



STEM Entrepreneurship & Innovation Program for Students to Help Develop Ohio's Future Workforce

Popularly Known as the “*Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation & Scholarship Program*”

Chairman Dolan, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Committee. I am offering this written testimony in support of Amendment SC2521X1 to Substitute House Bill 110, “STEM Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program for Students to Help Develop Ohio's Future Workforce”, which continues funding of what is more popularly known as the “Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation and Scholarship Program”.

My name is Mark Suter, a high school computer technology and entrepreneurship teacher at Elida High School. For the last 8 years, my students and I have been running a classroom business doing web design, photo scanning, and other tech services for real paying clients.

What I have found is that my students become engaged and embrace challenges when certain ingredients are present. Specifically: Content, Skill, and Will. Sadly, some teachers hyperfocus on the content, with little regard to the other 2 ingredients, then wonder why students are mentally absent and don't care. If I can give them enough content to achieve a real world relevant set of goals, they bring the will. All that's left then is to help them learn the skills. This BiO program clearly meets the criteria to get and keep my students motivated to make mistakes, a sign of learning on the threshold of their ability. I don't punish them for the mistakes, I reward them. By using the iterative nature of design in the BiO program, they have proven again and again that this program works.

I was fortunate to be named an Ohio Stem Exemplar, and all that really tells me is I'm getting SOMETHING right. I believe it is the trust-based risk taking environment where innovation is the norm. The BiO is a seamless integration into this environment because it asks my students to not regurgitate memorized content, but to design a completely new concept through multiple failures. This prepares them for how truly innovative companies work, what a great head start for my students!

On behalf of the teachers and students in our state, I urge you to please support Amendment SC2521X1 to Substitute House Bill 110 which continues funding of the Believe in Ohio Program.

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