



# Emerson South

OKLAHOMA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 7, 2026

## To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Emerson South Mid-High School in strong support of maintaining local workforce boards in Oklahoma, rather than moving to a single statewide board structure. As an alternative school serving an at-risk student population, we have directly experienced the value, responsiveness, and impact of our current local workforce system.

Our partnership with Oklahoma's Workforce Board (OWB) has been instrumental in providing meaningful career pathways and post-secondary opportunities for our students. These opportunities require flexibility, understanding of local employer needs, and the ability to quickly remove barriers that our students face. The current local board structure allows for exactly that. Because of their proximity to the community, local boards are nimble and responsive, adapting programs and resources to meet the needs of both students and employers.

For our students—many of whom face significant academic, economic, and personal challenges—timely support and tailored programming are critical to success. Through WIOA-funded initiatives, we connect students to career exploration, training, and employment opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach.

Transitioning to a single statewide board governed by a council that meets only a few times per year would diminish this local control and responsiveness. A centralized structure cannot adequately capture the diverse needs of communities across Oklahoma or react quickly enough to address emerging challenges.

Local workforce boards ensure that community stakeholders—including schools, employers, and service providers—have a voice in shaping solutions. This collaboration has been essential in helping Emerson South Mid-High School support at-risk students and prepare them for meaningful futures.

I respectfully urge you to consider the significant impact that local workforce boards have on schools like ours and the communities we serve. Preserving local governance ensures that programs remain responsive, relevant, and effective in helping individuals overcome barriers and achieve success.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Gina Villalva*

Gina Villalva  
Principal, Emerson South Mid High School