

SESSION CHECK-IN

Check In Code



B897



ALL OHIO CONFERENCE · MONDAY 2:45–3:30 PM

K–12 to CTE

Lessons Learned to Help All Students
Succeed

Jonathan Davis — Superintendent



THE SPEAKER

Who Am I?

01

**Classroom
Teacher**

02

**Business
Owner**

03

**Federal Programs
Coordinator**

04

**School
Administrator**

05

Superintendent

Ohio Association of Career Tech Supts. Board Member

Future Ohio ACTE President

Caveat: this is lived experience across two decades — not a perfect formula.

Two Questions Worth Asking

Prompting questions from *Legacy* by James Kerr — reframing how I think about the work.

“What is my job on the planet?”

“What is it that needs doing, that I know something about, that probably won’t happen unless I take responsibility for it?”

What I Knew as a K-12 Superintendent

- Beans, balls, buses, and boards
- Budget & finance
- Personnel & culture
- Community & political pressure
- Compliance & policy
- School funding is a problem!

The reality

DISTRACTED.

CTE was rarely the question in front of me — and it was almost never the one my board was asking.

What I first learned as a new CTE Superintendent

01 Focus becomes possible

Focus is nearly impossible in K–12. In CTE, we can actually give students it.

02 Outcomes & visible future

Tangible outcomes give students something to work toward — and a visible future makes them work for it.

03 Collaborate or fail

We're all in it for the same thing. We either work together — or we fail together.

04 School funding is a problem

Funding realities shape what a district can actually deliver.

I didn't know the actual problem — or the opportunity.



FOLLOW THE FUNDING

The Funding Problem Is Bigger Than Money

Students leave

CTC enrollment pulls 50%+ of some of our schools' juniors applying. Highest applying school 74%! “You cannot take anymore of our kids!”

K–12 runs into offerings, scheduling, expertise issues

Administrators, counselors, and boards are stretched thin. Students leaving shrinks class sizes. CTE complexity demands partnership — not DIY.

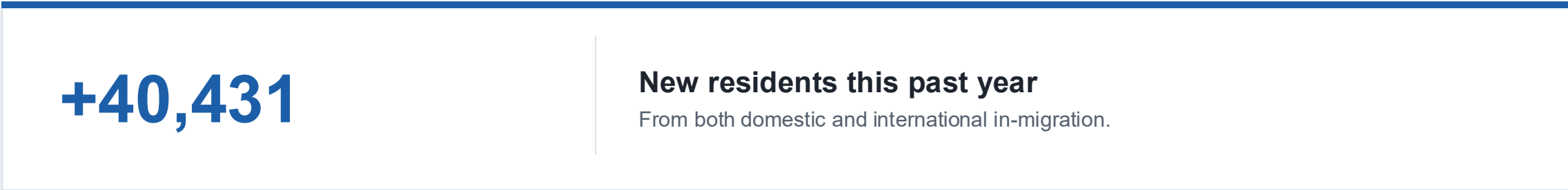
Demographics are a problem for everyone

We are not talking enough about the fact our communities need each and every student to successfully enter college or the workforce and have upward mobility.

THE LATEST CENSUS DATA

Is Ohio Growing?

New U.S. Census Bureau estimates show Ohio's population growing in the interim — driven by positive net in-migration.



Sources: JobsOhio analysis of U.S. Census Bureau estimates (2026); Ohio Department of Development population projections (2023); Ohio Department of Education & Workforce EMIS enrollment data (2025–26).

The Forces Working Against Growth

Even as in-migration lifts the total, three underlying pressures continue to weigh on Ohio's outlook.

–10%

**CTPD Eligible Sophomore
Applicant Pool Decrease**

THE HEADWIND

Deaths > Births

Projected for decades — only migration keeps Ohio growing.

–19,611

Fewer K–12 students

Enrollment fell to 1.72M in 2025–26 — the second-largest drop on record, as births decline.

Sources: JobsOhio analysis of U.S. Census Bureau estimates (2026); Ohio Department of Development population projections (2023); Ohio Department of Education & Workforce EMIS enrollment data (2025–26).

Or is Ohio Heading the Wrong Way?

While the nation keeps growing, Ohio is projected for sustained population loss through 2050 — the statewide backdrop to our region's story.

11,799,448

OHIO 2020

−675,552

PROJECTED LOSS BY 2050 · −5.7%

11,123,896

OHIO 2050 PROJECTION

−273,525

Working-age residents (25–64)

Ohio's core workforce shrinks −4.5% by 2050.

74 of 88

Counties projected to decline

Only 14 grow — losses concentrate in rural and Appalachian Ohio.

THE WRONG DIRECTION

U.S. +17.3%

Ohio −5.7%

Ohio slips from the 7th- to 9th-most-populous state by 2030.

Source: Ohio Population Projections Report (2023), Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research; U.S. figures from U.S. Census Bureau projections.

THE DATA

Ohio Is One of the Most “Homegrown” States in America

ROOTED IN PLACE

~82%

Were born in Ohio

More than four in five current residents are Ohio-born — one of the least “transplant” states in the country.

RURAL COUNTIES ARE NEARLY ALL LOCAL

Some Rural Ohio counties have 90%+ residents born in Ohio, meaning employers depend almost entirely on developing local talent.

WELL ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

Just ~66% of American adults live in their birth state, so Ohio sits far above the national norm for staying put.

HOW CLOSE THEY STAY

Studies suggest 55–60% of Americans live within 50 miles of where they were born.

THE DATA

CTE Is Full — the Career-Tech Pipeline Is Already Maxed

CTE PROGRAMS

~100%

Programs full — near-full employment for CTE graduates

CTC ENROLLMENT

50%+

Of some districts' juniors enroll at Career Technical Centers

The existing pipeline is at capacity — expansion, not just enrollment, is the constraint.

Source: SHP Workforce30 Final Report (2025); Center for Economic Analysis & Development, NKU Haile College of Business.

THE DATA

Business Needs More Than We're Producing

WORKFORCE DEMAND

5.25M

More workers with postsecondary training needed by 2032

OCCUPATION SHORTAGES

171

Occupation types projected in shortage by 2032
(Georgetown)

LIVE OPENINGS — OHIOMEANSJOBS.GOV

118,392 openings · 81,981 over \$50K · 1,292 internships

THE OHIO PARADOX

Fewer Students, Greater Demand for Skilled Workers

BACK THEN

More students

Fewer high-skill jobs

College for all!

RIGHT NOW

Fewer students

More high-skill jobs

Need every student!

540,000+

STEM & technical workers Ohio needs this decade

Employers can't fill the roles they have. Ohio is short roughly 1,200 physicians, while Intel suppliers, Honda/LG Energy, Centrus, and Anduril drive advanced-manufacturing demand faster than the pipeline can replace retiring workers.

THE DATA

A Two-Decade Shift in Where Students Learn

TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL SHARE

85% → 74%

Share of students in traditional public schools, down steadily over two decades.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

8× growth

From ~400K students in 2000 to ~3.7M by 2022–23 — about 7.6% of public-school students.

HOMESCHOOLING

~2% → 6%

Now comparable to charters nationally; Ohio rose ~15% in a single year (2023–24 to 2024–25).

PRIVATE CHOICE & ESAs

1M+ students

Up from under 200K in 2005 — now 75 programs across 33 states, D.C. & Puerto Rico.

THE CORE PROBLEM

A Widening Gap Between the Workforce We Have and the One We Need

Fewer, older workers must fill more jobs that demand more skill — while strained schools and expanding student options pull the talent pipeline apart.

SHRINKING SUPPLY ↓

Fewer humans

A shrinking population means fewer future workers.

Aging workforce

Experienced workers are retiring out of the labor force.

RISING DEMAND ↑

More jobs

Openings are outpacing the people available to fill them.

Need skilled labor

Employers increasingly require postsecondary training.

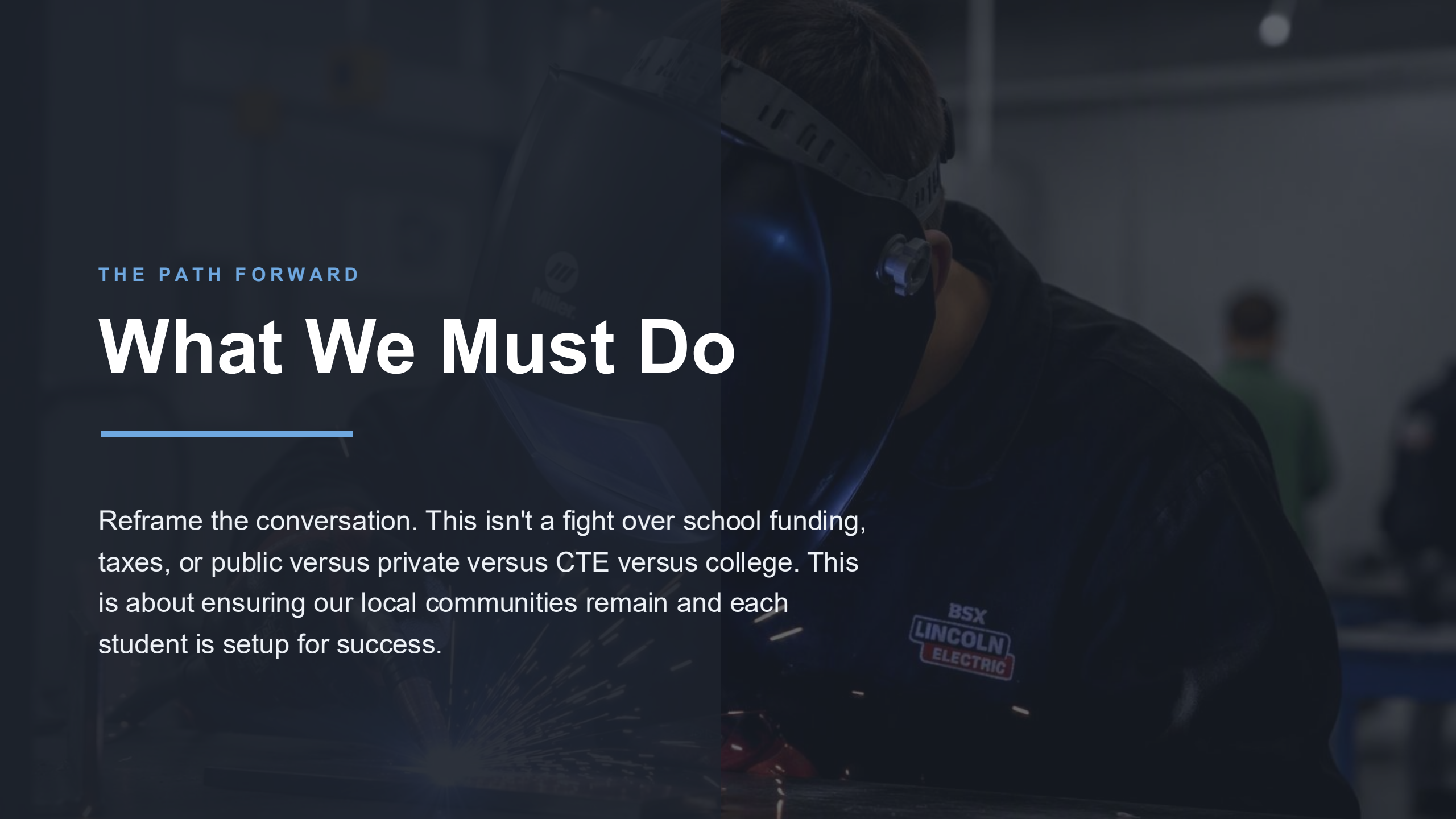
SYSTEM UNDER STRAIN

School funding problems

Districts are stretched thin and can't go it alone.

More student options than ever

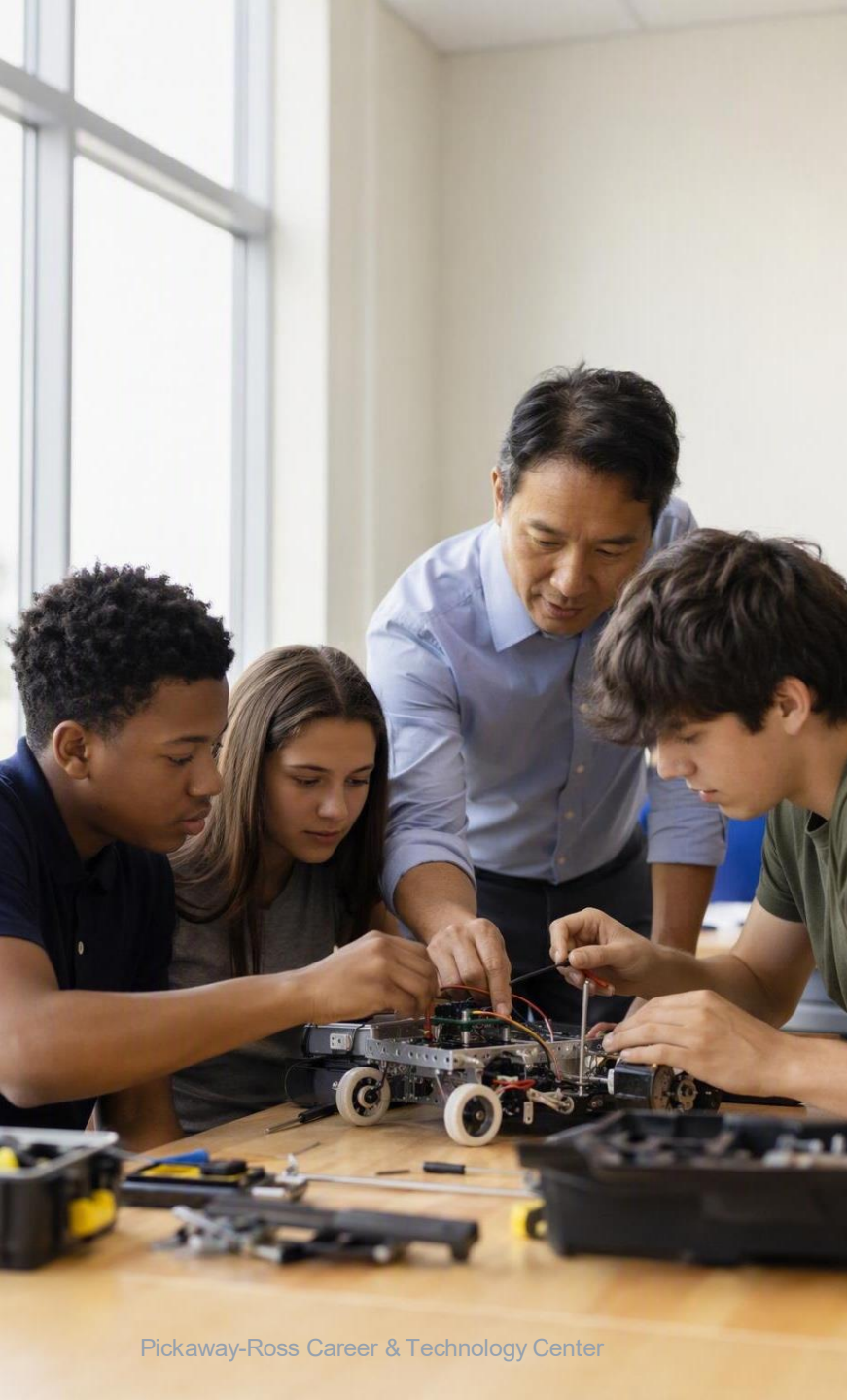
Attention and pathways are more fragmented than before.



THE PATH FORWARD

What We Must Do

Reframe the conversation. This isn't a fight over school funding, taxes, or public versus private versus CTE versus college. This is about ensuring our local communities remain and each student is setup for success.



RECOMMENDATION

Prepare Every Student for a Successful Career

A shrinking, aging workforce means we cannot afford to lose a single student:

Every Student

counts — in a shrinking workforce, not one can be left behind.

Every Path

college, trade, or technical — each one can lead to a skilled career.

Every Community

gains when a prepared graduate stays, works, and helps it grow.

Every student, a career — and advocate for it

Every student who transitions into a skilled career stays, works, and strengthens our communities — even as Ohio is projected to lose 675,552 residents by 2050. We must advocate with our legislators to fund and prioritize career-connected pathways for all students.

Sources: SHP Workforce30 Final Report (2025); Ohio Department of Development, Office of Research (2023).

Schools Must Model the Real World & State Must Support

01 **Connect core courses to careers**

High school teachers must know their region's businesses — the jobs, the training, and the pay.

02 **Take professional development seriously**

Invest in real, aligned PD. No fake online courses just to renew a license.

03 **Model what employers want**

Show up on time, work in teams, help others, keep learning. Are we modeling that?

04 **Rethink grades 11–12**

Emphasize CC+, OTC+, and senior-year work — freeing K–12 resources for early literacy.



Every business wants the same thing: people who show up on time, work in teams, help others, and keep learning.

DON'T FALL FOR IT

Beware the Pendulum Swing — We Need Everyone

Skilled Trades Are Critical

Electricians, welders, HVAC techs, and construction managers are in demand and pay well. CTE delivers.

Electricians · Welders · HVAC · Construction Mgrs

But the Pendulum Swings Both Ways

Georgetown projects **4.5 million workers with bachelor's degrees** needed by 2032 — nurses, physicians, engineers, teachers, accountants.

Nurses · Physicians · Engineers · Teachers · Accountants

The future belongs to both. Specialized expertise is the common denominator — not years spent in a classroom.



THE EVIDENCE

Apprenticeships: The Strongest Workforce ROI

+7.8–8.8 pts

More likely to be employed than comparable community-college students

+\$3,230–\$4,693

Higher annual earnings just nine quarters after enrollment

90%

Employment retention after apprenticeship completion

~\$80,000

Average starting salary for completers across programs

- **It is ok to hire students under 18!!**

Source: 2025 U.S. Department of Labor evaluation of registered apprenticeships.

Are we willing to truly advocate for students — and ensure employers and colleges give them the best deals and opportunities?

Are we willing to run programs that fit the current and future workforce — and sunset those that no longer give students what they need to succeed?

Will we take a real stand and recognize that we are the greatest asset to our community, region, and state's success?

Will we impress upon our business community that abatements only hurt the development of the asset they need most for a productive future?

THE ECONOMIC EVIDENCE

Does the Public Really Know the ROI of K–12 Investment?

Research shows sustained K–12 investment pays lasting dividends — in the very outcomes that keep communities and their economies alive.

+7%

Higher adult wages from a sustained 10% per-pupil spending increase

+0.3 yr

More years of completed education per student

–3 pts

Lower adult poverty — largest gains for low-income students

+2.8 pts

Higher college attendance from +\$1,000/pupil over four years

And it scales up. Workforce skill is among the strongest predictors of long-run economic growth — with national returns measured in the trillions of dollars.

A QUESTION FOR POLICYMAKERS

Are we talking to Legislators about...

The demographic problem.

Are we talking to Legislators about...

Schools are one of the largest employers in their area.

Are we talking to Legislators about...

Without every kid succeeding, their communities and businesses are in trouble.

Are we talking to Legislators about...

If jobs and housing are all pushed to one region, it forces migration away from these loved communities — changing their culture and structure in a negative way.

CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

School Funding Is an Economic-Development Investment

- Enhanced CTE funding for updated facilities, labs, and equipment
- Real College Credit Plus funding that doesn't hurt the home district or shortchange the college
- K–12 recognized as a workforce and, more importantly, community-outcome pipeline and funded as such

There has never been a better opportunity for youth to earn high-quality jobs.

A group of diverse students, including a young man with glasses and a young woman with curly hair in the foreground, are walking and smiling in a school hallway. The background shows other students and a bulletin board with various posters.

WHERE DOES CTE GO NEXT?

“When you are on top of your game, change your game.”

— LEGACY, JAMES KERR

A group of diverse students, including a young man with glasses and a young woman with curly hair, are walking through a school hallway. They are smiling and appear to be in conversation. The hallway has a bulletin board on the left and large windows on the right. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent rectangle containing text.

CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

So let's change our message. We stop apologizing and start leading—because we, and our students, are the key to the success of every community and business we serve.



LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

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