



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel recognizes Brian Myers for his dedication to trade education. He is the first teacher in the state to receive an Ohio Strong award.

By Alison Matas | Canton Rep

Brian Myers knew in 1990 he wanted to be a welder.

But today, there's a shortage of students pursuing his craft, which the Timken High School welding instructor attributes to a lack of focus.

"What we do here, we try to get them focused," he said.

On Wednesday, Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel recognized Myers for his dedication to trade education. He is the first teacher in the state to receive an Ohio Strong award — designed to commend people working in manufacturing and to provide students with role models in the skilled trades.

Mandel says as baby boomers exit careers in carpentry, automotive technology and pipefitting, not enough students have the training needed to replace them.

The reason, he contends, is because high schools have started measuring success by how many students attend college.

"The definition of success for high schools should be determined based on the number of graduates able to get jobs, not degrees," Mandel said.

April was the first month the treasurer gave Ohio Strong awards, and he traveled across the state to hand out about 15 or 20.

Timken High School Assistant Principal Chris Stone walked Mandel through shop classes Wednesday before stopping in the welding lab to surprise Myers.

Erin VanFossen, adult education director at the Buckeye Career Center, nominated Myers for the award. She explained how she watched him struggle with math as a student in the 1990s but ultimately achieve his dream of teaching welding at the high school level.

Mandel told the students present there's an influx of teenagers who attend college to earn four-year liberal arts degrees and then end up working at coffee shops or retail jobs. They're saddled with thousands of dollars in debt, and they're working in positions that don't require college degrees.

"I think what you're doing every day is ultimately going to keep our country strong," Mandel told the career technical education students.



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Myers told his students to study, listen and work hard.

"It's not an unattainable goal," Myers said. "You will get there."