

Testimony of Mark Hays
House Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment
March 27, 2019

Madame Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the subcommittee:

My name is Mark Hays and I serve as the Vice Chancellor for Workforce and Economic Development for the Dallas County Community College District in Dallas, Texas. DCCCD consists of seven independently accredited colleges with credit and non-credit enrollment exceeding 100,000 students. It is the largest community college district in the State of Texas and one of the largest in the nation. It is indeed an honor to be before you today to discuss how DCCCD is engaging employers, students, community-based organizations, and others to expand apprenticeships in North Texas.

In my role as Vice Chancellor of Workforce and Economic Development, I oversee a dedicated team of professionals who work to expand apprenticeships in a variety of industry sectors. We have made a commitment to our board of trustees for DCCCD to be engaged with 50,000 apprentices by 2030. To date, we are involved in 25 apprenticeship programs touching more than 1,600 apprentices. Nearly 50 more companies have expressed interest in both registered and Industry recognized programs and our team is working with these companies to get apprenticeships off the ground and getting more North Texans into middle class jobs. These apprenticeships encompass construction, manufacturing, information technology, health care, logistics, and aerospace. We work with both private employers and organized labor to create middle class jobs that provide a good living for workers and a stable workforce for businesses in North Texas. DCCCD's involvement in these apprenticeship programs varies. The District may simply be a pass-through entity for funds for some apprenticeship programs, but is also more

involved as an intermediary -- assisting employers with the establishment of new apprenticeships and working with state and federal officials in assuring compliance with the law. Our team works closely with employers, the US Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, and the Texas Workforce Commission to provide meaningful, competency-based apprenticeships that are important in meeting workforce demands in the Dallas area.

A significant milestone occurred this past summer when DCCCD, in partnership with RMS Aerospace, the Office of Apprenticeship in Dallas, and the Texas Workforce Commission worked together to create the nation's first registered apprenticeship in Unmanned Aerial Systems. The first cohort is underway and educating future UAS pilots for cutting-edge jobs with a variety of North Texas employers. Apprentices will receive three FAA licenses and one FCC certification when they complete the program.

I often get the question, "Why is a community college district so involved with apprenticeships?" My answer is our job is to help workers earn more and companies to become more profitable. Dallas is experiencing a conundrum. While there are thousands of middle class jobs going unfilled, the poverty rate is the third highest in the nation. Most of these jobs require an associate's degree or less, yet people who need those jobs are not getting connected to them. DCCCD Chancellor, Dr. Joe May, speaks about the "higher education network", whereby it's not about a single higher education institution, but about creating a better, more efficient system where communities and individuals thrive. Many of the apprentices we work with are not enrolled in our colleges as students. This effort is not about enrolling more students in our colleges. We hope that at some point they do enroll, but that's not the primary motivation here. We want members of our community to obtain the skills necessary to support

their families and we want companies to have a stable workforce. If those apprenticeships involve college credit, great! If not, then that's ok too. The key is obtaining the necessary skills to provide a good living and creating a dynamic, skilled workforce that helps our communities grow and thrive.

The vast majority of apprenticeships DCCCD is involved with are registered. We do have a small number that are Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Programs and we fully anticipate those types of apprenticeships expanding significantly once the Department of Labor issues clear guidance on IRAP's. DCCCD's goal is to meet employer needs, whether that be a registered apprenticeship or an IRAP. Some employers are hesitant to begin the process of a registered apprenticeship because they feel it is not flexible enough to meet their needs. They want a program that allows an apprentice to be trained in multiple skill areas. At DCCCD, we are all about meeting the employer needs and look forward to dramatically expanding IRAP programs in the future. Our team is prepared to work with both registered and IRAP apprenticeships, working with employers, and federal and state officials to make it happen.

In closing, I would like to emphasize how critical the role of the community college system is in moving apprenticeships to the next level. While registered apprenticeships have been around for decades, it's only recently that the community college has begun to play a significant role. Community colleges must continue to add and expand apprenticeships so individuals and communities can thrive. We cannot allow ourselves to be boxed in by excluding any type of program that allows individuals to obtain the necessary skills to succeed and businesses to grow.

Thank you for this opportunity today. I sincerely appreciate your attention and your dedication to this effort.