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My name is Sandra Himes and I am the Executive Director of the Lehigh Career & Technical Institute located in Eastern Pennsylvania near Allentown. LCTI is the largest career & technical school in Pennsylvania educating 2700 high school students in over forty-five programs of study. We also offer customized job training for our business/industry partners to train their current workforce. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of career and technical education.

Career and technical education plays a huge role in workforce and economic development for a region. Companies decide to move into an area or relocate out of an area based on whether they can have access to a skilled workforce. They look to the career & technical schools to provide a pipeline of trained workers. An increase in companies moving into an area will promote economic development for the region which translates into more jobs and a better tax base. In Pennsylvania, an increased tax base means more money for the school districts and a lesser burden on the taxpayers.

It is, then, the responsibility of the career and technical schools to offer quality programs designed to address business/industry needs. The ingredients of a quality program are as follows:

- First and foremost, there must be true involvement from business and industry. It is imperative to the success of the school and to the future success of the students. By regulation in Pennsylvania, every approved career and technical program must have an active Occupational Advisory Council or OAC. The OAC members are incumbent workers in the field—people who are doing the job every day. They advise the school on what equipment to purchase; they share their expertise on industrial safety; and to ensure a current curriculum, they recommend what skills are to be taught and maybe more importantly, what not to teach anymore because it is obsolete in the industry. At Lehigh Career & Technical Institute, we have over 500 business and industry people who advise our teachers each year.
- Secondly, a quality program will also have up-to-date instructional equipment that matches what is used in the industry. The equipment purchased must be capable of training the students for advanced skills. The former philosophy of training students for entry-level jobs is no longer acceptable. Companies now

expect new employees to hit the ground running and they can only do that if they have been trained on the same equipment that is used in the industry. For instance, it is not enough for Precision Machine students to be able to operate a CNC (computer numerical control) lathe or mill; the students must know how to program the machine if they are to be considered as a viable candidate for a position.

- Thirdly, the schools must offer industry-recognized certifications and credentialing to the students so when they apply for a position, the employers will know they have received industry-accepted training. These certifications or credentials can also be used as the foundation for articulation agreements or advanced standing at post-secondary institutions or apprenticeship programs.
- Another important factor is the instructor in the program. The instructors teaching in the quality program will be master technicians in their field of expertise and hold the industry certifications offered in the program. The OAC can again be used to help to interview perspective teachers to ask the technical questions and then advise the interviewing team as to who is the most technically skilled person for the position. This is vitally important because teachers cannot teach what they do not know.
- Lastly, the curriculum offered in the program must be based on state or national industry certifications along with 21st century employment skills. Students completing a program that is based on industry standards are almost guaranteed a job immediately upon graduation. In fact, students enrolled in quality manufacturing programs have employers lined up at the door to hire them while they are still in high school.

In summary, when schools offer quality programs, business and industry leaders know they have a reliable source for a highly skilled workforce. Having access to training for new and current employees will play a significant role in keeping a company or even expanding a company's interest in Pennsylvania. The career & technical schools in Pennsylvania are committed to the role we play in workforce development and, in turn, economic development for our state.

Thank you.