Awareness, Advocacy and Action

Engaging Business Leaders around Quality Early Learning
Photo Cover: Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment photos courtesy of Monica Willett, Berks County Intermediate Unit
Top: Timothy J. Bartik, Senior Economist, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research and Peter Danchak, NEPA Regional President, PNC Bank
Middle: Varsovia Fernandez, President & CEO, Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Bottom: Philip Peterson, Senior Vice President, Aon Hewitt
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As a community group working with local advocates, there may be many different people at your table to support and promote the importance of investing in quality early learning. Families, child care providers, school district staff, policy makers, and business and civic leaders—each individual plays an important and unique role with their skills, talents and resources they bring to the group.

Awareness, Advocacy and Action provides ideas, suggestions and assistance to effectively introduce businesses to the importance of investing in quality early childhood education. You and your local community group can discover ways to engage business leaders, keep them engaged, and assist them as they become Champions for investing in quality early education.

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Why build a relationship with a business leader?  
*The advocate perspective*

There are several reasons why local advocates would want to engage a business leader to become involved with the work being done to support and promote quality early learning. A business leader’s involvement and standing within a community and with community leaders may carry a lot of weight within a community, with his or her peers, and with policymakers. Through their support of a candidate or cause, their social or political standing, or their involvement within a community, business leaders may be in a position to grab the attention of their peers, policymakers and the public. Because of their business itself, or advertisements or sponsorship events related to their business, they may be very visible to other business leaders, community members and policymakers within a community, easily recognized, and as a result, may be viewed as successful leaders within their community.

A message from a business leader can set a different tone and increase the perception of validity, carrying more weight to the listener’s ears. The messaging from business leaders may not only be different from messaging received from others in the community, but may be perceived as being different. For example, unlike education professionals or early care advocates, business leaders may appear a “neutral party”, without a direct investment in the cause. Business leaders may also present a credible “investment” argument, making the connection between the dollar invested in quality early learning and the future cost savings.

**Why support quality early learning?**  
*The business leader perspective*

For all the ways in which local advocates or community groups may benefit from engaging a business leader, there are also benefits as to why a business leader may want to become involved with promoting investment in quality early learning.

**Personal connection**

One of the most powerful reasons people become involved in a cause is because of a personal connection and the desire to make an impact. Many may see their involvement as the right thing to do.

Business leaders are people too and it’s likely they may have a connection to early learning and want to make a difference in the community where they live and have their business. Perhaps they have young children or grandchildren, a family member is a teacher, or they may have a connection to a child with a disability.

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**Wisconsin**

To revitalize Wisconsin’s competitive lead and ensure long-term economic prosperity and fiscal stability, it’s clear we must invest our limited resources wisely. Investment in high-quality early child development and education is a powerful way to spur economic growth.

*Julia Taylor, President, The Greater Milwaukee Committee; Jon Stellmacher, Senior Vice President, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans; Susan Lipp, President, Full Compass Systems, February 25, 2010, The Cap Times (Madison, WI)*

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Although the reasons for becoming involved can be varied, it’s likely each business leader wants to make a difference through his or her involvement. Being involved with local advocates can provide them with the supports they can use to do so.

**Make an impact**

Another reason why a business leader may become involved with quality early learning is to make an impact within their own company, such as improving the company’s image with its employees or enhancing the company’s community image. Their employees may rely upon Child Care Works to help with paying for child care while working, may use a Keystone STARS child care facility as a safe and reliable setting for their children during working hours, or may need the support of Early Intervention services. Some business leaders may not even be aware there is a need for quality early learning support and services for their employees until their involvement with a local advocacy group!

Other business leaders may view their involvement today with quality early learning as an investment in the future for having access to a well-educated and highly skilled workforce tomorrow. For a small business leader, this may be limited to his or her own community, while a business leader of a larger company may focus on the national or global impact of having a well-educated and highly skilled workforce.

There are many states throughout the U.S. which have begun to recognize and promote the importance of investing in quality early learning, and Pennsylvania is fast being noticed as a leader. Often other states look towards Pennsylvania as a way to establish their own plans of action, and using the influence of business leaders is one of these areas. A business leader who supports the investment of quality early learning may be recognized because of his or her involvement. For example, when a business leader submits an Op Ed or is quoted in an article which is published locally, statewide, or picked up to appear on a national level, there is nearly always a public connection back to their company and their community.

**Establish a peer-to-peer connection**

A business leader may elect to become involved with quality early learning as a way to make a connection or as a demonstration of participation with his or her peers. For example, activities by community groups, such as downtown or town square businesses participating in a joint posting of artwork done by children in an early care setting, allows a business leader to demonstrate his or her involvement in quality early learning as part of a group of fellow business leaders within the community.

**Strengthen leadership skills**

Finally, business leaders may look on their involvement with the local advocacy groups as a way to strengthening their own leadership skills. Many of the activities in which business leaders frequently engage when involved in a local advocacy group, such as writing Op-Eds, or speaking with other business leaders, or meeting with a policymaker, also builds their capacity as leaders.
Before Establishing Contact

Through involvement with different stakeholders, you may have discovered some are very easy to approach and some you encounter on a frequent basis. You may have developed relationships with child care providers, nonprofit organizations, or schools which provide you with consistent opportunities to engage families, children, and child care and education professionals. Engaging business leaders may take a bit more planning and it may be necessary to develop additional contacts and relationships prior to engaging a business leader.

As with many of the activities your group supports, engaging business leaders takes a plan of action.

Identify the role and specific tasks for a business leader within your group

One of the initial steps which should be in place before establishing contact with a business leader is to identify the role and specific tasks a business leader will ideally fulfill within the group. Specifically identify what is it that your group wants from the involvement with a business leader. While your group may develop an entire list of roles and tasks they want from a business leader, the focus is to be clear, direct and get an agreement on what is expected from the business leader, their involvement parameters, and what the business leader hopes to achieve.

What Business Leaders can do to Support Quality Early Learning

Reach out to Media
★ Agree to sign and submit an Op Ed or Letter to Editor
★ Call into a talk show or be a guest
★ Agree to participate in a press conference
★ Post supportive comments on a blog or website which promotes quality early learning
★ Use company’s media department to help generate media attention for an early childhood related event
★ Share research about the benefits of investing in quality early learning

Reach out to Peers
★ Build local support by inviting a member of the Early Learning Investment Commission Speakers Bureau into the community.
★ Host a summit or other event to educate business leaders on quality early learning
★ Share research about the benefits of investing in quality early learning

Reach out to Policymakers
★ Encourage legislator(s) to send a letter to their caucus leaders
★ Publicly support a policymaker’s stance on quality early learning
★ Educate local policymakers from the business perspective
★ Share research about the benefits of investing in quality early learning

Reach out to the Community
★ Provide information about quality early learning to your customers
★ Visit quality early learning programs
★ Join a local early learning or advocacy group
★ Organize volunteer activities for management and staff at early learning programs

Reach out to Employees
★ Provide information to employees on how to enhance their children’s early learning and how to choose quality early learning opportunities for their children
★ Take advantage of the Pre-Kindergarten Income Tax Credit for Businesses
leader’s involvement, it’s important to prioritize, and eventually identify a main focus. This can then be used as an initial guide to developing a plan for engaging business leaders. As you work through your plan, keep in mind the main goal, but don’t lose sight of the other items on your list. Remember, it’s important to maintain flexibility for all your stakeholders, even business leaders!

Gathering data on early learning and how it impacts the community

Identify what your local community group can offer a business leader. Gather data on the reach and risk of families within your community, as well as data on quality early learning that conveys how it makes an impact within the community served by the business. How many working families rely upon Child Care Works to seek and keep gainful employment? How many children are served in quality early learning programs, such as Keystone STARS? How many children are at-risk for school failure? These facts may be very important in not only providing a clear picture of the families served within the geographical scope of the business (and possibly where the business leader him/herself lives), but also convincing a business leader to become involved. Later, when the business leader agrees to provide his or her involvement, this information will support them as they speak to others in their community.

Business leaders may also have an interest in accountability results and may want a direct connection between investing in quality early education and the “payoff”. This is a great opportunity to provide data that demonstrates an investment in quality early learning, such as how every $1 spent on high quality early education saves $7 in reduced future expenditures for special education, delinquency, crime control, welfare costs and lost taxes.¹ You can also make the connections between investing in quality early education and providing public benefits such as supporting today’s workforce; higher tax base; and minimizing risk factors like child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior.

If you haven’t done so already, this is a good time to prepare talking points, or an “elevator speech” that can be used to engage a business leader, as well as be used by the business leader when he or she steps into their role of supporter for investing in quality early learning. A very brief 1-2 minute talk (which could be provided in a short period of time—say, during an elevator ride) about quality early learning should hit one or two points. Don’t try to cram in every single fact about quality early learning!

There’s no need to limit to just one short speech. In fact, you may want to create a few elevator speeches, each with a different highlight or set of talking points. Your initial elevator speech to business leaders should identify the economic and workforce development issues important to business leaders.

Another elevator speech may want to convey the work your group does in the community around quality early learning. Remember, the key is to be engaging, while being brief and to the point!

**Connecting business leaders into the community**
Through the relationships you have built within your community with other stakeholders, your group is in the position to share these relationships and connections with others. Your group may be in a unique position to support business leaders’ involvement with the community as they develop a deeper and more personal connection to members of the community, especially with families. Think of the opportunities your group encounters, such as book readings at early learning programs, community events, or school board meetings, where a business leader may develop a deeper understanding of the importance of quality early learning. Your group has the community connections that can greatly enhance a business leader’s understanding of the impacts which can be made through investing in quality early learning!

**Making ties with other business and professional groups**
Many community groups may have already established relationships with business focused groups, such as Rotary Club, Kiwanis, or Chambers of Commerce, and may be able to provide ties with other business leaders or professional groups. Networking is very important to business leaders so providing an opportunity to do so during your events is a valuable recruiting tool. Your group initially needs only one business leader who is educated and supportive to recruit other business leaders, but to do this, there needs to be a connection with peers. Professional groups provide an ideal venue to accomplish this and expose the business leader to peer-to-peer support. Many area Chambers of Commerce have Education Committees whose focus is to strengthen the relationship between businesses and local schools.

**Involvement in broad based advocacy coalitions**
Business may benefit from the supports obtained through your group’s relationships with advocacy coalitions, such as Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA) and Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children (PennAEYC). These advocacy groups can provide information at the national level and provide links with other professionals which may be of support as your business leaders develop relationships with others.
Providing support for the business leader within your group

Identify what role the business leader will play within the group

Earlier we introduced the need to identify a role and specific tasks for a business leader who is engaged with a community group. The next step your group may want to take is to create a business engagement team within your group. Consider both the goals of the committee, as well as those of a business leader. This committee’s purpose may include recruiting business leaders to educational programs, providing education and resources to their own employees, conducting policymaker outreach with support, educating other business leaders in the community, and identifying ways a business leader can partner with the group to improve the quality of early childhood education. For each goal identified, the group may want to identify what is needed to reach the goal—and you may find that the skills and talents of a business leader fit some of these goals!

Identify where the business leader fits into the group’s structure

In some aspects, engaging a business leader may be very similar to engaging any other stakeholder. A business leader may elect to become involved in the work your group does because of a personal connection, or to make an impact in the community—just like other members of your group.

However, it is unlikely that a business leader will attend every meeting your group hosts. The business leader’s engagement may need to be much more specifically focused, with a stronger purpose and solid outcomes within a meeting. They may have less tolerance for meetings where a variety of items are discussed, or even one where much planning takes place. Business leaders may want to quickly identify the situation, decide on a resolution, then elect for a plan of action, with the process being very action orientated and goal driven. Because of tight...
schedules, they may have low tolerance for small talk—their time is money!

**View of a business leader**

**Create a business engagement team**
To best use a business leader’s involvement, it may be most helpful to create a business engagement team from those within your community group whose main purpose is to support the Business-to-Business connection. The goals or purpose of this team should include awareness, advocacy and action and may include such tasks as:

- Developing a work plan for year round involvement,
- Increasing awareness around the issue of quality early learning,
- Educating other business leaders in the community about the importance of quality early learning,
- Recruiting business leaders to become involved,
- Providing education and resources to their own employees,
- Conducting policymaker outreach with support of the team, and
- Identifying ways in which business leaders can partner with your group to improve the quality of early childhood education in your community.

When forming a Business Engagement Team, it might be helpful to identify the gaps within your group relating to business engagement, and then identify one or two main focuses of the group. This process can help keep the team on focus, without participants feeling overwhelmed or losing sight of their goals. It may also be very helpful when the team actually reaches out to a business leader to request their participation.

What does a Business Engagement Team look like? That depends on several different factors, such as the resources of the community group, the size of your community and those already involved. The team will usually contain those who have an understanding of quality early learning in your community, as well as a link or interest in the business community. It may contain members of an organization’s board or school board, leaders in your community, or a business leader who has approached your group on his or her own.

**Practice makes perfect**
So now your group has created elevator speeches. You’ve identified the risk of children in your community, and the involvement of children in quality early learning programs. You now know by heart the facts of how the investment pays off for your community. The elevator speech you’ve created identifies key pieces of information the business leader will find most valuable and it relates to the economic and workforce development issues important to business leaders.
Before you present your elevator speech to a business leader, say it out loud. Say it again. Say it over and over until it rolls off your tongue and you can present the information in a confident manner. Have a friend, co-worker or member of your group listen. Is your delivery smooth, without stumbling over words, phrases or figures? Is your presentation paced so it’s easily understood and you’re not rushing through your delivery? Do you sound like you know what you’re talking about?

Most importantly, do you feel confident? How confident you feel about delivering the message will impact the way the other person hears it. It’s of upmost importance to not only provide accurate information, but to feel confident in its delivery.

**Finding a Champion**

So, you’ve now identified major components of engaging a business leader to support investing in quality early learning within your community. You’ve done your homework in identifying the roles and specific tasks a business leader will play within your community group. Your group has collected data and formed a Business Engagement Team, and the confidence level of your group is up. What’s your next step?

To engage business leaders, you will need at least one business leader who is educated and supportive of quality early learning. This person will act in the role to engage and recruit other business leaders. You may already have someone in mind, or someone who is involved in your group who can fulfill this role, but if not, where do you begin?

**Identify your businesses**

With all the homework and preparation your group has done to engage business leaders in a thoughtful and deliberate process, it’s important that the next step of finding a Champion be just as thoughtful and deliberate.

To find that Champion, it may be as easy as starting at home! Look towards your parent organization’s board for a member who is supportive of this issue. Is there someone on this board who has a young child or grandchildren, who has a relative or close friend who is a teacher, or who has otherwise voiced an opinion in support of the work being done by your group? This could be your first Champion! If you’re struggling to identify this person, seek out a supportive Executive Director for help. Often a supportive Executive Director may have information about board members that can assist with identifying the best match.

Even if your group already has someone in mind, or is just starting to consider who to involve, your group should consider

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**It’s not just Pennsylvania business leaders supporting investing in quality early learning—it’s a nationwide movement.**

**Oregon**

*Our mission is not to pound on desks. It’s simply to share the research. We’ve got to do something, regardless of the economy, or at the other end, the social-costs end, it will just get too big.*

*Dick Alexander, retired founder of Viking Industries and former chairman of Associated Oregon Industries, quoted in The Oregonian, December 12, 2010, promoting Head Start as a business proposition.*
creating a data base of possible businesses to involve. This is a great role for your newly created Business Engagement Team. Identifying all the business leaders within your area can be done by obtaining the list of names through your Chamber of Commerce. Data is also available from the Department of Labor and Industry. This list should consist of local businesses in your community and should include top level executives and business owners. Don’t limit your list to only big companies—not everyone needs to be the CEO of a large company! The majority of businesses in local communities are small businesses with fewer than 50 employees. Think of the places people in your community visit every day—the local grocery store, the barber or beautician, the mechanic, and the bookstore or stationary store. What places do you drive by every day on your way to work? What companies do business with local early care and education programs? What companies cater to young families?

Another aspect to consider is to look for those business leaders who are engaged in local community activities, as well as those who are connected on a policymaker level. Who belongs to the local Rotary Club, or who volunteered (or contributed funds to) the policymaker candidate during the last election? Are those business leaders on your list? They should be!

One of the most important steps with engaging all your stakeholders, especially business leaders, is to learn as much as possible about the person as an individual. For the business leader it means learning what are their interests or local affiliations? What type of service or product does their company provide or produce, where is their product distributed, and how many does it employ? This information can act as a possible “hook” or lead-in to contact the business leader. However, don’t use this by itself to determine whether or not to engage an individual. Often, there may be connections or interests to your cause which are difficult to predetermine.

Making a game plan to meet
Once you’ve identified the local business leaders within your community, select which ones your group feels might be most beneficial to initially engage, possibly targeting one or two individuals, and then expanding to additional contacts later. These could be those who are already familiar with or to your group. For example, a spouse’s employer, a neighbor, or someone who attends your place of worship. What you want is an individual, one-on-one approach—not a net to catch all the business leaders in your community all at once!

When considering environments in which you or members of your group can gain exposure to business leaders, you might want to consider joining groups, attending or speaking at events where business leaders may meet, such as:

- Rotary Club
- Kiwanis Club
- Lion’s Club

The PA Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC) was established with a primary goal of educating business leaders across the state around the importance of investing in early learning.

There are 60 ELIC members available to present on the economic importance of investing in Early Childhood Education.

For more information, or to locate an ELIC member, please contact Diane Halstead, Director of Business Partnerships, PA Key, by calling 717-213-2067 or visiting www.pa-ellic.org
• Chambers of Commerce
• Junior League
• Local chapters of Human Resource organizations (SHRM)
• Professional organizations which represents an organization, like bar associations, economic
development, and retired professionals

Although many of these may be membership organizations, and being a member yourself may be
helpful, it’s not always necessary. Most will welcome an opportunity to have you or a member of your
group as a guest speaker during a meeting. In this opportunity, not only can you make a contact with a
specific person, but you can ‘plant the seed’ with other business leaders. Remember that it’s still
important to make that one-on-one contact, even in group settings. Take business cards (and provide
your own!), be ready to provide information about the work of your group, and then follow up with a
quick handwritten note or short email that references the meeting.

Establishing a protocol for contact

There are several steps to consider when establishing a contact with a business leader. Like with any
other contact, first impressions can often be the ones that remain well into a relationship or long after
an initial contact ends.

• **Introduce yourself and identify your organization and the group you represent.** Have
your business card ready, as well as your elevator speech. Now may be the time to deliver it!

• **Watch body language messages.** Watch the other person’s body language, as well as your
own. Is he or she making eye contact, leaning into the conversation, nodding in agreement,
smiling or displaying other signs of engagement? If there are background noises which may
make it difficult to hear, are you sure you’re speaking at a level to be heard? Is your body
language signaling that you’re receptive to what they are saying?

• **Be considerate of time and resources.**
We all tend to have busy and hectic schedules, but for
a business leader, a consideration of his or her time
and available resources may make or break his or her
involvement with supporting investing in quality early
learning. For a business leader, their time is money,
and they don’t want to waste either! Be flexible in
scheduling meetings (for both time and location), be
on time, and be aware of time—a 20 minute meeting
means a 20 minute meeting, not 25 or 30 minutes. If
the business leader elects to extend it beyond the
designated time, flexibility is a key to making this
happen, but be prepared to end the meeting at the
designated time.

• **Know your “ask”.** Ask for a business
leader’s time, ask for a business leader’s experience,
or ask for a business leader’s influence, but please **do not ask for a business leader’s money.** Far too often,
business leaders are approached with a request to fund a project, cause or belief. In difficult economic times, especially where cutting costs within the business itself may be in the forefront of a business leader’s mind, approaching for a financial handout may be a way to quickly close a door to a budding relationship. It’s far better to approach with your extended hand of assistance and support, and a request for their involvement, for they may not be approached as often with the request to become personally involved and share their time, experience or influence.

- **Follow up.** Were there questions the business leader had during your meeting? Did you offer to provide additional details, to clarify information, or even make connections? Following up after a meeting is an important component in meeting with a business leader. Find out the preference of the business leader for these contacts—don’t assume! Many prefer emails, however, for some phone calls may be best.

Your local community group may be at a point where you have one or two business leaders engaged to varying degrees. You may be at a point where you’re evaluating what next steps your group needs to take to engage business members of your community, or perhaps you’ve even had a few business leaders contact you for additional information about how they can become engaged. A contact from a business leader because he or she has heard about your work from a peer means word of mouth is working for you, but don’t let it stop there! It may be time to move to the next step of making that initial steps towards increasing your involvement by business leaders.

**Creating events to engage interest and involvement**

Once you’ve managed to meet and engage a business leader, there are several ways to maintain and support that engagement, as well as promote business engagement within your community.

- Adopt a business leader.
- Host a Business Summit, Forum or Breakfast to educate & recruit other local business leaders to help develop a pool of potential business committee members.

**Adopting a business leader**

Adopting a business leader is an excellent opportunity to establish a relationship and level of trust. It allows the business leader to build a personal connection to supporting quality early learning and allows you to act as a resource through this process.

One of the most effective ways for a business leader to make a connection to quality early learning may be to witness progress first hand. Matching a business leader to a particular child or early care program
may strengthen that connection. For this, your group must make the commitment to provide the business leader with regular updates of a particular early learning program. These updates can consist of artwork or letters done by the child(ren), letters from the center director, staff or parents, site visits, or involvement to special events (like book readings, holiday productions or Open Houses). Your business leader may also like to visit the early learning program, so issue an invitation!

Don’t neglect the support you can provide to your business leader, such as the latest information about quality early learning that has a focus of their area of interest, like geographical, economic or workforce related. Keep the business leader up to date with the latest research or outcomes as related to quality early learning, such as the new releases from the OCDEL Reach and Risk Report. You can use this information to highlight the need—and the progress—of the children and their families in your area.

### Hosting a business event

#### Preparing for the event

- **Create a specific timeline and purpose of the event.** Identify what connection the attendees can form and why they should attend your event—what’s in it for them? Clarify the anticipated outcome of the event, and select one or more items you’d like to happen as a result of this event.

  Create your “Call to Action” and make sure it is connected to the purpose of your event. Your Call to Action should include concrete suggestions, delivered with passion that inspires an individual into action, leaving no doubt that their participation is needed.

  It’s also important that the focus of the event meets the interest of a business leader, and clearly makes the connection between quality early learning and good business sense.

- **Identify the list of invitees.** Who should attend the event? Who would find the event most beneficial? Although this is a prime opportunity to use the data base of business leaders your group created, limit your attendees to a manageable number. If you have business leaders already involved, ask their suggestions as to who they feel should be added to the list. Don’t forget your policy makers! Invite your local mayor, borough council members, and other elected officials (such as state representatives, judges, sheriffs or constables). Also consider who will issue the invitations. Do members of your group have the connections to some of the invitees? Would the invitation have greater impact if it originated from an Executive Director, Board President, or a fellow business leader? Remember the purpose of the business event is to garner involvement from business leaders and they should be the ones invited to this type of event. Although it may be tempting to include those from the early childhood field, the focus should be on the business leaders themselves.

- **Secure a guest speaker.** Your guest speaker should be a person of interest to business leaders, with their own passion and commitment around investing in quality early learning. This could be a fellow business leader, school superintendent, or leading in research. Typically, a business event will feature a speaker who can make the case for quality early learning, as well as an engaged business leader.
When you make initial contact with the person you select, be prepared to provide the details of the event (when, why, what time, etc.), as well as what role you see this person playing in the event and what your expectations would be. What exactly do you need from this person? For example, you may need a guest speaker to share their own involvement in supporting investing for early education, and need him/her to speak for 15-20 minutes. Inquire if this person will need or want an honorarium for their time and involvement. Obtain a commitment, and ask if he or she will need supporting documentation from you as they prepare their remarks. (You may want to also request to review their remarks prior to the event.) Request a copy of their current bio, as well as permission to use their involvement to promote the event, such as in a press release. Finally, prepare your thank you letter, as well as a small gift of appreciation (as applicable).

- **Location, location, location.** Where will the event be held? It is easily accessible to attendees? Is there a fee for parking? Your business connections may help you determine an appropriate location. This may be a location where local Chamber of Commerce meetings are held, or where business leaders frequently meet for civic groups.

**Promoting the event**

Provide yourself plenty of time to adequate plan and implement promoting your event. Consider how you get the word out about your event. Will you send written invitations, or post an ad in the newspaper or local trade magazine or newsletter? Who will issue the invitation, such as an organization’s Executive Director or Board President? When creating your invitation, be brief and to the point, and use business orientated language. Include clear instructions on how to register for the event, and personalize each invitation. You should also prepare an insert with program description and registration form that can be included as an attachment to emails, posted on your organization’s website, or printed and handed out with information in other settings (such as profession development gatherings, business meetings, etc.). When considering how you will promote the event, don’t forget avenues such as asking your groups members to announce at meetings, preparing and releasing a press release to newspapers and trade magazines or newsletters. As the date of the event draws near, ask your business engagement team members to send e-mails and/or make phone calls to those business leaders who were issued an invitation, but have yet to respond.

*See samples of invitations to Business Leaders Summits at the end of this document.*

**Funding the event**

How will you meet the expenses of the event? Will attendees pay a fee, or attend for free? If they are paying a fee, how will you make them feel good about spending this money? You may want to identify a co-sponsor(s) for the event, however, this should be with someone whom you have already established a strong relationship. Now is not the time to approach a business for their support if you haven’t already established a relationship with them! A co-sponsor will be a business or organization that will help fund the event through donations of time, resources or money. In return, their business will be attached to any promotions of the event. Rely on a committee member with connections to local organizations. Ask yourself, how will their involvement in this event help their business or company? Don’t overlook business that can provide support through items such as publishing invitations, providing a meal,
donating meeting space, etc. Contact your Regional Key to determine if they are able to lend their support.

Creating the agenda
Your event should consist of two agendas. The first will be a detailed internal agenda which is based on your anticipated outcomes. It should include:

- Who will speak at the event, including who will welcome the guest speaker, who will conclude the event and all points in between!
- Guidance for the team, such as who will greet attendees, who will ensure that any AV equipment is in place and ready for use, who will make sure the guest speaker is where he or she needs to be, etc.
- Clarify intent of each session, including goal of each presentation, equipment needed, and handout information to be included, etc.
- Determine what is expected of speakers, including a detailed timeline for each presentation.

The second agenda will be the one provided for your attendees and should include the time of each presentation, the name of the presentation, as well as the person presenting and their professional affiliation.

As you plan the event, consider the arrangement of the room and seating arrangements. Should attendees have assigned seating based on industry or region? You may want to consider having an “ambassador” at each table to welcome the table members to the event and act as a point of introduction to the event. This person should be knowledgeable about the connection of quality early learning and business, as well as the county reach and risk. (This is a great opportunity to use elevator speeches, one page fact sheets and members of your business engagement team!)

See samples of Business Leaders Summit Agendas at the end of this document.

Hosting the event
It’s the day of the event and the room is set, check-in is underway, and business leaders are arriving. Your event is in full motion now! There are several factors to keep in mind as the event moves forward.

Make your event
- **Local.** The business leaders who attend your event are there because they either live in the community, or have a business which employs or serves the community (or frequently both!). The information they receive at your event should have a tie to the local community.
- **Personal.** A personal connection to the cause, as well as the results, will pique the interest of participants, as well as encourage them to become involved. Make that connection for them by having a peer share his/her experiences, providing information on the impact of investing in quality early learning and connections between investing and outcomes.
- **Fun.** No one wants to go to a dull or boring meeting, including business leaders, so make sure yours is engaging and interesting.
- **On schedule.** Time is money and a meeting that goes over schedule will cost both. The last thing you want is for someone to attend your meeting, and then have to leave and miss information because he/she left “on time”—even though your meeting wasn’t.
Including items during the event

- **Briefly introduce your committee members.** Include the business or organization they represent.
- **Thank supporters, especially those who made donations or funded the event!** Include a note of thanks not only as an announcement during the meeting, but also include words of thanks on the materials provided at the meeting.
- **Provide a Call to Action.** Attendees should leave your meeting with something specific he or she can do today, tomorrow, next week, etc. to support investing in quality early learning. This Call to Action must be specific to your group and the work being done in your community around quality early learning. Follow-up is critical, especially regarding Calls to Action. Letting people know that their support and actions can make an impact makes a difference. If assistance is needed in developing a Call to Action, contact Diane Halstead at the Early Learning Investment Commission (diahal@berksiu.org).
- **Provide takeaway information.** Include contact information for your group and any guest speakers, as well as information on next steps or calls to action.
- **Evaluate your event.** Provide a brief and easy way for attendees to provide their feedback of the meeting. Ask yourself what you really want to know and focus the evaluation in that direction. Avoid including questions that may not directly pertain to the purpose of the event. Make sure you include a place for contact information!
- **Thank everyone for attending.** End your event on a positive note by thanking the attendees for their time, and state that you’re looking forward to their future support. Be available as attendees are leaving to give a personal send off.

Delivering presentations

- **Varied delivery methods.** Participants are more likely to remember information if you vary the presentation.
  - Lecture Format (one presenter at a time provides information to attendees)
  - Interactive Format (including break out groups, etc.)
  - Panel Format (two or more presenters provide information to attendees during one presentation)
  - Combination of two or more formats

After the event

**Thank you, thank you, and more thank you**

In a world of technology, a handwritten note goes a long way in making a positive and lasting impression. A few simple words of thanks to an attendee can move them from “thought” to “action”. Include your business card with a thank you note (even if you’d provided it during the meeting!). If a handwritten note is not possible, follow up with a brief phone call, a letter or email.
Keeping engagement strong

Engaging the business leader is simply the first step of a long path of their involvement in promoting and supporting quality early learning. Keeping a business leader on that path takes effort to ensure they view their involvement as valued and successful.

Educate, educate, educate
Quality early learning, like other professional fields, is consistently supported with new data. One goal of your group may be to ensure that business leaders who have expressed an interest to support quality early learning—or better yet have moved into action!—are provided solid data on outcomes. Remember to keep strong that connection between quality early learning and the impact on business; however, if your business leader expresses an interest in other connections, you can help supply the data to support that area as well.

Make the experience real and personal
Helping business leaders develop their own stories or experiences they can share with others through site visits to early learning centers can strengthen their commitment to quality early learning. Make arrangements for a center director to meet with them to provide information about the various components of the Pennsylvania early learning system and OCDEL programs, as well as answer questions. Allow them to tour classrooms see firsthand children’s enthusiasm for learning and the level of quality the teachers and staff display.

Provide a helping hand
Assisting business leaders in using their local community and business and industry connections for recruitment can help expand your business committee. What information or supports do they need to make these contacts? Ask! Be ready to provide a listing of ways your group can support their involvement.

Take advantage
Listen closely to business leaders and take advantage of their expertise. They may bring a new perspective, areas of concern, or even their experience in the business world as their contributions to quality early learning. Consider ways your group can best use this expertise.

Be aware of the clock
Be respect of a business leader’s time commitment. He or she may have 15 minutes, or several hours, but it’s important to use their time commitment wisely. Be organized and keep lines of communication open.

Be patient.
Like any other, building this relationship requires:
- Time
- Energy
- Personal contact
- Benefits for both parties

Engaging a business leader may take months or longer, so patience is necessary!
Target a goal
You should have a good idea of the goal of a meeting beforehand. To help make the most of your time together, develop identifiable goals or outcomes for a business leader’s participation. Remember to make the work meaningful and have a purpose!

Be prepared
What is your plan of action when an attendee contacts you to participate? Have different levels of participation, each with a different time constraint. For example, if a business leader attends your event, then calls to say she has only one hour a month to contribute, what role can she play? What about the business leader who doesn’t have time to attend meetings, but wants to help promote investing in quality early learning some other way?

Take a look at the big picture
Once business leaders become engaged, it is possible they may take a stronger responsibility for their role, and that of the business community, for promoting quality early learning. Their focus may be exclusively on engaging other business leaders, contacting policy makers, working with the press (through such activities as writing Letters to the Editor or Op Eds), or engaging civic groups to take ownership of quality early learning. Sometimes, this may mean that the ‘business component’ of working with business leaders is overseen by another group in the community, or is housed at a location other than directly with your local community group, such as at a local Chamber. It may also mean that the business component is a group which is comprised solely of business and civic leaders and that interaction with your group is limited. When looking at the big picture—promoting quality early learning for the children of Pennsylvania—these can all be productive and supportive environments for engaging business leaders and gaining their support.

In many respects, business leaders are people in your community who are very similar to everyone else—they have their own interests and talents, they want to contribute to making their community stronger, and they want to feel as if they are making a difference. Although there may be some differences in the approach of building a relationship with business leaders, it can be much like building a relationship with other members in your community—taking time, energy, and personal contact in building a relationship in which both parties can benefit.
United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley

October 8, 2010

Please join me as we explore how early learning can be both an important component of a focused economic development strategy as well as a plan for long-term national economic growth. On behalf of the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, and the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, we are inviting you to participate in the first annual Lehigh Valley Business and Education Breakfast: “Investing in Early Childhood Education for Economic Success.” The breakfast will be held on Thursday, October 28th from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. on the Club Level at Coca-Cola Park, 1050 IronPigs Way, Allentown.

Building human capital through research-based investments will be the focus of this breakfast. This invitation-only meeting will provide business leaders from the Lehigh Valley the opportunity to hear local, state, and national experts discuss why investing in the education of America’s youngest learners has emerged as one of the most promising ways to help strengthen the future economic and fiscal positions of our region.

Please join us in bringing together the best minds in the Lehigh Valley to discover ways to coordinate our efforts around this important topic.

**If you would like to attend, please complete and return the attached registration form to Sue Nunez via fax at 610-867-7255 or e-mail at suen@unitedwayglv.org by October 15, 2010.**

If you have questions regarding the breakfast or registration process, please contact Mary Widmer, Coordinator of Community Engagement for United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley at maryw@unitedwayglv.org or 610-807-5743.

Sincerely,

Edward Doneley
Former Chairman
Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.

Attachments
Meeting Details and Guest Registration Form

**Meeting Location:** The first annual Lehigh Valley Business and Education Breakfast: "Investing in Early Childhood Education for Economic Success" will be held on Thursday, October 28, 2010 from 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. on the Club Level at Coca-Cola Park, 1050 IronPigs Way, Allentown. **Registration and breakfast begin at 7:30 a.m.** The program will begin at 7:45 a.m.

**Directions/Parking:** Take Route 22 to Airport Road South. Bear right off of the exit onto Airport Road South. Make a right turn onto American Parkway. Make a left into Coca-Cola Park Complex. Follow road and turn right at the entrance to the ball field, past the Iron Pigs office to the last door on the right. Parking is located in the West Lot in front of the Club Level building.

Please complete this form and return by Monday, October 11th to Sue Nuñez via e-mail at suen@unitedwaygvl.org or fax at 610-867-7255. If you have questions, please call Sue directly at 610-807-5730.

Name: ___________________________ Title: ___________________________

____________________________________________________________________

(Name as you would like it to appear on the name badge)

Organization/Company: ___________________________

Address: ______________________________________

Phone: ___________________________ Fax: ___________________________

Email: ___________________________

Please Note: One registration per form. Please duplicate as needed.

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Inc.
2200 Avenue A, Third Floor, Bethlehem, PA 18017-2189 • Phone: 610.807.5743 • Fax: 610.867.7255
Lehigh Valley Business & Education Breakfast

“Investing in Early Childhood Education for Economic Success”

October 28, 2010 • 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Coca-Cola Park, 1050 IronPigs Way, Allentown, PA 18109

AGENDA

Welcome

Drew Lewis
Global Marketing Manager
Air Products & Chemicals, Inc.
United Way Board Member

Introductory Remarks

Edward Donley
Former Chairman
Air Products & Chemicals, Inc.

Early Education... The Foundation for Learning

Gerald L. Zahorchak, Ed.D
Superintendent
Allentown School District

Pre-K Counts... Showing Early School Success

Stephen J. Bagnato, Ed.D.
Director, Early Childhood Partnerships
University of Pittsburgh
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Panel Discussion: Making the Case for Early Childhood Investments

T. Anthony Iannelli
President & CEO
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

- The Science behind the Policy...
  ...Why is starting early so important?
  Jarrett Patton, M.D.
  Pediatrician
  Lehigh Valley Health Network

- Investing in Early Education... Impacting our Workforce & Economy
  Michelle Powers
  Vice President - Human Resources
  Crayola, LLC

- Linking Learning and National Security
  Major General Wesley Craig, Jr.
  US Army - Retired
  Mission: Readiness

Call to Action... Next Steps

Lee Butz
Chairman
Butz Enterprises, Inc.

Message from Pennsylvania Early Childhood Caucus

Senator Pat Browne
Chairman

Closing Remarks

Edward Donley
Former Chairman
Air Products & Chemicals, Inc.
United Way  
SUCCESS BY 6™  
300 West State Street, Suite 1  
Sharon, PA 16146  
(724) 981-1884  fax: (724) 981-4838  
email: uwmc@uwmercercounty.org  www.uwmercercounty.org

Mercer County Economic Summit  
on Early Childhood Investments  
SPONSORED BY:

AGENDA

7:30 - 8:00 a.m.  Registration  
Continental Breakfast and Networking
8:00 - 8:05 a.m.  Welcome  
Joe George, President, Joy Cone Company
8:05 - 8:40 a.m.  Mission: Readiness  
Early Learning: An Investment in National Security  
Lieutenant General Dennis L. Bertholf, USA (Ret.)
8:40 - 9:00 a.m.  Mission: Child Development  
Teenage Pregnancies  
Rebecca Hanigskey, D.D.
9:00 - 9:20 a.m.  Mission: Community Impact  
Societal Impact of Children without  
Early Education Opportunities  
Honorable John C. Reed, Mercer County Court
9:20 - 9:30 a.m.  Mission: Impact  
Reflections  
Joe George, President, Joy Cone Company
9:30 - 9:45 a.m.  Mission: Mindset  
Self-Image Workshop  
Kathy Piston, D.D.
9:45 - 9:50 a.m.  Mission: Educational Improvement  
Tax Credit Award  
First National Bank of Pennsylvania
9:50 - 10:00 a.m.  Mission: Awareness  
Jim Micsky, Executive Director  
United Way of Mercer County

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND  
THE UNITED WAY OF MERCER COUNTY’S  
Mercer County Economic Summit  
on Early Childhood Investments  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2010  
Radisson Hotel Sharon  
Bristol Room  
3377 New Castle Road  
West Middletown, PA 16159  
Registration, Continental  
Breakfast and Networking  
7:30 a.m.
Program  
8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Please respond to the  
United Way office by  
November 19, 2010

SPONSORED BY:  
First National Bank, Joy Cone Co. and Specialty Orthopaedics
### AGENDA

**Mercer County Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investments**

**Date:** 12/3/10  
**Time:** 7:30 a.m. – 10:00am  
**Meeting Location:** Radisson Hotel Sharon, Bristol Room  
3377 New Castle Road, West Middletown, PA 16159

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7:30a.m. – 8:05a.m. | Registration/Introduction  
Continental Breakfast  
Networking  
Welcome | Joe George  
President  
Joy Cone Company |
| 8:05a.m. – 8:40a.m. | Mission: Readiness  
Early Learning – An Investment in National Security | Lieutenant General  
Dennis L. Benchoff, USA (Ret.) |
| 8:40a.m. – 9:00a.m. | Mission: Child Development  
Teenage Pregnancies | Rebecca Hanigosky, D.O. |
| 9:00a.m. – 9:20a.m. | Mission: Community Impact  
Societal Impact of Children without Early Education Opportunities | Honorable John C. Reed  
Mercer County Court |
| 9:20a.m. – 9:30a.m. | Mission: Impact  
Reflections | Joe George |
| 9:30a.m. – 9:45a.m. | Mission: Mindset  
Self-Image Workshop | Kathy Piston, D.O. |
| 9:45a.m. – 9:50a.m. | Mission: Educational Improvement  
Tax Credit Award | First National Bank of Pennsylvania |
| 9:50a.m. – 10:00a.m. | Mission: Awareness | Jim Micsky  
Executive Director  
United Way of Mercer County |

**LIVE UNITED**
Are we ready?

Do you have the quality of workforce you need to excel in the next 25 years?

Have you planned for the impact on your company of baby boomers retiring?

Are you satisfied with the number of young people joining service organizations and contributing to our community?

Did you know that 75% of young adults interested in joining the military are not capable?

How about some eggs, bacon, toast and a generous portion of reality.

Join us for breakfast and learn about how we can respond to these questions and ensure economic growth in the future.

Thursday, May 27, 2010
7:15 – 9:30am
The Ambassador Center
7794 Peach Street
Erie, PA

Breakfast is on us but reservations are required. Call 814-874-0141, Ext. 10 by Thursday, May 20, to reserve a table or your spot at a table.

Featuring guest speakers:
- Dr. Judy Cameron
  The Science of Early Brain Architecture
- Rob Grunewald
  The Economic Case for Investments in Young Children
- Retired General
  Ready, Willing and Unable to Serve
Are We Ready?
Register and go through Buffet Line

Welcome
Nick Scott, Jr.

Pledge of Allegiance
Led by Preschoolers from the YMCA and Early Connections

Why Should Business Care about Early Education?
Nick Scott, Jr.

The Science of Early Brain Architecture and the Future of Early Childhood Policy:
Dr. Judy Cameron

The Economic Case for Investments in Young Children:
Rob Grunewald

Ready, Willing and Unable to Serve
Mission: Readiness Video
Retired Lieutenant General Dennis L. Benchoff

Early Education is Our Business:
this breakfast is a BEGINNING for making life better for young children in our community
Nick Scott, Jr.

Next steps and Call to Action
Video: “The Ounce”

We wish to thank our sponsors and 2010 Breakfast Planning Committee for today’s event:
Betsy Bort, Bill Jackson, Nancy Anne Kalista, Vickie Lampe, James Martin, Nick Scott, Jr.,
Shlomo Turner, R.J. Zonna.
For questions or further involvement, please contact Nancy Anne Kalista at Early Connections,
Administrator for Success By 6 in Erie County

Success By 6® is a United Way of Erie County initiative administered locally by Early Connections, with
funding also provided by the Erie Community Foundation and the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development.
Op-Ed Sample #1

Your view: Why Erie needs early childhood education
Published: May 26, 2010, Erie Times News

By Rob Grunewald and Arthur J. Rolnick

Imagine a sunny day in Erie this summer and a playground full of 3- and 4-year-olds from poor households. Given their socioeconomic status, these children are more at risk to drop out of school, end up in prison or receive welfare payments than their peers from middle- and high-income households.

Now imagine that you are a policymaker and you have been handed an early childhood development program that will reduce arrest rates for these children by half. Further, imagine that this program will improve the children's grades and help them become responsible citizens and productive employees, as well as positively influence the lives of the parents. Still further, imagine that the money you invest in this program will yield a 16 percent inflation-adjusted annual rate of return.

How? Because of the savings attributed to the decrease in crime, reductions in the use of social services and increased earnings when these children reach the work force. That's a rate of return that policymakers usually dream about. But it's no dream. Long-term studies reveal that investing in high-quality early childhood development for at-risk kids has been shown to pay back a great deal more than invested. As Professor James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate economist at the University of Chicago, writes, "An accumulating body of evidence suggests that early childhood interventions are much more effective than remedies that attempt to compensate for early neglect later in life." Neuroscientists have demonstrated that environmental factors affect the healthy development of a young child's brain. If children receive developmentally appropriate care and education in the early years, they are likely to thrive by kindergarten.

But if they are subject to excessive stress, such as living in poverty or exposed to abuse or neglect, healthy development is compromised and they arrive at kindergarten more at risk for failing grades and later committing crime.

The question is no longer whether we need to invest, but rather what shape the investment should take. Over the past six years, we have been traveling the country to discuss the impressive research on the economic benefits of early childhood development programs, and one question has consistently arisen: How can we achieve the extraordinary returns found in the research; that is, how can we bring the programs to scale? The evidence has shown that small-scale early childhood development programs can work; the trick is to reproduce those successes on a larger scale.

Our 2005 paper discusses a model for such a market-oriented program (available at www.minneapolisfed.org). The marketplace for early education and care is a diverse collection of public and private child care and preschool programs. Most of the money in the market comes from parents paying for child care and preschool. In fact, the cost of a year of private child care rivals the cost of tuition at many public universities. A smaller proportion comes from child-care subsidies for low-income working parents, state sponsored preschools and federally funded Head Start.

In January 2008, the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation, with contributions from both business and philanthropy, began a pilot of a parent mentoring and scholarship model in St. Paul. Scholarships are provided to low-income families in two St. Paul neighborhoods with a high concentration of families living below or just above the poverty line. Similar initiatives are under way in Denver and Sioux Falls, S.D. As these projects move forward, we will better understand the effectiveness of demand-side approaches to investing in early childhood development.

Early childhood development programs work and pay a high rate of return for society. Pennsylvania has limited funds and choices to make. While Pennsylvania is off to a good start by providing funding for preschool, home visiting, and the Keystone STARS quality rating and improvement system, many eligible children are on waiting lists for high-quality early childhood programs. If we choose not to invest, we are condemning some of those kids to a life of crime and welfare dependency. And Pennsylvania -- and our nation -- will pay the price.

Rob Grunewald is associate economist and Arthur Rolnick is senior vice president and director of Research, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The views are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.
Op-Ed Sample #2

Businesses must provide experience, expertise to help students
Published: October 8, 2010, The Morning Call

By Edward Donley

American school students are losing ground to the rest of the developed world. We have heard the troubling statistics before — the United States ranks 21st in science and 25th in math scores. Both Republican President George Bush (No Child Left Behind) and Democratic President Barack Obama (Race to the Top) have taken on the challenge of reversing the trend of a failing education system in the United States. Change is coming to our education system because our economy depends on it, and it must begin with the youngest children.

Recently, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce published a new report on the importance of investing in early childhood education. Extensive research shows this approach is a very effective strategy to help bridge the long-standing educational achievement gap. This would increase low high school graduation rates and address the impending retirement of millions of baby boomers. These factors would place increasing pressures on American business. Investing in very young children produces huge gains.

While our entire K-12 education system needs drastic reform, we must begin where we can expect the highest return on our investment. Dr. James Heckman, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, has shown that the highest rate of return on dollars spent on human capital occurs at the youngest ages of birth to 5.

Given our economic downturn, it is more important than ever to focus on investments that provide the greatest return. Research on the rates of return to human capital at different ages shows that the earlier the intervention occurs, the greater the payoff.

The skills that our global marketplace demands — literacy, math and social skills such as creativity and leadership — are shaped by age 5. Quality early learning enables the child to do well in school, attend college or job-training programs, and build the skills to get higher-paying jobs and become productive members of society.

A child’s environment and their earliest experiences are most influential in the development of a child’s brain. Investments in high quality, early learning programs for children yield high returns. Economic research shows that every dollar invested today yields savings up to $17 in the years ahead.

The state Office of Child Development and Early Learning shows that children in Lehigh County are at moderate-high risk of school failure, with children in Allentown at high risk of school failure. Fifty-six percent of Allentown children live in low-income families. Quality early education can help these children to make them more likely to succeed in school and in life.

Business leaders throughout the Lehigh Valley have organized an important forum on early childhood education 7:30-9:30 a.m. Oct. 28 in the Club Suite at Coca-Cola Park. This important subject will be addressed by Gerald Zahorchak, former secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Education and current superintendent of the Allentown School District, as well as high-ranking individuals from the business, academic and military communities.

Pennsylvania cannot let any child fall through the cracks when we have early education programs that can prepare them for success. The first five years represent the most critical time, and our leaders must do more to recognize the importance of focusing on quality early learning. America’s competitiveness depends on it.

The business community must become involved. Small and large businesses have the most to gain when we have a well-educated workforce. It takes a strong effort at the local level to create innovative models of educational excellence. And it takes leaders willing to take a risk, to make decisions that will change the future for our Lehigh Valley children.

Every part of society has a stake in the future of children. We must be robust partners in their success. To improve our education system, business must lend its experience and expertise — not just money and good will.

Edward Donley is the former chairman of Air Products and Chemicals Inc.