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CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS IN PRACTICE

FIELD HEARING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

EXAMINING CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS IN PRACTICE

APRIL 1, 2010 (Columbus, Ohio)

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CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS IN PRACTICE

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2010

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,
Columbus, OH

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:12 p.m., at Metro Early College High School, 1929 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH, Hon. Sherrod Brown presiding.

Present: Senator Brown.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BROWN

Senator BROWN. Welcome. The Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, will come to order.

This is our first hearing in Ohio on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and I appreciate all of you students and community members joining us. This high school had a trip to Washington a year ago, and I met some of you, I think. How many of you were on that trip? OK. Some of you were. How many were on that trip and don't remember that trip?

[Laughter.]

OK. But anyway, welcome.

First, we will conduct this hearing pretty much in the following way. I will make a fairly brief opening statement just to sort of outline what the hearing is about and what the issues are about that we will be discussing.

Then I will call on each witness to give a statement. Each of them has a prepared statement that they will give. And then I will ask each witness questions, and that will be the hour and a half or so of the hearing.

I look forward to this. And again, thank you very much. I thank you as students, as faculty, as community members for hosting this hearing.

I want to especially thank our hosts, Metro Early College High School. It is fitting we hold a hearing on career and college readiness on this campus. Under the leadership of Principal Marcy Raymond, Metro Early College High School students graduate more than ready for college. You graduate as accomplished college students with as many as 2 years' worth of college credit.

I remember when I met several of you last year, the quality of questions you asked, the curiosity you showed toward government and toward other things were all quite impressive.

The HELP Committee has held two hearings in Washington on reauthorization. We heard from a panel of international experts who described the economic cost of failing to educate our youth to internationally competitive standards, and we are becoming more and more aware of that as a Nation.

In the second hearing, we heard from the Secretary of Education Arne Duncan about the Obama administration's priorities on reauthorization on education. As I said, this is the third hearing and the first field hearing that we have conducted, and we will get to the heart of the matter.

Your experience with college and career readiness in the real-life setting of schools and communities is exactly the kind of input the HELP Committee needs as we take up this legislation, this so-called reauthorization of the past law.

The Obama administration's blueprint for Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, reauthorization calls for reorienting title I toward career and college readiness for all students. The States are moving in that direction as well. The Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association have partnered to develop a common core of college- and career-ready standards in English and in mathematics. This is a big step forward.

The last two renewals, the last two reauthorizations of ESEA called on States to set "challenging standards" in the core subject areas and to develop State-wide assessment systems aligned to those standards in reading and mathematics. Those standards were not necessarily connected to the knowledge and skills we need for college or the 21st century workplace. This disconnect has been clear for many years.

Yesterday, I had a roundtable discussion in Summit County in Akron at the Summit County Job Center. Every person around the table echoed the need for us to do a better job of connecting young people to college and careers during their time in school.

Ohio has been a leader in the standards movement. Our State is an enthusiastic participant in the common core standards process. Ohio has moved to benchmark its standards against international standards, and the State is part of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Yet we have a long way to go.

Ohio's average freshman graduation is 79 percent, exceeding the national average by 5 percent. However, the rate for black and Hispanic students is just above 64 percent. For low-income students, the rate is 73 percent. Sixty percent of Ohio's recent high school graduates enroll in college, which is below the national average of 66 percent.

At the beginning, as freshmen, we have a higher rate of graduation in high school, a higher rate in Ohio of graduation than the national average. But in terms of going on to college, seniors going on to college, we have a significantly lower rate. Too many students never make it through the front door of a college campus. Those that do often do not make it through to a college degree or a certificate.

Consider the following statistics from the Ohio Board of Regents. In 2007, 32 percent of Ohio high school graduates enrolled in Ohio public college took remedial math. So that is, one-third of Ohio high school students took remedial math in college. Twenty per-

cent, one in five, took remedial English. Forty percent took at least one remedial course. So either math or English.

For students starting in Ohio's public colleges in 2001, less than 60 percent graduated within 6 years. At community college, only 9 percent earned degrees, and just over half remained enrolled after 3 years.

For our State and our Nation to remain competitive, we must dramatically increase these numbers. President Obama has made it a top priority, especially focusing on community colleges and helping people complete what they have begun when they are there.

It will take more than a new set of standards and better assessments to get there. We actually have to deliver on opportunities for career and college readiness for our students. That is why we are here today. That is why we chose Metro.

Today's witnesses have delivered on the promise of career and college readiness for students in some of Ohio's most disadvantaged communities. We know what works. We know how to measure it. We just have to mobilize the public will and the resources to do it.

I would like to thank each of the witnesses again, and thank all of you that joined us. I will introduce the witnesses in the order seated and ask that they speak in that order.

Crystal Jordan is a senior here at Metro from the Columbus City School District. Her home school is Walnut Ridge on the east side. During her entire senior year, Crystal has been enrolled in early college course work at Ohio State—excuse me, at The Ohio State University. I apologize.

I am always corrected when I just call it "Ohio State," like I did all my life. When I went there, I called it "Ohio State."

After graduation in June, Crystal plans to attend The Ohio State University and major in marketing. She was awarded a Morrill Scholarship for full in-State tuition at OSU. Her parents are William and Rita Jordan.

Are your parents here by chance?

Ms. JORDAN. No.

Senator BROWN. No? OK, I was going to introduce them and embarrass you if they were.

[Laughter.]

Bob Caldwell, career education. Bob Caldwell has been superintendent of Wolf Creek Local School since 1997.

Wolf Creek Local School District is located in Waterford, OH, situated in southeastern Ohio, in the heart of the Muskingum River Valley in northwestern Washington County. It encompasses approximately 124 square miles, has two school buildings—Waterford Elementary School for K through 8, and Waterford High School, 9 through 12—and serves around 700 students.

He started his career in one of the most rural counties in Ohio, Vinton County, and one of the poorest. Prior to joining Wolf Creek Local Schools, Mr. Caldwell was superintendent for Warren Local Schools. He has also been a school principal and an English teacher.

Jacqueline Silas-Butler, whom I have known I think longer than anybody on the panel, has served as executive director of Project GRAD Akron since 2006.

Project GRAD Akron is 1 of 12 affiliate sites of Project GRAD USA, one of the leaders in the Nation. It is an educational reform program, which was established 8 years ago to increase high school and graduation rates of the more than 2,000 students in the Buchtel cluster of the Akron Public Schools. Since its inception, Project GRAD Akron has provided research-based services and programs for students in grades kindergarten through college, their families, and their teachers.

Jacqueline is from Middletown, OH, originally. An attorney, received her Bachelor of Arts degree in history and political science from OSU and her J.D. from the University of Akron School of Law.

Kristi Phillips-Schwartz has served as director of education initiatives with the Cincinnati Business Committee since March 2008. She works with the Cincinnati Regents' top CEOs on education issues, primarily focused on improving educational quality in the urban core.

Ms. Phillips-Schwartz comes to the CBC from the Thomas Fordham Institute, an organization devoted entirely to the reform of elementary and secondary education. She is a graduate of Ohio State, earned a B.A. in art education, and an M.A. in educational policy and leadership. She is a native of Cincinnati.

Steve Jackson, senior vice president of Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development. He joined Great Oaks—I think Great Oaks is the largest vocational school in the State, right?

Mr. JACKSON. Yes.

Senator BROWN. He joined Great Oaks more than 30 years ago as a marketing teacher and later a building administrator, provides leadership now in curriculum, instruction, technology, adult education, and represents Great Oaks in a variety of community organizations. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from Ohio State and received his Master's from Xavier University, both schools that were knocked out of the NCAA tournament way earlier than I predicted on my brackets that I chose, thank you very much.

[Laughter.]

So welcome to all five of you.

Crystal will begin. Each witness will speak for about 5 minutes, I think, and then we will do questions.

So pass the microphone down, and Crystal, we will start with you.

STATEMENT OF CRYSTAL JORDAN, STUDENT, METRO EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL, COLUMBUS, OH

Ms. JORDAN. Good afternoon, Senator Brown and members of the committee.

Senator BROWN. I am sorry. I can't believe I just interrupted you. Everything that you say will be recorded in the committee testimony that other members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee staff and members of the Senate will have access to. So even though you don't see 10 of my colleagues sitting to my left, they will all have access to what you say, and it will be printed.

Thank you. Sorry.

Ms. JORDAN. That is OK.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here and share my thoughts with you today.

My name is Crystal Jordan. I am a senior here at Metro High School, Metro Early College High School.

As a Metro Early College student, I am a graduating senior at my home high school, Walnut Ridge, while concurrently participating in the program here at Metro. Metro Early College High School is an educational option for our partner districts and is one of the only two options for early college STEM in Franklin County.

For those of you who may not be aware, briefly, Metro is a small, public high school option for students from across Franklin County. We are not a charter school. As an early college high school, students are expected to complete all of their high school requirements and up to 60 hours of college credit in 4 years. Our early college studies are being implemented through a STEM curriculum—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

First, I would like to thank you for the support of early college high schools through innovative programming. Your support of schools that are creative and innovative is spurring high school education reform in Ohio and creating global citizens like me.

Attending Metro Early College High School has prepared me well and has been one of the wisest choices I have ever made. I have had the opportunity to do things that I never thought I could do in an environment that challenged me to maximize my potential.

For example, I participate in an advisory each year at Metro. During advisory, my classmates and I would plan to carry out various service learning projects and explore fields of interest through career shadowing days and college visits.

Most schools don't think that the development of me as a citizen who is active and responsible for making things better in the community is an important part of the responsibility of the school. That is not the case for Metro. Metro is all about helping me see my future in a way that causes me to notice what needs to change and what my role might be.

Metro takes seriously the opportunity and exposure necessary for students to explore career fields in STEM. I learned a lot about myself and what I might like to do through my internships. While attending Metro, I have completed two internships, one of which was required and the other I chose as an elective—the first internship at a local glass art studio called Glass Axis and the other at the Franklin Park Conservatory's Chihuly Resource Center.

During these internships, I discovered that I have a love for visual, hands-on art and that STEM thinking is an important part of the work that they do to create the wonderful exhibitions that I love. I learned skills that included providing services and goods to clients, helping art organizations to balance their finances, and upholding functional business.

I have shadowed the director of visual productions at Bath and Body Works and a public relations specialist at a major local advertising design company. These experiences have taught me more about the diverse fields of business and art and have contributed to my fascination with the fields.

At Metro, once students have completed the credits of a full high school curriculum, they have the opportunity to Gateway, which is what we call the presentation of our capacity to do college-level work. During my Gateway, I presented the habits and skills that I practiced throughout Metro classes. These tools prepared me to succeed in college-level classes.

I had to provide examples of high school coursework and my grades to a panel of OSU, Battelle, and Metro professionals, my parents, and a student advocate. It was a lot of pressure, but it prepared me to do things like speak to you all today.

Metro has carefully exposed me to college courses. The first college course that I completed was a 4-day entomology course taught at Ohio State's Stone Lab on Lake Erie. Every student in this class was from Metro, and although the class was short, it provided enough challenge to motivate me to step up my performance.

Because Metro is an early college high school and is a public option, Metro students do not need to be concerned about financial issues when taking courses at Ohio State. The tuition, books, and fees are included in the operating budget for our school and are not a burden on me as a student. It is really a scholarship opportunity for students. This allows students and their families to focus on their coursework rather than worry about having funding for their classes.

When I attend college next year, I will have a significant amount of coursework completed with success. I think that these opportunities are beneficial to all students because it enables us to achieve.

Attending Metro Early College High School has shown me that it is my responsibility to become a peer model to underclassmen who are looking forward to succeeding in the same way that I am. Because I am a member of Metro's first graduating class, I have gotten the opportunity to experience so much, and often, Metro gives me the opportunity to share my experiences with other students and with you.

Participating in an early college program is especially beneficial for me, because I am given the chance to explore different fields of interest before I even start college as a freshman. Last quarter, I took an economics course for my intended major of marketing. From taking this course, I found that I have a great interest in the analysis of statistical data.

I have always struggled with organization, study habits, and time management, and as an early college high school, Metro did its job to prepare me by providing me with skills and effective habits to overcome my learning weaknesses in a supportive environment. Adults call this 21st century skills, but I think they are survival skills for my future.

Classes are about 20 to 1 at Metro, and it is easy to talk to your instructor about any questions that you have. Also, Metro provides support through advisories, counselors, and tutors to help students gain confidence and a positive outlook on college.

Attending Metro has been a very beneficial, challenging, and fun experience for my classmates and me. Next year, I plan to attend The Ohio State University as a full-time student, and I am a Morrill Scholarship recipient. I look forward to the possibility of seeing

more students like me who have had the opportunities and instruction that Metro has provided.

I encourage the committee to consider continuing its investment in early college high schools as you review and make decisions on the reauthorization of legislation. There are more students like me who need this kind of environment, training, and encouragement.

Thank you for your time.

Senator BROWN. Thank you. Thank you, Crystal.

[Applause.]

Crystal, thank you.

I want to introduce Moira Lenehan, who grew up in Akron, is on my Washington staff, does education issues, and has been on Capitol Hill for a number of years. She joined us about a year ago. This is Moira sitting next to me.

Mr. Caldwell.

Thank you again, Crystal.

STATEMENT OF BOB CALDWELL, SUPERINTENDENT, WOLF CREEK LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATERFORD, OH

Mr. CALDWELL. Thank you for inviting me, Senator Brown, to be before you today. I care deeply about public education.

As previously stated, my name is Bob Caldwell, and I am superintendent of Wolf Creek Local Schools in Washington County, OH.

While I have been in education for 34 years, only 14 of those have been as superintendent of Wolf Creek. However, all 34 have been in rural Appalachian Ohio, called the southeastern.

Wolf Creek Local School has a total population, K–12, of 640 students. This is about 50 in each grade. Fifty-nine percent of our teachers have 10 or more years of experience and make an average of a little over $46,000 a year. This, compared to the Ohio average with 10 or more years experience of $56,000 and the overall State average income of being about $68,000.

A strong argument can be made, as a result of this, that rural and Appalachian school teachers become embedded in their communities and do not relocate for career or financial reasons.

Wolf Creek, while attaining an "excellent" rating the past 2 years on the report card and having a 98 percent graduation rate, concluded that we needed help. Now let me explain what I mean by that.

The OACHE, which is called the Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education, was established by the General Assembly in 1993, with the mission of increasing educational attainment in the then 29 counties of Appalachian Ohio. The OACHE pursues its mission primarily by awarding 2-year access project grants on a competitive basis to K–12 schools in the region.

These access projects implement activities that encourage all students to consider college by helping them overcome barriers to post-secondary education. The origin of OACHE was a suggestion by former famed restaurateur and then member of the Iowa Board of Regents Bob Evans to the college presidents that they address the low college going rate in his native Appalachian Ohio.

Acting on his suggestion, the Ohio Board of Regents funded the study—this study was completed in 1992—that has become the definitive work of why Appalachians do not go to college. The study,

titled "Appalachian Access and Success," instigated the OACHE's creation.

Access and Success found that although 80 percent of high school students surveyed wanted to attend college, only about 30 percent actually attended. This rate fell way below the rates of Ohio, 41 percent, and the entire United States that you referenced earlier, 62 percent.

The study further found low self-esteem, poverty, and lack of information to be the strongest barriers to college participation. To address this serious problem, in 1993, the Ohio General Assembly established the OACHE and charged the new consortium with increasing the college going rate in Appalachian Ohio.

Another analogy would be the Morrill Scholarship, which was referenced earlier—that Crystal actually received—at The Ohio State University is named in honor of Senator Justin Morrill, author of the 1862 Morrill Act that facilitated access to higher education for students previously underrepresented at America's colleges.

The Office of Minority Affairs at Ohio State offers the programs to promote diversity, multiculturalism, and leadership. Among the criteria to be considered include applicant status as a potential first-generation college student; applicant's racial, ethnic, tribal background; socioeconomic factors; and Ohio county of residence.

For the purpose of the scholarship, the Morrill Scholarship, people living in the 31-county Appalachian region are considered Appalachian Americans. Why are Appalachian Americans considered to be a minority for the purpose of this scholarship? Perhaps it is because many rural Americans are expected to follow their parents' footsteps. For instance, blue collar work is encouraged in lieu of seeking higher education.

Certainly, Appalachians have a history of having a strong sense of community, and they frown on boasting, and college graduates simply seems to be boasting. Compared with national averages, one in five Appalachian children live in poverty. Nearly 30 percent of third graders in Appalachia either have not seen a dentist in the past year or have never had a dental exam. This, according to Goins, Spencer, Krummel in a 2003–4 study.

In 1999, Waterford High School, which is a high school in Wolf Creek Local Schools, applied for and received the OACHE grant. The grant provided numerous opportunities for our students. The grant paid for individual and college visits to colleges and other activities, including attending of a Cleveland Cavaliers game.

Currently, at Waterford High School in the halls are posters, 62 posters representing 62 different colleges made by the 62 students enrolled in Career Search for Seniors class, which came from the idea generated from the OACHE grant. We have grown from 30 percent attending college in 1999 to 80 percent of our graduating class in 2008 that are attending college. Waterford, as a result of this success, no longer receives the OACHE grant.

The Battelle for Kids Ohio Appalachian Collaborative may just be the answer to our problem as I referenced through this. This collaboration joins the average daily membership of 21 rural Ohio school districts, which serve approximately 35,000 students.

It is our belief that this collaboration will allow us to compete against Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati for State, Federal, and private grants in a way that, individually, none of the 21 schools simply could. We, members of the collaborative effort, hope to increase the number of Advanced Placement courses offered and students who score at least a three.

We hope to attain a 100 percent graduation rate. Yes, Wolf Creek is at 98 percent graduation rate, and we are proud of that. However, if you are in the 2 percent—and at Wolf Creek, that is one or two students—that did not graduate, then we still have a problem.

I believe that all the students in the now 31-county Appalachian region deserve access to an education that maximizes their potential for opportunity and accomplishment. "It is a moral, global, and economic imperative to enable and empower these historically underserved students, thereby enriching their environments and enhancing their quality of life." That was a quote from Battelle for Kids.

Districts in The Battelle for Kids Ohio Appalachian Collaborative may be small and separated by many miles, but they know the fastest way to innovate and improve is to learn. Bolstered by good faith and shared responsibilities by everyone involved, this group of districts in this collaborative have an opportunity to exhibit transformational leadership to produce dramatic improvements in student outcomes.

The ultimate goal is to: (1) expand student opportunities; (2) two, enhance teacher quality and instruction; (3) transform leadership; (4) understand and use assessments and data; and (5) engage in communities.

We hope to recognize and reward effective teaching and leadership by using specific research-based strategies, including teacher-level value-added analysis in grades 3 through 12, formulate assessment practices, results-focused collaboration within and across districts, and community engagement.

I am proud of the progress that Wolf Creek and other districts have made, but as I referenced earlier, you are happy if you are in the 98 percent that graduate, but not so joyful if you are the 2 percent that did not. According to Robert Frost, we have miles to go before we sleep.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Caldwell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BOB CALDWELL

SUMMARY*

There are school children in Ohio's rural Appalachian region receiving a $7,056 education, while the *State average* (not the most expensive) per pupil expenditure is $9,216. The $2,250 shortfall translates into $45,000 less annually per classroom of 20 students, or over $2,250,000 less annually for a school district with 1,000 students.

There are school districts in Ohio's rural Appalachian region with local property valuation per pupil as low as $38,229, while the *State average* (not the highest) is $134,211. These numbers illustrate the lack of ability for some local communities to raise revenue to support education for their children.

*My testimony uses the data from this summary to express its need for the Battelle for Kids Collaboration.

Senator Brown, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I know that you care deeply about the future of Public Education.

My name is Bob Caldwell and I am the Superintendent of Wolf Creek Local Schools in Washington County, OH.

While I have been in education for 34 years, only 14 have been as Superintendent of Wolf Creek. However, all 34 have been in the Appalachian Region of southern Ohio.

Few issues do I carry the passion that I have toward helping the young people of my home region.

Wolf Creek Local School has a total school population (K–12) of 640 students. This is an average of 50 in each grade. Fifty-nine percent of our teachers have 10 or more years of experience and make on the average a little less than $46,000. This compared to the Ohio average with 10 or more years experience of $56,000, while the State's overall income was just over $68,000.

A strong argument can be made that Rural and Appalachian school teachers become embedded in their communities and do not relocate for career or financial reasons.

This testimony is not just about the teachers commitment to the students. It is about the students, the people who will soon be sitting in our respective chairs.

Wolf Creek while attaining an "excellent" rating the past 2 years on the report card and have a 98 percent graduation rate concluded they needed help!

The Battelle for Kids Ohio Appalachian Collaborative may just be the answer to our problem. This collaboration joins the average daily membership of 21 rural Ohio school districts, which serve approximately 35,000 students.

It is our belief that this collaboration will allow us to compete against Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati for State, Federal, and private grants in a way that individually we simply could not.

We, members of the collaborative effort, hope to increase the number of Advanced Placement courses offered and students who score at least a three. We hope to attain a 100 percent graduation rate. Yes, Wolf Creek is at 98 percent graduation rate and we are proud of that, however, what if you are in the 2 percent (one or two students for Wolf Creek) that did not graduate.

It has been quoted that Ohio has the 4th largest rural school enrollment in the country and one of every two Ohio districts is rural.

The Battelle for Kids Ohio Appalachian Collaborative is bolstered by good faith and shared responsibilities by everyone involved. This group of districts is uniquely challenged by a shrinking tax base, difficulty in recruiting teachers but welcomes the mission of accelerating college and career readiness of every student.

We believe that six major areas will be our focus: (1) expand student opportunities; (2) enhance teacher quality and instruction; (3) transform leadership; (4) understand and use assessments and data; (5) engage communities; and (6) recognize and reward effective teaching and leadership.

Senator BROWN. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Caldwell.

Ms. Silas-Butler.

STATEMENT OF JACQUELINE A. SILAS-BUTLER, ESQ., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PROJECT GRAD, AKRON, OH

Ms. SILAS-BUTLER. Good afternoon. My name is Jacqueline Silas-Butler, and I thank you, Senator Brown, for inviting us here today for this very important topic.

On behalf of the national Project GRAD network, let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Senator Sherrod Brown and his colleagues for authorizing Project GRAD as a Federal program in the Higher Education Act.

Additionally, thank you for inviting Project GRAD Akron to represent our organization, as I share about the important work that we do throughout the United States to assist students as they successfully prepare for college and career and become lifelong productive members of our country.

Project GRAD is a national reform program which initially began in 1993 in Houston, TX, in one feeder pattern. Today, we have 13 sites in 10 States, serving 213 schools and more than 134,000 students, their families, and teachers. We work in collaboration with local school districts to ensure academic achievement from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade and successful completion of high school and college for economically disadvantaged students.

Project GRAD is a unique model with an ambitious mission of increasing the high school and college graduation rates of the students we serve, who typically come from some of the lowest-performing schools. Ninety-two percent of Project GRAD USA's students are African-American or Hispanic, and 83 percent of the students served are low-income. Most of the students we serve are the first in their family to consider college as a viable option.

Project GRAD is the only educational reform effort that has been cited as a promising whole school reform leading to college success by many national organizations, including Building Engineering and Science Talent, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, Business-Higher Education Forum, American Youth Policy Forum, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

In the longest-served group of schools, Project GRAD students are completing college at a rate 92 percent above the national average for students from similar backgrounds. Nationally, Project GRAD has offered college scholarships to more than 9,600 students, worth over $40 million, and has nearly 13,000 high school students in the scholarship pipeline, making it one of the country's largest college access organizations for low-income students.

Nationally, Project GRAD's scholarships have sent high school graduates to more than 100 institutions of higher education, including The Ohio State University, The University of Akron, Kent State University, The University of Cincinnati, Lorain Community College, Cornell, Morehouse, Harvard, Emory, Rice, Spelman, Georgetown, Texas, Virginia, Howard, Princeton, and Yale.

The uniqueness of our model centers around our belief that Graduation Really Achieves Dreams—GRAD—and that we work with all students in any school we serve. Our model includes the following areas: community partnerships/engagement, academic support, student support and parental engagement, college access and retention, and scholarship.

As the executive director of Project GRAD Akron, I can personally attest that we are seeing tremendous gains for the students we serve. The success we have experienced is due in great part to the collaboration we have with the Akron Public Schools, local universities, as well as having the community engaged in our efforts.

Since 2002, our reading and math scores have increased, our schools are making a year or more growth in overall performance and have outpaced similar schools in the district, and our high school was the only high school in the district that met the Federal benchmark in reading and math AYP, adequate yearly progress.

Since 2006, Project GRAD Akron has awarded nearly $600,000 in scholarships to Buchtel High School's graduates, and two students were the recipients of the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship. In May, we will award $228,000 in additional scholarships to the class of 2010.

I would like to close my testimony by presenting some of the evaluation results that demonstrate that Project GRAD is a success. Dr. Eric Bettinger of Stanford University conducted studies in 2007 and 2009 at Project GRAD sites in Ohio. His results included a number of positive findings.

Graduation rates have improved across all Project GRAD high schools in Ohio since the inception of Project GRAD. Fourth grade math scores have increased in Project GRAD schools relative to comparison schools. Student disciplinary rates have fallen in Project GRAD schools relative to comparison schools. Student truancy rates have fallen in Project GRAD schools relative to comparison schools. Teacher attendance has also improved relative to comparison schools.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present my testimony in support of the reauthorization of ESEA. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Silas-Butler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JACQUELINE A. SILAS-BUTLER, ESQ.

On behalf of the national Project GRAD network, let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Senator Sherrod Brown and his colleagues for authorizing Project GRAD as a Federal program in the Higher Education Act (HEA). Additionally, thank you for inviting Project GRAD Akron to represent our organization as I share about the important work that we do throughout the United States to assist students as they successfully prepare for college and career and become lifelong productive members of our country.

Project GRAD is a national reform model which initially began in 1993 in Houston, Texas in one feeder pattern. Today, we have 13 sites in 10 States serving 213 schools and more than 134,000 students, their families, and teachers. We work in collaboration with local school districts to ensure academic achievement from Pre-K–12, and successful completion of high school and college for economically disadvantaged students.

Project GRAD is a unique model with an ambitious mission of increasing the high school and college graduation rates of the students we serve, who typically come from some of the lowest performing schools. Ninety-two percent of PG USA's students are African-American or Hispanic and eighty-three percent of the students served are low-income. Most of the students we serve are the first in their family to consider college as a viable option.

Project GRAD is the only education reform effort that has been cited as a promising whole school reform leading to college success by many national organizations including Building Engineering and Science Talent, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, Business-Higher Education Forum, American Youth Policy Forum, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

In the longest-served group of schools, Project GRAD students are completing college at a rate 92 percent above the national average for students from similar backgrounds. Nationally, Project GRAD has already offered college scholarships to more than 9,600 students, worth over $40 million, and has nearly 13,000 high school students in the scholarship pipeline, making it one of the country's largest college access organizations for low-income students. Nationally, Project GRAD's scholarships have sent high school graduates to more than 100 institutions of higher education, including, The Ohio State University, The University of Akron, Kent State University, The University of Cincinnati, Lorain Community College, Cornell, Morehouse, Harvard, Emory, Rice, Spelman, Georgetown, Texas, Virginia, Howard, Princeton, and Yale.

The uniqueness of our model centers around our belief that **G**raduation **R**eally **A**chieves **D**reams (GRAD) and that we work with **all** students in **any** school we serve. Our model includes the following areas: Community Partnerships/Engagement, Academic Support, Student Support and Parent Engagement, College Access and Retention, and Scholarship.

As the Executive Director of Project GRAD Akron, I can personally attest that we are seeing tremendous gains for the students we serve. The success we have experienced is due in great part to the collaboration we have with the Akron Public Schools, local universities, as well as engaging the community in our efforts. Since 2002, our reading and math scores have increased, our schools are making a year

or more growth in overall performance and have outpaced similar schools in the district, and our high school was the only high school in the district that met the Federal benchmark in reading and math (AYP—Adequate Yearly Progress). Since 2006, Project GRAD Akron has awarded nearly $600,000 in scholarships to Buchtel High School's graduates and two students were the recipients of the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship. In May, we will award $228,000 in additional scholarships to the Class of 2010.

I would like to close my testimony by presenting some of the evaluation results that demonstrate Project GRAD's success. Dr. Eric Bettinger of Stanford University conducted studies in 2007 and 2009 at Project GRAD sites in Ohio. His results included a number of positive findings:

- Graduation rates have improved across all Project GRAD high schools in Ohio since the inception of Project GRAD.
- Fourth grade math scores have increased in Project GRAD schools relative to comparison schools.
- Student disciplinary rates have fallen in Project GRAD schools relative to comparison schools.
- Student truancy has fallen in Project GRAD schools relative to comparison schools.
- Teacher attendance has also improved relative to comparison schools.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present my testimony in support of the reauthorization of ESEA.

ATTACHMENT

PROJECT GRAD USA®—GRADUATION REALLY ACHIEVES DREAMS

THE PRE-K–16 PROJECT GRAD MODEL

Project GRAD (GRAD) believes that, with the proper support, all students in high-need, low-income schools can graduate from high school and successfully complete a college degree.

GRAD'S STRUCTURAL MODEL

GRAD's school reform model:

(1) works in feeder patterns to ensure that the maximum number of Pre-K through 12th grade students receive academic support and college access knowledge,

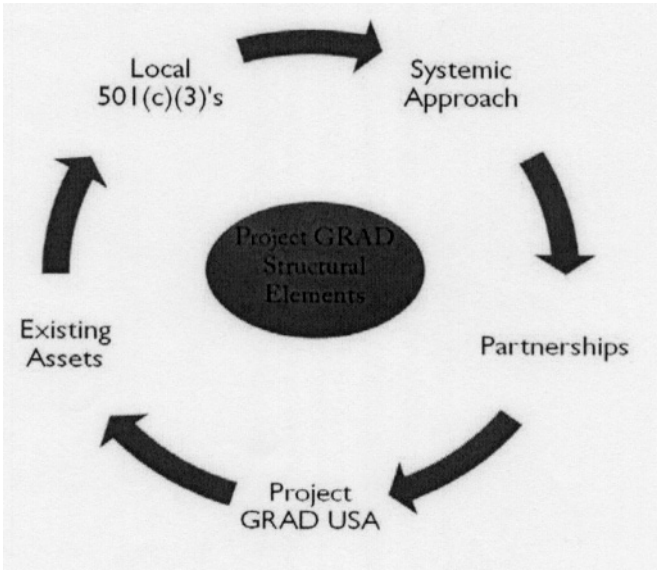
(2) establishes a local 501(c)(3) that mobilizes community resources and works in close partnership with, but external to, each school district,

(3) works with existing assets in each school to maintain a cost-effective, scalable, and replicable system,

(4) integrates the services of all organizations in a school that are working to improve student academic achievement and motivation,

(5) ensures program quality and provides consulting services through the national office, and

(6) works to ensure that students graduate from college.



GRAD'S MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

GRAD USA has a three-tiered management structure that ensures program integrity, accountability, and performance measurement at the national, district, and school level. The national GRAD office has responsibility for quality control, technical assistance, professional development, knowledge management, and policy. The district superintendent and leaders collaborate with GRAD USA and the local site to implement the model and allow State test results on student achievement to be submitted to the national GRAD office. Local GRAD sites are responsible for on-the-ground implementation and oversight in close partnership with GRAD USA.

GRAD'S PROGRAMMATIC MODEL: PRE-K–16

GRAD's model ensures student success by creating a college-going culture. The following elements are critical:

- Academic Support
- School Climate
- Parent & Community Engagement
- School-based Social Services
- College Readiness Initiative



ACADEMIC SUPPORT: PRE-K–7

GRAD's core Pre-K–7 model improves student achievement through a support system that enhances standards-based literacy and mathematics programs. The implementation of GRAD literacy and mathematics in a school or district does not require replacement of an existing curriculum, unless that curriculum is not producing acceptable student progress. GRAD provides academic support to better prepare and develop GRAD teachers' abilities to implement the existing curriculum or program through curriculum alignment, professional learning, data-driven instruction, on-the-ground coaching, and resources.

GRAD USA content specialists gather both qualitative and quantitative data about the reading and mathematics programs, review State test data, and identify perceived gaps or needs. Both the reading and mathematics curricula are analyzed to determine how well they align with State standards, State tests, and district benchmarks. The content specialists and local GRAD site meet with district administrators and teachers to agree on student achievement gaps and develop an action plan. GRAD USA requires in-school coaches who confer with teachers to establish goals, conduct classroom observations, take notes, provide feedback, and develop strategies for improving instruction. During grade level/departmental meetings, coaches provide embedded "just-in-time" professional development. GRAD's National Coach conducts regular visits to observe and provide support while modeling best practices and brokers additional professional development from district and/or university experts.

GRAD Literacy Coaches assist teachers in helping students develop reading fluency, comprehension skills, composition skills and demonstrate how teachers can help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. GRAD's goals for literacy include proficiency on State high-stakes tests; a research-based reading program; and a well-implemented, research-based composition program. The GRAD philosophy of teaching and learning for mathematics focuses on raising expectations about learning to include higher order understanding and application of concepts at all grade levels. Based on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

Principles and Standards, Project GRAD Mathematics uses carefully selected instructional activities and developmentally appropriate manipulatives to foster an understanding of concepts and processes that stimulate higher order thinking skills. Teachers are provided with the tools and support necessary for transforming their classrooms into environments characterized by student engagement in mathematical reasoning, non-routine problem-solving, and communication.

SCHOOL CLIMATE: PRE-K–7

GRAD USA's approach to school climate ensures that the school has a safe and personalized environment where students feel secure and valued and instruction is student-centered. When the school climate program is determined to be ineffective, GRAD USA provides a program such as Safe & Effective Schools that is based on distributed leadership and supports a personalized, caring learning environment that leads to more effective instruction resulting in increased student academic achievement.

PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: PRE-K–7

GRAD's theory of change is rooted in the belief that schools operate in the context of communities and key stakeholders—especially parents—must take ownership of school reform. Through GRAD USA's Parent & Community Engagement (PCE) model, a locally rooted, focused constituency of parents and community leaders advocate on behalf of low-income students to achieve lasting school reform, bring about change in students' lives, and inspire hope. PCE was developed with the understanding that parents and guardians play a critical role in ensuring academic success for students, and that schools are more than educational institutions; they are centers for community life. Key PCE activities include GRAD's Walk for Success℠, Walk for Success Rally, Parent University, and Parent Conference.

SOCIAL SERVICES: PRE-K–12

Local GRAD sites partner with campus-based social service organizations or implement GRAD's Campus Family Support (CFS) to provide interventions for student and family needs. The Pre-K–12 model includes a campus manager who oversees case load management and a family support team. The Campus Manager is the initial point of contact for all community agencies, tutors, mentors, and groups offering support services for the school. GRAD's Campus Manager provides intensive, ongoing services (e.g., guidance, tutoring, and access to enrichment activities) to a predetermined number of students at each school. If necessary, the Campus Manager makes referrals to outside agencies. If there is no existing relationship with outside agencies, the Campus Manager identifies those agencies and ensures that they have the capability and resources to meet student needs. CFS staff provide a "safety net" for students through counseling, mentoring, and referrals.

GRAD'S COLLEGE READINESS AND RETENTION INITIATIVE: 8–16

The six elements of GRAD's College Readiness and Retention Initiative include the following:

(1) **Academic Preparation and High Expectations.** GRAD requires partner districts to provide a high quality, strictly aligned academic curriculum for grades Pre-K–12.

(2) **8th Grade Readiness.** To prepare 8th grade students for the rigor of a college preparatory curriculum in high school, GRAD leverages current strategies and implements enhanced ones, so that all students leave 8th grade with personalized academic preparation and a college and career plan.

(3) **9th Grade Transition and Readiness.** GRAD ensures a base of success for students advancing to and in 9th grade through a solid focus on preparation for academic rigor. Students' 6-Year Scholar Plans are revisited and adjusted as needed to ensure that students and their parents are on target to achieve college readiness.

(4) **The College Preparatory Program in Grades 10 through 12.** GRAD's 10th through 12th grade academic readiness strategies ensure that high school students successfully complete the college preparatory curriculum and graduate from high school ready for college (inclusive of mathematics, literacy, and science). GRAD's non-negotiable requirement with the partner district ensures a default college preparatory curriculum aligned with State and national standards and grade-to-grade.

(5) **Educator Capacity Building.** Educator capacity is built through a school transformation initiative, professional development, and school-based academic coaches.

(6) **Systems Integration.** Working as a systems integrator, GRAD utilizes existing partnerships and seeks new opportunities to broker research-based, proven existing programs and initiatives.

Summer Academic and College Access Programs

GRAD provides Summer Bridge (8th to 9th transition program) and Summer Institute (9th to 10th and 10th to 11th transition programs) in partnership with local colleges or universities to address remediation/acceleration and enrichment needs and help build a college-going culture, inspiring students to graduate from high school and advance to college. GRAD hosts summer programs on college campuses, hosts College Access Forums, and conducts college tours to further connect students to post-secondary institutions.

College Access & Career Expectations

The College Readiness Team, led by the College Access Coordinator, provides targeted college access support, career planning and mentorship, and peer leadership opportunities integrated into every aspect of a student's high school career. This support strengthens the connection between post-secondary education and a student's desired career that is planned and tracked through a student's 6-Year Scholar Plan.

Student and Parent Constituency Influence

To generate and sustain a college-bound culture that systematically targets every aspect of a student's high school career, the team engages students, parents, faculty, and the greater community in generating a college-bound culture. GRAD hosts an annual Walk for Success, a door-to-door campaign visiting the homes of families of 8th and 9th grade students to formalize the GRAD Scholarship Contract and serve as a constituency development tool to support academic achievement and develop a college-going culture. GRAD also leverages its success to develop a student-driven peer constituency in support of college access and graduation using campus-based, student-led peer leadership groups.

Affordability

The promise of the GRAD Scholarship is the cornerstone of GRAD's college access efforts and influences the belief in both students and parents that college is a possibility. The $4,000 ($1,000 yearly) GRAD Scholarship serves as a motivation for students and is a source impacting affordability by leveraging other scholarship funds and financial aid. GRAD's College Access Coordinator individually monitors and counsels all students to ensure that they are prepared academically, and on track to receive the GRAD Scholarship and enter college as well as aid students in completing other scholarship and financial aid forms.

College Persistence

CRI targets the critical transition from high school to college through key support and retention strategies for GRAD Scholars in their freshman year of college. After the first year of college, GRAD leverages local site-based College Managers who provide emotional, social, and financial aid support throughout the students' college years with a goal of ensuring college graduation.

[Applause.]

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Ms. Silas-Butler.

Ms. Phillips-Schwartz, thank you for joining us.

STATEMENT OF KRISTI PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION INITIATIVES, CINCINNATI BUSINESS COMMITTEE, CINCINNATI, OH

Ms. PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ. Thank you.

I am Kristi Phillips-Schwartz, and I am with the Cincinnati Business Committee. Thank you for having me today. Thank you for hosting this here at Metro.

Cincinnati and northern Kentucky have, like many communities, a diverse array of education initiatives focused on improving the lives of and, more specifically, educational outcomes of children and youth. These resources are supported by a wide array of public and private institutions who share a common interest in the success of

youth to lead to a more vibrant community and, speaking as a representative of the business community, creating a more educated workforce.

Unfortunately, we have not seen the dramatic improvements we would desire in the education system. We know this, in part, because of key components of No Child Left Behind, such as requiring every child to be tested. These have helped to provide a better understanding of how every child is or is not being served.

When we looked at this data in our region, we came to the realization about 4 years ago that we needed to focus the time, energy, and talent of the entire community on specific strategies in a very coordinated manner to achieve the improvements that students and parents deserve. We needed to focus our work starting at birth through some form of college, cradle to career as we call it. And as a result, the community created something called the Strive Partnership.

The Strive Partnership looked to bring leaders from the education, business, nonprofit, philanthropic, and civic sectors to create a common vision for education in our community and to set some concrete goals for improvement.

We set five ambitions goals. Every child will be prepared for school, supported inside and outside of school, succeed academically, enroll in some form of college, and graduate and enter a career. We selected concrete measures related to each goal and put them in a report card published annually, capturing trends and guiding collective decisionmaking around where our community needs to focus strategies critical for improving future student outcomes.

Many of the strategies being pursued in the Strive Partnership are consistent with the direction that President Obama and Education Secretary Duncan are pursuing through policy and Race to the Top funding, including the development of data-driven action plans and continuous improvement strategies to enhance social services and academic instruction; better connecting health and social services to schools through our community learning centers; placing significant emphasis on improving teacher quality and effectiveness; and promoting the development of a portfolio of high-performing schools that turnaround our lowest-achieving schools.

Business leaders in Cincinnati have been engaged in and supportive of the abovementioned strategies being pursued by the Strive Partnership on various levels. A recent example of how the Strive Partnership has helped to bring community leaders together to unite and advocate behind a common agenda has been in the area of improving teacher quality.

Acknowledging that teacher quality matters more than any other school factor in student success or failure, Strive partners—including the Cincinnati Business Committee, Haile/U.S. Bank Foundation, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and JPMorgan Chase—helped to commission a comprehensive study by The New Teacher Project focused on improving the human capital system in Cincinnati Public Schools.

This study included a comprehensive survey of teachers and principals and focused on teacher hiring, placement, evaluation, professional development, compensation, retention, dismissal, and

leadership and working conditions. With the support of the Cincinnati Public School Board, the superintendent, and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, the recommendations from this report are now a focal point of many reforms being considered in the district.

The Strive Partnership has played a critical role in bringing the broader community together to unite behind the specific action items in the report card to improve teaching and learning within CPS.

Some of these recommendations include strengthening teacher and school effectiveness by adopting an evaluation system based on results, as well as practice linked to a system that rewards excellent teachers, encourages innovation, and ties teacher compensation, development, and advancement to student achievement; providing greater flexibility to address chronically low-performing schools through alternative structures, school redesigns, adaptable staffing, and new school options for parents and their children; and increasing the supply of the best teachers in the high-need schools.

This example highlights the important role that organizations like Strive can play in connecting leaders from all levels and sectors across the community around a common education reform effort to drive improved educational opportunities in our community.

As you work toward renewing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it will be important to talk with leaders in organizations like the Strive Partnership to understand how they are working effectively with groups of community leaders to drive education reform efforts on the ground. As with any new organization, there are many challenges to overcome, but the goal of providing every child with access to high-quality educational opportunities can only be achieved through a concerted, community-wide effort.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Ms. Phillips-Schwartz, very much.

Mr. Jackson.

STATEMENT OF STEVEN JACKSON, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GREAT OAKS CAREER CAMPUSES, GREAT OAKS DISTRICT OFFICE, CINCINNATI, OH

Mr. JACKSON. Good afternoon. Again, I am Steve Jackson, of the Great Oaks Institute of Technology.

I would like to thank Senator Brown for the opportunity to discuss the success that our district has had in preparing students for careers and college.

I would also like to thank our hosts at Metro High School, both for making this hearing possible and for the work you do on behalf of Ohio students.

Let me tell you a bit about Great Oaks. We are a public school district providing career and technical education programs for students in 36 school districts in southwestern Ohio. As one of the largest such districts in the United States, we serve urban, rural, and suburban students with more than 40 different career and technical programs on our four campuses.

Each year, more than 12,000 high school students enroll in our workforce development and career foundation education programs.

We also coordinate career education services for about 120,000 K through 12 students and provide career programs and other services for more than 50,000 adults annually.

Students come to us for a variety of reasons. Some are focused on their future and want to begin studying a field that interests them. Others have not been successful in their present high school and want a fresh start. Some know that they learn better in a hands-on, focused setting. Some of our students are among the best in their class academically and see that Great Oaks offers them new challenges and opportunities.

Great Oaks was formed in the early 1970s to provide career and technical programs for the region. This was done so that, together, school districts could offer their students highly specialized programs that they didn't have space or funding to provide by themselves. Over the years, our programs have changed as the community's workforce needs have changed. Typing, keypunch, and data entry classes have given way to biotechnology, robotics, and digital and interactive media programs.

While in school, it is important that our students gain real-world experience. Coops, internships, and apprenticeships give Great Oaks students the chance to work side-by-side with professionals in the field. Those opportunities can give them an advantage when they graduate also. For example, a joint project with the Independent Electrical Contractors of Greater Cincinnati allows students to complete the first 2 years of a 4-year electrician apprenticeship by the time they finish high school.

Students earn industry credentials and certifications as they complete Great Oaks programs. A high school student can graduate with a practical nursing license or EMT certification. A student could be certified as a professional firefighter, dental assistant, heating and air conditioning technician, welder, or animal care technician. These certifications and credentials validate the preparation their education provided for them to begin a high-paying, in-demand career immediately.

If all we did for our students was to give them a solid foundation for a career, we would be considered successful. A year after leaving us, about 92 percent of our graduates are working in their career field, continuing their education, or are in the military.

But the 21st century demands that students be prepared for both careers and college. To that end, one improvement in career and technical education is the increased emphasis on more rigorous, integrated academics. General math and science classes have evolved into advanced algebra, calculus, microbiology, and anatomy. Competencies are aligned with the Ohio Department of Education standards, as well as industry certifications and post-secondary requirements.

Creating this foundation of rigorous academic classes is the first step in preparing students for college. The next is to break down perceptual and financial barriers that our students may face. For example, many of our students arrive at our door not knowing how to make college a reality. We provide a setting in which students can achieve and one in which they find themselves doing college-level work while still in high school.

In fact, through 172 articulation agreements with community colleges, 4-year universities, and other institutions, our students can step directly into post-secondary education having earned as many as 50 credit hours for the advanced work done in their career program.

Students also have opportunities to earn college credit in some academic classes through a dual enrollment program. Curriculum is developed that meets college standards. Great Oaks teachers are certified as adjunct college faculty, and students can earn transcripted credit valid at any Ohio college or university.

So our students learn that they can—and do—achieve at a college level. The perception they have of their future changes.

But I also mentioned breaking down financial barriers. The college credit earned saves them and their parents thousands of dollars individually. In fact, last year alone, students earned more than 2,500 credits through the dual enrollment program. That represents nearly a million dollars in tuition saved, based on Ohio tuition rates. The result is that currently about 50 percent of our graduates go directly to post-secondary education.

We also provide second chances to those who have left high school. Our Gateway to Success program is a nationally recognized program which helps young people who have dropped out from high school earn a high school diploma.

It is a unique program for two reasons. First, those students can actually earn a diploma from the high school district they originally left. Second, Gateway to Success is located on several area college campuses, which allows students to experience the college environment.

In less than 3 years, more than 200 young adults have graduated through Gateway to Success. Even more noteworthy is that about half of these students who thought they wouldn't even finish high school have since gone on to college.

Preparing students for success in careers and college can only happen through partnerships with others within the community. I mentioned the partnerships with colleges and universities that provide our students with articulated and transcripted college credit and which has helped us to develop a college-level academic curriculum.

Equally important are the partnerships with business and industry. By working closely with our partners, we understand and anticipate the workforce development needs of our community. The programs we offer evolve as the economy evolves. So, based on labor market needs, we design and offer new programs.

Once we begin to develop a program, we create strong links with leaders in that field. The career-technical curriculum is designed with their support and assistance, and the labs are equipped based on their recommendations. Each of our programs has an ongoing advisory council to keep our instructors firmly connected to the industry. Those links are valuable as our students look for apprenticeship, internship, and co-op opportunities.

One area that has received much attention from educators recently is the concept of 21st century skills. Business and post-secondary leaders tell us that successful graduates must be able to work collaboratively, solve complex problems, use technology, and

be flexible in their education. The nature of career and technical education is that students are already learning those skills in their career programs.

Again, I appreciate the chance to give an overview of career and college readiness from the Great Oaks and career-technical perspective. By anticipating emerging needs and partnering with others in the community to create programs and pathways with value, we are able to provide an education that creates options and opportunities for our graduates.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jackson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEVE JACKSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About Great Oaks

- Public school district providing career and technical education programs for students in 36 school districts in southwestern Ohio.
- As one of the largest such districts in the United States, Great Oaks serves urban, rural, and suburban students with more than 40 different career-technical programs on four campuses.
- Each year, more than 12,000 high school students enroll in Great Oaks workforce development and career foundation education programs.
- Great Oaks also coordinates career education services for about 120,000 K–12 students, and provides career programs and other services for more than 50,000 adults annually.

Career readiness

- Career programs change as the job market and community needs change.
- Students gain real-world experience through co-ops, internships, and apprenticeships that give Great Oaks students the chance to work side-by-side with professionals in the field.
- Having career skills gives graduating students an advantage in the workplace.
- Students earn industry credentials and certifications as they complete Great Oaks programs. These certifications and credentials validate that their education has prepared them to begin a high-paying, in-demand career immediately.
- 92 percent of Great Oaks graduates are working in their career field, in the military, or continuing their education 1 year after graduation.

College readiness

- One improvement in career and technical education is the increased emphasis on more rigorous, integrated academics.
- Through 172 articulation agreements with community colleges, 4-year universities, and other institutions students can step directly into post-secondary education having earned as many as 50 credit hours.
- The Gateway to Success program provides a second chance for high school dropouts; half of those who complete the program continue in college.
- Students also have opportunities to earn college credit in some core academic classes through a dual enrollment program. Last year students earned more than 2,500 credit hours, and that represents nearly a million dollars in tuition saved.
- The result is that about 50 percent of our graduates go directly to post-secondary education.

Partnerships

- Great Oaks works with business/industry partners to understand and anticipate workforce needs.
- The career-technical curriculum is designed with business/industry's support and assistance, and the labs are equipped based on their recommendations.
- Each program has an ongoing advisory council to keep our instructors firmly connected to the industry. Those links are valuable, too, as our students look for apprenticeship, internship, and co-op opportunities.

I am Steve Jackson, senior vice president of the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development. I'd like to thank Senator Brown for the opportunity to discuss the success that our district has had in preparing students for careers

and college. I'd also like to thank our hosts at Metro High School—both for making this hearing possible and for the work you do on behalf of Ohio students.

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Students come to us for a variety of reasons. Some are focused on their future and want to begin studying a field that interests them. Others have not been successful in their present high school, and want a fresh start. Some know that they learn better in a hands-on, focused setting. Some of our students are among the best in their class academically and see that Great Oaks offers them new challenges and opportunities.

Great Oaks was formed in the early 1970s to provide career and technical programs for the region. This was done so that together, school districts could offer their students highly specialized programs that they didn't have space or funding to provide by themselves. Over the years our programs have changed as the community's workforce needs have changed. Typing, keypunch, and data entry classes have given way to biotechnology, robotics, and digital and interactive media programs.

While in school, it's important that our students gain real-world experience. Co-ops, internships, and apprenticeships give Great Oaks students the chance to work side-by-side with professionals in the field. Those opportunities can give them an advantage when they graduate, too. For example, a joint project with the Independent Electrical Contractors of Greater Cincinnati allows students to complete the first 2 years of a 4-year electrician apprenticeship by the time they finish high school.

Students earn industry credentials and certifications as they complete Great Oaks programs. A high school student can graduate with a practical nursing license or EMT certification. A student can be certified as a professional firefighter, dental assistant, heating and air conditioning technician, welder, or animal care technician. These certifications and credentials validate the preparation their education provided for them to begin a high-paying, in-demand career immediately.

If all we did for our students was to give them a solid foundation for a career, we would be considered successful. A year after leaving us, about 92 percent of our graduates are working in their career field, continuing their education, or are in the military.

But the 21st century demands that students be prepared for both careers and college. To that end, one improvement in career and technical education is the increased emphasis on more rigorous, integrated academics. General math and science classes have evolved into advanced algebra, calculus, microbiology, and anatomy. Competencies are aligned with the Ohio Department of Education standards as well as industry certifications and post-secondary requirements.

Creating this foundation of rigorous academic classes is the first step in preparing students for college. The next is to break down perceptual and financial barriers that our students may face. For example, many of our students arrive at our door not knowing how to make college a reality. We provide a setting in which students can achieve and one in which they find themselves doing college-level work while still in high school. In fact, through 172 articulation agreements with community colleges, 4-year universities, and other institutions our students can step directly into post-secondary education having earned as many as 50 credit hours for the advanced work done in their career program.

Students also have opportunities to earn college credit in some core academic classes through a dual enrollment program. Curriculum is developed that meets college standards, Great Oaks teachers are certified as adjunct college faculty, and students can earn transcripted credit valid at any Ohio college or university.

So our students learn that they can—and do—achieve at a college level. The perception they have of their future changes.

But I also mentioned breaking down financial barriers. The college credit earned saves them and their parents thousands of dollars individually. In fact, last year alone students earned more than 2,500 credit hours through the dual enrollment program. That represents nearly a million dollars in tuition saved, based on Ohio tuition rates.

The result is that currently about 50 percent of our graduates go directly to post-secondary education.

We also provide second chances to those who have left high school. Our Gateway to Success program is a nationally recognized program which helps young adults,

who have dropped out from their high school, earn a high school diploma. It's a unique program for two reasons: First, those students can actually earn a diploma from the school district they originally left. Second, Gateway to Success is located on several area college campuses, which allows students to experience the college environment. In less than 3 years, more than 200 young adults have graduated through Gateway to Success. Even more noteworthy is that about half of these students who thought they wouldn't even finish high school have since gone on to college.

Preparing students for success in careers and college can only happen through partnerships with others within the community. I mentioned the partnerships with colleges and universities that provide our students with articulated and transcripted college credit, and which has helped us to develop a college-level academic curriculum.

Equally important are partnerships with business and industry. By working closely with our partners we understand and anticipate the workforce development needs of our community. The programs we offer evolve as the economy evolves.

So, based on labor market needs, we design and offer new programs. Once we begin to develop a program, we create strong links with leaders in that field. The career-technical curriculum is designed with their support and assistance, and the labs are equipped based on their recommendations. Each of our programs has an ongoing advisory council to keep our instructors firmly connected to the industry. Those links are valuable, too, as our students look for apprenticeship, internship, and co-op opportunities.

One area that has received much attention from educators recently is the concept of 21st century skills. Business and post-secondary leaders tell us that successful graduates must be able to work collaboratively, solve complex problems, use technology, and be flexible in their education. The nature of career and technical education is that students are already learning those skills in their career labs.

Again, I appreciate the chance to give an overview of career and college readiness from the Great Oaks and career-technical perspective. By anticipating emerging needs and partnering with others in the community to create programs and pathways with value, we are able to provide an education that creates options and opportunities for our graduates.

Thank you for your time.

ATTACHMENTS

ESEA REAUTHORIZATION: CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS IN PRACTICE

- **CTE programs are on the leading edge of preparing students to be both college ready and career ready. True career readiness requires more than just academic skills.**
  - All too often, the terms "career ready" and "college ready" are used interchangeably, and discussions around career readiness are limited to traditional academic skills that allow students to successfully enroll in post-secondary education without remediation—what we think of as college readiness.
  - While there is no debate that a rigorous level of academic proficiency is essential for any post-high school endeavor, the reality is that it takes much more to be truly considered ready for a career.
  - Career readiness involves three major skill areas: *core academic skills* and the ability to apply those skills to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities; *employability skills* (such as critical thinking and responsibility) that are essential in any career area; and *technical, job-specific skills* related to a specific career pathway.
  - Great Oaks provides rigorous academic skills, as well as the employability and technical skills that are necessary for career success.
- **Students must be engaged in learning and remain in school in order to achieve college and career ready standards—CTE provides the relevance necessary to engage and involve students in their high school education.**
  - Research has shown that students have a decreased risk of dropping out of high school as they add CTE courses to their curriculum, up to a point at which they are taking one CTE course for every two academic courses. (Plank, et al., "Dropping Out of High School and the Place of Career and Technical Education," National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, 2005.)

- The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network has identified the 15 strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate. These strategies include "career and technology education." According to the Center, "A quality CTE program and a related guidance program are essential for all students." (National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, "Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention."
- One significant reason students drop out of school is that they lose interest and motivation in education because the curriculum does not seem to have a real-world application (Bridgeland, DiIulio & Morison, "The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts," 2006). Academics are often presented in isolation, instead of in a way that shines a spotlight on how the subject is applicable in the context of the real world.
- 2006 poll by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. of at-risk California 9th- and 10th-graders found that 6 in 10 respondents were not motivated to succeed in school. Of those students, more than 90 percent said they would be more engaged in their education if classes helped them acquire skills and knowledge relevant to future careers.

• **Through the integration of core academic concepts, CTE programs support not only students' technical achievement, but academic achievement as well.**

- CTE students are scoring above the State average on ESEA required math and reading assessments in many States.
- Students who complete a rigorous academic core coupled with a career concentration have test scores that equal or exceed "college prep" students. These dual-concentrators are more likely to pursue post-secondary education, have a higher grade point average in college and are less likely to drop out in the first year. (Southern Regional Education Board, "Facts About High School Career/Technical Studies.")
- Students in project-based, highly integrated CTE and academic science classes had higher test scores and showed a much deeper understanding of the principles taught than students taught in traditional lecture-based classes. (Riskowski, J.L., et al. *Exploring the Effectiveness of an Interdisciplinary Water Resources Engineering Module in an Eighth Grade Science Course,* International Journal of Engineering Education, 2009)
- Students using the National Research Center for CTE's Math-in-CTE model, which uses highly integrated CTE and academic teaching methods and courses, scored significantly higher on two national math assessments than students using traditional teaching methods. (Stone, J., et al., *Building Academic Skills in Context*, National Research Center for CTE, 2006)
- Participation in a "career major" significantly raises the likelihood of college attendance. (DeLuca et al., "Vocational Education Today: Participation Rates, Student Composition, and Early Outcomes of the NLSY97," American Sociological Association, 2004.)
- CTE students are significantly more likely than their non-CTE counterparts to report that they developed problem-solving, project completion, research, math, college application, work-related, communication, time management, and critical thinking skills during high school. (Lekes et al., "Career and Technical Education Pathway Programs, Academic Performance, and the Transition to College and Career," National Research Center for CTE, 2007.)

• **We believe that every student needs some post-secondary education and training in order to truly be career ready, but in order to most efficiently use time and resources, have made offering these opportunities to students while they are still in high school a top priority.**

- In order to actually be considered ready to enter a career, an individual must also possess at least some level of job-specific knowledge and skills. By offering students the opportunity to earn industry certifications and credentials in high school, students get a jump start on solid career pathways.
- While more data is still needed in this area, preliminary research has found that CTE students in a dual enrollment program were more likely than their peers to:
  - earn a high school diploma;
  - enroll in college;
  - have high post-secondary GPAs; and
  - earn more credits after 3 years in post-secondary education.

WHAT IS "CAREER READY?"

National dialogue has escalated around the concepts of college and career readiness. Influential national and State policymakers have called for high schools to prepare students to be ready for both college and a career. But what do these terms really mean?

All too often, the terms "career ready" and "college ready" are used interchangeably, and discussions around career readiness are limited to traditional academic skills that allow students to successfully enroll in post-secondary education. While there is no debate that a rigorous level of academic proficiency, especially in math and literacy, is essential for any post-high school endeavor, the reality is that it takes much more to be truly considered ready for a career.

Career readiness involves three major skill areas: *core academic skills* and the ability to apply those skills to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities; *employability skills* (such as critical thinking and responsibility) that are essential in any career area; and *technical, job-specific skills* related to a specific career pathway. These skills have been emphasized across numerous pieces of research and allow students to enter true career pathways that offer family-sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

As has been documented by such organizations as ACT and Achieve, career-ready core academics and college-ready core academies are essentially the same, thus creating overlap in the preparation students need to be ready for post-secondary education and careers.[1] All students need foundational academic knowledge, especially in math and English language arts, and, in today's economic environment, all high school students need the academic skills necessary to pursue post-secondary education without remediation—the measure many consider "college readiness."

However, to truly be career-ready, students also need to be able to apply academics in context, and some academic skills need more attention and development. For example, employers often cite deficiencies in English and written communications, such as memos, letters and complex technical reports. This supports the idea that most of the written material students will encounter in their careers is informational in nature, such as technical manuals and research articles, and they must be equipped academically to analyze and use these materials. Too often, these skills are not emphasized in traditional academic classrooms. Workplace deficiencies in math are also commonly noted, with more attention needed on areas such as data analysis and statistics, reasoning and solving mathematical problems.[2]

Students must also be able to apply academic knowledge to authentic situations they may face in their careers, a skill that takes practice and intentional instruction that may need to be tailored to a student's specific career goals. For example, students preparing to be nurses need to be able to calculate and apply ratios, proportions, rates and percentages to determine drug dosages,[3] while construction students need to be able to apply geometrical principles to design and implement building plans.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Employability skills have often been cited by employers as the skills most critical to workplace success in the 21st-century economy. These skills include (but are not limited to) critical thinking, adaptability, problem solving, oral and written communications, collaboration and teamwork, creativity, responsibility, professionalism, ethics, and technology use. Numerous groups have worked with business and industry leaders to identify employability skills critical to employee success, including the 1990 U.S. Department of Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills that produced the report "What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000," and, more recently, such groups as the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

The report "Critical Skills Needs and Resources for the Changing Workforce,"[4] by SHRM, stated that, "Overall, employers placed the greatest weight on employee

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[1] Achieve, Inc., "What is College- and Career-Ready?," *www.achieve.org/files/CollegeandCareerReady.pdf*.

[2] Olsen, Lynn, "What Does 'Ready' Mean?," *Education Week*, *www.educationalliance.org/StateScholars/Downloads/WhatDoesReadyMean.pdf*.

[3] Olsen, Lynn, "What Does 'Ready' Mean?"

[4] Society for Human Resource Management, "Critical Skills Needs and Resources for the Changing Workforce: Keeping Skills Competitive," *www.shrm.org/Research/SurveyFindings/Articles/Pages/CriticalSkillsNeeds.aspx*.

adaptability and critical thinking skills. HR (human resource) professionals and employees both reported that adaptability/flexibility and critical thinking/problem-solving skills were of greatest importance now compared with 2 years ago."

In the 2006 report, "Are They Really Ready to Work?" [5] employability skills "dominate rankings of knowledge and skills expected to increase in importance over the next 5 years." Employers identified critical thinking/problem solving, information-technology application, teamwork/collaboration, creativity/innovation and diversity as the top five such skills.

Students must be provided opportunities to gain these skills and to learn to apply them to real-world life and work situations. Many of these employability skills are also necessary for "college readiness," creating some additional overlap between the two areas.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

In order to actually be considered ready to enter a career, an individual must also possess at least some level of job-specific knowledge and skills. In the National Association of Manufacturers 2005 Skills Gap Report, "technical skills" was the top response to the question, "What types of skills will employees need more of over the next 3 years?" [6] While many career opportunities include a strong element of on-the-job training, some of these technical or industry-based skills must be acquired in advance. For example, technical skills are required for licensure in many professions, such as in most health care fields, or for broader industry certifications, such as the American Welding Society's Certified Welder credential.

Through the States Career Clusters Initiative,[7] business and industry leaders have identified key knowledge and skill statements across 16 career clusters and 79 more specific pathways. These statements represent what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in the specified career area. While some of the statements cover the academic and employability-related areas discussed above, there are also key technical skills highlighted. The cluster-level skill statements are very broad, providing students with a foundation of knowledge that could be applied in numerous related careers. More specific pathway-level skills begin to hone students' abilities in a more defined career area.

CONCLUSION

Since most of the career opportunities for today's students will require some form of post-secondary education, there are certainly times when students will not be able to acquire the necessary academic, technical or employability skills in high school that will allow them to be career-ready without further education and training. Additional knowledge and specialization in one or more of these areas is often required either immediately after high school or in the future, depending on a student's career choices.

However, regardless of a student's path, it takes all three of these broad skill sets for students to be ready for a career. Twenty-first century high schools should focus on providing all students a strong foundation across all three areas so they are prepared for whatever their lives may bring.

[Applause.]

Senator BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

Crystal, you said in your testimony that your coming to Metro and what you have done here were some of the wisest choices you have made in your life. Most people don't—most students in Columbus and in Franklin County and around the State don't have something quite like Metro to give them those opportunities.

How do we structure, how do we encourage students in other schools to take advantage of early college opportunities? How do we get students and what clicks in a student's mind to make her want to do that, to make him want to do that?

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[5] The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management, "Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce," *www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf*.

[6] National Association of Manufacturers, "2005 Skills Gap Report—A Survey of the American Manufacturing Workforce," *www.nam.org*//media/Files/s_*nam/docs/235800/235731.pdf.ashx*.

[7] States Career Clusters Initiative, www.careerclusters.org.

Ms. JORDAN. I think it is important to remind students often of the importance of a college education, maybe remind them that life would be much, much easier with a college education, even with a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree. So, as long as they are reminded often, I think that would help.

Senator BROWN. Did your parents go to college?

Ms. JORDAN. Yes. My mom graduated from college. My father attended college.

Senator BROWN. My wife, who is the first in her family to go to college, grew up in Ashtabula in the northeast corner of the State and went to Kent State. And she tells the story often of her first year in college, she would call home to talk to her parents, who didn't go to college, and ask advice, and they really never knew what to tell her.

So students that—I am sure it is a mixed bag among students here whose parents did not have the opportunity or did not choose to go to college. How do you encourage them to understand the importance of college? It was easier for me. My parents went to college. It sounds perhaps a bit easier for you.

It was expected of me. But in some families and, certainly what Mr. Caldwell said, in some places, it is almost expected that they don't. How do we get students more interested that way? What do you say to them? What do their teachers do? How do we structure a program in the high school to get them to want to do that?

Ms. JORDAN. I think it is important that teachers stay close to their students and talk to them often about college. Like I said, just talk about the importance of the education.

Senator BROWN. What about students working with other students? Were there any ideas you have? These aren't easy questions. So I don't expect definitive answers. But are there ways of getting students, is there a way without being, well, bullying or excluding people or anything to get students, sort of peers, talking to one another more about the opportunities?

Ms. JORDAN. Yes. I think it is important for students who have already decided to go to college to talk to their peers and make sure that they stay interested in school and move on to college.

Senator BROWN. Most of your friends—certainly most of your friends here—are going to college. Most of your friends back at—you went to Walnut? Is that where you went?

Ms. JORDAN. That is my home school.

Senator BROWN. That was your home school. That is OK. So most of your friends there have parents who went to college and talk about it?

Ms. JORDAN. A lot of my friends, actually, are the first to go to college, but they are sure that they are going. And we talk about it a lot.

Senator BROWN. Mr. Caldwell, your graduation rates are pretty incredible from high school. What do you do there at Wolf Creek that other schools in Appalachia don't do to have those kind of graduation rates?

Mr. CALDWELL. That is an excellent question. Wolf Creek is a very unique community. It is a community that the parents support. We have a levy passage rate that is phenomenal. If you ever see us play an extracurricular activity or parliamentary procedure

competition, anything, the gym is full. The community is behind the school.

Senator BROWN. Excuse me. Are you demographically different in terms of the educational level and the income level of families, others in Washington or Meigs or Vinton or——

Mr. CALDWELL. I am really glad you asked that. We are unique for the now 31-county Appalachian area. Our average income of our residents, according to the latest data, 2007 Ohio income tax, is $26,000. So, no.

But by comparison, our unemployment rate is less than 4 percent for our school district community. We have two power plants in our community. So, believe it or not, Bexley is ranked right below us on the Ohio School Facilities Commission. We are, actually, by the State of Ohio classified as high wealth, embedded——

Senator BROWN. Because of the property tax? Because of the value of property?

Mr. CALDWELL. Per pupil valuation.

Senator BROWN. Per pupil valuation.

Mr. CALDWELL. But thank you, yes.

We are not even closely related to when you referenced Vinton County or my home county of Meigs County. Very impoverished in those two particular counties. In my school district, we do have a 26 percent free and reduced lunch rate, but we have to beg our families to take advantage of it, believe it or not. They don't want to take advantage of it. Too proud.

So, for us, it is expected to graduate. My home school district, Eastern Meigs County, 85 percent graduation rate. They have to work on it. Work to get students to attend school regularly. So it is a culture.

Senator BROWN. So why were you able to have such an increase? A better question, the increase that you mentioned in your testimony in graduation—in those that you had close to 100 percent. I appreciate your empathy for those that didn't, and that is the mark of a good superintendent or a good human being that is always trying to help those that aren't doing quite as well.

You start with close to 100 percent graduation from high school, and then you didn't do so well a few years ago with those going to college. But now you are doing much better. What can you suggest other counties—in Appalachia Ohio, other school districts—do on that second issue, to get those that graduate to go to college, like they do in Wolf Creek?

Mr. CALDWELL. It is exposure. I will give you an example. I am a product of Appalachia. This is difficult testimony for me. I am 55 years old, and I am intimidated by this entire environment because this is unique. I have attended——

Senator BROWN. Because all these kids are smarter than you and I? Is that the reason?

[Laughter.]

Mr. CALDWELL. Actually, I would say I probably have the lowest IQ in the room.

Senator BROWN. I think you have done very well, Mr. Caldwell.

Mr. CALDWELL. Trust me, it is about exposure. When I said that our kids took the OACHE grant, and we went to Cleveland, many

of our kids had never been to Cleveland and probably will never go back.

I remember teaching, if I may, teaching driver's education when I was in Vinton County. And if you have ever been to Vinton County, it has one traffic light still to this day.

Senator BROWN. In McArthur.

Mr. CALDWELL. In McArthur. Still to this day in the entire county.

Senator BROWN. Can't relate to this, can you?

[Laughter.]

Mr. CALDWELL. So I told the young man driving, "Make a right on 50 and head toward Chillicothe." And he said, "Where?"

I will never forget that. That is about exposure and opportunity.

Now, if I may, they say when you use athletic analogies, it is time to retire. So I apologize for this. Maybe it is time. Four years ago, our girls basketball team played at Pickerington in the regionals, and we were destroyed by a team from Columbus. The team was better than us, but part of it was because we had never been to the regionals.

Now, for the fourth year in a row, we have made it to the regionals. We still got beat this year in overtime by 3 points by another Columbus team. We are not intimidated anymore. It is about exposure and opportunity.

If you invited me up here again next week—that is not soliciting, by the way.

[Laughter.]

I would be less intimidated just because I have been exposed to this.

Twenty years ago, when I became a superintendent—actually 18—when I became a superintendent, believe it or not, a trip to Columbus was still intimidating to me. So Appalachia is pretty unique in a lot of ways. I hope that answered your question or gave you thought.

Senator BROWN. That was a terrific answer. Thank you. And thanks for your honesty about that.

I think we have all been there, when we went to college, when we went to—I mean, I think all of you understand. That was a great lesson from a very wise person. Whether your IQ is the highest in the room or not, there is a lot of wisdom there. But thank you for that.

I think all of us, when we admit in weaker moments, your teachers, your principal, all of us have been in those situations where we don't know if we measure up—and now you do. So thanks.

Ms. Silas-Butler, talk to me more about Project GRAD, about your feeder schools. What are the schools like Buchtel schools that are going to be part of Project GRAD, what do they have to agree to? It is not just something you give them. They earn it. Talk that through, if you will?

Ms. SILAS-BUTLER. Basically, the way Project GRAD is set up, in each school district, before Project GRAD can come into the district, the teachers have to vote. The teachers and administrative staff have to vote whether or not they will accept Project GRAD. Because it is not just, oh, we come in and we provide services. They have to agree to receive the services.

So before we go into any district, they are exposed to the information, and sometimes they even visit some of our sites to make that determination. Then they actually have a vote to determine whether or not they want Project GRAD to come in.

And once we go into a particular school, 100 percent of the students are considered Project GRAD students, 100 percent of the teachers are Project GRAD teachers. So it is not that you pick and choose your students or you pick and choose whether or not you want to do the programs. It is 100 percent. You made that agreement to do so.

For example, in Akron, we have our elementary schools. We start with our elementary schools. Then we have a feeder program to our middle school, and then we have our high school. So those students—typically, they receive the services such as our math, social services, literacy, college readiness-type information in our lower grades. They receive that at all levels.

We provide professional development for teachers. We have coaching where we send persons into the building to model for the teachers. We give a lot of support to the administrative staff, as well as the teaching staff. We also work with the families.

Those are several of the areas that we work with, and then once we get to the middle school and high school, we also do additional programs and services for the teachers, as well as the students. We also—with our younger students as well, we do things.

For example, with our program, every fall we have what is called "Walk for Success." We target certain grade levels that we will go. For example, in Akron, we visit like the kindergarten homes, the—it depends on which year and what we are looking for. But we will visit the homes of all the kindergarten students, the fifth grade students because they are transitioning to middle school, our sixth graders because they are just the new kids on the block at the middle school, our eighth graders because they are transitioning from eighth to ninth, our ninth graders.

And we go to their homes. We go out as a community. We go with the teachers, the school staff. We have a lot of community support, and we go out and we share all the services that we provide at Project GRAD, as well as what services are available in the Akron Public Schools and in the community.

I am not trying to talk too long because I could talk on and on and on. But one of the cornerstones of our project is we have a learning contract for our kids and our students in high school. Those students in high school, they sign what is called a learning contract, which gives them certain requirements that they must meet in order to receive our scholarship.

Our whole mission is to increase the high school and college graduation rates. But in addition to that, we provide a scholarship to those students, and they receive a scholarship of up to $4,000 each for them to go to college or a trade school or a technical school. Those students who receive the scholarship are required to take certain courses in high school.

For example, under the requirements for graduation, you may currently only need to have 3 years in math, but we may require 4 years. We require a foreign language. We require that the stu-

dents must go to what is called our summer institutes on a university campus.

As everyone has mentioned today, if you haven't been exposed to a college, you won't have a clue that you may need to go to college. So we have our summer institutes on college campuses. We typically have them on the University of Akron campus. We have college professors teaching the courses, and they are exposed to college at an early age.

For example, our sixth and seventh grade students, we do a program called Kids to College because the earlier you expose students to college, it becomes a viable option. You know, just as was stated earlier by Mr. Caldwell, if you have never been to Columbus before, it is intimidating. If no one in your family has ever gone to college, little things such as, oh, you have to pay for textbooks. Gee, I have to pay for textbooks. You don't take those things into consideration.

Just a host of different things we offer, and I don't want to take up all the time because I can——

Senator BROWN. Thank you then. That is good.

Tell us about what do you see and what are you beginning to see in college outcomes? This program has been around. I believe you are in three Ohio cities, right, Lorain, Akron, Cincinnati?

Ms. SILAS-BUTLER. Yes.

Senator BROWN. Tell me what you are seeing in college outcomes.

Ms. SILAS-BUTLER. What we are seeing is, first of all, that our students are going to school more prepared for college. What we are finding that some of the reasons why we have students who are taking remedial courses in college is because many of our students haven't taken the ACT but only one time. And there is a lot of research on how many times you take the ACT. If you are prepared for—some schools, they start working with kids as early as eighth grade with the ACT. They explore the plan and things like that.

Well, we are finding that a lot of our students are taking remedial courses in college because they have only taken the ACT one time, and their scores may not be as high as they need to be. So we are providing tutoring and services much earlier on for our students so we can have a higher success rate as it relates to college.

Our graduation rates from high school are at least 80 percent of our students are graduating from high school. This will be our first year in Akron to have students who will be on track to graduate from college. Because although we started in 2002, our first group of scholarship recipients started in 2006. So this will be our first year of students.

Those are on the 4-year plan. They are doing very nicely. We know that many of our students are not financially prepared to go to college. So they are working. They are taking some time off. They are going part-time and things like that. But we are finding more and more students are going to college. We are finding that they are more successful.

We also have a mentoring component where the students in college work with our high school students, as well as our younger students, to be—first, if someone my age, and I am younger than you, but my age trying to tell the students it is important to go to college. When they hear from their peers and they see from their people like the young lady here, Crystal, telling them how impor-

tant it is to go to college, they understand it a lot better than hearing it from someone else.

Senator BROWN. Thank you.

Ms. Phillips-Schwartz, you said every student, one of the criteria for Strive is every student should be supported outside of school. What do you do about that? What does that mean?

Ms. PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ. Well, one of the things that we really noticed when we started looking at the data was that everything can't happen within the school. And there are a lot of social service agencies providing services out there that we hadn't really coordinated well, that we hadn't been kind of measuring the success of, and hadn't necessarily been linking appropriately with the schools.

So, basically, on the birth to career kind of path, we have been starting with the early childhood programs and services, connecting them up, starting to measure, collect data, measure how effective they are. And then once they are reaching school age, especially with what we are calling community learning centers, really focusing the entire community services—health, mental, a variety of services to the schools.

For example, you go to school and you have dental services provided at your school. There are psychiatrists. Everything is kind of housed within the school so that everyone is working as partners.

Senator BROWN. Are you getting the Cincinnati Business Committee to connect with students so they can—some things as specific as internships and others as maybe less specific, more amorphous like some kind of mentoring? Or are businesses sort of adopting schools, doing things? I mean, I know there is some of that. Tell me about that.

Ms. PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ. Yes, there are, actually, and it varies according to business. But Strive has definitely helped us to link up with specific needs of schools.

Taft Information Technology High School in Cincinnati is partnered with Cincinnati Bell, and they have actually had a partnership where the CEO, Jack Cassidy, and the principal of the school talk regularly, meet regularly, establish goals together. They have mentors——

Senator BROWN. Is any business doing it as well as Cincinnati Bell?

Ms. PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ. What is that?

Senator BROWN. Is any other company doing it as thoroughly and as——

Ms. PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ. There are others that are looking to that as a model. GE is one with Aiken, and there are others that have similar programs. But I wouldn't say any to that sort of extent, yes.

Senator BROWN. You said the teacher is the most important factor in all of this. I think most of us would agree with that. Make a pitch to these students about why they should be teachers.

[Laughter.]

Let me get her off the hook for a second while she is thinking. How many of you right now as students think you want to be teachers? High school, college, grade school, what?

MALE SPEAKER. I want to be a high school——

MALE SPEAKER. I am thinking grade school to high school.

MALE SPEAKER. I would like to be a history professor.

Senator BROWN. OK. So only three of you? Somebody back there, what do you want to teach?

FEMALE SPEAKER. Speaker. Elementary——

Senator BROWN. Elementary. OK.

So convince the rest of them. Is there somebody else?

Ms. PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ. There is one more.

FEMALE SPEAKER. I want to be a high school literature teacher.

Senator BROWN. High school literature. Anybody else want to be a teacher? I mean, I don't expect you to know what you are going to do yet, and I expect those that think they know what they are going to do to change their minds, and that is all OK.

Tell them why they should be teachers.

Ms. PHILLIPS-SCHWARTZ. Well, I have some experience in this because I have a degree in education, and I am actually going to teach in the future. That is my plan.

But I think it is simply that you have the tremendous opportunity to impact the future and make a difference in the world. I mean, I think there are very few careers in which you can really say you put in a hard day's work and really have impacted the future positively.

Senator BROWN. So now all of you want to be teachers, right?

[Laughter.]

Mr. Jackson, you mentioned the electrical contractors example. I have done about 150 roundtables around Ohio where I will meet, I will sit down with 15 or 20 people like we did yesterday with the workforce investment group in Akron and just listen, ask them questions. Ask each of the 15 or 20 or 22, whatever, questions. We will do it for an hour and a half or so.

The first one I did was in Cincinnati back in my first year in the Senate, in early 2007. And I remember it was a group to talk about jobs and economic development and how we do it. One guy there was a building trades person. I think he was a pipefitter. I am not sure if he was a laborer or a pipefitter or electrician or a carpenter, but it doesn't matter.

But he was talking about the long-term shortage in this country of trades people, people that want to be carpenters and pipe fitters and electricians and laborers and boilermakers and millwrights. And we talked about how those jobs are. No. 1, they are absolutely tickets to the middle class. No. 2, that they manage their own pensions. So there aren't the problems of companies running away with pensions as we have seen too often. And No. 3, they have good healthcare.

If you are talking to students, now how do you—he was talking about the acute shortage there is going to be in the next 10 or 20 years in building trades. How do we answer that? How do you convince young men and women about the trades, especially in an economy right now where there are a lot of carpenters and electricians and pipe fitters that aren't working, but will be 2 years, 3 years, 5, 10, 20 years from now?

What do you do to get more young men and women wanting to be electricians and pipe fitters and carpenters and millwrights?

Mr. JACKSON. I am old enough to go through the 1980s and the 1970s when we have seen the building trades and the letdown. We

went through the same enrollment problems and the same shortages. I think one of the things is that, as a Nation, we have lost respect for the skilled tradesman, and I think that everybody's goal is to go to college and that is what has made our country, that is what made these facilities.

I think it is for college and career ready. I think that the trade has changed, that you just don't stop with that trade. There is continuing education that goes along with that. And we believe that any career technical education program does prepare you.

We know that in your life, you change careers seven or eight times or even more. It is tough right now in the trades, especially when they look at the national news and the local news, and they look at the construction and new construction. But it will come back and that we have to be prepared as a Nation, as a State, that we have to have the skilled trades represented. We have to have that. If we lose that sight, we will fail.

It is very difficult, but we have a lot of young people that still have that desire. They still like working with their hands. They still love to have that ability to work outside. Not everyone wants to work behind a desk.

There is a lot of education that goes back to career orientation and exploration that really students understand. When they think of construction trades, they only know what they have been exposed to or what they have seen on TV. Well, there are so many career pathways. There are so many different jobs in the construction trades that they are not even aware of, which some are working out in the field and some is working behind the scenes and so on.

I think we have to do a better job, not only in the construction trades or manufacturing or the transportation industry, but all of the career fields and do a better job of explaining what are career opportunities for young people.

Senator BROWN. One of my missions in the U.S. Senate in the next 10 years is to make Ohio a leader in clean energy production. Ohio is—we have more jobs in solar energy in Toledo manufacturing, solar manufacturing in Toledo, OH, than any city in America.

The Governor and I were in Cleveland yesterday or 2 days ago. We are on this path to likely being the first city, the first place in the world to have wind turbine fields in fresh water, in Lake Erie off the coast of Cleveland, and Ohio can be a real leader in this. We build things very well in this country, better than anywhere in the world.

Young people, manufacturing, my guess is if I ask you to put your hands up if you wanted to go into manufacturing, there would be no more than one or two or three of you, fewer than teachers, as important as all of that is. One of the things I have thought about is—how many students are there at Great Oaks, roughly?

Mr. JACKSON. Oh, we serve probably around 12,000 between 9th and 12th graders, yes.

Senator BROWN. Do you try to get students to go into an auto plant or to go in—I mean, you don't have a lot of auto plants right in Cincinnati. But go into the GE plant or to go into a place where they make things?

Fifteen years ago, I took my daughters, who are now grown, through an auto plant that was in our neighborhood, a Ford plant. And they got to see Thunderbirds made and how they paint the car and how they put the windshield on and how they attach the doors.

And I mean, they didn't end up going into manufacturing, but they were pretty intrigued by that. Maybe I was more intrigued than they were. But they were pretty intrigued by seeing that.

Do we, at our JVS and our vocational schools and our career centers, have programs to let students see these things when they are in 8th grade or 10th grade or whatever the best time to see people actually making things and what it might lead to?

Mr. JACKSON. When they come to career technical centers, very much. We don't exist without our business and industry involvement. We don't exist, and we shouldn't exist. So we are very close to them and work with them and our students with mentoring programs, job shadowing, and all those different components.

I think it goes back to career education. When you talk about K through 8, what is the exposure of careers. Then again, I used to be a high school principal, a career technical director, used to talk to my colleagues. This is 20-some years ago. And, "Oh, you are the one who teaches them to go to work."

And I kept thinking, "Well, what are you supposed to be doing?" You know, I mean, you are going to high school. Isn't that what you are supposed to be doing, too?

So I think the bridge has to happen that the reason that these students are in school is for a career, and I know that is what their parents are wanting, the careers, job, move out. And sometimes I think that that bridge has got to be gapped a little bit more is that this is about career pathways.

This is about making decisions along the way. What am I good at? What do I like? And again, what is the exposure that students must have to be able to make some good decisions?

And sometimes I think that we are just in a lockstep that you go through and we are backward 200 years ago in some of how we deliver education. I don't know if that answers your question.

Senator BROWN. That was good. Thank you.

Thank you all. Thanks for your testimony.

I have just a couple of closing comments.

I am still thinking about your comment on being intimidated when you came here, and the intimidation. My wife, who is a writer, is a very good writer. She is actually a Pulitzer Prize winner for the Cleveland paper. And she and I have noticed—we have talked about this a lot—that when we go to meetings and we go to groups of this size or we go to a roundtable of 15 people, that women, especially young women, are a lot less likely to speak up than young men.

One of the reasons we have a majority of women on this panel is that it is important to me. I am the father of daughters, two daughters. And it is so often in a group there will 50 people in the group, and I will speak, and then I will take questions. And there is roughly half women and men of any age, and it is almost always the men that speak up.

And part of the reason we came to a high school and part of the reason we have a panel that is a majority women is to encourage

you to speak up. There is a quote that someone said some years ago, "Speak up even if your voice shakes."

Even if you are intimidated, even if you think you are nervous, you probably won't sound nervous when you speak up. And it is an opportunity to speak out and get stronger and make a difference in this world. So I would just close with that.

And then I would read this. My daughter sent me this quote right before this, about an hour ago. It is Abraham Lincoln. He said, "The philosophy of the schoolroom in one generation will be the philosophy of Government in the next." Which I have never heard before, but it is a wonderful quote.

I thank you all for being here. I thank you, the panel especially.

Anyone on the panel that would like to add anything else, the roll is open, the record is open for 7 days. So if you would like to get in touch with our office and add anything, if you want to write a whole speech, Kristi, on why people should go into education, you could even do that. But if any of you have anything you want to add, the roll is open for another week.

I appreciate you. I appreciate especially Metro. I appreciate the students sitting here quietly, most of you staying awake. I really appreciate that.

[Laughter.]

The meeting is adjourned. Thanks.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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