



## Written Testimony before the Ohio House Finance Committee Regarding HB49

April 5, 2017

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB49. My name is Mike Davis, and I am the President of Junior Achievement of Central Ohio.

I'm testifying on the as introduced budget proposals around the state's efforts to better integrate career readiness into our k-12 educational system as outlined by the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation. We agree that more can be done, and that organizations like Junior Achievement across the state can help bridge the gap.

I often like to ask people I meet if they knew their job existed when they were a kid – not as a 5<sup>th</sup> grader but as a 15 year old. Most people I talk to usually say no. If we look at the career path for professional athletes, I think it would be fair to say that when LeBron James set foot on the basketball court on his first day on the job, he had spent nearly his entire life preparing for that moment. To this day he is doing the same drills he did as a child; however, he has muscle memory, he's faster and stronger, and he has failed and succeeded with an opportunity to learn from both. As leaders, we need to make sure that we are giving our students the same type of support, preparation, and repetition of practicing the necessary skills they need to succeed in their future career.

Junior Achievement is an international organization that was founded in the US in 1919 by several of the country's most successful business leaders and we are proud to carry on that tradition. Here in Ohio, we serve as one of nine Junior Achievement affiliates across the state. Working with educators and employers across Ohio, Junior Achievement reached **199,000** students with more than **1.3 million hours of support from volunteer mentors last year.**

At Junior Achievement of Central Ohio, we are experts in the intersection of education and career development. Our model relies on both the experience and knowledge of **business professionals** (and to us, everything is a business), who volunteer to deliver our content and demonstrate various career paths for our students, and our **educator professionals** who are part of a multi-grade-level commitment to our curriculum.

We serve students in the urban, suburban, and rural areas of Ohio and as such we are committed to meeting their unique needs. We are passionate about our work because we know, first hand, the spark that is ignited when a young person sees themselves in a leadership

role for the first time, or as a valued member of a team, or when a quiet idea becomes a big inspiration.

As policy makers, you are aware that the workplace of the 21st-century is demanding, requiring sophisticated skills, a strong work ethic, professionalism, and personal responsibility. *That's where Junior Achievement comes in.*

We have the support of a national program to ensure that our work is informed by the latest research and best practices. In fact, all Junior Achievement programs are correlated to the Ohio Academic Content Standards for social studies for grades K-12 as well as the Common Core State Standards in English/ Language Arts and mathematics.

Junior Achievement's instructional model employs the talent, experience, and knowledge of volunteer professionals who deliver the Junior Achievement curriculum in the classroom while mentoring students. This allows students to make a meaningful connection to what they are learning in school and how it applies to the real world. We focus on getting kids ready by:

- **Teaching financial literacy.**
- **Igniting an entrepreneurial way of thinking.**
- **Helping them build skills for success in their careers and life.**

Our programs inspire students to dream big – but to also realize that their dreams are achievable. I would like to take a quick moment to talk about a few of the various programs Junior Achievement offers.

Our **JA In-Class** programs help prepare students for the real world by showing them how to generate income and effectively manage it, how to create jobs to make their communities more robust, and how to apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. Students put these lessons into action and learn the value of contributing to their communities. JA In-Class programs are taught by trained volunteers, who each bring his or her personal experience, professional insight, and enthusiasm to the classroom.

The **JA BizTown** program provides 5th grade students with a realistic opportunity to experience how basic economic concepts are applied in the real world. By participating in JA BizTown, students experience the full responsibilities and opportunities that are part of a free enterprise system. They operate businesses including retail stores, manufacturing shops, media outlets, utility services, restaurants, banks, and even City Hall. Students learn firsthand what it takes to create and run a business, as well as personally earn and manage money.

The **JA Company Program** unlocks students' innate ability to fill a need or solve a problem in their community by launching a real business venture. This concept has proven effective in partnerships with schools and community organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Our programs have a proven track record and measurable outcomes. Among the outcomes experienced:

- **JA participants are more self-reliant, put a lower burden on social safety net, and provide better for their own retirement.**
- **JA participants are better prepared for the workforce, resulting in their getting ahead faster and providing better results for their employers.**
- **JA participants are 3x more likely to spend less than they earn and are far less likely to be unemployed or rely on social assistance.**
- **JA participants have demonstrated ability to save more, borrow less, and do better financially than the average student.**
- **JA participants earn 50% more, on average, than those who do not benefit from our programs.**

However, we see the greatest impact *in changing how students perceive their futures.*

As you consider the challenges of setting policies to better prepare our students for jobs and careers of the future, I encourage you to look to Junior Achievement as an important partner in your efforts. As outlined in the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation's recent report, we agree that there is more to be done to help facilitate relationships between the business and education communities to ensure that our students are prepared for the future.

At Junior Achievement, we have been helping to build that bridge for nearly a century and would welcome the opportunity to partner in these initiatives.

Chairman Smith, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.