

OSZARK CAMPUS

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June 3, 2021

To: Career Education and Workforce Development Board

Arkansas Tech University-Ozark Campus provides oversight of Arkansas Tech Career Center (ATCC). I want to thank the board and the Office of Skills Development for the opportunity to share a few thoughts with regard to the pending "Rules for Secondary Technical Centers" under consideration by the Career Education and Workforce Development Board.

In the proposed rule section II A, item 5, we would like to express a concern in regard to the career center funding carry over changes. ATCC has managed over a period of ten years to build a carry-over balance through careful planning and budgeting. The center utilizes those monies to improve and modernize programming in prudent and planned measures. Currently ATCC is in the planning stages in partnership with the Russellville Chamber and industries to further align and improve ATCC program offerings with current and future industry needs. Along with the chamber's workforce board, ATCC's carry-over balance is committed to meet those recommendations to be outlined this coming August.

I recommend the board consider mirroring the carry-over model as utilized by Arkansas Department of Education and defined by Act 1105 of 2017 in relation to public school carry over funds. It is consistent with a phased and planned approach in serving the institution and the state allowing districts to present a multi-year spending plan for carryover in excess of 20%.

Arkansas Tech University, the Ozark Campus, and ATCC are working in concert with the community to continue offering relevant and accessible programming supporting the region's workforce and have carefully budgeted our carry forward over many years to fiscally meet future industry program needs. ATCC would appreciate the board's consideration of including an opportunity to present a spend down plan prior to losing our carryover funds in excess of 20% as proposed.

It is important to understand that ATCC fund balance was not accrued in a single year, but rather over a decade. ATCC does not anticipate future carryovers, considering the new tiered funding model approved by the legislature and the board in 2019. However, ATCC would appreciate the board's consideration of allowing us to utilize our current accrued balances to fund specific regional workforce programming within the next 2-3 years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Bruce Sikes, Chancellor
ATU-Ozark