***I/We* *am/are*** writing to express my strong support for the community-directed spending project submitted by Lorain City Schools, seeking federal funding for the construction of buildings and structures for the district’s new horticulture program.

The Lorain City School District (LCS) recognizes the importance of providing students with diverse educational opportunities that prepare them for future success. In alignment with this goal, they are establishing a comprehensive horticulture program aimed at enhancing students' skills, knowledge, and interest in the field of horticulture. This additional Horticulture Pathway will educate and empower students to solve food scarcity, provide job opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Lorain residents.

Living in an urban community with a poverty level above the national average, Lorain residents have limited access to recreational green spaces and fresh fruits and vegetables, both of which contribute to overall health. The city is a food desert, defined by the CDC as areas that lack access to essential nutrients found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Creating a horticulture program will provide a solution by preparing students for a career field that combines plant science with greenhouse management.

The building and structures would serve as a classroom, laboratory, and greenhouse for the program. The construction would include:

* Three greenhouses housed under a single structure
* Classroom space for a minimum of 25 students
* A program lab, and many other items.

The establishment of a horticulture program at Lorain High School and our Middle Schools presents a unique opportunity to enrich students' educational experiences, foster environmental stewardship, and prepare them for future careers in the growing field of horticulture. This project has been designed and work is slated to begin *(insert expected construction start date)*. The need for the construction of this facility in this neighborhood is evident, and obtaining community-directed spending project funds, would help make this program a reality.

As *(inset connection to the community),* ***I/we*** know the impact that this new center will have on our ***community/constituents.*** This funding would help Lorain City Schools to continue to live up to its goal of “challenging each child in their care through the process of discovery and learning, preparing for fulfilling post-high school paths, empowered to become a resilient, lifelong learner and contributor to society.” ***I/We*** fully support this project and urge you to look favorably upon this request.