

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon

Secretary

U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

As members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, we write to express our deep concern regarding the Department of Education's recent decision to terminate more than \$28 million in Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) funding across the state of Ohio. We urge you to reverse this decision and reinstate funding for these critical programs that directly support Ohio students.

In Ohio, and across the nation, GEAR UP grants provide essential resources to students from low-income backgrounds, enabling them to prepare for post-secondary success. Through tutoring, mentorship, career exploration and leadership development opportunities, these programs support students by expanding access to career pathways and advanced opportunities.

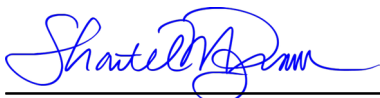
On September 12, 2025, GEAR UP programs administered by Akron Public Schools, Cleveland Metropolitan Schools, the Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio (ESCNEO), and the Ohio Department of Higher Education were formally notified by the Department of Education that their funding would be terminated by September 30, 2025. Collectively, these four programs in our state service over 16,000 students across more than ten school districts in Ohio. This termination would eliminate more than \$28 million in critical support and resources for students.

The elimination of these programs will have immediate and devastating consequences for students, educators, and the communities that serve them. Thousands of students will lose access to proven supports that foster academic readiness and promote long-term success. Without tutoring, mentorship, career exploration, and leadership development, many students will unnecessarily struggle to graduate, pursue postsecondary education, or obtain stable employment. Moreover, educators will lose essential tools to support students, and communities will face the broader social and economic impacts of lower educational attainment.

For these reasons, we urge you to reverse the termination of the GEAR UP programs administered by Akron Public Schools, Cleveland Metropolitan Schools, the Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio (ESCNEO), and the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



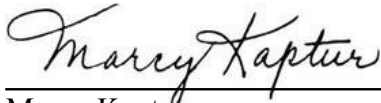
Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress (OH-03)



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress