Yesterday I was pleased to be on hand during Governor Mike DeWine’s first State of the State address to the General Assembly and all citizens in Ohio. As he expressed his commitment to seeing all youth and families succeed, the DYS core value of “strive to provide youth with everything they need to succeed” immediately came to mind.

The Governor outlined his vision for Ohio, which includes investing in children:

- Increased wrap-around services models for in-need youth. “We are going to expand wrap-around service models, such as the Ohio Sobriety, Treatment, Abuse, and Reducing Trauma program, known as OhioSTART,” said Governor DeWine. “It provides specialized victim services to children who have been abused or neglected because of parental drug use, and it provides drug treatment for those parents.”

- Substance abuse prevention education each year in grade levels from Kindergarten to 12th grade. “We are going to consistently and continually educate children in Kindergarten through 12th grade on the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use and teach them the skills—through a much-needed focus on social-emotional learning—on how to make healthy decisions throughout their lives,” said Governor DeWine.

- Increased resources to local communities to combat the addiction epidemic, including increased treatment capacity and a new public health fund that will leverage resources to increase public health awareness and prevention strategies. “We are going to expand the state’s treatment capacity first with more crisis support for children and for adults struggling with mental illness and addiction,” said Governor DeWine.
Workforce development was another investment the Governor prioritized in his speech. He said, "We are going to help businesses in Ohio through increased opportunity zones, and we are going to help Ohio college students by having every one of our public universities offer guaranteed tuition—that won't increase one dime—over the four years the student is in college." "We're going to invest more in our career-tech centers and two-year community colleges, and we are going to create at least 10,000 industry certificates."

This is particularly encouraging as we are working with community college partners across the state to expand vocational programs designed to ensure youth are job-ready when they go home. We are prioritizing training that can be completed at DYS, or be finished in the community, for youth to gain industry-recognized credentials for in-demand job opportunities.

I look forward to working with the Governor, his cabinet, and all of our colleagues, community partners, family members, and staff who support the success of youth and families day in and day out.