

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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June 1, 2026

The Honorable David A. Fink
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Fink:

On behalf of Leo High School, I am pleased to offer our strong support for the Illinois Department of Transportation's application, on behalf of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, for funding through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program.

As a century old educational institution located on Chicago's South Side, Leo High School understands the importance of reliable transportation infrastructure to the economic vitality of our city and region. Our students, families, faculty, alumni, and community partners rely on an efficient transportation network to access educational, employment, and economic opportunities throughout the Chicago metropolitan area.

We strongly support the CREATE Program's Rock Island Connection Project (P2), which represents a critical investment in the modernization of one of the nation's most important freight and passenger rail corridors. By eliminating rail congestion and reducing conflicts between freight and passenger trains at Belt Junction, the project will improve safety, reliability, and efficiency throughout the regional and national rail network.

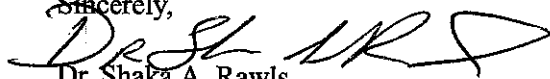
The benefits of this project extend well beyond transportation. Improved rail mobility strengthens workforce access, supports economic development, enhances supply chain reliability, and contributes to the long term growth of communities across Chicago and the Midwest. Investments in infrastructure such as the P2 project create opportunities for current and future generations by connecting people more efficiently to education, employment, and commerce.

As an institution committed to preparing young men for postsecondary success and meaningful participation in the workforce, we recognize the importance of maintaining a strong transportation system that supports regional competitiveness and economic growth. The CREATE Program has demonstrated the value of collaboration among public agencies, private industry, and community stakeholders, and the P2 project is a vital next step in advancing that vision.

Leo High School fully supports this application and encourages the Federal Railroad Administration to award CRISI funding for the Rock Island Connection Project. We look forward to the successful implementation of this important investment and the lasting benefits it will provide to Chicago, Illinois, and the nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Shaka A. Rawls". The signature is stylized with a large "D" and "S" and a long horizontal stroke.

Dr. Shaka A. Rawls
President and Principal
Leo High School
Chicago, Illinois