



Kasich praises Cincinnati community-mentorship program

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By Joe Vardon

CINCINNATI — A wealthy businessman who gives his employees and his money to a high-school mentoring program.

An African-American college senior who still talks with his mentor from five years ago.

A churchgoing Procter & Gamble employee who is mentoring a Cincinnati seventh-grader.

These three people were among those who spoke before Gov. John Kasich took the microphone yesterday at Cincinnati's Withrow University High School, and they are the faces of the kind of mentoring effort the Republican governor wants in schools across the state.

Kasich was there to promote his proposed Community Connectors program, which has \$10 million from casino-license fees to fund matching grants — up to a 3-to-1 ratio — with what local communities spend to sponsor mentorship programs in schools.

Cincinnati Public Schools and several surrounding suburban schools districts already benefit from the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, which links 1,700 volunteers and 100 businesses with schools and has had a 96 percent graduate rate for seniors participating in the program over the past five years.

At Withrow, between 25 and 40 employees from Western & Southern Financial Group spent one hour a week with students as part of the mentoring program.

Kasich announced his \$10 million program during his State of the State speech last month and included it in his midbiennium review to the legislature last week. Yesterday's event was

Kasich's first to promote one of his policy proposals included in the budget review.

"They come here, and they sit with these kids, and they change lives," Kasich said of mentors. "And I have to tell you, in some cases, they save lives."

Article found here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2014/03/19/kasich-praises-cincinnati-mentorship-program.html>

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