

From: Michael Tisovic

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RE: Proponent Testimony: SB 178

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, and Members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 178. I would like to share with you some of the issues where our current educational system does not meet the needs of today's children or the current and future workforce requirements in our community. We owe the children the means to a strong education that allows each and everyone of them to succeed in their chosen career path. The world is changing more each day. We must have an educational system that is more adaptable and accountable to the needs of the community.

My background is in manufacturing. I am a graduate of Cleveland State University with a degree in Electrical Engineering and am currently the Plant Manager of Wieland Chase in Montpelier, Ohio. I have worked in manufacturing for more than thirty years. I have been a member, currently vice-president of the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium in Northwest Ohio since 2015, actively working to address the work force issues in the six-county area. Twelve years ago, I became a lead mentor for the First Robotics program, and I have been teaching students from fourth grade through high school critical thinking and problem-solving skills to help develop their technical abilities.

We have all heard that the only way to be successful is to have a college degree. In 2018, 53% of our high school graduates go to college but only 31% graduate¹. If the measuring stick for a good education is finishing college, why do 47% of our students not even attempt to go and another 22% do not finish. In today's world, going to college should not define a good education. A good education should be defined as being prepared to enter the workforce no matter what career path is chosen. Today's society needs worker in all fields from doctors to assembly line workers and our educational system lacks the ability to create the workforce that is needed. We need more options for the 69% of our students that do not go to or finish college. Only 7% of Ohio students graduate with technical credentials¹. 62% of our graduating high school seniors are not prepared to enter the workforce. The lack of qualified workers for today's workforce handicaps our state's economy. Bill 178 would give our legislature the control needed to create and hold accountable programs that target these underserved graduating seniors

¹ <https://www.ohiobythenumbers.com/#student-achievement-national-exams>



College credit plus, a program that allows any high school student to take free college classes, has been around since 2015. This program greatly benefits the low-income student so why do more students not take advantage of the program. The answer is that our public education system lacks accountability. The Ohio auditor's office determined that even though state law requires districts to hold meetings about the program there is no enforcement and districts freely confess that they were not holding meetings. The schools that do offer the program restrict the number of classes that can be taken in various ways. While most colleges will allow high school students to take any class that they have met the requirements for, the local high school will limit which classes are available to their students. The program allows each high school student to take up to 30 college credits per school year. Some high schools discourage students from taking more than 15 college credits by restricting the student's participation in after school activities if the student takes more credits at the local college than they take at their high school. Most high school student will choose sports and other high school activities over taking that extra course at the local college. While the above are some examples of the lack of accountability at the high school level, there exists an equal lack of accountability at some of our public colleges. One high school senior was told by the University of Toledo that her CCP credits in calculus and physics would not be accepted by the university's engineering department and that she would have to retake the classes. The University of Toledo's decision was highly questionable due to the fact that the courses in question were being taken in person at the university and the student had earned A's in every class. If a university will not except CCP credits earned on their campus, how many CCP credits will they accept. College credit plus is an example of a great program that benefits our high school students in many ways that is not fully supported by our current educational system. With Bill 178, we would have the resources and processes necessary in government to hold schools accountable to support a program like CCP.

The evidence shows there is a need for systemic change at the state level to our education system to ensure accountability to taxpayers and for our kids. Transparency at the state level is necessary now more than ever, so that we can ensure schools have the support they need from the state and students can access the academic and workforce skills they need to be well-educated, career-ready adults. SB 178 addresses this need by refocusing our system at the state level on what matters most: our children and their future.

SB 178 restructures the Department of Education to create a state cabinet-level agency called the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) that will have a dual focus on primary and secondary education as well as preparing students for the workforce. This cabinet-level agency will be led by a Director appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. This creates a system similar to other states that have found world-class talent to lead their states into the 21st century and develop structures that have significantly increased student achievement through state-level actions.



In summary, I believe educational leadership, both college and career oriented, need to communicate with industry leadership. I believe we owe the 69% of our kids not finishing college an opportunity to be prepared for a rewarding career. I believe we can solve the workforce issue by coming together and working as one for the benefit of our children. Therefore, it is time for us to refocus and reenergize the state's system of administering education in Ohio. In this changing world, it simply is not working. Senate Bill 178 is about ensuring accountability for our kids, our schools, our taxpayers, our economy, and our future. Currently, there is none. Real change and bold action are necessary more than ever to create an educational culture that prioritizes our children's success in the real world. It is time for a change that works for our kids, who deserve our best efforts for their success.

Chairman, thank you, and I welcome questions from the committee on this proposal.

