



**Ohio Senate Finance Committee
State Operating Budget (HB 33) May 31, 2023**

Testimony of the Ohio Association of Career-Technical Superintendents

Chair Dolan, Vice-Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee: the Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents (OACTS) submits this testimony on behalf of the state's 49 Joint Vocational School Districts (JVSDs), and its 52 Ohio Technical Centers (OTCs).

HB 33 reflects a very positive and exciting state operating budget for high school and adult career technical education in Ohio. The CTE community and its leaders are once again energized by the emphasis placed on our sector and the support from state and local policymakers as well as our communities. Our superintendents would like to describe for the committee's benefit some of the issues we continue to emphasize as part of the budget bill:

1. **Funding for CTE Facility Expansion:** We strongly support (and appreciate) the Executive Budget's \$200 million allocation over the biennium aimed at Career-Technical Planning District facility expansion; and that the House maintained this allocation in full. As we have emphasized over the last several years, a clear impediment to the growth of our sector is our limited building capacity. CTE leaders have evaluated dozens of proposals adding up to over \$469M in facility needs; we urge the Senate to maintain this one-time fund in full.
2. **K-12 School Funding Formula:** Like our traditional district partners, we support Ohio's current k-12 school funding formula, which the legislature adopted during the last operating budget cycle. The formula includes a six year "phase-in" that facilitates gradual implementation over the course of three biennial budgets, and we are encouraged that HB 33 continues the phase-in by funding years three and four. We also appreciate the House adjusting salary input data from 2018 to 2022. To spur even more long-term growth, we continue to recommend setting a 50% floor for the state share percentage that applies to CTE supplemental funds.
3. **OTC Plus:** The budget contains language facilitating the ability of high school students to take coursework and otherwise earn credentials and certificates at OTCs. (See proposed R.C. 3313.901, EDUCD2). We strongly support these provisions, which will help address and remedy capacity issues (i.e., wait lists) at the state's career-tech schools and spur the growth of adult education programming statewide. We also urge the committee to support an amendment that would slightly modify the program's parameters, and create a separate funding framework. These changes are intended to ensure schools statewide make use of the program to its fullest extent and do not lose funds based on their students' participation.
4. **Grant Funding for Equipment:** We strongly support the budget's \$100 million allocation to assist all schools (including charter and STEM schools) with the purchase of CTE equipment and supplies. These resources will be incredibly valuable and, in some cases, will be used in conjunction with the \$200 million facility expansion fund.

5. **Short-Term Certificate Funding:** OTCs' primary focus is short-term certificate training. State statistics on student outcomes have shown that we are the most efficient and effective at operating and delivering short-term programs to Ohio's adult student population. To that end, we are pleased the Executive and House budgets greatly increase investments in short-term certificate programs and needs-based financial aid for students via the proposed "Work Ready" and "Talent Ready" Grant Programs.
6. **High School Industry Recognized Credentials:** We are excited that HB 33 renews existing programs aimed at increasing the number of industry-recognized credentials earned by Ohio high school students. The budget bill maintains funding to reimburse schools for the cost of issuing credentials, as well as funding to operate the existing Innovative Workforce Incentive Program (IWIP). The budget also includes up to \$10 million in each fiscal year to support a Work-Based Learning Incentive Program, which will promote student interactions with business and industry to foster engagement in career fields as well as alignment with educational programs.
7. **Adult Diploma Program:** We are pleased to see the budget maintains funding for the highly coveted Adult Diploma Program, which provides job training and an alternative pathway for adults (age 20 or older) to earn a credential in conjunction with a state-issued high school diploma. We hope to increase utilization of this program in the years ahead.
8. **SuperRAPIDS:** The Executive Budget proposed \$200M in Federal ARPA dollars to boost funding for the Regionally Aligned Priorities in Delivering Skills (RAPDS) program; the House budget cut the proposed program to \$100M. We could help put these funds to good use right away, which are aimed at assisting OTCs and other higher education institutions with CTE equipment and supply needs.
9. **College Credit Plus Expansion:** We have some concerns regarding the proposed expansion of College Credit Plus and its existing Innovative Waiver Pathway as it appears to duplicate numerous longstanding programs (CTAG, ITAG, Bilateral Agreements) that already allow students to earn college credit without additional cost to the student, the secondary school district, or post-secondary institution.
10. **TechCred:** The Executive and House Budgets maintain funding for the successful TechCred program, increasing the appropriation to more than \$50 million over the biennium to support the upskilling of Ohio's workforce and to help individuals qualify for a better job in today's modern economy. TechCred reimburses businesses and individuals for the cost of short-term certificate programs, and has to date assisted more than 1,800 employers with more than 44,000 credentials earned.

We thank the committee for its time and hard work throughout the budget process.

Maggie Hess, Executive Director
OACTS