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February 18, 2015

Dear Members of the Advisory Board/Grants Review Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for the grant application being submitted by Partners in Education, Toledo, Ohio. This grant application entitled, "***Success Mentors***," features a well-designed program that is much needed in our community, especially among urban students who are racial/ethnic minorities.

As the Director of Minority Health for the Toledo-Lucas County Commission on Minority Health, I am pleased to inform you that the Commission is partnering with Partners in Education. 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 mission of reducing racial/ethnic health disparities. Some of the major determinants of racial/ethnic health disparities are: 1) the quality of education received by youth, 2) the readiness of youth for college, 3) employment. By helping minority youth succeed in these areas, Partners in Education is actually helping us to reduce future racial/ethnic health disparities in Lucas County.

Partners in Education (PIE) has been working to promote the success of Toledo Public School students since 1994 when the agency was organized via the leadership of the Rotary Club of Toledo with support from the Toledo Area Chamber of Commerce, area banks, and corporations. In 2010-2011, Lucas County Commissioner Tina Wozniak led community efforts to help PIE develop the College Coach Program. The College Coach Program continues today and serves as the foundation for their new program, ***Success Mentors***.

As part of our partnership with Partners in Education, the Commission has agreed to support ***Success Mentors*** in the following ways:

1. We will help promote the program to our members
2. We will help PIE recruit adult mentors for their students
3. We will help promote the program's major events

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,

Barbara Gunning, PhD, BSN
Director of Health Services

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