

MARIAN UNIVERSITY

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Center for Vibrant Schools



Jillian Lain

Regarding City Connects Pilot Program

May 9th, 2023

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Jillian Lain, and I am the Director of City Connects Midwest from the Marian University Center for Vibrant Schools. We are here today to ask members of the Senate and this committee to build upon and support the existing \$1 million commitment by the House. The pilot program contained in the House version of the budget is designed to expand the City Connects program in at least 32 K-12 schools in Ohio; however, to fully implement this pilot we are seeking an additional \$9 million out of a \$10 million initial ask. Following this pilot project, schools will have the ability to sustain implementation because City Connects is already a named allowable use of the Student Wellness and Success Funds. Additionally, many schools utilize federal Title 1 & Title 4 funds to provide ongoing support for the program once the pilot funding concludes.

In the Fall of 2008, City Connects launched in a Catholic elementary school in Dayton, Ohio. Over time, City Connects expanded and is currently implemented in seven Ohio schools across Dayton and Springfield, including four parochial schools, two charter schools, and one public school. As a part of my role, I work collaboratively with Boston College to support the implementation of City Connects in these Ohio schools and have seen the impact firsthand.

What makes City Connects unique is that every child can benefit—not just the students in need of crisis intervention. In the 2021-22 school year, City Connects in Ohio served more than 2,600 students from early childhood through high school. A City Connects coordinator created and implemented individualized student support plans for 99% of students. These plans ensure students can receive appropriate support, including prevention and enrichment services like after-school programs, early intervention services like behavioral interventions, and intensive crisis intervention services like mental health services. In this same academic year, 26,089 services were delivered by more than 100 Ohio community partners, with 93% of students receiving three or more services.

Additionally, in the 2021-22 academic year, Boston College partnered with the Marian University Center for Vibrant Schools to establish the City Connects Midwest Technical Assistance Center. The TA Center ensures students in the Midwest can benefit from one of the nation's most rigorously evaluated and effective approaches to student support. Since 2021, City Connects has been implemented in nearly 80 schools in Indiana in the last 2 years through various city and state funding sources. The initial data is proving very promising, and we are eager to continue to expand City Connects in Ohio as well.

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In 2019 and again in 2021, thanks to your leadership and that of Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted, City Connects was one of several programs named an allowable use of Ohio Student Wellness and Success funds. Today we ask the committee to build upon the \$1 million commitment by the House for a City Connects pilot program to support at least 32 schools across the state.

We are confident that with City Connects' proven track record, expanding City Connects in your state will benefit Ohio students and their families for years to come, both academically and socially. I thank you for your time and consideration of this project, and we appreciate all that you are already doing for students in Ohio.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jillian Lain', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jillian Lain
Director, City Connects Midwest
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