



Education *for* Ohio's Future

DECEMBER 2006

Ohio Grantmakers Forum

Ohio Grantmakers Forum is an association of foundations, corporate contributions programs and other grantmaking organizations. Its mission is to provide leadership for organized philanthropy in Ohio and to enhance the ability of members to fulfill their charitable goals.

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Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

High Stakes for Ohio

As the new century unfolds, Ohio stands at a crossroads. Over the past 20 years, our state and local leaders have worked to improve student, school and system performance. We have seen progress in some areas, but our education system falls far short of preparing all students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Consider how far we still must go:

- **Failing to meet world-class standards.** Depending on the grade level and subject, between 68 percent and 89 percent of our students pass state tests in reading and mathematics. But on the more challenging National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which is considered testing's gold standard and closer to international standards, only about one-third of our students meet the standard.
- **Continuing achievement gaps.** The persistent low achievement levels by minorities and low-income students remain a huge societal challenge; gaps range from about 20 to 40 percentage points on reading and math tests at every grade level.
- **Falling behind internationally.** Just as troubling, we are not keeping up internationally. "Above average" in the United States no longer is enough to sustain middle-class living standards, considering the globalization of the economy and the growing strength of other countries' K-12 school systems, which surpass us in many areas.
- **Trailing in higher education.** Currently, more than two-thirds of new jobs require some postsecondary education or training, but only 25 percent of Ohio's residents have a four-year degree. That places Ohio 38th nationally, while the United States ranks only 14th internationally on college graduation rates.

These data, and many examples like them, should serve as a wake-up call for anyone who cares about the state's future. We have a choice. We can continue to make incremental changes and take our chances that the rest of the industrialized world will not get too far ahead of us. Or we can make several high-impact changes to our school system and, in the process, meet our responsibilities to our children and grandchildren. The clock is ticking.

Priorities for action

State policy improvements in the following five areas will accelerate improved student learning, classroom by classroom, school by school and community by community, around our state.

MANDATE A SEAMLESS P-16 SYSTEM WITH CLEAR GOALS

A strong education system that prepares all students for the 21st century must have seamless transitions from preschool to higher education (P-16). But our system is fragmented, and too few students have access to quality preschool or affordable postsecondary education. We recommend the following:

1. The governor, Ohio General Assembly and other state policymakers must come together to create a master plan for Ohio's P-16 system that includes challenging goals and indicators capable of showing progress in the following critical areas:
 - Increasing the number of children in quality preschool and full-day kindergarten programs;
 - Increasing the number of students scoring proficient on NAEP;
 - Increasing the number of high school graduates prepared to do college-level work;
 - Improving two- and four-year college completion rates; and
 - Closing the achievement gap at every level of the system.
2. The governor and Ohio General Assembly must:
 - Give a restructured Partnership for Continued Learning the authority to review the P-16 plan and ensure progress is being made; and

- Develop an integrated data system that includes information about preschool, K–12, higher education and workforce performance to guide decisions ... and allows us to track the progress of individual students.

CREATE WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS AND STRONGER ACCOUNTABILITY

Ohio's goals must be challenging enough and its supports effective enough so that all students are prepared for an increasingly competitive economy and diverse society. But our K–12 standards, curricula and tests are not yet aligned with the expectations of college and work, and our teachers do not have adequate tools to use the standards in their daily instruction. We recommend the following:

1. The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents must complete the alignment of the state's academic standards with the demands of college, 21st-century workforce skills and international standards. These more challenging expectations need to drive further expectations, instruction and assessment of Ohio's students.
2. The Ohio Department of Education, with adequate funding, must intensify its efforts to help improve chronically low-performing districts and schools, including:
 - Selectively developing curricula, model lessons, assessment tools and teacher professional development in the content areas where the data suggest student performance is weakest; and

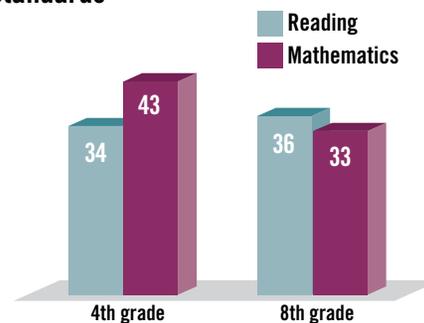
- Developing aggressive intervention strategies to more quickly and precisely assist districts and schools that are continually failing to meet performance targets and not improving at a significant rate.

GUARANTEE QUALITY TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS IN EVERY CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL

Good teachers make the biggest difference in student success, and excellent principals are essential for attracting and keeping the best teachers. But we do not have enough quality teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff urban and rural schools and in high-need subject areas; our programs for preparing teachers and administrators are uneven; educator compensation is based on seniority and credentials, not performance; and too many promising state reforms have not yet affected local districts. We recommend the following:

1. The governor and Ohio General Assembly should review current policy and promote efforts with local school districts and unions to produce innovative collective bargaining agreements that allow greater flexibility in staffing; promote pay-for-performance strategies based on well-researched evaluation criteria (including value-added analysis); and streamline processes to remove chronically ineffective educators.
2. The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents should conduct a comprehensive review of the state's teacher and administrator preparation programs,

Few Ohio Students Meet World-Class Standards



Percentage proficient or above, 2005

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress

focused on improving admission standards, strengthening the curriculum content and emphasizing clinical experiences. This review should be used to determine future funding for schools of education.

3. The state Board of Education should fully implement the Educator Standards Board's new standards and professional development requirements for teachers and principals. It must ensure that the new requirements become part of local district practice, particularly in the areas of hiring, evaluation, promotion and professional development.
4. The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents, with sufficient funding, must intensify their efforts to ensure a more strategic distribution of high-quality teachers and principals in hard-to-staff rural and urban schools and in high-need subject areas. These efforts should include expanded quality alternative certification programs, local "grow-your-own" strategies and financial incentives.

ACCELERATE INNOVATIONS AND OPTIONS THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM

Students and families must have public school choices, both inside and outside the traditional public school system, because students cannot be prepared for an increasingly complex and competitive world with a one-size-fits-all approach. But our traditional public schools offer a limited menu of innovation, while our public community (charter) schools have no uniform performance standards, uneven accountability and an inequitable allocation of resources. We recommend the following:

1. The governor and Ohio General Assembly should expand innovation statewide by partnering with local districts to significantly increase quality options within public schools. This is particularly important in districts that have a significant number of low-performing schools, where the state has a responsibility for intervening. The state should provide resources and waivers to create new schools within the school district to meet the varied needs of all students and their families. Schools, new and old, should reflect current research that supports high-quality and relevant curriculum; expanded forms of autonomy; the development of regional schools; the infusion of technology; a longer school day and school year; and accelerated options for combined high school and college coursework.
2. The Ohio Department of Education and state Board of Education must hold all community school sponsors accountable through performance contracts, and they should immediately shut down the schools that are con-

sistently the lowest performers. These state organizations also should assume a greater oversight and enforcement role to ensure compliance and quality. Performance contracts should clearly spell out the academic achievement goals that schools must meet, create easy-to-understand indicators for measuring these goals, and hold schools accountable for effective financial stewardship and student success. Because accountable community schools offer an opportunity for innovation and choice, the Ohio Department of Education and state Board of Education should consider lifting the geographic restrictions on where charter schools can open; lifting the current cap on the number of permissible charter contracts; and providing greater financial support for charter schools, particularly in the area of facilities.

ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING TIED TO RESULTS

Ensuring that all districts have sufficient resources is especially important now that all students are expected to meet higher standards. Despite improvements, Ohio's current funding system still does not — and cannot — ensure stability, equity or appropriate growth, and local districts are not accountable for spending tax dollars wisely. Ohio has discussed, debated and litigated our school funding system without acceptable resolution long enough; during this time, a generation of students has gone through the schools. We recommend the following:

1. It is time for Ohio's elected leadership — the new governor and Ohio General Assembly — to fundamentally redesign

the K–12 education funding system so that schools and districts have equitable, stable and predictable revenues. This will require a different mix of revenues, such as reworking property taxes; revisiting House Bill 920; or moving to other sources of revenue, such as sales and excise taxes.

2. Ohio policymakers must agree on a new definition of *adequate* funding that will answer the basic question: How much does it cost to educate students with different learning needs who attend school?
3. The state must increase its share of total education funding at each level of the P–16 system:
 - Early education — to ensure more low-income students are served;
 - K–12 — to guarantee equitable, stable and predictable resources; and
 - Higher education — to increase access and affordability.

Any increases must be tied to clear accountability and improved student results.
4. The governor and Ohio General Assembly should develop state policies to advance effective finance practices that promote the equitable and efficient use of resources, including the use of weighted student funding formulas to ensure that students with greater needs receive appropriate resources, cost sharing across districts and targeting funds to research-based practices.

Going forward, together

None of us can be satisfied knowing that our collective investment in public education is failing to equip our children with the skills they will need to thrive in the 21st century.

What's needed: State leadership. We encourage state education leaders to organize their response around the five highest-leverage opportunities for change addressed by this report. Ohio Grantmakers Forum (OGF) will:

- Seek to establish and support an informal network of key state-level education stakeholders to encourage dialogue, information sharing and consensus building; and
- Consider funding research commissioned by this network.
- Monitor the progress that the state has made and issue a report in two years.

What's needed: More effective education grantmaking.

To ensure that the nearly \$300 million in annual grants are deployed wisely, OGF will:

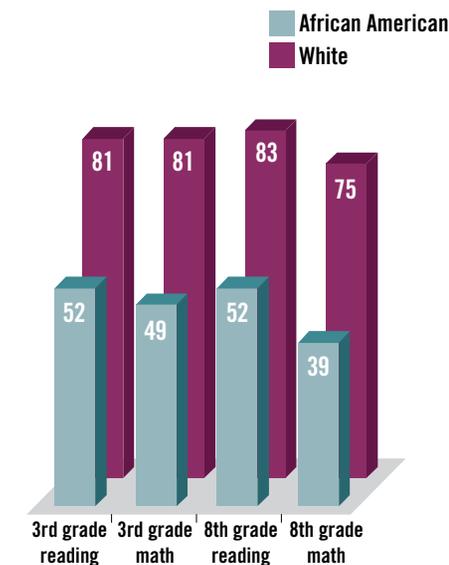
- Promote implementation of the Principles for Effective Education Grantmaking, outlined by Grantmakers in Education;
- Encourage that grantmaking decisions be aligned with the findings and recommendations of this report;
- Support education reform through policy advocacy, while observing the necessary governmental restrictions; and

- Facilitate awareness of and support for education reform through greater citizen and stakeholder engagement at the local and state levels.

What's needed: Community engagement. To facilitate the exchange of ideas and information and build support for sustainable local and state-level change, OGF will sponsor a series of conversations in cities and towns across the state. We will not simply ask participants to rubberstamp and ratify the recommendations in this report, but to weigh alternatives and help leaders set priorities.

For all audiences — OGF members, policymakers and the public — the essential first step is a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities that Ohio faces. We hope this report contributes to that understanding.

Wide Achievement Gaps in Ohio



Percentage meeting standards on Ohio's achievement tests, 2006

Source: Ohio Department of Education

SECTION 1: OHIO'S CHALLENGE

In 2005, the Ohio Grantmakers Forum (OGF) board of trustees formed an Education Task Force to consider how philanthropy might better understand and address the issues of education reform in Ohio.

Representatives from more than 30 OGF member organizations participated in the process, as did staff from three national foundations. Although initially concerned only about school funding, the task force soon realized that the issues facing education in Ohio are broader and more interrelated. Thus, we created a multiphase, collaborative project involving both research and action.

We have three primary audiences for this work:

- The grantmakers themselves;
- Statewide education policymakers, including government officials; and
- The general public.

Section 1 describes the challenge facing Ohio students and institutions, including:

- An overview of the new global context in which efforts to improve education are occurring (Chapter II) and
- A review of Ohio students' performance compared to previous years and international competitors (Chapter III).

I. Introduction

As the new century unfolds, Ohio stands at a crossroads. Over the past 20 years, our state and local leaders have worked to improve student, school and system performance. Gubernatorial commissions, citizens' task forces, national researchers and advocacy groups have weighed in on how to improve our education system. Elected officials have acted on many of these ideas — most notably by strengthening the state's academic standards, assessments and accountability system; increasing school choice options; setting educator standards; and financing a massive upgrade of our aging school facilities.

THE CHALLENGE

“When I compare our high schools to what I see when I’m traveling abroad, I am terrified for our workforce of tomorrow. In math and science, our 4th graders are among the top students in the world. By 8th grade, they’re in the middle of the pack. By 12th grade, U.S. students are scoring near the bottom of all industrialized nations.”¹

— Bill Gates, Microsoft, 2005

“Economic competition in the flat world will be more equal and more intense. We Americans will have to work harder, run faster and become smarter to make sure we get our share. But let us not underestimate our strengths”²

— Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat*, 2005

The result is that we have seen progress and can take pride that, overall, our children and youth do better academically than those in most states. By all means, we should celebrate these gains.

But at the same time, we should recognize that we still have a long way to go if our students are to have the skills they will need in a complex and global community. Many of our students, especially minorities and the poor, remain far, far behind. And too many of our institutions and citizens have not recognized the new global, competitive realities confronting our students, which are outlined in Chapter II.

We have choices to make. We can continue to make incremental changes and take our chances that the rest of the industrialized world will not get too far ahead of us. Or we can seize an unprecedented opportunity to begin transforming our school system to ensure our students' future success. We have the potential

to strengthen our position in the global marketplace, earn recognition as an international leader in education, and meet our responsibilities to our children and grandchildren.

As Will Rogers once said, “Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just stand there.” The changes envisioned in this report will take a steady and collective will that we have never had to exhibit before. Even so, we believe that the rewards will be worth it and — even more important — that failure to act will be tragic for our young people and our society.

Philanthropic leadership

Ohio's philanthropic community is prepared to play an active role in helping improve public education. Across the state, charitable foundations give more to support education than any other funding interest area. Yet we do more than just give grants. Philanthropists are leaders and conveners in local communities and are recognized as “neutral brokers” on matters of public concern.

A 2005 report by researcher Jay Greene estimated that private philanthropies gave about \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion to K–12 schooling in 2002. Yet this amounted to less than 1 percent of all education spending. For this reason, Jay Greene suggested that “trying to reshape education with private philanthropy is like trying to reshape the ocean with buckets of water.” Thus, the

“only realistic strategy for reform by philanthropists is to leverage their private dollars by attempting to redirect how future public expenditures are used.”³

Yet, as author Andrew Rotherham points out, “Most education grantmakers undertake relatively little work in the area of public policy.” By doing so, “they are neglecting the very process by which we make and codify change for a publicly funded service such as education — the policy and policy process.” He concludes, “While a lack of attention to education policy is certainly not the only reason that many philanthropic efforts in education have failed to cause lasting change or fallen short of initial high hopes, this failure to consistently engage in the policy process has at a minimum done nothing to lessen the other challenges grantmakers face.”⁴

Phase 1: This report

Phase 1 of the project involved producing an independent, comprehensive and easily accessible review of the current state of education in Ohio, together with policy and practice recommendations. We want state leaders to take a critical look at the overall performance of the system and, based on this understanding, to make additional improvements that will allow the next generations of Ohio youth to succeed in a world that will be very different than the one we live in today.

To produce the report, the task force divided itself into several workgroups, hired a project director and consultants, and examined multiple aspects of Ohio's education system during spring and summer 2006. Task force members interviewed education policy stakeholders, consulted state and national experts, and analyzed numerous reports. OGF's board approved and then released the completed report in December 2006.

This report is organized into three sections:

- An overview of trends in global competition and student performance (Chapters II and III);
- A closer look at five critical focus areas: systems and structures, standards and accountability, teaching and leadership quality, quality innovation and choice, and funding (Chapters IV–VIII); and
- A discussion of next steps for OGF and its members (Chapter IX).



Why Philanthropy Needs To Care about Public Policy

\$427
billion

Public spending on
K–12, 2002

\$1.5
billion

Philanthropic
spending on K–12,
2002

Source: “Buckets into the Sea: Why Philanthropy Isn’t Changing Schools and How It Could,” Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, 2005

Phase 2: Extensive engagement, education and advocacy

Going forward, we intend to use this report, its policy and practice recommendations, and their implications for Ohio as the catalyst for a series of discussions with public officials, other stakeholders and the general public. Since policymakers and educators cannot do this work alone, extensive community engagement will be required to help involve Ohioans in supporting education reform. Research suggests that when parents and the public participate in the work of their local schools — whether helping their own children with homework or voting in levy or school board elections — student performance improves and schools are stronger.

We have learned much in the past several months of research and listening, but we do not pretend to have all the answers. We consider this report to be the starting place for a series of discussions — from local communities to the capitol — that will lead to greater understanding and ultimately, we hope, to action at both the state and local levels. The issues raised in this report are hardly new, and we are not so presumptuous as to think that our involvement in the policy debate will be transformative. But we do know that grant-making alone, without simultaneous changes in the

policy environment, will be insufficient to create and sustain the changes addressed by this report.

Hence, this report emphasizes policy changes, including recommendations to policymakers in each of the five high-leverage areas. The importance of influencing policy also explains our Phase 2 emphasis on:

- Encouraging more dialogue, information sharing and consensus building among key education policy stakeholders; and
- Building support for education reform by facilitating conversations and engagement in communities throughout the state.

That said, changes in policy also will be reinforced by more effective education grantmaking. While not abandoning support for worthy local nonprofits, foundations must find ways to leverage grantmaking to help reform the system of education in Ohio. To that end, during Phase 2, OGF will help our members consider how to align their education grantmaking with the findings and recommendations in this report.

For all audiences — OGF members, policymakers and the public — the essential first step is a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities that Ohio faces.

We have learned much in the past several months of research and listening, but we do not pretend to have all the answers. We consider this report to be the starting place for a series of discussions — from local communities to the capitol — that will lead to greater understanding and ultimately, we hope, to action at both the state and local levels.

SPOTLIGHT

Foundations provide strong support to Ohio education

Ohio's grantmakers are ardent supporters of education, as demonstrated by the nearly \$300 million in grants OGF estimates they give in a typical year. This represents more than one-quarter — 27 percent — of total dollars contributed by Ohio's 3,000 grantmakers. The breadth and depth of the giving are remarkable, as are the innovative ways in which foundations work alone, together and with other institutions to improve education systems, schools and student achievement. These significant dollars flow to all levels, from preschool through postsecondary colleges and universities.

Foundations provide not only dollars but also expertise and passion, as demonstrated by a foundation trustee who serves as the superintendent of a county joint vocational school, an executive director who serves on her local school board and a program officer who is president-elect of the Ohio School Boards Association.

Supporting schools directly

Philanthropy's commitment to Ohio's students and schools is evidenced every day in hundreds of ways across the state, from preschool to postsecondary schools. When one school district cut art teachers during a budget tightening, a foundation stepped in

with funds to save the positions. When another district needed to better understand student mobility patterns, a grantmaker funded a study to gather and analyze data. Other foundations have helped teachers access professional development opportunities and provided dollars to teachers for class projects.

Forging partnerships

Ohio grantmakers recognize the value of working together to improve education, and they have built partnerships with national funders as well as state and federal education agencies. One such example is a current effort transforming 18 large, urban high schools into more than 65 small schools to boost achievement and graduation rates. Other Ohio funders have worked together in short- and long-term collaborations around education, including the one that produced this report. Grantmakers support efforts to build connections and the structures critical to improving education, such as one funder's creation of the state's first P-16 council. Another Ohio grantmaker is now replicating the council in five other counties.

Starting early, staying late

Many grantmakers in Ohio focus on making a difference in the lives of young children through better early care and education. Three major initiatives are working at the state level to improve early childhood care and education, funded by a variety of state and national grantmakers. By supporting programs at the local level, Ohio funders have increased access to preschool; provided teacher training; and made systemic improvements for children in centers, preschools and home care settings.

Many Ohio corporate philanthropies have strong commitments to education, particularly through tutoring and mentoring students, with employees taking time from the work day to help build reading, math and other skills. One corporation's employees have logged more than 125,000 hours tutoring kindergartners — just one example of hundreds that could be cited. Ohio grantmakers also recognize the importance of learning after high school. Funders — particularly Ohio's strong cadre of community foundations — provide substantial scholarship dollars to students wanting to continue their education beyond high school. In 2005, about 13 percent of education grant dollars enabled students to attend two- and four-year colleges.⁵

II. An Unprecedented Challenge and Opportunity

The global economic shift is upon us. We face unprecedented global competition, not just for low-skill, low-wage jobs but also for well-paid professional positions.

Ohio's painful reality. We in Ohio are experiencing firsthand the shrinking manufacturing-based economy, an especially painful reality for a state that once led the world as an industrial age innovator. In recent years, we have seen a steady shift of jobs away from manufacturing toward the service sector, with challenges that include outsourcing, downsizing and loss of corporate headquarters. We have lost thousands of college-educated professionals and middle-class jobs. Even the manufacturing jobs that remain now require many more skills than are guaranteed by a high school diploma.

Ohio's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy found:

Today, our state is losing ground in training knowledge workers and in creating the high-skill, high-wage jobs that will be used to measure our prosperity in the 21st century. Only 11 states have a smaller portion of their populations who have earned baccalaureate degrees. And Ohio's per capita income — once safely above the national average — has declined steadily during the past 40 years to the point where today it is lagging most of the nation.

Ohio is not a leader in new-firm formation or new-product innovation — just as it is not a

pacesetter in entrepreneurialism or in the commercialization of technology from its research universities. The state is behind in building a knowledge- and innovation-based economy.”⁶

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce put it bluntly: “The fact is that Ohio has witnessed a structural decline of employment and population,” driven largely by the departures of manufacturers to other states and countries, reduced competitiveness of Ohio-based firms, and little growth in emerging industries.⁷ However, our recent past need not be our future if we ensure that every one of our young people can graduate ready to meet the social and workplace demands of tomorrow.

A recent report from the Ohio Business Roundtable framed the challenge well. “Positioning Ohio to be globally competitive requires action on multiple fronts. ... Most important, we need to nurture and grow our talent — i.e., skilled, knowledgeable citizens ready to compete, ready to succeed in college and the workplace, and ready to thrive as lifelong learners in a ‘flat’ world where competition for jobs, investment and opportunity is global — and fierce. This is no small challenge. And the clock is ticking.”⁸

Our intent is to offer an independent, easily accessible review of where we have been, where we are now and the future policy options for education in Ohio — from the unique perspective of the foundation community.

Today, the skills needed to succeed in college and the workforce are basically the same. That is the conclusion of two major recent reports — the first in 2000 by Achieve (a national organization working closely with state leaders to improve standards and graduation rates), the second in May 2006 by ACT, the college testing company (*Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?*).⁹ These reports found that even students who do not plan to attend college immediately after high school still need the equivalent of a college-prep curriculum. Too many students, parents, educators, policymakers and citizens have not accepted this new reality. As a result, too many students graduating from high school are unprepared for the challenges of work and college.

The need for an improved education system — one that adequately prepares our students for these new workplace opportunities and demands — is more critical than ever. Currently, more than two-thirds of new jobs require some postsecondary education or training. Moreover, 90 percent of the fastest-growing occupations require some education beyond high school.¹⁰ But today, only 25 percent of Ohio's residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, below the national average of 28 percent.¹¹

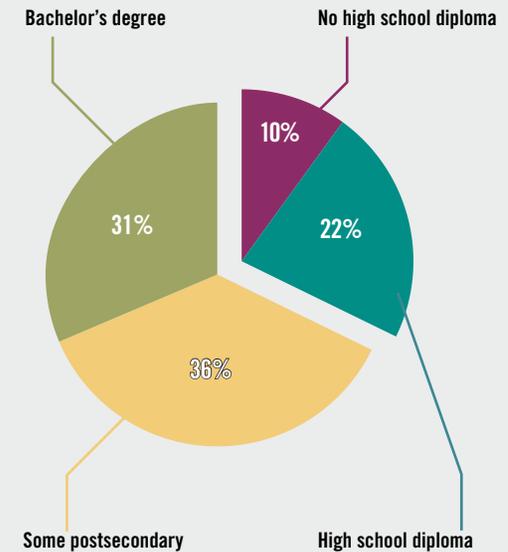
That is not good enough. As former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has observed, "If we are to remain preeminent in transforming knowledge into economic value, America's system of higher education must remain the world's leader in generating scientific and technological breakthroughs and in meeting the challenge to educate workers."¹² Closer to home, the Commission on Higher Education and the Economy urged: "The task of building a knowledge-driven economy by maximizing higher education's potential for generating new ideas, innovative products and better trained workers cannot be left to chance."¹³ Our focus in this paper is not to recommend improvements to higher education, as such, but to help ensure

that all Ohioans leave the K–12 system prepared for such postsecondary learning opportunities, whether in college, in the military, in apprenticeships or on the job.

Even manufacturing jobs require much higher skill levels. The National Association of Manufacturers estimates that 40 percent of manufacturing jobs will require some postsecondary education by 2012; by contrast, 30 years ago, more than half of manufacturing workers had not even graduated from high school.¹⁴ Unfortunately, manufacturers are having a hard time filling these new jobs. Eighty percent of U.S. manufacturers reported a shortage of qualified workers, and 60 percent said high school graduates were poorly prepared for entry-level jobs, according to a 2005 survey. In Ohio, most of the state's manufacturers surveyed expect it will be difficult to fill the 400,000 job openings projected in the next three years. The biggest gaps cited by manufacturers in filling these jobs — 250,000 of which will be entry-level positions — are inadequate work ethic, experience and technical skills.¹⁵



More than Two-Thirds of New Jobs Require Some Postsecondary Education



Source: *Closing the Expectations Gap 2006*, Achieve, Inc., February 2006

The multiple benefits of education

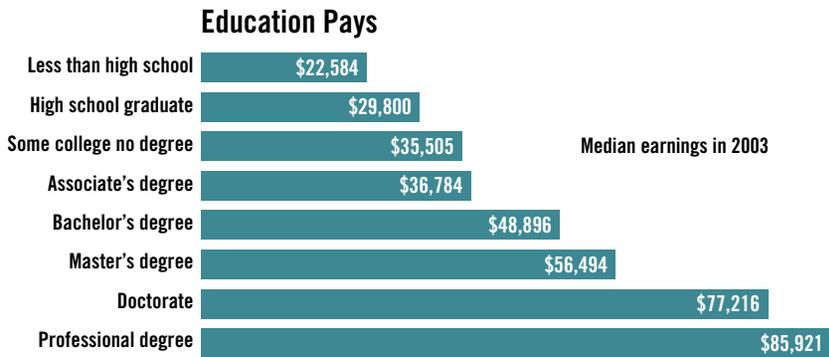
Economic benefits. Failing to respond to these new realities will have huge costs. More than ever, an individual's income potential depends on the level of education attained. And the road is steepest for those who do not graduate from high school.

An 18-year-old high school dropout today makes about \$280,000 less on average than a high school graduate over a lifetime (and contributes about \$60,000 less in state and federal income taxes). The average annual salary for a worker with a bachelor's degree was \$48,900 in 2003, compared to \$29,800 for a worker with only a high school diploma.¹⁶

Further, unemployment levels are significantly lower for individuals who receive postsecondary education or training. In fact, we all pay for the youth who do not graduate; a study by the Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that high school dropouts cost Ohio some \$12.2 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes.¹⁷

Closing the achievement gaps between white and minority students alone would have an economic ben-

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, published by Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY



efit for our young people and our state. According to one U.S. estimate, if Hispanics and African Americans had the same education and commensurate earnings as whites, the national wealth of these groups could increase from \$113 billion to \$118 billion annually.¹⁸

Social benefits. Beyond the economic case, we have a moral obligation as well to improve our education system and the performance of our students. We cannot tolerate the performance gaps that leave too many of our minority students behind or that lock our special education students and those from low-income families out of opportunities. All of our children deserve a quality education and the chance to succeed regardless of where they live, the color of their skin or how well their parents did in school. The costs are not just measured by job statistics and wages; there are also huge societal costs for not improving schools.

High school dropouts are three and half times as likely as high school graduates to be arrested in their lifetimes. The life expectancy for those without a high school degree is two and half times lower than for those with more than 13 years of education.¹⁹ Twenty-eight percent of high school dropouts have no health insurance, compared to 19 percent for high school

graduates and 8 percent for college graduates. And the poverty rate for high school dropouts (22 percent) is about double that of high school graduates (12 percent) and more than five times higher than that of college graduates (4 percent).²⁰

Community benefits. Our communities, too, benefit from quality education. This is especially important here in Ohio, with our 614 school districts and history of local control of education. A 2004 report by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation summarizes scores of studies that show how public education can foster economic development and community well-being. The study found that good schools are a major draw for attracting — and keeping — companies and employees in a community. In particular, a community's quality of life appears to be an increasingly important consideration when higher-skilled employees consider where they want to live. Further, school quality has a direct and positive influence on residential property values in all types of neighborhoods. An increase in per-pupil spending increases property values, while new or well-maintained school buildings help revitalize and stabilize neighborhoods.²¹

SNAPSHOT

614

Ohio school districts.²³

1,813,000

Students enrolled in traditional Ohio classrooms in 2005.²⁴

72,000

Students in Ohio community (charter) schools.²⁵

225,000+

Ohio students with disabilities, from dyslexia to severe physical handicaps.²⁶

III. Overview of Student Performance

To best understand our schools and how to improve them, we need to begin with a clear picture of our students: who they are, where they live, and how well they do on national and state assessment tests.

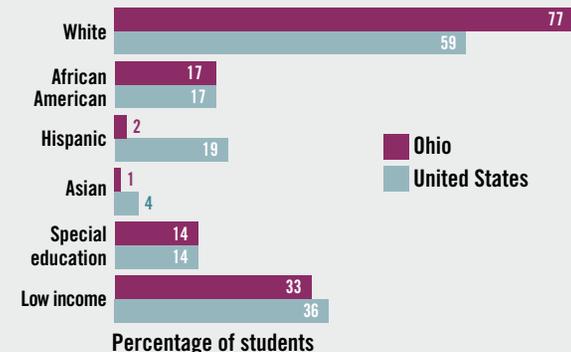
Our student population is less diverse than the national average.

Nearly 80 percent of the state's public school students are white, much higher than the national average. The percentage of African American students (17 percent) is nearly even with the national average, but we have much lower percentages of Hispanic, Asian and American Indian students than the national averages, which means fewer English language learners and migrant students. Our proportion of special education students — those with an individualized education plan (IEP) — is nearly the same as the national average, 13.9 percent compared to 13.8 percent.

We have more than half a million students — nearly one-third of the students in public schools — who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (a measure of poverty in schools). Still, that is slightly lower than the 36 percent of students nationally whose families live in poverty. As in other states, the highest concentrations of low-income children are in urban areas; in Ohio, 53 percent of children in urban areas are low income, 28 percent are low income in the suburbs and 37 percent are low income in rural locales. Family income matters because children from low-income families more often face challenges that make it harder to succeed in school, such as health, readiness for school, lack of early experiences that can

accelerate literacy and increased mobility. They also tend to be placed with the least-qualified teachers and have less opportunity to take challenging courses.²²

Demographics of Ohio Students



Sources: U.S. data for 2003–04 from *NCES Digest of Education Statistics*; Ohio data for 2004–05 school year from *Condition of Education in Ohio 2005*

Urban and rural enrollment are declining, while wealthy suburban enrollment is rising the most.

Of our 15 major urban, high-poverty school districts, all but one (Euclid) lost enrollment from 2000 to 2005, partly because of overall population decreases in urban areas and partly because of the steep rise in community (charter) school enrollment, which

NATIONAL RESULTS

43%

Percentage of Ohio 4th graders meeting National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) mathematics standards in 2005, up from 16 percent in 1992.²⁹

34%

Percentage of Ohio 4th graders meeting NAEP reading standards in 2005, up from 27 percent in 1992.³⁰

33%

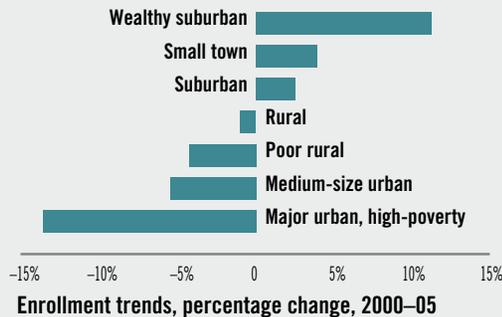
Percentage of Ohio 8th graders meeting NAEP math standards in 2005, up from 18 percent in 1992.³¹

36%

Percentage of Ohio 8th graders meeting NAEP reading standards in 2005, up 1 percentage point since 2002.³²

has grown from fewer than 10,000 students in 2000 to 72,000 in 2005. Of the six largest urban districts, Akron lost the fewest students (3,751 students) and Cleveland the most (11,666 students).²⁷

Ohio Enrollment Change by District Type



Source: *Condition of Teacher Supply and Demand in Ohio — 2005*, The Ohio Collaborative and Ohio Department of Education

Student performance is mixed.

Overall, Ohio's students are showing progress on a number of fronts and are above the national averages in many categories of performance. Indeed, Ohio has made some of the most sustained gains of any state on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) since the 1990s. But the persistent achievement gaps between minorities and low-income students and their more advantaged peers remain a huge societal challenge. Just as troubling, our gains are simply not strong enough to keep up internationally. Above average in the United States no longer is enough to sustain middle-class living standards, not considering the globalization of the economy and the growing strength of other countries' school systems.

The good news: More Ohio students are achieving proficient levels on state and national tests.

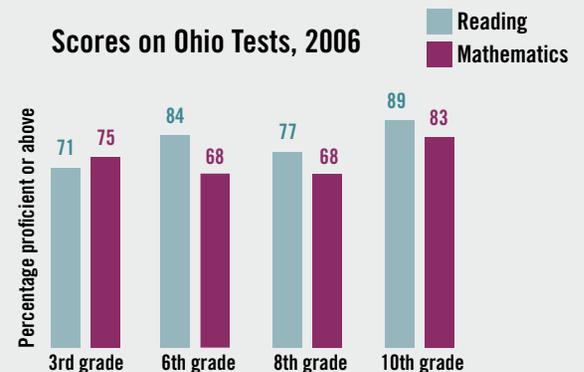
Judging from Ohio's state assessment scores, the majority of our students are doing relatively well. In the 2006 exams, for instance, 75 percent of 3rd graders scored at the proficient level or above in mathematics, 71 percent in reading.

The 2006 scores for 6th graders were higher in reading (84 percent meeting standards) than in mathematics (68 percent proficient or above).

In 8th grade, 77 percent of students scored proficient or above in reading, and 68 percent scored proficient or above in mathematics in 2006.

Finally, in 2006, 89 percent of 10th graders passed the reading component of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), 83 percent passed the math component and 73 percent passed science.²⁸

(NOTE: Because Ohio changed tests in 2005, comparisons to previous years are not possible.)



Source: Ohio Department of Education

WIDE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS ON STATE TESTS

30%

Average percentage point gap between white and African American 3rd graders who are proficient in reading and math on Ohio's state test.³⁷

30%

Average percentage point gap between white and African American 6th graders who are proficient in reading and math.³⁸

33%

Average percentage point gap between white and African American 8th graders who are proficient in reading and math.³⁹

19%

Average percentage point gap between white and African American 10th graders who are proficient in reading and math.⁴⁰

In national assessments, our students score above the national average and showed improvements in many categories. On the 2005 NAEP test (considered to be the gold standard of U.S. tests), 43 percent of Ohio 4th graders scored at the proficient level or above in math, compared to 35 percent nationally — a big increase from the 16 percent of Ohio students who scored proficient or above in 1992. In reading, 34 percent of Ohio 4th graders scored at proficient or above, up from 27 percent in 1992, compared with 30 percent nationally.

One-third of Ohio's 8th graders scored proficient or above in mathematics in 2005, compared to 28 percent nationally and 18 percent in Ohio in 1992; 36 percent scored proficient or above in reading, compared to 29 percent nationally and 35 percent in Ohio in 2002.³³

One possible reason that Ohio's overall national average is high compared to other states is that we have more white students, who tend to outperform minorities (see next section), but Ohio's white students perform only slightly better than their peers in other states.

Our high school graduation rate (76.5 percent) is in the top 15 nationally, according to *Education Week's Diplomas Count* report, which measures the percentages of 9th grade students who graduate four years later. There are huge disparities, however; the graduation rate is only 50 percent for African American students.³⁴ Sixty-six percent of Ohio students took the ACT test for college admissions in 2005, up from 61 percent in 2000. Ohio's average composite score, 21.4, stayed the same for those years and was barely above the national average score of 21.1.³⁵

Continuing — and in some cases growing — achievement gaps threaten Ohio's future.

Closing the gaps has become a high priority for state officials in the past few years and has received a great deal of attention from educators and the press, partly driven by passage of the federal No Child Left Behind law. But on at least one measure, NAEP, it appears that Ohio's urban students are falling even farther behind. On the 2002 8th grade reading test, for example, the gap between urban and suburban students (including students from the urban fringe beyond the suburbs) was only 15 points; by 2005, it had widened to 25 points. In 8th grade mathematics, the urban-suburban gap increased from 18 points in 2000 to 28 points in 2005. The trends were similar in 4th grade, although the gaps were smaller. Suburban students perform slightly better than rural students, and the gaps have closed in the past five years in the 4th and 8th grades.³⁶

Achievement gaps persist across grade levels on state tests. For example, in 3rd grade math, the achievement gap between white and African American students across the state closed by 6 percentage points, but in reading, the achievement gap widened 5 percentage points from 2005 to 2006. Gaps between white and Hispanic students closed by 3 percentage points in reading and 6 percentage points in math. While these improvements are promising, the gaps remain very high: about 30 percentage points between white and African American students and about 20 percentage points between white and Hispanic students.

In the 6th grade, achievement gaps on reading closed between white and African American students by 4 percentage points and between white and Hispanic

A LOWER STANDARD?

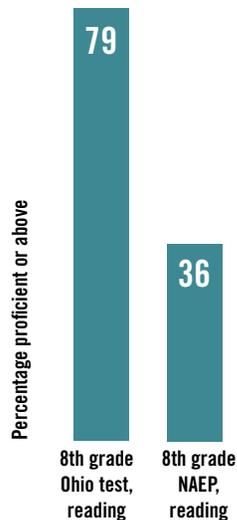
One sign that Americans are not keeping up with other industrialized countries is how our state test scores compare with scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test.

In Ohio, for example, while **79 percent** of our 8th graders met the state's own reading standards in 2005, only **36 percent** met the NAEP standards — suggesting to experts that Ohio's standards and passing levels are much less rigorous than world-class expectations and/or that we are testing lower-level items.

There are similar gaps in other grades and subjects; for instance, **70 percent** of Ohio's 3rd graders passed our own math test, but only **43 percent** of our 4th graders passed NAEP's math test.⁴⁵

Virtually every state has similar gaps.

The NAEP-State Gap



Sources: National Assessment of Educational Progress and Ohio Department of Education

peers by 2 percentage points. In math, gaps widened slightly for both groups: 3 percentage points between white and African American students and 2 percentage points for Hispanic students. Again, the gaps remain very high: about 30 percentage points between white and African Americans and 20 percentage points between white and Hispanic students.

In **8th grade**, gaps in reading widened 3 percentage points between white and African American students to 31 percentage points in 2006, but closed slightly (by 1 percentage point) between white and Hispanic students. In math, gaps closed slightly for both groups, but again the gap between white and African American students is about 36 percentage points and 23 percentage points between white and Hispanic students.⁴¹

Although the vast majority of Ohio students scored well on the OGT, the percentages of minorities who did not pass were much higher than for whites. For example, 87 percent of whites, but only 60 percent of African Americans and 71 percent of Hispanics, passed the math portion of the test. Only about half of Hispanics and four in 10 African Americans passed the science section. Given that all students must pass the OGT to receive a high school diploma, these data are especially troubling.⁴²

One major explanation for the performance gaps is that we do not make sure that minority students take challenging courses that will prepare them to succeed. For example, of first-time Ohio college freshmen in fall 2003, 43 percent of Asians and 24 percent of whites had taken a complete college-prep curriculum in high school, including four years each of English, mathematics and social studies and at least three years of science courses that include biology, chemistry and physics. But only 16 percent of African Americans and 19 percent of Hispanics had

taken such courses. Other factors contributing to the problem are student mobility and teacher quality; too many poor and minority students are being taught by teachers who have not majored in the field or are novices (see Teaching and Leadership Quality section).⁴³

Our students are increasingly competing with students from Europe, Asia and other countries, which are outperforming us.

Given the increasingly global context in which we live, any review of our educational performance must, to the extent possible, go beyond comparing current to previous performance or comparing Ohio to its neighboring states. More than ever, our citizens are not just competing with Indiana or Illinois, or even with California or Connecticut, but with dozens of countries, most notably from Europe and Asia.

Although specific data on Ohio's students compared to international students do not exist, we can connect the dots from the U.S. data on international tests to how Ohio compares to the nation.

For example, on the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which is given to students in more than 30 industrialized countries, U.S. 8th grade students ranked 17th in reading (down from 16th in 2000), 26th in math (down from 20th) and 20th in science (down from 15th), behind countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Japan, Korea, Sweden, Finland and the United Kingdom. In math, the United States ranked higher than only six countries: Russia, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Mexico and Brazil. Significantly, these results do not include scores from either China or India, which many believe will be our major future competitors.⁴⁴

HOW THE UNITED STATES COMPARES WITH OTHER NATIONS

17th

8th grade reading.⁵⁰

26th

8th grade math.⁵¹

20th

8th grade science.⁵²

16th

High school graduation rates.⁵³

South Korea, about the same size as Ohio in square miles, graduates more students with science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees than the whole United States.⁵⁴

In the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), U.S. students typically ranked lower than most Asian and many European countries. The United States ranked 15th out of 38 countries in 8th grade math and 9th in 8th grade science. In 4th grade math, the United States ranked 12th out of 25 countries and ranked 6th in 4th grade science. Our international standing declines as students get older. Moreover, the business community in particular is concerned about student performance in math and science, which are considered keys to our future economic competitiveness.⁴⁶

The United States also trails other countries in high school and college graduation rates. In 2004, the United States ranked 16th, with 72 percent of students receiving high school diplomas, behind Japan and most European countries, in a survey of members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In its rankings of college graduation rates, the United States ranked 14th, with 66 percent graduating, behind Japan, Australia, Korea, Mexico and many European countries.⁴⁷

Further, the United States is falling behind other countries, particularly India and China, in producing enough college graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. These students are crucial to maintaining a competitive economy. Ohio is producing increasing numbers in these fields — a U.S. Census survey showed that in 2003, Ohio universities awarded 78 bachelor's degrees in STEM fields per 100,000 residents, an increase from 71 degrees per 100,000 residents in 2001. But those numbers lag behind the national average, which was 83 degrees per 100,000 residents in 2003.⁴⁸

Ohio's higher education system needs improvement.

Of equal concern, Ohio's colleges and universities are not adequately preparing our students for these challenges. Only 25 percent of our citizens have a bachelor's degree or higher, 38th in the country. Only 13 percent of adults in Cleveland have such a degree. We are 39th in the percentage of students with a two-year associate's degree.⁴⁹

These indicators point to troubling trends for Ohio and the nation. Without dramatic changes in what children are being taught and how they are learning those skills, Ohio's economy will slide farther and faster behind. Nothing less than the economic and social well-being of our state and its residents is at stake. But as discussed in the following pages, we can turn the tide by making strategic improvements in several key areas. The first step is to understand the reality of where we stand.

SECTION 2: PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Following Section 1's review of student performance and the new global environment facing Ohio's students, Section 2 examines five focus areas that impact student success. These are:

- ***Systems and structures*** that are more aligned from preschool to higher education, with common goals and sustained commitment to ensure success for every one of our students;
- ***Higher standards and stronger accountability*** that reflect what students need to know and do in a global future;
- ***High-quality teachers and school leaders*** because we know that they make the biggest difference in helping students meet the standards and succeed academically;
- ***Quality public school innovations*** because one size doesn't fit all and students should be able to pick the instructional pathway that is most likely to help them meet these standards; and
- ***An improved funding system*** that provides adequate, stable and equitable resources to ensure that all students succeed and that holds educators accountable for spending these resources effectively.

In each area, we discuss the importance of the issues (Why This Matters), assess where Ohio stands (The Situation) and recommend state policy changes (Priorities for Action) that we believe have the greatest promise for creating the conditions that will allow local schools to provide the education our children and youth deserve. Each chapter also includes key policy-related Milestones dating to the late 1980s.

As described more fully in the endnotes, our analysis of the current situation relied on data produced by a wide range of public, private and nonprofit sources.

These five areas are by no means comprehensive. But we believe that state policy improvements here will accelerate improved student learning, classroom by classroom, school by school and community by community, around our state.

SPECIAL CHALLENGES

The diversity of our students' learning needs underscores the need for more seamless transitions across the preschool through college spectrum.

14%

Percentage of Ohio students who qualify for special education services.⁵⁵

25,000

Number of Ohio students who don't speak English.⁵⁶

16%

Percentage of Ohio students who are considered "gifted and talented"; many of these students will at some point risk becoming disconnected from school unless classes are challenging enough.⁵⁷

20%

Percentage of Ohio students who changed schools in 2003–04, which often leads to a drop in achievement. These transitions are not limited to low-income children; fully 45 percent of families that move in a given year are not low income.⁵⁸

IV. Systems and Structures

WHY THIS MATTERS

A critical challenge for Ohio is to ensure that basic systems and structures are in sync. High standards and strong accountability, quality teaching and leadership in all schools, high-quality school choices, and funding that is adequate and well spent — are all essential for our future. But if these and other elements of the system operate at cross-purposes, their power is greatly diminished.

A strong education system that prepares all students for the 21st century must have seamless transitions from preschool to higher education. Under an ideal preschool through college (P–16) system, a child's first educational experience would begin with preschool. Research proves that early learning opportunities help children, particularly those from disadvantaged homes, enter kindergarten more prepared to succeed in school.

At the other end of the spectrum, the need for higher education has never been more urgent. Economic reports show that about two-thirds of new jobs created in the 21st century will require some form of postsecondary education.

1. Ohio has a fragmented P–16 system, although efforts are under way to improve alignment.

THE SITUATION

As a local-control state, our 614 independent K–12 school districts have significant autonomy, which creates a fragmented system. At the same time, the federal No Child Left Behind law is forcing states to take a greater role in holding all districts accountable for meeting identical goals.

Disconnected goals. Our preschool, K–12 and higher education systems have separate systems of governance and separate goals. Efforts are under way to improve alignment and coordination. The Ohio Department

of Education says that the state's preschool and K–12 standards are aligned, and it is working with the Ohio Board of Regents to clarify college-ready standards and ensure that K–12 standards are aligned with them.

Recognized need for a unified P–16 approach. State officials have discussed the need for a comprehensive P–16 system that would:

- Mesh early learning, K–12 and postsecondary education;
- Ensure that students have access to high-level content, work toward common, agreed-upon

PARTNERING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Some students will require less time, others will require more, to master the skills they need. None of our children should have to struggle through school for lack of access to the high-quality services that they need to learn well or because they do not get the message that their success matters to the *entire community*.

One way to send that message is through **full-service schools**, where multiple public and private agencies collaborate with the school system to provide a wide range of services to supplement academic offerings, including health and mental health services, recreation and cultural programs, adult education, and more. The Lake Local School District in Uniontown has created such a model.⁶³

The **Strive Community Partnership** is raising funds to guarantee college tuition for every student in Cincinnati, Newport and Covington (KY). The idea is to work across sectors to provide high-quality preschool, smooth transitions through aligned K–12 support programs and a clear trajectory to postsecondary success.⁶⁴

The **Stark County P–16 Compact** is a collaborative effort of 17 school districts, the Stark Educational Service Center, the Stark Education Partnership, five colleges, and local foundations and business-people whose mission is to increase the high school graduation and college-going rates in Stark County.⁶⁵

goals, and are prepared for the demands of higher education and the workplace; and

- Preserve continuity during state leadership turnovers.

To advance these goals, state leaders have established the Partnership for Continued Learning, which includes the governor, legislators, and members of the state's Board of Education and Board of Regents. One focal point is implementing recommendations of the American Diploma Project, which seeks to align high school curricula with the higher-level skills that colleges and employers demand. (See Standards and Accountability section.)⁵⁹

Improved P–16 data systems. A strong P–16 system needs a data system that identifies successful educational practices and areas needing improvement at different levels, from students to schools and programs. It also is important to link education

performance to workforce data to see how students fare once they have left school.

Ohio recently has taken steps to collect the necessary information and monitor the progress of individual students as they move through the system. Educators need such information to help strengthen instruction. Families, policymakers and the public need such information to see how well schools and school systems are helping individual students improve their performance from year to year.

But we still cannot match student records among pre-kindergarten, K–12 and postsecondary (college and workforce) providers. Critical research, including analyzing student data to detect indicators that can predict future academic success or failure, cannot be conducted. State officials will have to resolve issues of student privacy and the costs of creating such a system to move forward.⁶⁰

2. Not enough Ohio youngsters have access to quality preschool.

THE SITUATION

For many children, success in school requires access to high-quality preschool programs. Recognizing this reality, the state created a cabinet-level initiative called Ohio Family and Children First in 1992, which aims to make sure that children are ready for school. The initiative works through 88 local Family and Children First Councils to improve children's well-being and school readiness.⁶¹

Uneven access. Early learning programs in Ohio are scattered among a combination of public and private providers. Access to public preschool is partly funded

by federal and state welfare programs, which offer early learning opportunities to 3- and 4-year-olds from the state's lowest-income families. But new stringent funding guidelines do not serve many needy children and drop students if their families become ineligible for welfare.

Low preschool enrollment. Further, the state has fallen short in its preschool enrollment goals. In 2004–05, only 5 percent of the state's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in state-sponsored programs, about half the number of children served by state-sponsored preschool in 2003. The state ranked 27th of the 38 states that operate preschool programs.⁶²

LOOKING AT PRESCHOOL

306,240

Number of 3- and 4-year-olds in Ohio.⁶⁹

47%

Percentage of Ohio 3- and 4-year-olds in school.⁷⁰

\$781 million

The benefits that Ohio would receive if we spent an additional \$482 million to enroll an additional 40 percent of Ohio 3-year-olds for two years. We would have fewer school dropouts; lower criminal justice, health and welfare costs; and increased tax revenues.⁷¹

Innovative approaches. Build Ohio is an inter-agency alliance working toward the development of a system of early care and education. The work of Build Ohio is to identify gaps or needed improvements in the infrastructure, seize opportunities to move the system forward, convene stakeholders for design and feedback, and build public awareness and the support of investments in early childhood. The coalition is working on a number of fronts, including piloting a voluntary quality rating system for early childhood centers, linked to the preschool academic content standards, and developing a professional registry and

the TEACH program to encourage training of early care and education providers.⁶⁶

School Readiness Solutions Group. The state Board of Education appointed this group in 2005 to make recommendations to the department, governor and legislators for the design of a high-quality early learning system. It published its comprehensive recommendations in August 2006, which currently are being reviewed by policymakers, educators and foundations.⁶⁷

3. Too few students have access to affordable higher education.

THE SITUATION

Although postsecondary education is becoming a requirement for many new jobs, higher education is not accessible or affordable for many Ohio students.

“F” for affordability. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education recently awarded an “F” to Ohio for affordability. Paying for a year of public four-year college tuition (not including financial aid) costs an average of 42 percent of family income in Ohio, compared to 28 percent a decade ago, and it is much higher than the best-performing states.

Moreover, the study says that the gap in college participation between whites and other ethnic groups has widened substantially. Currently, 37 percent of whites between ages 18 and 24 are enrolled in college, compared to 26 percent of other groups. Sixty-one percent of high-income young adults are enrolled, compared to 20 percent of their low-income peers.⁶⁸

Inadequate accountability. Ohio's higher education system is not aligned with our K–12 system. The standards are different. High school graduation and college admissions and placement tests are different. Data systems do not monitor the performance of students from one level to the next. (See Standards and Accountability section.)

Priorities for Action

Policy Recommendations

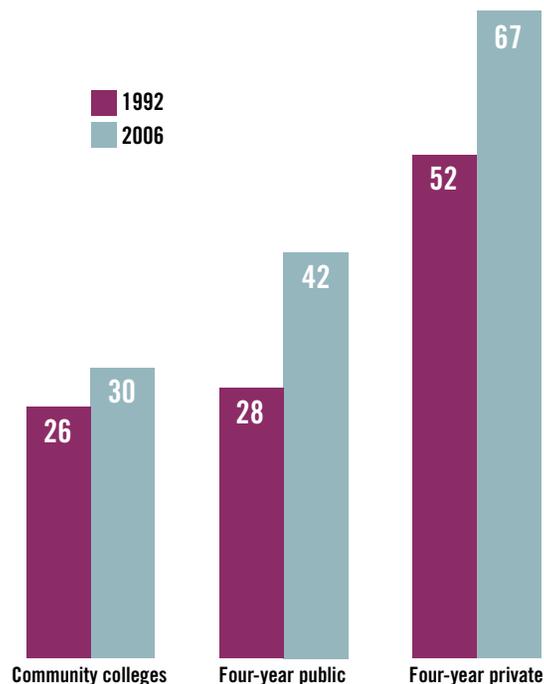
1. The governor, Ohio General Assembly and other state policymakers must come together to create a master plan for Ohio's P–16 system that includes challenging goals and indicators capable of showing progress in the following critical areas:
 - Increasing the number of children in quality preschool and full-day kindergarten programs;
 - Increasing the number of students proficient on NAEP;
 - Increasing the number of high school graduates prepared to do college-level work;
 - Improving two- and four-year college completion rates; and
 - Closing the achievement gap at every level of the system.
2. The governor and Ohio General Assembly must:
 - Give a restructured Partnership for Continued Learning the authority to review the P–16 plan and ensure progress is being made; and
 - Develop an integrated data system that includes information about preschool, K–12, higher education and workforce performance to guide decisions ... and allow us to track individuals' progress.

Milestones

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 1988 | Governor Celeste creates Education 2000 Blue Ribbon Commission. | 2005 | Partnership for Continued Learning is established to create a seamless system of education. |
| 1991 | Governor Voinovich is elected. During his tenure, Ohio becomes the national leader in state support for Head Start. | 2005 | School Readiness Solutions Group is formed to develop recommendations for improved early childhood services. |
| 1992 | Ohio Family and Children First Initiative is started to help coordinate early childhood services across the state. | 2005 | Responding to the CHEE report, Ohio Business Roundtable establishes the Business Alliance for Higher Education and the Economy. |
| 2003 | Governor Taft creates the Commission for Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE). | | |

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Percentage of family income (average of all income groups) needed to pay for college expenses in Ohio minus financial aid



Source: *Measuring Up 2006*, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

GRADING OHIO: STANDARDS

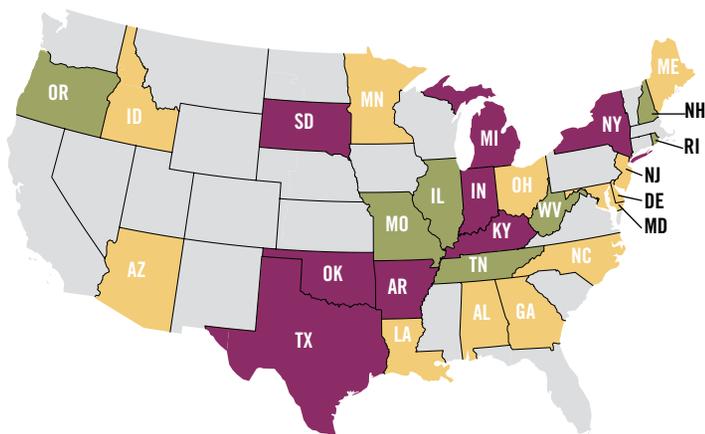
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Education Week's ranking of Ohio's overall standards, 11th in the United States. A recent American Federation of Teachers report says Ohio is one of 11 states in which tests are aligned with strong content standards.⁷⁴

C

Fordham Foundation's grade for Ohio's English language arts standards, compared to a D for mathematics and B for science.⁷⁵

Only Eight States Require a College- and Work-Ready Diploma ... Ohio and Others Plan To



■ College- and work-ready diploma in place
■ Plan to raise requirements
■ Raised requirements in past year, but not to college- and work-ready level

Source: Achieve, Inc., Survey/Research, February 2006

V. Standards and Accountability

WHY THIS MATTERS

Ohio needs challenging goals for education so that students who meet Ohio's standards are ready to compete in the increasingly global labor market and diverse society. Rigorous goals alone are not enough, however. Teachers and principals also need the curriculum tools and training to bring these standards to life in classrooms. All students should have the "scaffolding," safety nets and supports around them that will help them succeed. Local educators have neither the time nor the capacity to develop these resources on their own. And local districts and/or the state must intervene forcefully to help turn around low-performing schools.

1. Ohio's standards are not yet benchmarked to 21st-century skills and expectations.

THE SITUATION

Strengthening our system of standards, assessments and accountability has been a statewide priority for the past several years. We introduced new standards in the past five years in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, foreign language and technology.

New standards get mixed reviews. Nationally, Ohio's standards get mixed reviews from organizations such as *Education Week*, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the American Federation of Teachers. (Grades differ because of different criteria.)⁷²

A February 2006 report from Achieve's American Diploma Project (ADP) shows that our standards are not yet aligned with postsecondary and workplace expectations. For instance, only five states have aligned their high school standards with 21st-century requirements; these include the ability to do higher-level math such as Algebra II and geometry and to write a coherent research paper. Ohio is one of 21

states in the process of doing so. (See related findings from this report, page 27.)⁷³

There also is evidence that not enough Ohio students are taking the higher-level courses that will prepare them to succeed in college or at good jobs. Only 47 percent of Ohio high school students are taking upper-level math courses such as Algebra II, according to an unpublished 2002 study from the Council of Chief State School Officers; Ohio was 23rd of 34 participating states.

Partly in response to findings such as these, Ohio is one of 25 states that have joined the ADP Network, which is committed to strengthening state standards, tests and accountability systems, including much better alignment between the K–12 and higher education systems. Governor Taft's Ohio Core proposal incorporates many of the ADP recommendations, including a requirement that all high school students, beginning with the class of 2011, take a rigorous core college- and work-ready curriculum. Completion of the core curriculum

GRADING OHIO: ACCOUNTABILITY

C

Education Next's grade for how closely our assessment system aligns with NAEP, which is considered equivalent to the highest international standard. Only five states (Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, South Carolina and Wyoming) have NAEP-level proficiency standards.⁷⁹

8

The number of recommended data elements (out of 10) that Ohio has for tracking student progress from K–12 through college, one of only seven states with this many. These include indicators on student enrollment, demographics, performance and course-taking and teachers that students have had.⁸⁰

would be a requirement to enter Ohio's public universities. The Ohio Department of Education is working with Achieve to align K–12 and postsecondary standards.⁷⁶

A broader set of expectations. While many national organizations are focused on boosting reading, writing and math skills, a separate business-led group, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (a coalition of national business and education leaders), is calling on Ohio and other states to require a broader set of

competencies for high school students. In addition to the core subjects, the partnership recommends:

- Global awareness;
- Civic engagement;
- Financial, economic and business literacy;
- Learning skills; and
- Instructional technology literacy.

To date, North Carolina and West Virginia are the only two states that have agreed to raise their requirements in this way.⁷⁷

2. Ohio is strengthening its accountability and assessment system, but weaknesses remain.

THE SITUATION

Working closely with national groups, state leaders have taken several positive steps to strengthen our system for measuring student and school performance, but there is still room for improvement.

Expanded testing. Like all other states, we have now adjusted our assessment system to test annually reading and math in grades 3–8 and once in high school, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. (Annual science tests also will be required, starting in the 2007–08 school year.) Unlike many states, our testing system also covers writing and social studies.

The Partnership for Continued Learning, a coalition of K–12 and higher education leaders, is considering additional high school assessments.

High school test. We are one of 23 states with a high school exit exam, which students must pass to gradu-

ate; Maryland and Washington are phasing in such a test. But our Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) is pegged at 10th-grade standards, and a 2004 report from Achieve said Ohio's math test, like those of other states studied, actually measures skills that other countries test in 8th grade. The same report found the state's English language arts exam was even easier to pass.⁷⁸

Better alignment needed. The recent ADP report also looked at three indicators related to accountability and assessment. Like most states, Ohio's current system falls short in:

- *Aligning high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations.* Five states are doing so, and 12 more plan to, including Ohio. (Since the ADP report was published, Ohio has drafted aligned standards.)
- *Aligning high school and postsecondary assessments.* Six states are doing so, and eight more plan to, although not Ohio.
- *Holding high school and postsecondary institutions accountable for student success,* including building

DOES OHIO HAVE THE RESOURCES OR STRATEGY TO HELP LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS?

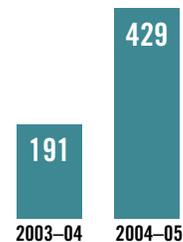
Ohio's complex accountability system blends the state's priorities, which include **measuring both absolute achievement and individual student progress** from year to year (so-called value-added measurements) with new federal requirements, which focus on whether different groups of students (whites, African Americans, low income, etc.) make **Adequate Yearly Progress** toward meeting standards in English and mathematics by 2014.

The state requires school districts to intervene when students do not perform well on state tests, and we are one of 37 states to provide **assistance to low-performing schools**, according to *Education Week*.⁸⁵ But it is unclear how much Ohio spends on such help, according to a 2005 report by the (now dismantled) Legislative Office of Education Oversight.⁸⁶

The report said that the federal focus on reading and mathematics spurred districts to prioritize interventions in those subjects, with much less attention to writing, social studies and science. **Case studies of 10 districts** said they were more likely to intervene before students take a high-stakes test than after they have scored poorly because they do not have enough money to do both.

Concerns about whether the state **has sufficient resources or a strong enough strategy** have increased as the number of schools needing improvement under No Child Left Behind has risen dramatically.

Ohio Schools in Need of Improvement



Source: *Education Week*

aligned P-16 data systems to monitor school and student performance. Three states have done so, and 31 plan to, although not Ohio.⁸¹

Integrated accountability system. A noteworthy feature of our accountability system is how it integrates the state's own accountability indicators with NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress targets into a seamless scorecard of school performance. The National Governors Association has praised Ohio for this initiative.⁸² It is unclear, however, whether the state has the capacity to help the growing number of low-performing schools (see sidebar).

3. Teachers do not have sufficient tools and training to use the standards to plan and deliver daily instruction.

THE SITUATION

Teachers frequently say that they need more help translating the state's academic standards into day-to-day lesson plans and other tools for improving instruction.

Model curricula. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has begun to develop elements of model curricula — including content standards, lessons and unit plans, benchmarks, indicators, and assessments — which are posted on the ODE Web site. The Ohio Resource Center for Math, Science and Reading has numerous lessons aligned to the state's standards. And, as part of the Ohio High School Transformation Project (part of a national effort funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to create smaller schools and more personalized learning environments), curriculum supports are under development. All of these are voluntary, however, and leave it to the individual teacher, school or district to combine the pieces into a coherent and unified curriculum.

Measuring student progress. We are one of only seven states that has at least eight of the 10 data elements in place that allow states to measure student progress over time, from K-12 through college, according to the Data Quality Campaign. Such information will allow policymakers and educators to better understand the finer details of student performance and which academic interventions work best. The only elements we are missing are student-level college readiness data and the ability to match K-12 and higher education data records. (See Systems and Structures section.)⁸³

As part of the effort to increase the instructional impact of standards, there also is growing recognition across the country that states and districts could better identify “power standards.” Of the hundreds of standards in each subject at each grade level, these are the most important for students to master. Ideally, these core standards also are the ones that are measured by the state's assessment. The ODE says it will address this issue next year.

Using technology. Numerous Ohio school districts and community-based organizations are showing how technology can improve student achievement:

- The Summit Education Initiative, a local education foundation and three school districts in Summit County formed *Learning Matters* to improve student performance on the mathematics section of the Ohio Proficiency Test.⁸⁴
- *Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)* uses innovative, technology-based educational

GRADING OHIO: USING TECHNOLOGY

4

Number of areas (out of 13) in which Ohio provides data and analytical tools to help educators better understand the performance of their students ... and strengthen their instruction accordingly, reported by *Education Week's Technology Counts 2006*.⁹⁰

resources and strategies to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities.⁸⁷

- A few dozen Ohio school districts, community-based organizations, community colleges, libraries and others are members of the national *Community Technology Centers Network*, which uses technology to strengthen the social, economic, educational and cultural life of its communities.⁸⁸

“Value-added” being phased in. In the past few years, Ohio has become one of the nation’s leaders in measuring the year-to-year progress of individual students and using these “value-added” data to help teachers sharpen and customize their instruction for each student. The state will pilot value-added reporting in reading and mathematics in the 2005–06 and 2006–07 school years before being fully implemented in all schools in 2007–08. The value-added measurements will supplement, not replace, the current system, which focuses on the percentage of students at each grade meeting the standards in each subject. The data also should help strengthen the state’s approach to K–12 teacher evaluation.

As part of the new value-added measurements to monitor student progress over time, Ohio is developing tools to help teachers use these data day to day. Working with nonprofit groups such as Battelle for Kids, ODE will provide extensive professional development to help teachers and principals understand how to use this important diagnostic information to differentiate instruction and improve their teaching practices. Moreover, House Bill 107 requires colleges of education to teach prospective educators about value-added measurements and using data. Pilot programs and materials are under way.

Data Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2). This new statewide system will include tools to help educators analyze student data and identify strategies to address individual students’ needs. A Web site and other resources are being developed by a coalition of stakeholders, including school districts, ODE, local education associations and other groups. State and federal funds are being used to support the project. Districts’ participation is voluntary. The initial data tools are scheduled to be completed by December 2006.⁸⁹

Priorities for Action

Policy Recommendations

1. **The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents must complete the alignment of the state's academic standards with the demands of college, 21st-century workforce skills and international standards. These more challenging expectations need to drive further expectations, instruction and assessment of Ohio's students.**
2. **The Ohio Department of Education, with adequate funding, must intensify its efforts to support chronically low-performing districts and schools, including:**
 - **Selectively developing curriculum, model lessons, assessment tools and teacher professional development in the content areas where the data suggest student performance is weakest; and**
 - **Developing aggressive intervention strategies to more quickly and precisely assist districts and schools that are continually failing to meet performance targets and not improving at a significant rate.**

Milestones

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| 1997 | Senate Bill 55, the "Educational Accountability Law," is signed into law. | 2001 | Senate Bill 1, "The Student Success Law," incorporates the majority of the commission's recommendations into law. |
| 1997 | The Joint Council of the Ohio Board of Regents and the state Board of Education is created. | 2004 | State Board of Education's Task Force on Quality High Schools recommends ways to improve Ohio's high schools. |
| 1999 | Achieve report reveals the absence of clearly articulated academic content standards. | 2006 | In his State of the State address, Governor Taft proposes Ohio Core initiative to ensure high school graduates are prepared for college or work. |
| 2000 | Governor Taft appoints the Commission for Student Success to address issues identified in the Achieve report. | | |

OUR TEACHERS

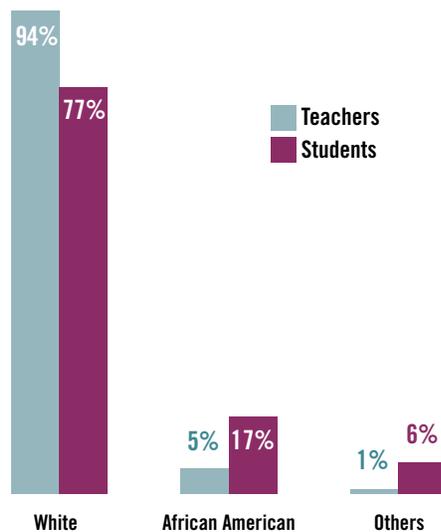
97,624

Total number of Ohio teachers, 26 percent, with five years or less of teaching experience.⁹¹

59%

Percentage who are between 40 and 60 years old.⁹²

Teachers Are Less Diverse than Students



Source: *Condition of Teacher Supply and Demand in Ohio — 2005*, The Ohio Collaborative and Ohio Department of Education

VI. Teaching and Leadership Quality

WHY THIS MATTERS

The research is clear: Quality teachers and principals make the difference in students' achievement. Moreover, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law requires that every classroom have a quality teacher. And data show that the majority of every dollar spent on K–12 education in Ohio pays for personnel. Without the right people in our schools, other investments or interventions are unlikely to matter much.

If we are going to be competitive nationally and internationally, we need to have the best and brightest teachers working in all of our classrooms with all of our students. We have a special responsibility to ensure that students who traditionally have been underserved, particularly minority and low-income students, benefit from the best educators.

And we know that attracting and retaining great teachers require having excellent principals — school leaders who understand instruction and have the capacity and authority to make key decisions about hiring, budgets and education programs that will allow more of their students to reach high standards.

We have an opportunity to be a leader in the emerging national efforts to redefine what it means to be a great teacher and principal — and to develop and compensate these professionals accordingly.

1. Ohio has taken promising steps to strengthen the education profession, but most changes have not yet impacted local districts.

THE SITUATION

In the past several years, Ohio has taken several steps to strengthen the quality of teachers and principals, including the development of standards and performance indicators, but few of these changes have changed local practice yet.

Teacher and principal standards developed. The Educator Standards Board, created by Senate Bill 2 in 2004, has developed new standards for teachers and principals. The standards outline the competencies needed to help students achieve high standards and

OUR PRINCIPALS

3,976

Total number of principals in Ohio, of whom 56 percent are male, 87 percent are white and 12 percent are African American.¹⁰¹

52%

Percentage who are 50 years old or younger.¹⁰²

18%

Percentage with less than five years of experience.¹⁰³

30%

Percentage with more than 25 years of experience.¹⁰⁴

include three levels: Proficient, Accomplished and Distinguished. These standards are expected to be implemented statewide in 2007–08. A key next step is to develop guidelines for using these standards to evaluate teachers and principals. Most districts have not yet incorporated these changes into their human resources policies or practices.⁹³

Mentoring/induction programs. The state has a mentoring and induction program for first-year teachers and principals, with \$9 million of annual funding. But there is consensus that more needs to be done.

Such programs are effective in retaining and building the skills of new teachers, while providing career options for veterans. Research says that quality induction can decrease attrition rates up to 20 percent. Nationally, California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment program stands out for effectiveness, with a teacher retention rate of 84 percent after five years of teaching.⁹⁴

In Ohio, 26 percent of teachers have been teaching five years or less, according to 2005 data. Eight percent of new teachers leave after the first year and 12 percent after two years (from attrition data); attrition is higher in hard-to-staff schools.⁹⁵ Toledo's program, one of the nation's first, has drawn national recognition and has had a 15 percent increase in the retention of new teachers since the program started in 1981.⁹⁶

Career ladder. The Educator Standards Board also is developing a career ladder for teachers, which will create positions such as master teacher and other opportunities to advance in the profession without leaving the classroom. Another important effort to nurture the professionalism of teachers is the growth in the number of Ohio teachers who have earned certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS); as of the 2004–05 school year, Ohio had 2,521 NBPTS certified teachers.⁹⁷

Professional development. Quality training for teachers should be central to the state's reform efforts. The Educator Standards Board has approved professional development standards for teachers and principals. These guidelines, which are aligned with the new educator standards (page 31), are designed to help schools of education and school districts reshape their training and development programs and to help educators plan their own professional growth, with efforts focused on improving student achievement. The state's expanded use of value-added performance measurements will help teachers pinpoint their individual instructional weaknesses. The Legislature is focused on tying professional development to specific high-need areas such as mathematics and science and to increased accountability for results.⁹⁸

Leadership development. The state and districts have made several sporadic, piecemeal attempts to strengthen principal leadership, but the efforts have not been particularly strategic or successful. For instance, the state created the Ohio Principals Leadership Academy in 2000 to provide a comprehensive approach to principal training, but funding ended in 2001. Today, scattered professional development efforts include:

- *State Action for Education Leadership Project*, funded by The Wallace Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which is supporting teams of administrators, teacher leaders and union leaders from Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown to use data, shared leadership and accountability to improve student achievement.⁹⁹
- *Entry Year Program for Principals*, which provides professional development to new principals or assistant principals.¹⁰⁰

GRADING OHIO: TEACHER QUALITY

B

Education Week's Quality Counts 2006 grade for Ohio's efforts to improve teacher quality. We rank 7th nationally, tied with eight others.¹⁰⁸

EDUCATION SCHOOLS CRITICIZED

A recent major national report found that the vast majority of the nation's teachers are prepared in programs that have low admission and graduation standards and cling to an outdated vision of teacher education.

The study said that most education schools are engaged in a "pursuit of irrelevance," with curricula in disarray and faculty disconnected from classrooms and colleagues. These schools have "not kept pace with changing demographics, technology, global competition, and pressures to raise student achievement," said the study, which was written by Arthur Levine, former president of Teachers College at Columbia University.¹⁰⁹

2. Ohio does not have enough qualified teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff urban and rural schools and in high-need subject areas.

THE SITUATION

Closing the achievement gaps will require improving both traditional and nontraditional approaches for teachers and for ensuring the equitable distribution of teachers to all schools.

Major shortages, especially in high-poverty schools.

Statewide, we have too few high school teachers in several critical areas, including mathematics and science. Moreover, all levels of high-poverty schools have shortages of highly qualified teachers in nearly all the subjects, particularly in middle and high school. For instance, one in eight Ohio teachers in the highest-poverty elementary schools is not qualified by NCLB standards, compared to only one in 67 in the lowest-poverty schools, according to The Education Trust. In the state's highest-poverty and highest-minority secondary schools, about 40 percent of teachers are not highly qualified, about double the rate for the lowest-poverty and lowest-minority schools.¹⁰⁵

In Ohio, urban students are much less likely to be taught by a highly qualified teacher (see page 34). Community (charter) schools have the lowest number of highly qualified teachers and the highest percentage (11 percent) of long-term substitutes. One implication is that, although inner-city students may be choosing to attend a community school, the likelihood of excellent teaching is low.¹⁰⁶

Encouragingly, Ohio is one of only two states to fully report on the unequal distribution of unqualified teachers and to have prepared a set of solid strategies

for closing the gaps, according to an August 2006 Education Trust study.¹⁰⁷

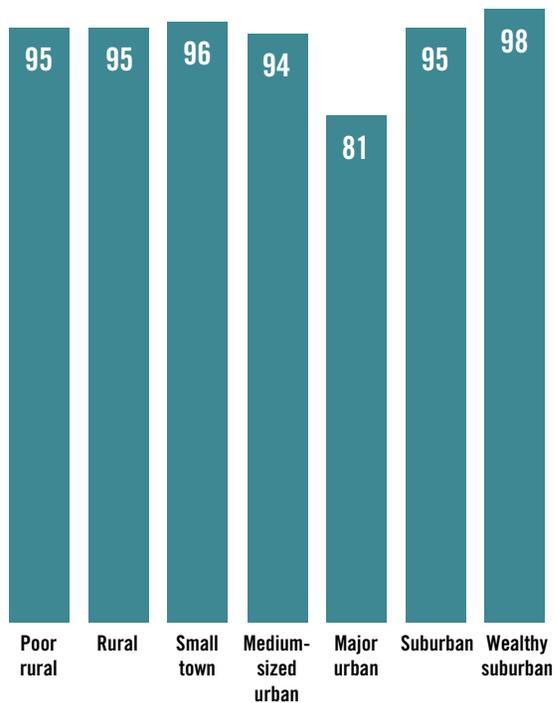
Traditional teacher preparation. In Ohio, 51 colleges and universities offer teacher preparation programs. A number of recent national studies call for rethinking multiple aspects of teacher preparation — to attract higher-quality candidates, ensure that graduates know the content of their subjects and how to teach them, and provide significant amounts of in-classroom experience while they are in school. It is especially important that teachers have the skills and knowledge to help close achievement gaps.

Although the state has not created a comprehensive strategy for traditional teacher preparation, several recent initiatives are worth noting:

- Several years ago, Ohio *increased the passing scores on the Praxis test for teacher licensure.*
- *House Bill 107*, passed in summer 2005, strengthens the requirements for teacher prep programs by requiring the state Board of Education to ensure the curricula of those programs are aligned with the state's academic content standards, the minimum standards for primary and secondary schools, and the value-added performance measurements developed by the Department of Education.
- *The Teacher Quality Partnership* (the Board of Regents, Department of Education and 51 teacher training institutes) is measuring how the preparation of teachers impacts student performance in their classrooms. But its key findings won't be available for several years. To date, the partnership has focused on collecting demographic data on

OHIO'S URBAN STUDENTS LESS LIKELY TO HAVE HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Nearly one in five Ohio big-city students is taught by an unqualified teacher, based on the low-level teacher quality definitions of the No Child Left Behind law. By comparison, well over 90 percent of teachers everywhere else are considered “highly qualified.”



Percentage of teachers “highly qualified” under No Child Left Behind

Source: *Condition of Teacher Supply and Demand in Ohio — 2005*, The Ohio Collaborative and Ohio Department of Education

10,000 graduates of our state’s teacher education programs from 2003 to 2005.¹¹⁰

- *The Governor’s Commission on Teaching Success* recommended strengthening clinical and field training for new teachers and principals, but the state has not acted on the recommendation.¹¹¹
- The Legislature recently invested \$13 million to *improve teaching in the areas of mathematics, science, engineering, technology and foreign language*.

Nontraditional alternative licensing. Our alternative licensure system to help provide alternate routes to certify teachers has grown since its creation in 2000, especially in secondary schools and special education programs. It has grown from six alternative licenses in

2001 to 1,650. One focus of these programs, such as Troops to Teachers or The New Teacher Project, is to help mid-career professionals switch fields.¹¹²

Nontraditional local efforts. Some districts around the country are using a “grow-your-own” approach to develop a new generation of high-quality teachers and principals through deliberate strategies for recruiting and training staff from within their own schools. Ohio’s Teacher Commission recommended such a strategy, but there appears to have been little action to implement it. Any district-level efforts in this area must be accompanied by initiatives to strengthen local school systems’ human resources departments, which traditionally are weak.

3. Most Ohio districts use traditional seniority and a credential-based system, rather than a performance-based system, to compensate teachers and principals and determine school staffing.

THE SITUATION

Across the country, states and districts are rethinking approaches for evaluating and compensating teachers, which often include changes to the collective bargaining system.

Teacher evaluation. As in other professions, appropriate annual evaluations are important tools to encourage and nurture high-performing staff, support average performers to improve, and hold accountable and ultimately dismiss chronically weak performers. But anecdotal evidence suggests that Ohio’s teacher evaluation process usually is conducted by principal observation, often only once during a school year, with little or no follow-up between the teacher and

principal. Teacher evaluation is poorly defined, is inconsistent across schools and districts, and often does not take into account the single most important purpose of teaching: gains in student achievement.

Without significant data, anecdotes suggest that principals and district personnel are not typically rigorous in following established processes in removing chronically ineffective teachers. Currently, the state’s teacher employment law allows tenured teachers to be dismissed only for “gross negligence.”

A few districts, such as Brunswick, Cincinnati, Columbus and Toledo, are using peer reviews, in which high-quality veteran teachers help evaluate their colleagues. As the state continues to develop

TOLEDO'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH

Since 1981, **Toledo Public Schools and the Toledo Federation of Teachers** have been working on one of the nation's most closely watched examples of district-union collaboration. They focused first on peer review, but since 2001 they also have been rethinking teacher compensation. The goal of the program is to promote teacher quality while improving the academic performance of students. Key features include:

- Targeting professional development at specific student academic and school improvement needs;
- Providing more effective teaching and learning;
- Retaining the most effective teachers in the classroom by rewarding teaching excellence;
- Assigning additional responsibilities and leadership roles to recognized teachers; and
- Placing teachers in high-needs schools and challenging assignments.¹¹⁴

value-added assessment to measure improvements in student achievement (see Standards and Accountability section), these tools can become important contributors to teacher evaluations, too.

Based on the career standards for teachers and principals and the educator professional development standards, the Ohio Department of Education will be distributing guidelines by which school districts and teacher unions may negotiate agreements for systems of assessment, feedback, professional development and other supports for educator learning and practice.

Compensation. Ohio, like other states, faces two main challenges. First, salaries are based on a teacher's education level and years of experience rather than how well he or she performs. Student performance is not a factor at all. Second, depending on the district, there is minimal or no management flexibility or incentives to encourage teachers to take on more challenging assignments,

such as mentoring younger peers, teaching hard-to-staff subjects or teaching in low-performing schools.

Encouragingly, in 2005 the state launched a pilot program in five Columbus schools, which are working with the Columbus Education Association and the Milken Family Foundation's Teacher Advancement Program to support performance-based compensation coupled with ongoing instructional development. The program:

- Provides bonus pay for teachers who meet or exceed Adequate Yearly Progress performance targets in math and reading;
- Establishes other financial incentives to retain high-performing teachers;
- Provides teachers with additional planning time to develop strategies for student support; and
- Develops a university partnership to provide professional development courses for teachers at all five pilot schools.¹¹⁵

Priorities for Action

Policy Recommendations

1. The governor and Ohio General Assembly should review current policy and promote efforts with local school districts and unions to produce innovative collective bargaining agreements that allow greater flexibility in staffing; promote pay-for-performance strategies based on well-researched evaluation criteria (including value-added analysis); and streamline processes to remove chronically ineffective educators.
2. The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents should conduct a comprehensive review of the state's teacher and administrator preparation programs, focused on improving admission standards, strengthening the curriculum content and emphasizing clinical experiences. This review should be used to determine future funding for schools of education.
3. The state Board of Education should fully implement the Educator Standards Board's new standards and professional development requirements for teachers and principals. It must ensure that the new requirements become part of local district practice, particularly in the areas of hiring, evaluation, promotion and professional development.
4. The Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents, with sufficient funding, must intensify their efforts to ensure a more strategic distribution of high-quality teachers and principals in hard-to-staff rural and urban schools and in high-need subject areas. These efforts should include expanded quality alternative certification programs, local "grow-your-own" strategies and financial incentives.

Milestones

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|--|
| 2001 | Ohio's Student Success Law (Senate Bill 1) calls for the creation of the Governor's Commission on Teaching Success to boost teaching quality. | 2005 | House Bill 107 strengthens the requirements for teacher preparation programs in several ways. |
| 2003 | The Teacher Quality Partnership is created to complete a comprehensive, longitudinal study of the preparation, in-school support and effectiveness of Ohio teachers. | 2006 | House Bill 115 appropriates \$13.2 million in FY 2007 to support alternative teacher licensure and dual enrollment programs in the areas of math, science, engineering, technology and foreign language. |
| 2004 | Senate Bill 2 is signed into law, creating the Educator Standards Board. | | |

VII. Innovation and Choice

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The **Boston Pilot School initiative** was launched in 1995 by the teachers' union, superintendent, mayor and school committees to compete with charter schools by creating models of educational innovation and increased choice options within the school district. Pilot Schools are unionized schools that have clear autonomy over staffing, budget, curriculum, schedule and governance. In 10 years, the number of Pilot Schools has grown from five to 19, and they enroll about 10 percent of the city's students.¹¹⁵

In **New York City**, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel Klein envision developing 200 new small schools by 2008 (including 50 independent charter schools) and 300 empowered (autonomous) small schools in 2006. These schools, most of which are union, are systematically replacing failing schools and offering principals and teachers freedom from most administrative and union constraints in exchange for reaching performance targets.¹¹⁶

WHY THIS MATTERS

Innovation and choice have driven improvements in virtually every sector of the American economy, from health care and energy to technology and bioscience. Despite some encouraging exceptions, too much of education remains largely stuck in an outdated model that assumes a nine-month school year, a six-hour school day, the prevalence of stay-at-home moms, adherence to rigid grading systems and standardized tests, separate and distinct subject areas, pencil-and-paper testing, and stand-and-deliver lecture-style instruction. The traditional educational model of one-size-fits-all does not meet the interests and learning needs of our increasingly diverse student population, nor does it prepare our students to compete in a global economy, with India, China and Germany as key competitors. Our cities, our state and, indeed, our country must exponentially raise our expectations about the quality, breadth, delivery and depth of the education we provide for our children. Our schools must become centers of innovation and excellence to meet the needs of the 21st-century economy and society. Students and families should have quality public school choices, both inside and outside the traditional public school system, to pursue the education that best fits their interests and needs.

1. Many Ohio public school districts have not recognized the need for wide-scale innovation.

THE SITUATION

Across the country, many districts and communities, especially in urban areas, have taken on the challenge of building a portfolio of high-quality new schools to replace failing schools and to provide a more challenging and relevant school experience. Significant initiatives are under way in cities such as Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, New York, Portland, Philadelphia, Providence, Sacramento, San Diego and Washington, DC. In these communities, the public and philanthropic sectors are developing new schools within the

public school sector that meet the diverse needs and interests of students, particularly those who are low performing.

Autonomy plus accountability. These schools typically enjoy significantly greater levels of autonomy and accountability in the areas of staffing, budget, curriculum, schedule and governance than do traditional schools in the same districts. Decisionmaking is delegated to the school level; resources are allocated according to the needs of the children in each school;

GRADING OHIO: A LEADER IN THE GROWTH OF COMMUNITY (CHARTER) SCHOOLS

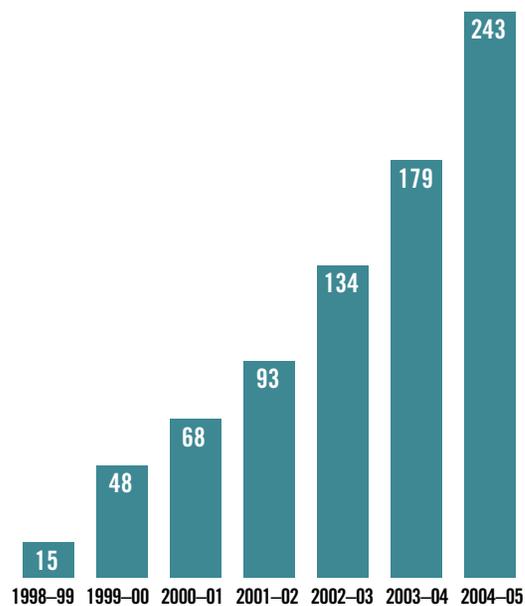
300

Number of community schools in Ohio.¹²²

5

Number of Ohio cities (Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown) that rank in the top 10 nationally in the percentage of students who attend charter schools.¹²³

Ohio Community School Growth 1998–2005



Sources: Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Charter Schools Association

and principals, teachers and parents are encouraged to think beyond the boundaries of traditional education in terms of curriculum and delivery.

Multiple approaches in Ohio. Although there are no districtwide strategies in Ohio to create new, innovative approaches, some promising efforts are under way:

- Partnerships in cities such as Akron, Columbus and Cleveland have emerged to offer *innovative science-focused schools*. For instance, the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine opened in August 2006 to provide a specialized college-prep curriculum, starting with an initial class of 100 9th grade students.
- *Magnet schools and alternative programs*, such as the French-immersion and Montessori programs in Columbus, as well as the alternative calendar (year-round) elementary school in West Carrollton, have offered options for many years.
- The state's proposed system of *science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) high schools* would infuse math and science, along with international perspectives, into the program. Students would have opportunities to gain work experience and earn college credit.¹¹⁷
- *The Ohio High School Transformation Initiative* provides resources and technical support for large high schools across the state to reorganize into smaller schools so that secondary students benefit from more personalized help to reach rigorous academic expectations. Sites include Cleveland Heights, University Heights and the new Woodward Career Technical High School in Cincinnati.¹¹⁸
- *Of the state's 44 online e-schools*, 38 are sponsored by school districts; this virtual schooling option is especially valuable for rural students and students with unique learning styles — it provides access

to instruction that otherwise would be unavailable to them. The state has placed a moratorium on new e-schools while the quality of these schools is reviewed.¹¹⁹

Specialized approaches. Several programs within traditional public schools now reach a large number of Ohio students, but these innovations are dispersed across a large number of school districts. None has reached the scale necessary to transform learning in any single district.

- *Ohio has two major dual enrollment programs.* The Postsecondary Enrollment Options program, through which local districts allow high school students to earn college credit, has grown from 6,646 students in 1998 to more than 10,000 in 2004. Participation is concentrated in particular high schools and postsecondary institutions. Implementation is very uneven. Some high schools and postsecondary institutions work together to recruit students, counsel them about course options and help them find appropriate supports throughout the year. In other cases, students are left entirely on their own.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, the state's Early College High School programs allow disadvantaged 9th graders to work toward a high school diploma and two years of college credit, all while attending high school. There are five such programs in the state, with another four to open.¹²¹ The Partnership for Continued Learning is reviewing draft recommendations to improve these programs.
- *The College Tech Prep program*, started in 1991, serves more than 22,000 students in almost 700 Ohio programs supported by 23 consortia. It is considered one of the country's best such programs. Students typically enter College Tech Prep in grade 11 and pursue the pathway through the

FUNDING CONTROVERSY

Community (charter) school proponents say they are at a financial disadvantage. For example, Cleveland community schools received **28.2 percent** less funding than district schools (\$7,704 vs. \$10,732 per pupil, a gap of \$3,028) in 2002–03, while Dayton community schools received **33.8 percent** less (\$7,614 vs. \$11,498 per pupil, a gap of \$3,884).

One explanation: Community schools lack access to significant local resources, including receipts from property, local sales tax and other local tax revenues.

They also do not share in school construction funding provided by both the Ohio School Facilities Commission and locally approved bonds.¹²⁸

On the other hand, traditional public schools say they lose state funding for each student who attends a community school — forfeiting the per-student state portion of their “basic state aid.”

second year of college or a postsecondary degree, sometimes earning college credit in high school. Students choose from a range of technologies that emphasize experiential learning and opportunities for onsite work or education experiences. Classes are offered on college campuses and industry sites. Half of the graduates enroll in postsecondary education within a year of graduation.¹²⁴

- *High Schools That Work (HSTW)*, a national program now in Ohio and 30 other states, has received widespread recognition for accelerating student achievement. In 2004, HSTW was implemented at 102 Ohio high school/career center sites with a particular emphasis on literacy and mathematics across the curriculum. In 2004, 11 Ohio sites were recognized in the top 50 HSTW sites nationwide.¹²⁵

2. Ohio’s public community (charter) schools have no uniform performance standards, uneven accountability and an inequitable allocation of resources.

THE SITUATION

Ohio has one of the country’s largest concentrations of public community (charter) schools, which offer parents choices and allow educators to try new approaches within the public school system. While they have the potential for innovation and ultimately for pushing the larger public K–12 system to improve, community schools are not living up to this expectation. Without clear accountability mechanisms in place and enforced, however, too many community schools will continue to offer low-quality instruction. Offering parents the choice to move from one poor-performing school to another is really no choice. Choice in and of itself is too often a false promise.

Numerous community schools. Compared to other states, Ohio offers many charter school options, but the choices tend to be limited to certain

students. More than 72,000 of our students attend 300 community schools, about 4 percent of all K–12 students, one of the highest percentages in the nation. *Education Week* says Ohio ranks fourth nationally in the number of charter schools.¹²⁶ But because they were developed to be a strategic option for low-performing districts in urban areas, new start-up community schools were limited to the largest 21 districts and districts in “academic emergency” or “watch.”

No uniform standards. Since 2003, when a new law removed the state Board of Education as a charter authorizer or sponsor, charters can be sponsored by any public university, county service center or approved education nonprofit with \$500,000 in assets and state Board of Education approval. There are no uniform standards among these charter authorizers.

Although this report chose not to address vouchers, it should be noted that Ohio is one of only a handful of states with a voucher program. The program has been limited to students in 42 Cleveland schools and 51 additional low-performing schools elsewhere. To date, 3,601 students have applied for the 14,000 available EdChoice voucher slots for 2006–07, open to students in academic watch or academic emergency schools. The stand-alone Cleveland program awarded more than 5,800 vouchers in the 2005–06 school year.¹²⁷

BOOSTING PARENTAL AWARENESS

Relatively low participation in several choice programs suggests that parents may not be receiving understandable and timely information about their choices.

For example, only **1 percent** of eligible parents nationally are taking advantage of the opportunity to transfer their child to a higher-performing school, and only **17 percent** are obtaining free tutoring for their child under the federal No Child Left Behind law. In 2003–04, only **0.3 percent** of eligible students in Cleveland even requested a transfer, **1 percent** in Youngstown, **3 percent** in Akron and Toledo, and **zero** students in Dayton.¹³²

A statewide organization, **School Choice Ohio**, and **Parents Advocating for Choice in Education (PACE)** in Dayton have been formed to share choice information with parents. A recent poll by **KidsOhio** found very low levels of awareness in Columbus, where one-quarter of the parents lacked enough information even to have an opinion about community (charter) schools or vouchers.

Sponsors have the legal authority to negotiate performance contracts with individual community schools. If a community school perceives the sponsor as too stringent, it can shop around for a new one.

Inadequate data and oversight. A 2005 report (*A Tough Nut to Crack in Ohio*) identified numerous problems with Ohio's system, notably incomplete and inaccessible data to monitor performance, a weak contract renewal process, and inadequate oversight and accountability. Pointing out that more than one-third of community schools did not supply adequate data for a 2003 report from the state's independent Legislative Office of Education Oversight, the *Tough Nut* study said, "The failure of a significant share of the state's charter schools, particularly at the high school level, to provide adequate assessment data raises red flags about the efficacy of Ohio's charter accountability system as well as the performance of many state schools."¹²⁹

Ineffective monitoring. In June 2006, the state auditor said the Ohio Department of Education did not have an effective system for monitoring the \$20 million in start-up costs that went to 130 charter schools across the state. "There was a serious lack of controls," the auditor's office said.¹³⁰ In October 2006, at the request of Ohio's top government and education leaders, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools issued a report seeking to strengthen the state's charter school program. Among its 17 recommendations were calls for closing low-performing charter schools and holding sponsors more accountable for overseeing the growing charter movement, while also helping more high-performing schools to open and succeed in Ohio.¹³¹

3. Ohio has only started to imagine what education might look like in the future.

THE SITUATION

The interconnectedness of our world requires new ways of conceptualizing education. Technology, in particular, has the potential to equalize a growing divide among students and transform the teaching and learning process. The increased power of technology to customize learning should make individualized learning more the norm, not the exception. The ability to deliver education from virtually anywhere should be exploited. Video gaming, the Internet and other technologies are changing the very nature of how students learn and interact outside the schools.

But these innovations have barely penetrated the average school or classroom.

Looking ahead: Two national views. In 2005, the George Lucas Educational Foundation, founded in 1991 to encourage innovation in schools, advanced 10 "big ideas for better schools." For students, these included much more project-based learning (using real-world issues to study complex topics in their communities, interacting with local and global experts); more integrated learning that combines reading, writing, math, science, art and technology

REFORM FROM WITHIN

The Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools, an organization of charter school operators, is creating a principles-based, membership organization committed to high-quality community schools. The goal is to unify community school supporters around a common mission of high-quality schools. The group, led by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, is just completing its strategic planning process, identifying potential board members and beginning a national search for an executive director.¹³⁵

into multidisciplinary instructional units; more cooperative learning, where students use conflict resolution and other techniques to learn teamwork and other noncognitive skills; and comprehensive assessments that provide a continuous profile of a student's learning.¹³³

In October 2006, the Institute for the Future teamed with KnowledgeWorks Foundation to prepare the map *Future Forces Affecting Education*. The map says the “youth media culture is crashing into schools and educators like a tsunami,” and it examines approaches that offer much more personalized, interactive and collaborative learning, using tools such as digital gaming, wikis (Web pages that can be edited by anyone), blogs (personalized Web pages), podcasting (sharing audio and visual files), machinima (remixed animated computer games) and mashups (video, music or graphic media that are combined into new media). The report argues that places and objects are becoming increasingly embedded with digital information and linked through connective media into social networks, ending the distinction between cyberspace and real space. These technologies already are transforming how students learn and interact with each other outside the classroom, and they are helping other sectors become more productive and creative.¹³⁴

Priorities for Action

Policy Recommendations

1. The governor and Ohio General Assembly should expand innovation statewide by partnering with local districts to significantly increase quality options within public school schools. This is particularly important in districts that have a significant number of low-performing schools, where the state has a responsibility for intervening. The state should provide resources and waivers to create new schools within the school district to meet the varied needs of all students and their families. Schools, new and old, should reflect current research that supports high-quality and relevant curriculum; expanded forms of autonomy; the development of regional schools; the infusion of technology; a longer school day and school year; and accelerated options for combined high school and college coursework.
2. The Ohio Department of Education and state Board of Education must hold all community (charter) school sponsors accountable through performance contracts and should immediately shut down the schools that are consistently the lowest performers. These state organizations also should assume a greater oversight and enforcement role to ensure compliance and quality. Performance contracts should clearly spell out the academic achievement goals that schools must meet, create easy-to-understand indicators for measuring these goals, and hold schools accountable for effective financial stewardship and student success. Because accountable community schools offer an opportunity for innovation and choice, the Ohio Department of Education and state Board of Education should consider lifting the geographic restrictions on where charter schools can open; lifting the current cap on the number of permissible charter contracts; and providing greater financial support for charter schools particularly in the area of facilities.

Milestones

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 1992 | Governor Voinovich creates Commission on Educational Choice. | 2002 | Cleveland voucher program is declared constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. |
| 1995 | A program is created to provide vouchers to students in the Cleveland Public School system. | 2005 | Educational Choice Scholarship program is created to provide 14,000 vouchers to students in Ohio's academic watch and academic emergency districts. |
| 1997 | Governor Voinovich signs Ohio's first charter school law. First charter school opens in 1998. | | |

OHIO FUNDING

\$8,963

Average per-pupil spending in Ohio, 16th in the United States.¹³⁶

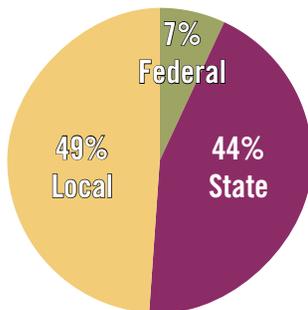
\$11,904

Range of per-pupil funding in Ohio, from \$5,859 to \$17,763.¹³⁷

456

Average number of school levy elections a year since 1983.¹³⁸

State Funding Share, 2004



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

VIII. Funding

WHY THIS MATTERS

Ohio has discussed, debated and litigated its school funding system without acceptable resolution long enough; during this time, a generation of students has gone through Ohio's schools. The debate over building a more equitable school finance system overshadows all other education issues in Ohio. Numerous commissions have been formed to study the issue, and four Supreme Court rulings have declared the current system unconstitutional, but no comprehensive solution has emerged.

Having sufficient resources is especially important now that the state and federal governments are holding districts, schools and students accountable for meeting the new requirements that will enable our students to compete internationally.

It is equally important, however, that these resources be spent effectively. Education spending is the biggest state expenditure. Although Ohio residents believe that education is a top priority, they are skeptical about how districts and schools spend the funds and concerned by the lack of incentives to spend funds efficiently.

We cannot expect taxpayers to support increased education spending unless they better understand where the money is coming from, how it is being spent and how it translates into results for students.

1. Despite improvements, Ohio's current funding system still does not — and cannot — ensure stability, equity or appropriate growth.

THE SITUATION

The state Legislature has made many efforts over the past two decades to strengthen school funding, including:

- Improved finance formulas and tax rules;
- Targeted relief to urban districts; and
- Billions of dollars in school facilities improvements.

Nevertheless, Ohio's school funding system is fundamentally flawed.

Property tax inequities. While property taxes are the main source of funding for schools across the United States, Ohio districts rely on property tax revenue more heavily than most other states.

Overall, Ohio spends an average of \$8,963 per pupil, excluding capital costs, 16th in the nation. But this average masks huge inequities among districts that are caused by the state's strong local-control system,

NEW EXPECTATIONS FOR WHAT IS “ADEQUATE”

“In the past, states have defined adequacy on the basis of the revenue available. This is, in essence, a political decision, rather than a decision based on student needs. Driving the change now is the establishment, for the first time, of ambitious education goals at all levels of the educational system. These goals are aimed at raising outcomes for all students.”¹⁴³

— Lawrence O. Picus, University of Southern California

FUNDS THAT FOLLOW THE STUDENT

A growing number of states and districts are using a **weighted student funding formula** to address inequities between high- and low-wealth districts and to hold school officials accountable for how the money is spent. The formula allocates funds based on the number of students at each school, with additional funds (or “weights”) given to the neediest students.

This approach often is tied to site-based management, which gives principals more control over their budgets, staffing and programming. For example, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, which pioneered the concept two decades ago, principals now control more than 90 percent of their budgets and are held accountable for getting results.

The Cincinnati Public Schools moved to a weighted student funding system that allocates resources based on the needs of individual students. The 42,000-student district had a \$6,000 gap in funding between schools — ranging from \$4,000 to \$10,000 per student. Since moving to weighted student funding in 1999–2000, the district closed the gap within four years.¹⁴⁴

which allows the 614 districts to raise money independently through property taxes and ballot initiatives.¹³⁹

Because property values vary so greatly from community to community, some districts with much lower tax rates can raise far more revenue for schools than districts with higher tax rates — based on property valuations.

State leaders have tried to address this problem with more aid to high-poverty districts, but these efforts have not been successful. Data from the Ohio Department of Education show that district per-pupil funding ranges from \$5,859 to \$17,763.¹⁴⁰

Tax cap limits growth and stability. Moreover, passage of House Bill 920 two decades ago — one of several property tax limitation laws that swept the nation at that time — has undermined the growth and stability of Ohio school funding. Local district levies have not outpaced inflation, meaning that voters, even in the wealthier districts, must approve more and more levies just to maintain existing programs. Between 1983 and 2005, Ohio districts had

10,478 school levy elections, an average of 456 a year. Overall, only 51 percent of the levies were approved, requiring schools to go back to the voters repeatedly just to maintain current funding levels.¹⁴¹

State’s funding share has decreased. The state’s share of operating funds has decreased in recent years and is now only about 44 percent, below the national average of 47.1 percent. As a result, local districts are contributing more — thus increasing their dependence on local property taxes and ballot initiatives.¹⁴²

No agreement on how much it costs to “adequately” educate all students. Ohio’s education leaders and experts have had plenty of discussion but have not reached consensus on how much it costs to ensure that each and every student, many with different needs, have the resources to meet the state’s academic standards. Until it does so, the state cannot identify the specific costs for adequately educating students, including those with special needs, such as students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, English language learners, and students living in poverty.

2. Many districts and schools do not sufficiently focus on the effectiveness of their spending.

THE SITUATION

Just as policymakers should be held accountable for providing sufficient resources and flexibility, districts and schools should be held accountable for spending the money effectively.

District allocations to schools not student based.

In Ohio, the state funding allocation to an individual school district is largely determined by a formula consisting of a per-pupil base amount with per-pupil add-ons for special education, career education, and gifted and low-income students. However, in most

districts, this per-pupil allocation does not follow the individual student to the school he or she attends. Instead the money flows to schools on the basis of staff allocations (that is, the number of teacher positions assigned to the school based on student enrollment), program-specific requirements (such as gifted and talented) and community politics. This top-down bureaucratic approach not only creates inequities, but it also does not allow school building leaders, who know their students’ needs best, to make site-based budget decisions about staffing and programming to help students meet academic standards.

OHIOANS SAY

80%

Percentage of respondents saying they would be less likely to vote for their state legislator if he or she voted to reduce spending for K–12 education.¹⁴⁷

74%

Percentage of respondents saying they would be less likely to vote for their state legislator if he or she voted to reduce spending for higher education.¹⁴⁸

60%

Percentage of respondents who believe that state funding for K–12 is less than adequate.¹⁴⁹

38%

Percentage of respondents who believe that state funding for higher education is less than adequate.¹⁵⁰

Disparities within districts. This top-down practice of allocating funds often masks another problem facing Ohio and other states: huge spending disparities between schools within the same district. Because the best-paid, most senior teachers tend to teach in the higher-performing schools, those schools' resources are higher. The practice of "salary averaging," where districts report the average salaries across all schools, hides these disparities. As a result, the poorest, lowest-performing schools often have the fewest actual resources and the lowest-paid, least-qualified teachers.

Linking student performance to spending. Traditionally, Ohio has allocated money to districts based on student formulas with little direction on how the money should be spent. Ohio is not alone in this regard. Ohio's most recent state budget begins to address this issue by targeting funds to specific areas that have been identified as making a difference in improving student achievement. Although the state's most recent biennial budget starts to consider more research-based practices, the system is far from being fully developed. The School Finance Redesign Project is examining how K–12 finance can be redesigned to better support student performance. It, too, is at an early stage.¹⁴⁵

Rigid teacher compensation policy. Teacher salaries are the largest and most critical investment districts make. The current method of compensation — a

single salary schedule — pays teachers on the basis of their years of experience and the educational credentials they have accrued. Currently, most districts in Ohio have no flexibility to pay teachers based on performance or to offer differential pay for more challenging assignments.

Promoting efficiencies across districts. One method for ensuring improved efficiencies is for school districts to partner more. For instance, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Financing Student Success said, "Today, districts function primarily as independent business units with regard to purchasing, human resources, transportation and other operational needs." It found some districts are pooling resources but encouraged more such sharing, notably by consolidating the purchase of health insurance for public school employees. The commission also called on the Ohio Department of Education to continue its efforts to streamline and strengthen the state's regional service providers.¹⁴⁶

Limited transparency. For the most part, school budgets are incomprehensible to the lay person, and few districts make any attempt to explain the data in ways that would build public understanding and support. Even the most basic information — where the money comes from and where it goes — is rarely easy to access or understand.

IN OTHER STATES

Other states have used various approaches to address the same kind of funding challenges facing Ohio.

Maryland offers one example of a state that took a comprehensive look at the equity and adequacy of its school funding. In 2002, the Thornton Commission, led by the former head of a local school board, found that the state's districts were underfunded by more than \$1.1 billion a year. It used an approach that determined the resources that "successful schools" used to educate their students. Using the commission's recommendations, the state developed a new per-pupil finance formula that gave more aid to the least wealthy districts. The new per-pupil formula gives more aid to economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and English language learners.¹⁵¹

Kansas is one of several states to commission an analysis by Standard & Poor's to identify school districts that are using resources the most effectively. The 2006 study examined how high-performing districts use funds, staff, time and instructional programs to improve student learning.¹⁵²

Priorities for Action

Policy Recommendations

- 1. It is time for Ohio's elected leadership — the new governor and Ohio General Assembly — to fundamentally redesign the K–12 education funding system so that schools and districts have equitable, stable and predictable revenues. This will require a different mix of revenues, such as reworking property taxes; revisiting House Bill 920; or moving to other sources of revenue, such as sales and excise taxes.**
- 2. Ohio policymakers must agree on a new definition of *adequate* funding that will answer the basic question: How much does it cost to educate students with different learning needs who attend school?**
- 3. The state must increase its share of total education funding at each level of the P–16 system:**
 - **Early education — to ensure more low-income students are served;**
 - **K–12 — to guarantee equitable, stable and predictable resources; and**
 - **Higher education — to increase access and affordability.**

Any increases must be tied to clear accountability and improved student results.
- 4. The governor and Ohio General Assembly should develop state policies to advance effective finance practices that promote the equitable and efficient use of resources, including the use of weighted student funding formulas to ensure that students with greater needs receive appropriate resources, cost sharing across districts and targeting funds to research-based practices.**

Milestones

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| 1989 | The Legislature appropriates the first-ever state funding for preschool. | 1997 | Ohio Supreme Court upholds the <i>DeRolph</i> decision. |
| 1990 | Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding is formed. | 1997 | The Ohio School Facilities Commission is established by Senate Bill 102. |
| 1991 | Coalition for Equity and Adequacy files <i>DeRolph</i> case in Perry County, alleging Ohio's system of funding schools is unconstitutional. | 2003 | Ohio Supreme Court acknowledges that the system is still unconstitutional but relinquishes jurisdiction to the General Assembly. |
| 1994 | Perry County Judge Linton D. Lewis finds Ohio's school funding system unconstitutional. | 2005 | Blue Ribbon Task Force on Financing Student Success recommends changes to the school funding formula. |

IX. Going Forward, Together

As the previous pages document, the world has changed fundamentally, and unless we respond effectively, we risk the future well-being of our children, our communities, our standard of living and our quality of life. The good news for Ohio is that, for the most part, our K–12 students tend to perform above average compared to other states. But that overall portrait of performance masks large, continuing and disturbing gaps in achievement. Depending on the grade and subject, test scores for African American, Hispanic and low-income students tend to be 10 to 40 percentage points lower than scores for white students. Although the K–12 performance of our children has mostly improved in recent years, the gaps have not closed measurably and, in some cases, have widened. Moreover, our higher education performance is well below the national average, and tuition continues to be expensive compared to the national average.

Acknowledging and closing achievement gaps.

These gaps are not new. Nor are they unique to Ohio. Every state is grappling with the challenge of providing a high-quality education to all children, not just to the high achievers, who until recently were the primary focus of most school systems. What's new is that the state and nation have now made closing these gaps a priority.

Keeping up with the accelerating pace of global change.

The global context also is new and a significant challenge. Increasingly, the graduates of our school systems are competing with students from around the world for the high-paying, high-skill jobs of the future, many of them in high-tech sectors. As *The New York Times*' Thomas Friedman has observed, technology has "flattened" the world's economic playing field. Dozens of countries, mainly in Europe and Asia, have made capturing these future jobs a national priority — and they have organized their school systems accordingly. Their standards are higher, their systems are more focused and coherent, and their

spending is more effective. Not surprisingly, their students do better on most international measures of achievement.

An economic and moral responsibility. None of us can be satisfied knowing that our collective investment in public education is failing to equip our children with the skills they will need to thrive in the 21st century. Ohio, with our traditional reliance on well-paying, low-skill manufacturing jobs, is more vulnerable than other states to this transformation. A high school diploma is no guarantee of success. Our challenge is not just economic. We, as leaders of our communities, institutions and families, have a moral responsibility to ensure that future generations have just as strong a chance of "living the good life" as we have had.

What's needed: State leadership

Ohio is fortunate to have many individuals and groups already working to improve public education. We applaud their efforts and, on the basis of this report's

Our challenge is not just economic. We, as leaders of our communities, institutions and families, have a moral responsibility to ensure that future generations have just as strong a chance of "living the good life" as we have had.

FIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

1. Develop a more coherent, structured system from preschool all the way through higher education.
2. Develop more challenging academic standards, graduation requirements and aligned assessments, along with more practical teacher tools.
3. Identify, prepare, recruit and nurture a new generation of excellent teachers and principals who are prepared to reach all students.
4. Ensure that all students have quality public school innovations and ensure that all schools are held to consistent standards of accountability.
5. Resolve our long-term funding crisis.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION GRANTMAKING

Discipline and Focus
 Knowledge
 Resources Linked to Results
 Effective Grantees
 Engaged Partners
 Leverage, Influence and Collaboration
 Persistence
 Innovation and Constant Learning

Source: Grantmakers in Education

analysis of the current state of affairs, encourage state education leaders to organize their response around the five highest-leverage opportunities for change:

- Develop a more coherent, structured system from preschool all the way through higher education, with clear goals and a master plan for student success. Increased student access to high-quality preschool programs (which research shows make a significant difference in students' future success) and postsecondary education or training (which research shows will be mandatory for some two-thirds of good future jobs) are needed.
- Develop more challenging academic standards, graduation requirements and aligned assessments so that a high school diploma means that a graduate is truly prepared for college or a good job — along with more practical tools to help teachers translate these standards into day-to-day classroom instruction.
- Identify, prepare, recruit and nurture a new generation of excellent teachers and principals who are prepared to reach all students — using a full range of strategies, including increased accountability for our teacher preparation programs; better teacher and leadership development; and alternative forms of licensing, evaluation and compensation that will attract the best and brightest to the education profession.
- Ensure that all students have quality public school innovations — including community (charter) schools, dual enrollment programs, and specialty schools in fields such as science and math — and ensure that all schools are held to consistent standards of accountability.
- Resolve our long-term funding crisis, notably by changing our over-reliance on inequitable and unstable local property taxes and holding school districts more accountable for spending their sizable public investment wisely.

Ohio Grantmakers Forum (OGF) support. To encourage dialogue, information sharing and consensus building, OGF will seek to foster dialogue among key state-level education stakeholders, including government officials, education-related organizations, practitioners, and business and foundation leaders. Through this network, education leaders may be able to work more closely to achieve their common goal of education improvement. Moreover, OGF members will consider funding needed research. OGF will monitor the progress the state has made and issue a report in two years.

What's needed: More effective education grantmaking

Nearly \$300 million annual grantmaking is a clear indication of philanthropy's commitment to quality education in Ohio. This report reflects the foundations' willingness to use more than just financial resources to help address this societal challenge.

Without diminishing the contributions of many others, the foundation community brings unique assets to the quest for education improvement. Philanthropy has available financial resources and can help create knowledge, facilitate conversations and take risks in pursuit of its goals. Yet, when compared to the needs identified in this report, these foundation resources must be deployed wisely to maximize their impact.

OGF support. Thus, going forward, OGF will:

- Promote implementation of the Principles for Effective Education Grantmaking, outlined by Grantmakers in Education, a national organization;
- Encourage that grantmaking decisions be aligned with the findings and recommendations of this report;
- Support education reform through policy advocacy.

Spectrum of Community Engagement Opportunities



cacy, while observing the necessary governmental restrictions; and

- Facilitate awareness of and support for education reform through greater citizen and stakeholder engagement at the local and state levels.

What's needed: Community engagement

While state-level and foundation leadership are essential for needed reforms to occur, the engagement and support of the general public are indispensable. Schools ultimately belong to their communities, and in the final analysis, the communities will play a paramount role in determining how good our schools will be.

Our schools are being asked to do more with existing resources and are under continuing pressure to produce better results. Yet without a greater sense of ownership by the community, local schools will not have the resources they need to get the job done. And without a better understanding of the impact of state education policy on local communities, citizen support for necessary change will be weak. Opinion polls (page 50) indicate that the public wants to participate more fully.

We hope this independent report on education in Ohio will be a catalyst for community conversations about education priorities at the local and state levels. There is no shortage of good ideas about how to improve our schools. We are short on the public will to prioritize and implement the best of those ideas. As the matrix to the left shows, community engagement can take multiple forms — all the way from merely being informed about proposed changes to becoming an active partner in creating that change. Significant barriers exist to achieving community

engagement on a scale that would lead to meaningful gains in academic achievement. Teachers and other educators often lack the skills and attitudes necessary to engage the community in discussions about important decisions. Community members also may lack the will, ability and knowledge to engage in long-term efforts to improve their schools, thus making it difficult to bring their perspectives into the discussion.

Removing barriers such as these will require efforts by both the government and nongovernment sectors at the state and local levels. Our discussions produced several suggestions for state action, including:

- *Holding school districts accountable* for providing opportunities for parents and the public to be engaged in multiple ways, including service on decisionmaking councils. Federal and state laws require such participation by parents, but rarely if ever are they enforced.
- *Researching and publicizing examples of community participation in their local schools* — from parents serving on local school councils to companies offering internships to community organizations providing mentors — and analyzing the extent to which such involvement helps improve student performance. We have some promising research in this area, but we need to get smarter about what works and then encourage the widespread dissemination of these best practices.
- *Providing grants and technical assistance to help school districts conduct professional development in this area* — to help parents and the public become more effective advocates for better schools and to help teachers, principals and other school staff become more effective in informing and involving parents and community members as partners in school improvement.

The Ohio's Education Matters polls, published by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation from 2001 to 2005, show the following percentages agree with the following statements:¹⁵³

70%

"I feel a strong sense of personal responsibility for improving my local public schools." (2002 poll)

72%

"Our local public schools will not continue to improve unless citizens like me get involved." (2002–03)

85%

"Students, schools, teachers and the community all share responsibility and accountability to promote safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments." (2002–03)

91%

"Schools should invite parents and other citizens to advise the schools in important decisions." (2004)

87%

"The success of my community is tied to the success of our public schools." (2004)

OGF support. To facilitate the exchange of ideas and information, and build support for sustainable local and state-level change, OGF will sponsor a series of conversations in cities and towns across the state. Using this report as the starting point, community members will engage in dialogue about how they can help improve education in their local schools and throughout Ohio.

We will not simply ask participants to rubberstamp and ratify the recommendations in this report, but to focus first and foremost on our findings and use this fact base to focus on the implications for their local communities and the state ... to weigh alternatives ... to make priorities ... and to consider tradeoffs and choices, including the costs of inaction.

In addition, the foundation community also may consider supporting greater community engagement by funding research and disseminating information about best practices and then helping local school districts apply lessons learned.

We can turn these challenges into opportunities, but only if we work together and only if we start now. As a state, being at "the national average" or even "above average" is no longer good enough to provide high school graduates with the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in an increasingly competitive and diverse world.

The challenge is to help more Ohioans — and the policymakers who represent them — understand how the world has changed and then find ways to work together to make sure that our children can succeed.

The foundation community stands ready to do its part.

We applaud the efforts of the good people and organizations already actively engaged in the business of education reform in Ohio. However, as this report shows, we still have a long way to go.

Glossary

Academic content standards — what we expect students to know and be able to do in key subject areas at each grade level.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) — the federal accountability measure mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and mathematics by the 2013–14 school year.

Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program — a state-funded induction program, co-sponsored by the California Department of Education and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, to support the professional development of newly credentialed, beginning teachers.

Career ladder — a multilevel approach that defines a number of stages in a teaching career (such as novice teacher and master teacher). Promotion from one level to another is determined by increased competence not years of experience.

Community schools (charter schools) — Community schools (often called charter schools in other states) are public, nonprofit, nonsectarian schools that operate independently of any school district but under a contract with an authorized sponsoring entity that is established by a statute or approved by the state Board of Education. Community schools are public schools of choice and are state and federally funded.

Data Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2) — a long-term initiative that provides a systematic approach for Ohio educators to access and analyze valuable data. D3A2 will point to specific aligned resources to meet the individual needs of students. The end result will be an easy-to-use resource that will save time, improve instruction and raise student achievement. D3A2 is a cooperative effort of many stakeholder groups and is being led by the Ohio Department of Education.

Dual enrollment — when a student is simultaneously enrolled in two separate academic institutions — usually high school and college.

Early college high schools — small high schools from which all students graduate with two years of college credit.

Educator standards — what teachers and principals must know and be able to do at all stages of their careers.

Grade A Learning Communities — a pilot program designed to improve student achievement by sharply focusing on teacher quality in the areas of compensation and performance, skills and preparation, and leadership and support.

“Grow-your-own” recruitment strategies — based on the premise that there are individuals in schools who do not currently hold teacher or principal licensure but who could become, with assistance, qualified teachers or principals. These strategies might include scholarships, grants or forgivable college loans for college or university; courses and professional development; and mentoring and internship experiences.

Induction — an initial period of time on the job for new teachers and principals during which they receive mentoring and support. These programs help educators successfully make the transition from their preparation programs to independent professional practice.

Model curricula — developed by states and school districts to help teachers adapt standards to their daily instruction. These typically spell out when during the school year various standards should be taught, and they include sample lesson plans, diagnostic tests and other teaching tools.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) — also known as “the Nation’s Report Card,” this is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in various subject areas. Since 1969, assessments have been conducted periodically in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography and the arts.

Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) — starting with the class of 2007, Ohio high school students will be required to pass these tests for graduation. The tests are in reading, mathematics, science, writing and social studies. Students initially take these tests in their 10th grade year, but they have multiple opportunities to retake the tests prior to and even after leaving high school.

Ohio Principals Leadership Academy — a partnership among Ohio's leaders in government, education and business, which ended in 2001. Its mission was to foster professional and personal leadership growth for Ohio's principals from prekindergarten through high school.

P–16 system — a coordination of preschool, K–12 and higher education to ensure students have an aligned system of learning, ensuring smooth transitions between levels with an ultimate goal of increased access to higher education.

Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) — established through collective bargaining agreements, these programs help new and veteran teachers improve their knowledge and skills by linking new teachers — or struggling veteran teachers — with consulting teachers who provide ongoing support through observing, modeling, sharing ideas and skills, and recommending materials. The consulting teachers conduct formal evaluations and make recommendations regarding the continued employment of participating teachers.

Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) — enables Ohio high school students to earn college credit and/or high school graduation credit through the successful completion of college courses.

Praxis tests — a series of professional assessments for beginning teachers developed by the Educational Testing Service.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) — an international assessment (begun in 2000) that focuses on 15-year-olds' capabilities in reading literacy, mathematics literacy and science literacy. In the United States, this age corresponds largely to grade 9 and 10 students. PISA also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies such as learning strategies. PISA emphasizes skills that students have acquired as they near the end of mandatory schooling. PISA is currently being administered every three years.

Step Up to Quality — a voluntary Three Star Quality Rating system being piloted in select early childhood programs licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The program recognizes and promotes early care and education programs that meet quality benchmarks over and above minimum health and safety licensing standards.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) — developed to measure trends in students' mathematics and science achievement. Offered in 1995, 1999 and 2003, TIMSS provides participating countries with an unprecedented opportunity to measure students' progress every four years.

Value-added analysis — a statistical methodology that factors out nonschool-related influences on student achievement gains. This measurement allows education leaders to gauge the impact of instruction on student learning. Value-added analysis looks at the progress that students make over time based on statewide assessment results.

Vouchers — a certificate through which parents in certain school districts are given the ability to pay for the education of their children at a school of their choice rather than the public school to which they are assigned.

Weighted student funding — a fair and equitable way to distribute funds for school budgets. The amount of money given to a school is based on individual student needs, not enrollment. Schools with more needs receive more resources.

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