

Investing in School Choice Options

The DeWine-Husted Administration is working to ensure that Ohio's children can access valuable opportunities during Ohio's Time in history. The new budget will support programs that ensure that more students – no matter where they live – can receive college credit and workforce readiness skills to help them live up to their God-given potential.

Ohio's new operating budget includes $22.4 billion over the biennium to support students, schools, and districts with **increased funding in the K-12 school funding formula and school choice programs.** This record investment continues the six-year phase-in of the school funding formula implemented in 2022, which funds students where they are educated and **increases investment in economically disadvantaged students and student transportation programs.**

Ohio has a strong tradition of supporting the right of families to choose where their children are educated. The budget builds on that commitment to school choice programs by **expanding eligibility for the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship** to all Ohio families. Families at or below 450% of the federal poverty level ($135,000 per year for a family of four) will be eligible to receive the full scholarship amount (approximately $6,165 for grades K-8 and $8,407 for grades 9-12) and families with higher incomes will receive a partial scholarship.

School choice also provides the option of attending one of the 334 community schools, which educate more than 116,000 Ohio students. This budget continues to

support a strong community school sector by doubling the per-pupil facilities funding in this budget — from $500 to $1,000, ($87.1 million in FY 2024 and $88.6 million in FY 2025) — for brick-and- mortar community schools through the Community School Facilities Program. A new Community School Equity Supplement provides an additional $650 per pupil for every brick-and-mortar community school in the state to enable them to better serve their students.

In addition, this budget signals the DeWine-Husted Administration's commitment to Quality Community and Independent STEM School Support with $136.5 million per year for quality community schools and independent STEM schools. Each school qualifying for this funding will receive an additional $3,000 for each economically disadvantaged student and $2,250 each for all other students. These funds will help successful community and STEM schools build the capacity to serve more Ohio students.

Workforce readiness for K-12 students continues to be a priority in Ohio with an investment in the new budget of $16 million per year for workforce readiness programs. Continued funding encourages over 70,000 students to earn industry-recognized credentials and supports the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program, which provides bonus payments to schools for up to 8,400 students earning in-demand credentials.

Access to College Credit Plus is also supported in this budget with a $3 million per year investment for high school teachers to earn credentials to teach College Credit Plus courses in high schools. Since its inception, the College Credit Plus Program has saved students in grades 7-12 and their families more than $1 billion on the cost of college tuition.

Funding for $100 million in Career-Tech Equipment Grants is included in Ohio's operating budget to support equipment purchases that support career-technical education programs in schools and districts throughout the state. Priority will be given to career-technical education programs that support careers on Ohio's Top Jobs List and establish or expand IWIP programs.

A $200 million investment in **Career-Tech Construction Grants** will address waiting lists for career-technical education programs and the need for education and training programs for occupations critical to Ohio's economy. This program will provide grants to city, local, and exempted village school districts designated as the lead of a career-technical planning district to help cover facilities and equipment costs for education and training programs that support Ohio's Top Jobs List or qualify for IWIP.

This summary was compiled by the Ohio Office of Budget and Management. More information is available at obm.ohio.gov.