



**Ohio House Economic and Workforce
Development Committee
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 1
Brian Bontempo, Superintendent, Auburn Career Center**

March 28, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the Ohio House Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts today regarding Senate Bill 1. My name is Dr. Brian Bontempo, and I am submitting this testimony as the superintendent of Auburn Career Center (serving Lake and Geauga Counties), as well as a Board Member of the Ohio Association for Career-Technical Education. My brief comments will be specific to the component of SB 1 that proposes to adjust the structure of the Ohio Department of Education in an effort to elevate Career-Tech education (CTE).

Auburn Career Center serves Lake and Geauga County high school students; our Ohio Technical Center (OTC) additionally serves the adult student population throughout eastern Cuyahoga County, often times partnering with regional businesses like Magnet, Lincoln Electric, and the Alliance for Working Together (as well as a host of others) to offer various in-demand customized training opportunities. Suffice it to say that employers in Lake, Geauga, and Cuyahoga Counties rely heavily upon the success of our training programs. Whether it's manufacturing, healthcare, IT, or any trade, these employers look to us to be connectors and trainers to meet the demands of our local economy.

As with most regions of Ohio, our student application numbers are way up and our enrollment is the highest it's been since we opened the doors 1965. We continue to work hard to meet the demands of students and parents who seek to gain access to our programs, as well as workforce needs of business and industry. Some of our facilities are aging but we do an outstanding job staying current with maintenance as well as curriculum, supplies and equipment designed to meet the input of program advisory committees and continually evolving training requirements.

During my time as a superintendent I have worked collaboratively with my colleagues from across Ohio and in some cases outside of Ohio in search of ideas and strategies to continue to serve unique regional workforce demands and to grow opportunities for students. We welcome SB 1 as a tool for improvement, which will help elevate our work and more quickly meet the mission of expanding CTE statewide. We envision the new Deputy Director of the Division of CTE helping to inform, navigate, inspire, listen, and carry our message to policymakers in Columbus. Great organizations are mission-driven with leaders that speak to the mission every day, provide support and purpose, and drive passion to meet new goals. The new leadership structure appears to offer CTE a "seat at the table" to better guide and inform the leaders of Ohio. I often reflect on an old saying, "great teams are a magnet for great talent." Being represented at the cabinet level and on the Governor's Executive Workforce Board will undoubtedly build trust, inspire talent, and allow for an efficient and responsive approach to career-tech across Ohio.

I am optimistic about the future in Ohio with all of our talent. It is time to put a plan into action.