \$2 million to the project. If not for this local contribution, we would not have been able to provide all the equipment, supplies, and experiences necessary to provide a well-rounded career-technical experience. We are thankful they understand supporting Tri-Star supports the community and workforce. It is important to note, our local unemployment rate is currently 3%; our community needs a robust workforce development partner and looks to Tri-Star to fulfill this role.

In addition to the levy and business partner contributions, our nine compact member schools increased their contributions because they felt it was important to both the community and the local businesses. Our community, business partners and compact members have invested in our students and future workforce, however they can only do so much. We need the CTE supplement “weighted” funding to be moved outside any cap or freeze to meet the needs of our students and workforce.

As you can tell, I could go on for quite a while about how the funding freeze has impacted Tri-Star, but to keep my testimony concise, I will stop there and offer to answer any questions you may have.