



Toledo Public Schools
Office of the Superintendent/CEO
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February 23, 2015

Advisory Board
Community Connectors Grant Program
State of Ohio

Dear Advisory Board Members:

Partners in Education of Toledo Ohio has submitted a grant application to your Community Connectors grant program. I am writing to express my strong support for their **Success Mentors** grant application. The mission of their proposed program, **Success Mentors** is to *foster hope for a bright future by equipping and empowering youth to succeed in school and life*. This mission is in direct alignment with our vision to be an 'A-rated' school district whose graduates are college and career ready.

As Superintendent/CEO for Toledo Public Schools and Board of Trustee for Partners In Education, I strongly support the **Success Mentors** proposal! My work as the Superintendent/CEO for Toledo Public Schools provides me the opportunity to encourage an atmosphere of excellence with an emphasis on technology and accountability - so all students can be college or career ready. **Success Mentors** will help students realize this ultimate goal and help all of NW Ohio by closing the achievement gap. The number of students not graduating from high schools is disproportionately higher among black and Latino males. We need mentoring programs like **Success Mentors** to prevent drop out among our minority students and to teach them how to envision and achieve a positive future.

Partners In Education (PIE) has been helping Toledo Public School students succeed since 1994. PIE is well respected throughout the NW Ohio community and has strong support from many community partners including Lucas County Commissioner Tina Wozniak, the Rotary Club, the Toledo Chamber of Commerce, the Toledo Community Foundation, the Toledo Federation of Teachers, Lucas County Department of Job and Family Services, and Catholic Dioceses of Toledo. Furthermore, PIE has strong academic partners including The University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, Lourdes University, Mercy College of Northwest Ohio, Herzing University, and Owens Community College.

I strongly encourage you to fund the proposed **Success Mentors** program. This program is greatly needed by our students and their families. As you know, the Toledo Public School District is the 4th largest school district in Ohio. Many of our students live in poverty and face tremendous barriers to success in education and in life. For example, 33% of youth under the age of 18 in Lucas County live in poverty compared to 23.9% in Ohio. It is barriers like these that create the significant need for **Success Mentors** in Toledo/Lucas County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Durant', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Romules Durant
Superintendent /CEO
Toledo Public Schools
TPS Proud!