



March 6, 2025

Dear Ohio Legislator,

My name is Tiffany Squires, and I am a Director of Talent Management and Culture at The Sherwin-Williams Company in Greater Cleveland. I am writing to express my strong support for the renewal of state funding for Junior Achievement (JA) programs across Ohio.

As someone who serves on the Executive Board and has been closely involved with Junior Achievement, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact these programs have on our youth. JA's workforce and financial literacy programming equips students with essential skills that prepare them for future careers and responsible financial management. In our community, these programs have inspired countless students to pursue their dreams and make informed decisions about their futures.

The benefits of Junior Achievement extend beyond individual students. By fostering a well-prepared and financially literate workforce, JA contributes to the overall economic health and prosperity of our region. The skills and knowledge gained through JA programs empower students to become active, contributing members of our society, which in turn strengthens our local economy.

We ask you to include an amendment to HB 96 that would provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. This funding will expand JA's impact statewide, ensuring that every student has access to resources that empower them to make actionable career plans and contribute to Ohio's workforce. The funding will support programs in all 88 counties.

Thank you for considering this request. Your support for Junior Achievement will help ensure that Ohio's students are well-equipped to succeed in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Squires  
Director, Global Architectural Talent Management & Culture

The Sherwin-Williams Company  
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March 5, 2025

Ohio House  
77 S. High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Ohio Legislator,

I am writing to express my sincere support for Junior Achievement (JA) and the incredible work they do to inspire and prepare young people to succeed. I want to voice my support for additional funding. As someone who is passionate about education and youth development, I am constantly impressed by the innovative programs and resources that Junior Achievement offers to students. I have been in education for over 20 years and the one constant in my teaching career has been my involvement in JA. I have switched school districts (working in multiple northeast counties), taught different grades/subjects but continuously had support from JA which made my job and transitions easier.

As I was sitting down to write this letter and reflect on the amazing opportunities, it prompted me to go through some pictures and old newspaper articles to reminisce (I have attached some of the pictures and fond memories that JA has brought into my classroom at the end of this letter). Over my career, I have participated in The Company Program, Inspire Career Fairs, Corporate Club Luncheons, Titan Competition, Stock Market Simulation, Economics, Be Entrepreneurial, and Career Speaker Series (some names may have changed and some probably no longer exist). The one thing I am sure of is the tremendous impact these programs had on my students. Not only does JA offer hands-on entrepreneurship programs to financial literacy curriculum, but they also provide young people with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in today's rapidly changing world.

Through JA programs, students have the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals and business leaders, gaining valuable insights. JA isn't possible without the amazing volunteers they send into the classroom. I have made lifelong connections with those volunteers. Not to mention, they take a vested interest in my students long after the program ends and continue to offer various support to students after graduation.

JA provides real-world experiences and practical skills needed to ensure that students are prepared to succeed in their future careers and contribute to their communities. I feel JA has done just that for my students! I can't say enough amazing things about working with Al DiFranco, President and CEO of Greater Cleveland, and the team he has put together. When I say they have



gone above and beyond in their programming for my students I mean they have exceeded every expectation on every level!

I have seen firsthand the positive impact that JA has on students. They come away with a newfound sense of confidence, a deeper understanding of how the economy works, and a clear vision for their future. I strongly believe that JA is making a real difference in the lives of young people, and I am proud to offer my support for their important work. I look forward to continuing my relationship with JA and seeing all that they will accomplish in the years to come. The requested funding will help to increase the number of schools and teachers who will continue to receive the same experiences as me and my students.

I ask you to include an amendment to HB 96 that would provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. This funding will expand JA's impact statewide, ensuring that every student has access to resources the empower them to make actionable career plans and contribute to Ohio's workforce. The funding will support programs in all 88 counties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Pagan". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Beth Pagan  
BPOT Instructor









## North Royalton High School

14713 Ridge Road • North Royalton, Ohio 44133  
Phone: (440) 582-7801 • Fax: (440) 582-7337 • [www.northroyaltonsd.org](http://www.northroyaltonsd.org)

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March 5, 2025

Ohio House  
77 S. High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Ohio Legislator,

I am the business teacher at North Royalton High School and I am thrilled to extend our full support and commitment to our partnership with Junior Achievement (JA) of Greater Cleveland for the proposed state funding request.

JA has been an integral part of my development as a business teacher. The tremendous support that I received from the entire JA staff has been amazing and helped build my confidence on topics that I was less familiar with, such as investing in the stock market.

JA assisted in the development of an Investing Club at North Royalton High School as part of my students participating in JA's *Stock Market Challenge*. My students have participated in three Stock Market Challenges hosted by JA at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland and have enjoyed the competition and ability to both network and learn.

Junior Achievement provided support and volunteer personnel via industry leaders to help me and my students learn about financial literacy, the stock market, and business industry standards.

We ask you to include an amendment to HB 96 that would provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. This funding will expand JA's impact statewide, ensuring that every student has access to resources that empower them to make actionable career plans and contribute to Ohio's workforce. The funding will support programs in all 88 counties.

Sincerely,

***Kriste Smith***

Mrs. Kriste Smith  
Business Teacher  
North Royalton High School  
[kriste.smith@northroyaltonsd.org](mailto:kriste.smith@northroyaltonsd.org)



The office of Autumn Russell  
President & CEO

March 5, 2025

Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Financial Literacy and Workforce Readiness Programming Initiative – State Budget Request

Dear Ohio Legislator,

On behalf of the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium (GCCC)—a collective impact organization comprised of public, private, education, and nonprofit partners working to grow and sustain Greater Cleveland's talent pipeline—I am writing to endorse an amendment to HB 96 that would support Junior Achievement (JA).

Junior Achievement of Greater Cleveland is an anchor partner in GCCC's work to help every student graduate with a career vision and plan, and the confidence, knowledge, education, skills, and networks they need to own their future and contribute to a competitive regional workforce. JA has been instrumental in the development and implementation of our PACE (planning and career exploration) curriculum for students in grades 6-12 in eleven Northeast Ohio public school districts. They have been able to use their existing curriculum and expand to suit the needs of both our students and local employers.

JA helps GCCC serve approximately 30,000 middle- and high-school students (80.6 percent of whom are low-income) in addition to their existing work with students in grades K-5 and in the 23 other counties outside GCCC's current footprint. JA's existence at the intersection of education and workforce helps them deliver key financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship lessons, as well as connect students directly to employers and industry partners. Financial support for their important work will be key to helping our next generation thrive in the workforce and will result in more students obtaining family sustaining wage careers in high-demand industries (e.g., manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, etc.).

We ask you to include an amendment to HB 96 that would provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. This funding would expand JA's impact statewide, ensuring that every student has access to resources that empower them to make actionable career plans and contribute to Ohio's workforce. The funding would support programs in all 88 counties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Autumn Russell'.

Autumn Russell  
President & CEO  
Greater Cleveland Career Consortium

Jim Zidlicky  
Social Studies Teacher  
Department Liaison  
Financial Literacy  
Cleveland Heights High School  
(216) 406-3261 cell | j\_zidlicky@chuh.org

March 4, 2025

Ohio House  
77 S. High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215



Dear Ohio Legislator,

We ask you to include an amendment to HB 96 that would provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. This funding will expand JA's impact statewide, ensuring that every student has access to resources that empower them to make actionable career plans and contribute to Ohio's workforce. The funding will support programs in all 88 counties.

Junior Achievement plays a critical role in preparing students for their futures by offering invaluable lessons in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. Through my work with Cleveland Heights High School, I have personally witnessed the positive impact JA has on students in our community. I am a teacher at Cleveland Heights High School who teaches financial literacy and has partnered with JA to take part in their Stock Market Challenge. This partnership is two-fold, with professionals in the industry describing to students the fundamentals of the stock market and investing. The other component is students participating in a simulation of what it is like to invest in the stock market and compete with other schools.

The impact of Junior Achievement extends beyond the classroom. By inspiring students to explore career pathways and make informed financial decisions, JA helps cultivate a more prepared and motivated future workforce. This, in turn, strengthens our local businesses and bolsters Ohio's economy.

Investing in Junior Achievement is an investment in Ohio's future. The proposed funding will allow JA to reach more students across all 88 counties, ensuring that more young persons have the opportunity to gain essential life skills and make meaningful contributions to our state's workforce.

I respectfully ask that you support the amendment to HB 96 to provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to empowering Ohio's students.

Sincerely,

*Jim Zidlicky*

Jim Zidlicky



March 7, 2025

Dear Ohio Legislator:

My name is John Bakalar and I'm the current Business Teacher at Chagrin Falls High School and this letter is in support of Junior Achievement. For the last four years I have collaborated with Junior Achievement on their experiential learning events in the Greater Cleveland area and they do amazing work and offer incredible experiences for students in Northeast Ohio!

Junior Achievement (JA) provides invaluable experiential learning opportunities that empower students with real-world skills in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career readiness. We have been a part of hands-on programs like JA Stock Market Challenge, JA Company Program and JA Inspire! These events bring interactive classroom activities, students gain practical experience in budgeting, investing, business management, and workforce preparation. JA's programs bridge the gap between classroom education and real-world application, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills. By engaging with industry professionals and participating in immersive simulations, students develop confidence and a deeper understanding of economic concepts, preparing them for future success. Their commitment to experiential learning equips young people with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving global economy. I know many of the JA Cleveland staff personally, and they are tireless workers who take tremendous pride in their work. I am thankful for the opportunities they provide students of Northeast Ohio and proudly support their organization!

We ask you to include an amendment to HB 96 that would provide \$2.75 million per fiscal year to Junior Achievement. This funding will expand JA's impact statewide, ensuring that every student has access to resources that empower them to make actionable career plans and contribute to Ohio's workforce. The funding will support programs in all 88 counties.

Sincerely,

*John Bakalar*

John Bakalar  
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