

Dear Editor:

I urge reader support for the Great Oaks school levy on the November 4<sup>th</sup> ballot. Because it is a 2.7 mill, 10-year renewal of a levy that expires this year, it will NOT raise taxes.

What passage of the Great Oaks levy will do is to continue the valuable contributions of this nationally recognized joint vocational school district. Great Oaks is a special public school system that serves 36 school districts in southwest Ohio. On four campuses it prepares students for successful careers in a wide variety of technical fields, including some of society's most critical jobs – police officers, fire fighters and health service technicians. The funds sought by the levy will provide the equipment and materials upgrades needed to maintain state of the art training that is required by local employers and continuation of its highly skilled and dedicated professional staff.

What may not be as well known and of which we at BRIDGES have first-hand knowledge is that Great Oaks may be our region's leading proponent of diversity and inclusion on the secondary school level. Under the leadership of its President & CEO Dr. Robin White, Great Oaks has embarked on a system-wide, multi-year "Inclusion" initiative to create a social and academic environment that nourishes the success of *all students* – of all racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Great Oaks recognizes that its students will need more than technical know-how to achieve professional success. They will also need, according to Dr. White, the cultural insights and social skills that will prepare them to be able to interact successfully in our pluralistic workplaces.

We commend Great Oaks for this important commitment to the social development of its students and urge voters to support this commitment and the outstanding vocational education being provided by a YES vote on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

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President & CEO  
BRIDGES for a Just Community