

**Ohio House Finance Committee**

**written testimony of**

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Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Driehaus, and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of continuing and expanding the Adult Diploma Pilot Program in H.B. 64.

Cuyahoga Community College has a long history of providing workforce education focused programs to low-skilled adults and others who face multiple barriers to employment, career training and post-secondary education. This Adult Diploma Pilot program is an important addition to our programs because of the unique opportunity to integrate the High School Diploma credential with a nationally recognized career credential using a competency – based model. We have been presented with a unique opportunity to affect positive change for the many unemployed and underemployed adults who have been seeking to obtain these important credentials through other means. Upon obtaining their high school and industry credential through the pilot program, participants will be better positioned to take even greater steps to achieving their career and educational goals.

Since the February 11, 2015 press release announcing the project, we have been contacted by many interested potential participants and organizations. What is evident through discussing the pilot program with potential participants is the persistent need to obtain a high school diploma to further advance their careers and pursue their higher educational goals.

There is both great urgency and optimism at Cuyahoga Community College in creating another pathway for the more than 1 million adults in Ohio (approximately 146,000 in Cuyahoga County) without a high school diploma. We share the excitement of the many potential participants and organizations in our community as we plan for a July 1, 2015 implementation of the Adult Diploma Pilot program.

In developing our pilot, we are committed to creating a career pathway focused curriculum that will meet the high school diploma academic standard of the Ohio Department of Education, the workforce needs of our business and industry community and help each participant transition seamlessly into their desired career training or post-secondary education field.

As it is stated in the grant proposal, it is not our intent to replicate the traditional high school diploma credit model or ABLE/GED Credentialing model. We are focusing our credential and certificate curriculum efforts to prepare our students for in-demand occupations as determined by OhioMeansJobs and the Ohio Department of Education. To that end, we have marshalled our internal and external stakeholder community to assist us with developing a competency based education model for this Adult Diploma Pilot Program.

We are working with members of the Northeast Ohio Consortium of Higher Education-(NOCHE), Promise Academy, Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Investment Board and the Educational Services Center of Cuyahoga County, among others, to plan and implement this project. We also look forward to future collaborations and learning opportunities with the other pilot project grant awardees concerning;

- Competency Based Learning and Assessment
- Leveraging existing resources to insure student success
- Special Accommodations for participants
- “Best Practices” research with similar state-wide adult diploma initiatives

The innovative nature of this pilot project is both intentional and inspirational. We are being intentional in reaching out to our community to assist with the development of a new approach to adult education in the State of Ohio. We are inspired by the vital support of the state through the funding of this pilot project and the life-changing impact it will have on each participant and our community.

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Driehaus, and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee, thank you for your time.