

Transforming
Ohio's Education System
Preparing Our Students for the 21st Century

An Interim Report by
The Ohio Education Association

**In Response to Governor Ted Strickland's
Vision for Education**

May 2008



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Inspiring Creative and Innovative Learning Environments	7
Ensuring Educator Quality	10
Building Collaborative Learning Communities.....	13
Setting Standards and Accountability	16
Reducing Achievement Gaps.....	19
Creating Safe Schools	23
Providing Adequate School Funding	27
Improving Charter School Accountability.....	32
Enhancing School Board Leadership	36
Promoting Shared Accountability	39
Conclusion	43
References	44

Transforming Ohio's Education System

Preparing Our Students for the 21st Century

Introduction

The core problem is that our education and training systems were built for another era, an era in which most workers needed only a rudimentary education. It is not possible to get where we need to go by patching that system.... We can get where we must go only by changing the system itself.

— Tough Choices or Tough Times
National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007

Pursuing a Vision of Educational Transformation

Governor Ted Strickland's 2008 State of the State Address put forth a vision of educational transformation in Ohio. He stated that his vision for the education system was to "create learning environments that foster and nurture creativity, innovation and global competency."

In addition to defining his vision, the Governor proposed six guiding principles designed for the statewide discussion about how this vision could be achieved:

- First, we must strengthen our commitment to public education.
- Second, a modern education system must be directly linked to economic prosperity and civic well-being. Ohio cannot thrive without understanding that world-class schools will produce a talented workforce and civically responsible citizens. A talented workforce will attract and create jobs.
- Third, we must excel internationally in our ability to foster creativity and innovation. These skills fuel a lifetime of success, especially in an evolving global economy. Our schools must teach students to think past the limits of what's been done and imagine what could be done.
- Fourth, our best teachers can show us what works best in the classroom. We need to consult them and follow their lead.
- Fifth, we must strive to develop a specific, personalized education program that identifies how each individual student learns and use the teaching methods appropriate to each student's needs and abilities.

- Sixth, testing and assessment will continue to answer accountability questions. But their most important role will be to guide personalized and individualized education through understanding a student's capabilities, weaknesses and potential growth in the educational process.

After exploring nine key areas proposed by the Governor, the Ohio Education Association concurs that the challenges of achieving a world-class education must be approached systemically.

Achieving the Vision Through System Transformation

Preparing students for the challenges of work and life in a revitalized Ohio economy will require both new teaching strategies and systemic change. As teachers and principals begin to think in new ways, current state and local barriers to educational innovation and the development of 21st century knowledge and skills must be removed. Those barriers must be replaced with flexibility, effective supports and adequate resources. A vision of transformation in education will require a willingness to transform the entire public education system with simultaneous initiation of change in classrooms, schools, districts and communities and throughout state systems of education and government.

All stakeholders must be accountable for creating and supporting world-class education. Ohio's system for funding public education continues to be unconstitutional, thus creating an environment where reforms are often top-down unfunded mandates. The system must be fully funded to provide high-quality education for students across the state. The system must be balanced between state and local control and decision-making. It must support educator learning and innovation through collaborative learning communities. Most importantly, it must be a system that addresses students' unique needs, inspires them to want to learn and prepares them for success in life.

In order to create such a system, we must analyze critically what currently exists, articulate clearly what our vision for transforming the system is and work collaboratively to initiate, support and implement policies that lead to the development of a world-class educational system.

Building upon the system components outlined by the Governor, OEA has developed a systemic policy vision to pave the way for transforming Ohio's public education system into a world-class institution that inspires and supports excellence and innovation in teaching and learning.

Assessing the Context

Ohio's Education Policies and Progress

Ohio's education policy leaders have spent the past decade enacting policies aimed at increasing the rigor of the state's expectations for all students. Standards, assessment and accountability are the watchwords of Ohio education reform circa 1997-2004.

After establishing an accountability system for school districts with passage of Senate Bill 55 in 1997, Ohio followed in 2001 with Senate Bill 1, which established the state's first academic content standards, called for new assessments aligned with those standards and expanded the accountability system to include not only districts but also schools. After the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, Ohio passed Senate Bill 3, which incorporated subgroup performance into its accountability system. In 2004, the legislature passed Senate Bill 2 to create the Educator Standards Board, which was designed to establish guidelines for licensure and professional development (Achieve, Inc., 2007).

Those improvements and others, such as the institution of annual achievement testing and more advanced high school course requirements, raised the bar for both teachers and students in Ohio's schools, and a case can be made that student achievement in Ohio has steadily improved since the passage of the new laws. *Education Week's* annual *Quality Counts* report (2008), for example, ranks Ohio at seventh in the nation.

But celebrating incremental improvements and striving to be first in the nation are not adequate for meeting the challenges ahead.

Education at a Crossroads

In a global economy driven by knowledge and innovation, Ohio can no longer measure the quality of its education system against national standards. Incremental progress—even accelerated progress—toward the baseline state standards represented by achievement tests is insufficient. Today's public education system must meet international, world-class standards as measured by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The PISA results for 2006 showed the United States ranked at #19 in reading, #20 in science and #28 in mathematics (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Those results suggest that even top-ranked states must question whether their students are as well prepared as they need to be.

A recent survey of over 400 employers across the United States conducted by the Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the Society for Human Resource Management found that only 23.9% of respondents reported that new employees with four-year college degrees have “excellent” basic knowledge and applied skills. The report states, “The deficiencies are greatest at the high school level, with 42.4% of employers reporting the overall preparation of high school graduates as deficient; 80.9%

reporting deficiencies in written communications; 70.3% citing deficiencies in professionalism; and 69.6% reporting deficiencies in critical thinking” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006).

A closer look at the nature of today’s economy and what it promises for the future suggests Ohio’s education system needs to set aside the improvement goals of yesterday and adopt a new vision for education in the 21st century.

The Ohio Economy in Transition

Ohio is the seventh largest U.S. state economy and remains the third largest manufacturing state and the fourth largest producer of durable goods, according to Governor Strickland’s *Turnaround Ohio* plan (2007), but those statistics do not mean what they once did. From January 2001 to March 2008, Ohio has lost 239,800 manufacturing jobs. Focusing the education system on recovering lost manufacturing jobs is a strategy with limited benefits. Many of the high-wage manufacturing jobs that once were the bedrock of the American economy have been relocated to China, India and Central America, where skill levels are increasing and wage scales remain well below those in the United States. Other jobs have been lost due to automation. In fact, machines and computers continue to absorb jobs composed of mostly repetitive and routine tasks—not only factory work but also many semi-skilled service jobs, such as those once plentiful in banks, airlines and offices (Levy & Murnane, 2004).

The impact of these shifts has been substantial. Ohio’s overall unemployment rate has risen from 4.0% in 2001 to 5.7% in 2008, a 43% increase (Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed 4/22/08). In 2003, Ohio’s per capita income was 5% below the national average. The real wages of Ohio’s workers are declining. In addition, Ohio ranks 50th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia in its ability to attract and hold onto well-educated people ages 19-24. On average, 45 more people leave our state on a daily basis than move into it (*Turnaround Ohio*, 2007).

Even strategies to meet the minimum benchmarks of yesterday’s education system—increasing the number of college graduates and preparing more students for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, for example—must be rethought because a global communications network has given many high tech companies access to a global pool of workers. Graduates from Ohio’s postsecondary education programs, including highly-trained technicians and engineers, are now competing for jobs in technology industries with young workers from China, India and Singapore who are both highly educated and willing to work for a fraction of the wages paid to Americans (Friedman, 2008).

Creativity and innovation are the only ways U.S. industries will be able to compete against the low labor costs in newly industrialized nations (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Therefore, building an adequate pool of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals in Ohio is only the beginning of attracting and keeping companies that will create high-paying jobs. Ohio also must be able to show that its workforce

includes innovative, creative people who can thrive in 21st century work environments and that its communities are the vibrant, culturally rich places that bright, creative knowledge workers tend to prefer (Florida, 2004 and 2008).

Clearly, creating 21st century Ohio schools and communities and developing a healthy Ohio economy are part of a shared challenge and a shared vision—the challenge of innovation, the vision of a bright future for the next generation of Ohioans.

Skills for the 21st Century

When employers were asked to project changes in necessary skills in the next five years, they identified the need to think critically and creatively and to speak a foreign language. They put professionalism, teamwork and oral communication at the top of the list for skills that are required to be successful in a 21st century work environment (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2006). In a follow-up nationwide poll of registered voters conducted in 2007 by Public Opinion Strategies and Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007), several additional findings were reported:

- Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported that they believe schools can and should incorporate 21st century skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills, technology skills and communication and self-direction skills, into the curriculum.
- Sixty-six percent of voters said they believe that students need a broader range of skills beyond the basics of reading, writing and math.
- Fifty-five percent of voters polled said they believe that schools should place an equal emphasis on 21st century skills and basic skills.

Based upon these survey and polling data, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills has proposed a framework for the skills and attitudes students need to possess in order to be prepared to participate effectively in a workplace defined by a global, information-based economy. In addition to teaching students to master the basic skills in the core curriculum of reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, geography and government, the Partnership believes that schools must weave in the following interdisciplinary themes:

- Global awareness
- Financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy
- Civic literacy
- Health literacy

In addition to these interdisciplinary themes, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007) proposes that the K-12 curriculum should include learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology skills and life and career skills.

Designing learning experiences that develop knowledge and skills for the economic and societal challenges our students will face calls for Ohio's educators to think and work in new ways. Generating engaging projects and utilizing performance-based assessments, integrating instruction in multiple disciplines, becoming adept in the use of technology and partnering with educators in other parts of the world and with experts in a range of organizations are all challenges faced by today's educators in Ohio.

Outlining OEA's Vision and Policy Recommendations

The Ohio Education Association believes that in order to transform our current education system, which is based upon minimum standards, into a high-performing system that prepares our students for future success in higher education and the rapidly changing global workplace, it is imperative for policy leaders, educators, business leaders and parents to adopt a new vision. We must imagine our schools as places where children feel safe and happy and where educators innovate and collaborate as they address the learning needs of every student. We must envision new ways of teaching, collaborating with colleagues and engaging with the community that will help all children master the basics *and* develop 21st century skills.

This document takes a comprehensive look at the key policy areas that the Ohio Education Association believes must be addressed to transform today's education system into one that supports a vision of excellence and innovation in teaching and world-class performance in student achievement. Each policy area includes a brief review of the state's current status and challenges, OEA's vision of how a world-class system functions in that policy area and OEA's policy recommendations for transforming the system to achieve the vision. Measures of progress also are provided for discussion.

Inspiring Creative and Innovative Learning Environments

“American ingenuity” is a phrase that has long been part of this nation’s lexicon, and for good reason. Whether settling new frontiers or exploring space, creating new industries or living the American dream, Americans have historically embraced opportunities to better themselves and better their communities. From public schools that stressed civic duty, independent thought and social responsibility came citizens that created great works of art and literature, built industries and led the nation.

The challenges of today’s global economy call on this “can do” spirit more than ever. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007) has identified innovation and learning skills as essential in preparing students to be “effective and self-reliant lifelong learners.” A number of organizations and groups in the education community are exploring the challenges of what author Thomas L. Friedman (2008) calls a “flat world” in which America’s competitive edge will be maintained only through innovative breakthroughs. A recent poll by Lake Research Partners (2008) indicates that a substantial bloc of potential voters are concerned that students receive too much instruction in basics and not enough opportunities in the arts and other experiences that develop the imagination. Clearly, Ohio must step up to the challenges of world-class aspirations. The transformation needs to begin in Ohio’s public schools.

Ohio’s Current Status and Challenges

Ohio has taken important steps toward developing a more creative, innovative public education system. The following accomplishments have laid the groundwork:

- Building a technology infrastructure and providing online resources to educators
- Adopting Academic Content Standards in the fine arts, foreign languages and technology
- Establishing the Governor’s Institute for Creativity and Innovation in Education to engage stakeholders in dialogue about how to foster and support creativity, innovation and global competence
- Establishing the Committee for Arts and Innovative Thinking, a statewide group of arts’ educators exploring how the arts can be integrated with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education

Numerous forces inhibit and undermine the creativity and innovation of both teachers and students in Ohio schools. Where innovation should be fostered, compliance is dictated; where creativity should be celebrated, mastery of basic skills is rewarded.

Federal legislation like ESEA/NCLB, state mandates and other unenlightened decisions of the past have caused high-stakes testing to be over-emphasized and have saddled some schools and districts with punitive labels that stifle creativity and innovation in teaching.

Such a system fails to nurture the aspirations and imaginations of those who will some day be expected to generate the creative ideas and achieve the innovative breakthroughs this state and nation need in order to achieve and maintain a high standard of living for all. To develop citizens with the problem-solving and critical thinking skills that will be necessary to excel in the 21st century, Ohio will need to reignite the innovative flame of public education that made this nation great and rethink the systems that have blocked educational innovation and stifled the natural creativity of children and young people.

OEA's Vision

A world-class system of public education addresses both the intrinsic needs of all students and the demands of a 21st century economy and society by adapting to change, fostering innovation and seizing opportunities to collaborate. Building system capacity for promoting innovation and creativity would include the following improvements:

A Complete Curriculum: Schools should urge students to know more than the basics by providing a complete curriculum that emphasizes skills and knowledge for the 21st century and that includes the visual and performing arts, foreign languages and other disciplines that develop creative thinking and global competence. Increased respect for academic freedom and the professional judgment of educators would encourage teachers to engage and challenge students with multiple avenues for learning and with instruction that is customized for individual learning needs, styles, preferences and interests.

Collaborative Learning Communities: Collaborative learning communities can inspire the new ways of thinking and stimulate the creative sparks needed to develop innovative teaching and learning environments. Teachers would engage in peer coaching, mentoring, critical friends' groups and other strategies for innovative problem solving and effective practices. The system should support teachers by responding to their needs as identified through formative assessments and data analysis and by providing opportunities during the school day to engage in professional learning.

System Flexibility and Responsiveness: State agencies, universities, OEA and other professional organizations and local school districts and communities should engage collaboratively in deep, ongoing, visionary exploration of what conditions are needed to foster and support creativity and innovation in teaching and learning environments and to develop students' critical, creative and collaborative skills. State and local education leaders should deliberately design a system with those conditions. They should systematically identify and reward creativity and innovation in schools and build an infrastructure to help disseminate effective innovations and foster their local adaptation. All stakeholders should celebrate diversity as both a value and a necessary condition for creativity and innovation.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Utilize the professional expertise of practicing educators who have been identified as accomplished teachers (Master Teachers or National Board Certified Teachers) in developing policies that foster and support replication of programs, curricula and methods that have demonstrated success.
2. Revamp the current state testing system from one that measures basic skills and limits teaching to one that uses performance-based demonstrations to emphasize problem-solving and critical thinking skills and to address varying levels of performance in multiple ways.

State and Local Districts

1. Create an assessment system that informs instruction and promotes understanding, rather than one that is punitive and merely labels students, teachers and schools.
2. Provide schools with the funding and support needed to meet the fine arts, foreign language and technology standards and to incorporate critical thinking, creative problem-solving, visual literacy and other 21st century knowledge and skills into all areas of the curriculum.
3. Fund a technology infrastructure for public schools that is robust, up-to-date and maintainable so that all students have access to globally distributed and state-of-the-art learning opportunities.

Measures of Progress

- The state will have a mechanism for convening accomplished educators for policy discussions and an effective system for disseminating innovative practices through the existing Ohio Resource Center and Ohio Learning Network or a new best practices clearinghouse.
- The state will have a framework for performance-based assessment in problem-solving and critical thinking that includes self-assessment and opportunities for goal attainment.
- All schools will provide instruction in the visual and performing arts and will integrate the arts with other academic content.
- Educators will use technology effectively to develop and implement 21st century learning experiences.
- All educators will document student performance of tasks that require the skills outlined by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

Ensuring Educator Quality

Ohio's public education system is complex and interdependent, but ensuring a highly-qualified educator in every Ohio classroom is the critical link to developing creative and innovative learning environments and significantly raising student achievement. Research has consistently shown that highly-qualified and accomplished teachers positively influence student achievement and that teachers who are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards make a significant impact on improving students' achievement test results (Goldhaber & Perry, 2004; Vandervoot, 2004).

The goal of a highly qualified teacher in every classroom is central in most national, state and local educator quality initiatives. OEA is committed to achieving this goal by working to strengthen the teaching profession and the education system.

Ohio's Current Status and Challenges

Ohio's system for ensuring educator quality has been improved through a number of initiatives:

- Restructuring the educator licensure system to ensure that all educators continue updating and improving their knowledge and skills
- Moving control of professional development and license renewal to Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) with majority teacher membership in order to help educators design professional development opportunities that address local needs
- Creating an Educator Standards Board (ESB) made up of practicing educators representing the P-16 continuum

LPDCs and the ESB advance educator quality by giving Ohio educators a greater voice in identifying high-quality professional development opportunities and defining standards for their own profession. However, ensuring educator quality also requires ongoing visioning and data-informed planning to address Ohio's achievement gaps and help all students succeed. While the ESB currently is charged with creating standards, it has no power to implement and support policies and to ensure educator quality throughout the state. Nor are there incentives and resources to build educator capacity in buildings and districts.

OEA's Vision

Building the professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills of educators is a major emphasis in a world-class education system. Building system capacity for ensuring educator quality would include the following improvements:

Support for Intensive, Job-Embedded Professional Learning: Time for professional development and collaboration with colleagues should be embedded in the regular workday of all educators. High-quality peer review, coaching and mentoring should be standard practices at

both the building and district levels. All educators should have the time, tools and training to make data-driven decisions that positively impact their own practice and their students' learning.

An Autonomous Educator Standards Board: An Educator Standards Board can be the driving force behind educator quality in Ohio. In order to bring about real change, the ESB should become an autonomous policy-making body that oversees the teaching profession in Ohio.

An autonomous ESB, consisting entirely of educators with a teacher majority, would differ significantly from the current Board structure. Rather than acting in an advisory capacity to the State Board of Education, the ESB would have the authority to create, implement and monitor policies and resources for teacher preparation, professional learning and professional conduct. Also, the ESB should receive full funding and the logistical support from agency staff to perform its duties.

Leadership Opportunities: Ohio should strongly support National Board Certification initiatives throughout the state, particularly those in high-needs schools. Local districts should provide career lattices as set forth in the framework proposed by the ESB in 2006. These would offer opportunities for different teacher leadership roles. The collective bargaining process should be used to establish appropriate resources for those roles, including time and compensation commensurate to responsibility. Successful adoption of the Ohio Department of Education's Master Teacher Program, outlined in Senate Bill 2, should be part of those career lattices.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Increase funding for all educator professional development, including collaborative learning communities and National Board Certification.
2. Establish and staff an autonomous Educator Standards Board with the charge of setting and administering standards for educator preparation, professional learning and professional conduct.
3. Strengthen induction support for educators, particularly in high-needs schools.
4. Strengthen the state technology infrastructure.
5. Increase training and technological support for educators to use data effectively in improving practice.

Local Districts

1. Increase programming of quality professional development aligned with the Ohio Educator Standards, including those for professional development.
2. Diversify teacher roles and create more opportunities for collaborative learning, leadership and professional development.

3. Increase the recruitment and training of teachers for mentorship and peer assessment and review programs.

Higher Education Institutions (and other professional development providers)

1. Create programs that are responsive to school and educator needs. Provide professional development in using systems thinking, developing teacher leadership and placing teaching and learning at the center of continuous improvement planning.
2. Create and maintain professional development schools and other educator preparation partnerships with school districts.

Measures of Progress

- All professional development offerings and beginning educator support programs at the state and local level will be aligned with the *Ohio Standards for Professional Development*.
- Professional development/collaboration time will be embedded into the regular school day throughout Ohio.
- Ohio will adopt a fully-autonomous Educator Standards Board by 2009-2010.
- The ratio of accomplished teachers to students will improve annually (with accomplishment identified by National Board Certification, Ohio's Master Teacher designation or other standards-based process).
- The number of teachers of color and teachers in high-needs schools pursuing National Board Certification will increase.
- The number of districts implementing career lattices will increase over the next five years.
- The number of trained mentors and peer evaluators will increase over the next five years.
- The retention rate of teachers and principals will increase over the next five years.
- Ohio's student achievement gaps will decrease annually.

Building Collaborative Learning Communities

Collaborative learning communities are groups of educators who work together collegially to improve student learning. A collaborative learning community forms around a shared vision and mission and grows stronger as educators engage in inquiry about their professional practice, learn together, collaborate with their peers and make decisions. Members of a collaborative learning community visit and review each other's classrooms, examine teacher and student work collaboratively, use data to identify student and school needs and create and carry out plans to address those needs. Schools can configure collaborative learning communities in a variety of ways, including within or across grade levels and curriculum areas. Educators from multiple buildings or districts can participate in a collaborative learning community, along with early childhood educators, family members, university faculty and other professionals who contribute to student learning. Some collaborative learning communities are open-ended, networked and ongoing; others assemble briefly to address a single well-defined problem or question.

Collaborative learning communities increase educators' professional confidence in their ability to promote student learning—and studies link that increased self-efficacy to both higher teacher performance and higher student achievement (Garmston & Wellman, 1999; DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Ohio's Current Status and Challenges

Ohio's current system of Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) is a mechanism for giving educators responsibility for their own learning and ensuring that the activities of collaborative learning communities meet the *Ohio Standards for Professional Development*.

Educators must take the lead in forming and configuring collaborative learning communities that suit their students' needs and their own professional learning goals. But while membership in a collaborative learning community cannot be coerced or legislated, teacher leadership and productive learning communities can be encouraged and supported by the system. Unfortunately, the conditions required for successful learning communities are rarely found in schools and districts. Too often, educational leadership is narrowly defined as a top-down model, creating a tradition of unenlightened management that inhibits, rather than fosters, teacher professionalism. Non-teaching duties, lack of common collaboration time and little or no technological support for collaborative learning communities across distance are formidable barriers to success.

For collaborative learning communities to be successful, time for collaboration and training in both process and data use is imperative. Occasional meetings before or after school are not sufficient for building strong collaborative learning communities to address student needs and achievement gaps. Without dedicated time in the regular school day to develop community and carry out the necessary work both in and outside of classrooms, collaborative learning communities cannot function effectively. In addition, with diminishing funding for professional

development, lack of a state-level support framework for professional learning and an over-emphasis on testing, the creation of collaborative learning communities is not a state priority.

OEA's Vision

In a world-class education system, educators participate in collaborative learning communities as a way to improve their own teaching practices and address the unique needs of their students. Through the successful implementation of collaborative learning communities, staff isolation is decreased, staff capacity is increased and the quality of the school's programming for students is improved, helping to close achievement gaps and build 21st century skills. Building system capacity to support collaborative learning communities would include the following improvements:

A Culture of Support: Schools and districts should foster the integration of professional learning into educators' regular school day by creating a weekly schedule that provides time to meet and collaborate. Teaching schedules should be differentiated so that teachers can provide peer assistance to their colleagues through classroom visits and shared planning time. With state and local support, schools should use processes that encourage group socialization, teamwork and collaboration. Also, providing access to technology that allows real-time interactions among members would encourage collaborative learning communities to network and collaborate across schools and districts.

A Culture of Trust: Collaborative learning communities should be empowered to make decisions at the local level to serve the needs of their students, including assessment of their own needs as professionals for community building, professional development and tools for data review and analysis. Needs and goals identified by collaborative learning communities should drive resource decisions and shape service delivery from local, regional and state agencies.

A Culture of Collegiality: Administrators, teachers and other education professionals should define a vision for professional learning for their schools and the means to achieve that vision. Educators should actively and collaboratively assess their students' performance through multiple measures, analyze the results of those assessments, gather the appropriate resources for addressing the student needs that have been identified and implement high-quality instruction to improve students' learning. They also should use student data in developing strategies to strengthen their schools and districts. Collaborative learning communities should guide and support new teachers and help all teachers meet their individual professional goals. For those teachers who wish to pursue National Board Certification, Master Teacher designation or another standards-based path to a higher level of accomplishment, collaborative learning communities should serve as support systems. Building-level collaborative learning communities throughout each district should communicate, and when their needs overlap, they should work together to find common solutions that benefit the district.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Support local initiatives to create collaborative learning communities.
2. Provide professional development and resource delivery specifically targeted at creating successful collaborative learning communities.
3. Increase state funding for all educator professional development and learning.
4. Increase support for teachers seeking National Board Certification.
5. Design, develop and maintain a technology infrastructure that facilitates the formation of collaborative learning communities across buildings and districts.
6. Create a state clearinghouse to support collaborative learning communities.

Local Districts

1. Revise the current school day structure to include dedicated professional development/collaboration time tailored to individual building and district needs.
2. Increase training and support for educators to use data effectively in improving practice.
3. Use the collective bargaining process to develop a workable framework for collaborative learning communities.
4. Increase the availability of high-quality professional development that is aligned with Ohio's *Standards for Professional Development*.

Measures of Progress

- School and district schedules throughout Ohio will include dedicated time for job-embedded professional development and collaboration.
- The number of educators voluntarily participating in collaborative learning communities will increase annually.
- The number of collaborative learning communities at the building and district level will increase annually.
- The ratio of accomplished teachers to students (with accomplishment identified by National Board Certification, Master Teacher designation or other standards-based process) will increase annually.
- The state will have a fully-functional state technology infrastructure for cross-building/district collaborative learning communities.
- Student achievement will increase annually.

Setting Standards and Accountability

Standards-based instruction and assessment are essential for ensuring that all schools share a common vision of what students need to know and be able to do for success in higher education and careers. Effective standards can help set rigorous expectations for all students and provide schools with a strong basis for the design and improvement of curriculum and instruction. A well-designed and effectively implemented state assessment system can provide statewide indicators of progress and increase accountability among all education stakeholders. Effective school-based and classroom-based assessments that are aligned to rigorous state standards can provide data for educators to use in improving their practice, meeting all students' needs and developing schoolwide improvement strategies.

Ohio's Current Status and Challenges

Ohio has adopted Academic Content Standards, implemented a series of achievement tests aligned with those standards and established passage of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) as a condition of high school completion. Ohio's Academic Content Standards were developed through a process that involved educators and other stakeholders from the P-16 continuum, and Ohio schools are aligning their curricula with those standards.

Ohio's current achievement tests are a one-time snapshot of student performance with very little useable information for educators, students and parents. Their continued use in measuring adequate yearly progress (AYP) and the association of AYP with high stakes consequences are guarantees that an increasing percentage of Ohio's schools will be labeled as failures, despite substantial progress, and that dropout and graduation rates will worsen (Darling-Hammond, 2007). A "one-size fits all" test does not ensure student success, and the current system does little to accurately identify and describe high-needs schools. Test results do not account for student differences in ability, language and culture. Many schools that show remarkable progress with high-needs students consistently fail to meet the AYP requirements, which are based on an ever-rising bar.

Because achievement test results involve high stakes for children and schools and are used to label schools and determine consequences for failure to meet AYP measures, schools have been forced to narrow their curriculum offerings and devote weeks of instructional time to preparing for and administering the tests. Teachers are compelled to "cover" test content at the expense of strategies that promote depth of understanding. Without time for in-depth exploration of concepts and completion of complex tasks, students meet Ohio's Academic Content Standards in only superficial ways and do not develop the knowledge, skills and creativity needed for the complex problems and challenges they will encounter in postsecondary education and life. Furthermore, the overemphasis on high-stakes testing discourages the state from aligning its

content standards with the vision of world-class education that is being shaped by rapid technological advances, 21st century careers and a global economy and society.

In short, testing has become an end in itself that overshadows the primary goal of increasing student achievement in higher-order thinking and problem solving.

OEA's Vision

A world-class public education system uses academic standards and assessments to prepare students for the future. Building system capacity to enhance student success through standards and accountability would include the following improvements:

Deep Engagement with Standards: The education system should adapt to change by creatively applying state academic standards to 21st century contexts and challenges. Standards should be the basis for designing engaging, relevant curricula that inspire students to do meaningful, high-quality work aligned with rigorous assessment criteria.

Multiple Assessments: Student learning should be measured through multiple assessments, the majority of which are developed at the local level by educators who know the backgrounds and needs of their students and who have access to a wide range of resources for designing and delivering high-quality standards-based curriculum and instruction. Locally created performance-based assessment that is integrated with instruction should be viewed as an important way to provide both teachers and students with immediate, detailed feedback that can be used to determine learning needs and improve instruction.

Training and Resources: Local development of quality classroom assessments for diagnosis and instruction should command significant resources and commitment. Teachers should be trained in the use of data analysis' tools and should have time during the school day to examine student performance data and collaborate with colleagues to improve professional practice.

Shared Accountability: The state should share responsibility for student learning with local districts. The accountability system should be based on multiple measures. The state should view the results of its annual achievement tests as only one indicator of school or district progress and should use those results in allocating funds and improving support services. When schools and districts fail to meet federal AYP standards, the state should provide them with additional resources, time and support to perform needs assessments and develop local improvement plans that address their specific weaknesses.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Review and revise the current academic content standards and develop rigorous, world-class expectations for student learning, including mastery of 21st century skills.

2. Revise the current accountability system to ensure valid, reliable, age-appropriate assessment instruments that will fairly measure students' attainment of the standards.
3. Strengthen the state technology infrastructure to support instructional planning and performance-based assessment.

State and Local Districts

1. Increase resources (i.e., training, tools and conditions) to successfully implement standards-based curricula.
2. Support and fund the development of locally created assessments aligned to state and local standards.
3. Increase training and support for educators to use data and data analysis' tools effectively to improve practice.

Measures of Progress

- All Ohio Academic Content Standards (OACs) will be updated through a regular cycle of review and revision that includes benchmarking.
- Curricula will be realigned to revised OACs for ALL subject areas (including the arts, health and physical education and technology).
- A multi-measure accountability system will be implemented.
- The accountability system will demonstrate shared responsibility and accountability between the state and local districts.
- Ohio's student achievement gaps will decrease annually.
- Overall achievement across academic content areas and in 21st century skills will increase annually.

Reducing Achievement Gaps

“Achievement gaps” is a simple term for a complex set of problems referring to disparities in achievement between a high-performing demographic group and all other demographic groups. The disparities can occur on a number of measures, such as graduation rates, school achievement, test scores and participation in college preparatory coursework and other challenging curricula.

Children from low-income communities, African-American children, Hispanic children, children whose first language is not English and children with disabilities are disproportionately represented among students with low academic performance. If gaps in performance are not addressed, those students will leave school unprepared for the demands of the workplace or postsecondary education. There is no justification for these patterns of differences in achievement among various demographic groups of students.

Achievement gaps are a pervasive problem with deep roots in our social history. Any review of the literature on achievement gaps reveals a number of probable causes that exist both within and outside of schools. The variables are many; they are complex in nature, and they are intricately inter-related. Gaps exist in Ohio schools at all economic levels and in urban, rural and suburban settings.

Ohio’s Current Status and Challenges

Ohio’s State Board of Education created an Achievement Gaps Task Force to study the achievement gap problem and issue a report with recommendations. The report, issued in May, 2003, provided recommendations for strategies in three areas:

- Drive focus toward high achievement for all.
- Ensure that educators are well-prepared and supported.
- Adapt structures to the needs of the students served.

Numerous studies, professional organizations and policy groups agree with the Task Force’s assertion that closing achievement gaps is both a moral imperative and a civic and economic necessity for Ohio and the nation.

In response to the recommendations from the Achievement Gaps Task Force, the Ohio Department of Education launched the State Superintendent’s Schools of Promise Initiative. This initiative recognizes Ohio schools that are closing achievement gaps and producing high achievement for all students. Those schools have demonstrated that it is possible to close achievement gaps, despite having student demographics often associated with low performance. Also, the Ohio Schools to Watch program recognizes successful middle schools and the Ohio Schools of Distinction program recognizes schools in which all student subgroups, including students with disabilities, meet state expectations in reading and mathematics.

Despite some successes, the concentration of low achievement in schools serving Ohio's economically disadvantaged and minority children continues to be a crisis in Ohio:

- At the sixth-grade level, only 33% of African-American students demonstrated proficiency in reading in 2006-2007, compared to 83.4% of white students (Ohio Department of Education, 2007).
- In Ohio elementary schools, for every 10 percentage points the poverty level of the school population increases, achievement in reading decreases by 5.6 percentage points (Ohio State Board of Education, 2003).
- In the class of 2007 (the first class required to pass the Ohio Graduation Test), only 30.9% of African-American students passed all sections of the test on their first attempt, compared to 64.6% of students statewide. (Ohio Department of Education, 2007).

OEA's Vision

In a world-class public education system, all students achieve at high levels regardless of their economic, racial or ethnic backgrounds. All students and staff are provided with a physical and emotional learning environment that fosters growth, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, religion, country of origin and economic status. Building system capacity for reducing achievement gaps would include the following improvements:

Support for High Expectations: Parents, educators, communities and policy makers should have high expectations for all students and work in partnership to provide the necessary support for high achievement. The state should not only hold high expectations for students but also hold itself accountable for promoting the conditions and strategies that have proven effective in Ohio's Schools of Promise and other successful schools serving high-needs populations. Those elements include the following:

- Instructional leadership
- Continuous assessment and immediate intervention
- Collaboration and common planning time
- Professional development for teachers
- Clear discipline policies
- Strong partnership with parents

Opportunities to Achieve: All students should have opportunities to use critical and creative thinking and to do high-quality work that is meaningful to them. Multiple measures should be used to assess student achievement.

Replication of Effective Practices: The system should fund and support the replication of programs that are promoting success in economically disadvantaged schools.

Cultural Responsiveness: All of Ohio’s educators should be culturally competent and aware of their own cultural assumptions. All schools should recognize and build upon the strengths in all cultures. The system should ensure that cultural biases do not pose barriers to student and school success.

Community and Partnerships: Communities and school districts should be full partners in designing and implementing programs and curricula to eliminate achievement gaps. State and local practices, programs, policies and resources should be aligned to support high achievement for all students.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Require districts and schools to address parental and community involvement in their school improvement plans.
2. Annually fund high-quality regional professional development opportunities that feature practices from the Schools of Promise, Schools of Distinction and Ohio Schools to Watch. Feature staff from such successful schools at those sessions.
3. Require, fund and support universal access to high-quality preschool and all-day kindergarten.
4. Provide sufficient funding to ensure that all economically disadvantaged school districts can provide small class sizes; recruit and retain high-quality teachers and principals; offer extended learning opportunities after school, on weekends and during the summer; and provide teachers and other instructional personnel with improved data systems and training in the use of those systems.
5. Establish an Ohio Closing Achievement Gaps Congress in which all groups that advocate for reduced achievement gaps, along with stakeholder representatives, convene annually to review and promote the current best practices for closing achievement gaps.
6. Require that all state and local social agencies collaborate with the Ohio Department of Education, education service centers and local school districts to remove the barriers to learning, particularly in low-income school districts. Establish central coordination of the collective resources that are available to support families and children so that all students are ready to learn.

Local Districts and Communities

1. Collaborate to identify and address the health, development and literacy needs of children, pre-natal through high school. Schools and local communities, including health and social service agencies, must work together.

2. Establish and fund school district committees to develop local strategies for closing achievement gaps.
3. Recruit highly-qualified teachers to schools with significant achievement gaps and provide incentives for remaining there.

Measures of Progress

- Student performance gaps for the Ohio Achievement Tests, Ohio Graduation Test, ACT and NAEP will be eliminated.
- Gaps in student access to advanced courses, AP courses, gifted programs and college prep classes will be eliminated.
- Gaps in student attainment (academic honors, high school graduation, employment and college participation and completion) will be eliminated.
- The percentage of economically disadvantaged students who are taught by highly-qualified teachers will increase.
- The percentage of children with access to high-quality preschool programs will increase.

Creating Safe Schools

A safe school environment is essential to every child's success. The term "safe schools" refers to a comprehensive set of issues related to conditions in and around schools that affect the physical and emotional health and well-being of students and their families, as well as the safety and security of the students and adults who learn and teach in schools.

While keeping children safe and healthy is fundamental, schools must do more to create a safe, positive climate for learning. Decades of research indicate that students who feel safe and accepted in school and who have positive relationships with teachers and school personnel perform better academically (Cohen, 2006; Blum et. al., 2002; Osterman, 2000). Moreover, high-needs schools that pay attention to safety, discipline and community are more likely to attract and retain highly-qualified, experienced educators (Billingsley, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001).

Ohio's Current Status and Challenges

Ohio has taken significant action to support safe schools. Accomplishments include the following initiatives:

- Requirements for school crisis planning that meet national standards
- Comprehensive school climate guidelines and policies to address harassment and bullying
- A resource network to provide training and technical assistance in a variety of areas that affect school safety

Schools must take responsibility for keeping students safe, physically and mentally healthy and academically engaged. But they cannot succeed alone. Students also must play a role, and teachers, education support professionals, parents, school and district leaders and community groups all must work together to provide the broad range of services and supports students need. School districts also need the flexibility to implement programs that fit their unique needs at the local level, as well as sufficient financial support to assist them in the implementation of those endeavors.

OEA's Vision

In a world-class public education system, all students feel welcome, respected and safe in their schools and communities. Consequently, teachers can focus more attention on student learning, and students are well positioned for academic success and development of the knowledge and skills needed to create a strong Ohio workforce. Building system capacity for creating physically and emotionally safe schools would include the following improvements:

Education for the Whole Child: Curriculum and instruction should address not only students' academic learning but also their social and emotional development, including self-awareness,

social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision making (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2003; Commission on the Whole Child, 2007). Educators should provide appropriate instruction in tolerance, respect and conflict resolution.

Integration and Collaboration: Based on a plan developed by state agencies, the OEA and other education stakeholders, systems of school-based or school-linked health, education and social services should address the continuum of family and student needs that affect student learning. Services should be integrated, sustained and data-driven with the objective of keeping all students safe, healthy and ready to learn.

Effective Intervention Strategies: Guided by clear, consistent policies, schools and communities should appropriately and fairly address all threats to the safety and well-being of all students and all school personnel. Alternative placement programs, managed by well-trained staff and administration, should provide high-quality education and interventions to help disruptive students get a new start and become productive citizens.

Proactive Policies and Planning: Schools should collaborate with the community in developing and continually improving crisis response plans. Educators and families should jointly develop codes of conduct that are adequately and fairly enforced to reduce disruptive behavior and allow for the reinforcement and development of positive behavior patterns. All policies and plans should be based on the unique needs of a community's students and should be adequately funded.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Amend the *Elementary and Secondary Schools Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools* to require a school counselor for every 250 students (American School Counselor Association, 2005), and provide full state funding for these additional positions.
2. Require all schools to integrate appropriate social and emotional learning content with the academic curriculum.
3. Extend the current assault protections afforded to teachers under Ohio Law to all school employees.
4. Amend the *Elementary and Secondary Schools Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools* to require local school boards to employ one certificated school nurse for every 750 students in general school populations, one for every 225 mainstreamed disabled students and one for every 125 severely/profoundly disabled students. Provide full state funding for these additional positions.
5. Require school districts to evaluate crisis response plans on an annual basis and ensure that those plans provide for a range of scenarios.

6. Provide adequate state funding for the maintenance of older buses and support for new buses. Require private busing companies to follow the same state safety regulations as public school systems and mandate safety inspections for all buses.

State and Local Districts

1. Work with OEA and other stakeholders in creating state and local plans for expanding the school-based or school-linked health, education and social services necessary to meet the continuum of family and student needs that affect student learning.
2. Create state and local policies to address the redevelopment or demolition of nuisance properties near school buildings.
3. In conjunction with local affiliates, require local boards of education to develop an ongoing process whereby school staff, parents/guardians/caregivers and students are involved in identifying disruptive behavior and in prescribing, implementing and evaluating codes of conduct. Such codes should foster discipline and personal accountability as opposed to rigid enforcement and punitive consequences.

Local Districts and Communities

1. Provide culturally responsive instruction and environments, and teach all students to understand and appreciate diversity.
2. Create and promote opportunities and activities that help all students to feel part of the school community.
3. Expand opportunities for children to work with adult role models in after-school and recreation programs.
4. Create and adequately staff alternative placement programs for use after all other behavioral interventions for disruptive students have been exhausted.
5. Establish policies and provide training for educators on removing disruptive students from the classroom and responding to students who threaten the safety of others.
6. Prevent and effectively deal with bullying and harassment by integrating social and emotional learning, conflict resolution, anger management and peer mediation into the current curriculum.
7. Establish community safety boards responsible for identifying and prioritizing key risk factors, as well as understanding those issues and developing viable solutions.
8. Provide adequate training for those who have responsibilities under crisis response plans and include crisis response training in the professional development schedule.
9. Provide confidential ways for students to communicate with adults about rumors and threats.

Measures of Progress

- All educators will be provided with professional development and support in providing instruction that is culturally responsive and addresses social and emotional learning.
- All economically-disadvantaged schools will have after-school programs offering remediation and enrichment opportunities aligned with the curriculum.
- All economically disadvantaged districts will have alternative programs for disruptive students that provide standards-based, differentiated instruction and intensive, research-based support for psychological and behavioral difficulties.
- All schools will implement Ohio's policies and guidelines for crisis response and school climate.
- All school personnel will be trained to respond to crisis situations.

Providing Adequate School Funding

Ensuring adequate per pupil funding is the first step in preparing Ohio students for life in a global economy and society, and it is pivotal to the state's economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Public education is a long-term investment with strong links to economic growth. One extensive review of economic studies presents the conclusion that “education spending can have a direct, positive impact on the business climate and can improve the success of at-risk students, whose contributions to the economy are critical for achieving a high-value/high-wage economy in the 21st century” (Schweke, 2004). Hungerford and Wassner (2004) found a state's public K–12 expenditures affect personal income levels, employment and small business starts.

Investing in world-class K-12 education will mean that more students will be prepared to enter postsecondary education. Higher educational attainment means higher income levels. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2007), U.S. Census Bureau data show that high school graduates earn annually about \$10,000 more than dropouts but about \$10,000 less than those with associate degrees and \$25,000 less than those with baccalaureate degrees. State investments in ensuring that today's K-12 students not only graduate but also enter and succeed in postsecondary education will be recovered many times over in the form of state and local income and sales tax revenues, as well as in the increased vitality of local economies achieved through higher income levels.

Investments in public schools also contribute to immediate economic development goals. In a review of the research on the economic impacts of public schools, Weiss (2004) suggests that quality of life issues, including the quality of public schools, play an increasingly significant role in where companies choose to locate. Sims (2004) found that good schools make communities more attractive to college graduates and the companies that are seeking to hire them.

In short, by failing to meet its sole responsibility to secure, maintain and update a thorough and efficient system of public common schools, pursuant to Article VI, section 2 of the Ohio Constitution, the state not only has been limiting educational opportunities for Ohio's citizens, it also has been failing to invest adequately in its future economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Ohio's Current Status and Challenges

Four times the Ohio Supreme Court has determined the state's system for funding education to be unconstitutional, and Ohio's legislature has failed to address the over-reliance on local property tax. With the continuation of an unconstitutional school funding system, Ohio's schools are struggling to comply with increased accountability mandates from both federal and state legislation and policies. Taxpayers who can least afford it are shouldering a disproportionate share of the tax burden for schools.

Although the funding system is far too complex for most taxpayers to understand, they know the system is broken. Passage rates on local school tax levies are at an all-time low. In the last election, only 23% of local tax levies to fund schools passed. That decline has forced many districts to adopt significant budget cuts. Some communities have fought hard to pass new school levies only to see them erode away due to the reduction factors of HB 920 (which requires that the tax rates be reduced when the property values increase). Ohio needs to reduce the overall reliance on local property taxes and greatly reduce the number of millage elections that are presented to the people.

Ohio needs to fix the basic flaws in the funding system—flaws that have only been exacerbated by decades of political tampering with a foundation formula. Moreover, Ohio needs a school finance system that is much easier to understand than the current system. Communities that understand educational programs and needs will be more likely to provide adequate support.

OEA's Vision

A world-class public education system upholds the state responsibility to provide an adequate public education to all children while respecting local control. Providing all children with access to high-quality educational opportunities and accomplished teachers is considered the state's most important priority when funds are allocated. Building system capacity for effective school funding would include the following improvements:

An Educational Accountability Commission: A group of distinguished education leaders should be convened to identify and define the learning resources essential to high-quality educational opportunities for all Ohio school children. The group should use at least three research-based models as the basis for its recommendations. The Commission, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Budget & Management and Legislative Service Commission, should then cost out the resources and determine per pupil funding, as well as other funding formulas.

A World-Class Resource System: Educators should be able to access the resources they need to meet the state standards, implement best practices and customize instruction and intervention to meet students' individual needs. The system should provide schools the funds needed to implement high-quality professional development for teachers and administrators.

Transparency and Fairness: Citizens should be able to access clear information about how their schools are funded. The tax burden placed on citizens for schools should be fair, and districts should not be forced to rely heavily on local school levies to meet their basic obligations.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Reaffirm that Pre K-12 public education is a state responsibility, and declare that education is a fundamental right enforceable in the courts.
2. Create the requirement that this state shall identify and cost out the components of high-quality educational opportunities for all its public school students at every grade level and for every category of student—including, but not limited to, regular, special education, gifted, disadvantaged, preschool and vocational/technical/career education. The components would include but not be limited to those programs, curricula, professional development, education facilities and facility maintenance, educational resources, transportation services and interscholastic and extracurricular activities necessary to prepare students to function at the highest level of their abilities in postsecondary school educational programs and to successfully earn a suitable livelihood. Together, with such additional requirements proposed by law, these educational components should constitute a thorough and efficient system of public common schools and represent the minimum level of educational opportunities to which all public school students have the fundamental constitutional right.
3. Create the Educational Accountability Commission, which would, each biennium, identify and define the components of a high-performing education system for all categories of student. The Commission, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Budget & Management and Legislative Service Commission, would determine the amount of money required to educate, on a per pupil basis, each category of public school students. The Commission should use three or more nationally recognized research approaches in determining the costs.
4. Create a per pupil base support mechanism to distribute the per pupil cost amount determined by the Educational Accountability Commission and other formulas that are necessary to appropriately support food service, transportation services, etc. In devising the funding mechanism, the Educational Accountability Commission should consider factors such as the following criteria:
 - The establishment of creative learning environments and collaborative learning communities
 - Scarcity and density of population of school districts
 - Student population growth and decline within school districts
 - Variations in the cost-of-doing-business in different areas of the state
 - Issues related to the nature of rural, urban and suburban school districts
 - The level of education attainment, average personal income and property wealth per student within school districts

5. Create separate support mechanisms for school districts with unique enrollment and demographics.
6. Require the local tax contribution to be the revenue generated from only 20 mills of real estate property taxation or its equivalent with all such millage exempt from the rate reduction factors of the Ohio Constitution and House Bill 920. These 20 “inside” mills can be achieved by interpreting the Ohio Constitution’s 10 mill limit against the full value of property to be 28.5 mills against property valued at 35% of full value. By establishing the floor and the local share millage both at 20 mills, this almost completely eliminates the problem of phantom revenue.
7. School districts that wish to provide education programming beyond the state-defined adequate level or to participate in the School Facilities Program may seek voter approval of school district income taxes or property tax levies above the required 20 mills. Such millage should continue to be subject to tax reduction factors.
8. The ten percent rollback on Class Two property should be eliminated. Ohio should adopt a four-year reappraisal cycle to smooth growth. Annual statistical updates should be applied across all counties.
9. Require that a peer-to-peer, district-to-district system be established to conduct on-site inspections in each school building to determine if school districts, charter schools and intermediate service centers are providing high-quality educational opportunities and meeting all state standards.
10. Practically limit the percentage that any one taxpayer pays in property taxes by implementing a general “circuit breaker” that applies to all taxpayers, not only those in low income brackets. Most homeowners cannot realistically afford more than five percent of their disposable household income to pay property taxes. Fund the circuit breaker mechanism out of general revenues.
11. Require all charter schools and voucher programs to be subject to the same intense measurement and financial reporting that is statutorily and administratively imposed on traditional public schools. All state funding for charter schools and voucher programs should be separately appropriated by the legislature. In order to prevent the social and emotional isolation of children in the public education system, require that no more than 50 percent of a student’s program be conducted outside the classroom or home schooling setting, except in the case of students with established needs.

Measures of Progress

- High school graduation and college participation rates will increase significantly.
- The disparity between the lowest and highest quartiles of educational spending per student will decrease significantly.
- The resources available each year for aggressively pursuing programs of professional development that support the development of creative and innovative learning

environments, high-quality professional learning and the integration of technology with instruction will increase significantly.

- Achievement gaps will decrease significantly.
- The system's ability to attract, train and retain the best teachers and support staff will increase significantly.

Improving Charter School Accountability

All Ohioans should have a voice in the education of their children and viable alternative options when an educational program does not fit a child's needs. Ohio's charter school program was originally established for such a purpose. Proponents of Ohio's charter school experiment promised to create a system of schools based on a competitive model that would raise academic achievement levels and outperform the state's urban school districts. Unfortunately, most Ohio charter schools have failed to deliver on the promise of academic success. Most have produced poor academic results while placing a tremendous drain on Ohio's increasingly scarce education resources. Moreover, they have not been held accountable for their failure. If this lack of charter school accountability continues, the academic success of numerous students will be jeopardized.

Ohio's Current Status and Challenges

In 1825, the State of Ohio established a system of common schools that provided free education to all Ohio children. The state later expanded that system to include secondary schools. Ohio's public education system has provided a high-quality education to some of the world's greatest scientists, inventors, artists, writers, business people and political leaders. It continues, despite scarce resources, to educate the majority of Ohio's children and to be fully accountable to taxpayers for its academic and fiscal performance.

Including fiscal year 2008, Ohio charter schools will have received more than \$2.7 billion in state funding since the program's inception (Ohio Collaborative, 2005). Yet the majority of charter schools—57 percent—remain in academic watch or academic emergency, according to an analysis of Ohio Department of Education data (2007). The same data show that Ohio's traditional public schools, including those in urban school districts, consistently outperform charter schools (Ohio Coalition for Public Schools, 2007).

Of all the charter schools in Ohio, for-profit charter schools show the worst academic performance. Among the 32 charter schools operated by one major for-profit charter school operator, 27 received an academic emergency or academic watch designation on their 2006-2007 Local Report Cards. None was rated as excellent or effective. No for-profit charter school received an excellent rating in 2006-2007, and only one was rated effective (ODE, 2007).

Charter schools spend over two times more per pupil on administrative costs than do traditional public schools. In terms of teacher quality, only 30 percent of teachers employed by charter schools have Master's degrees compared to 59 percent of teachers in traditional schools (Ohio Collaborative, 2005). Further, charter schools lose 49 percent of their teachers each year, while traditional public schools have a teacher turnover rate of 11 percent (Ohio Collaborative, 2005).

Despite significant problems with academic and fiscal performance, the number of charter schools in Ohio has greatly expanded. For the 2006-2007 school year, 310 charter schools

operated in Ohio, enrolling nearly 77,000 students from more than 600 of Ohio's 612 traditional school districts (Ohio Collaborative, 2005).

Instead of fueling innovation and reform, the rapid and unaccountable expansion of a poorly performing charter school system increasingly threatens to undermine and dismantle the broader public education system.

OEA's Vision

A world-class public education system provides educational options in an academically sound and fiscally accountable manner. Rather than draining or dismantling the state's public system, all education leaders, policy makers, business people and citizens provide resources and work together to diagnose and address areas of weak performance by developing strategies that are systemic and appropriate to the challenges educators face. Building system capacity for charter school accountability would include the following improvements:

Innovation and Flexibility: The state should implement education reform mechanisms that promote decentralized and shared decision making, diverse educational offerings and the removal of onerous administrative requirements. Public funding, instead of providing seed money for entrepreneurs seeking business opportunities, should be used to facilitate these reforms on a widespread basis in public schools, as well as in charter schools established before 2008 that have clearly demonstrated the capability to provide meaningful, high-quality school choice to families in need of alternative programs for their children.

Accountability for All: The state of Ohio should not allow charter school experiments to negatively impact the regular public school system. Fiscal and academic accountability measures should be applied to both public and charter schools. Charter schools should be subject to adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees and health and safety standards, nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunities for all students and staff. In addition, charter schools should be staffed by licensed education professionals and be financially accountable. Programs should comply with all state laws applicable to regular public schools and be required to use appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation, as well as adequate attendance and record-keeping procedures.

Existing charter schools that demonstrate poor academic or fiscal performance, as well as those that are not providing complete academic and fiscal information, should be shut down by the state to ensure that students in those schools receive an adequate education and that taxpayer dollars are expended appropriately.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Require community school operators to be nonprofit entities. Until that requirement is enforced, amend charter school law to subject all documentation related to operation of charter schools to the Ohio Public Record Law. Currently, only public charter schools and public sponsors, such as Educational Service Centers, are subject to public record law. For-profit sponsors and education management organizations (EMOs) claim they are exempt from public record requirements. This lack of transparency makes it easier for unscrupulous operators to use public funds in inappropriate ways.
2. Require an on-site statewide evaluation process for charter schools to be implemented every three years and overseen by the Ohio Department of Education. These evaluations should confirm that each sponsor has complied with all required assurances and charter terms, state laws governing academic and fiscal accountability and other applicable laws. The evaluations should highlight deficiencies and make recommendations for improving or closing consistently deficient charter schools.
3. Ensure that teachers in charter schools meet the same licensure requirements as traditional public school teachers.
4. Establish a moratorium on new "brick and mortar" community schools until July 1, 2010, in order to provide time to address academic and fiscal accountability problems.
5. Require the formation of a work group with representatives from all public education stakeholder groups for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the overall operation and performance of charter schools. The committee should report on its findings and make legislative recommendations to the General Assembly.
6. Require that the Auditor of State audit all charter schools, sponsors and EMOs annually. This provision would subject the entire system to public audit requirements.
7. Include the performance of charter school sponsors in ODE's annual report on charter schools. Greater transparency will encourage more accountability.
8. Issue the same public accountability information for public schools and charter schools. Hold schools accountable that fail to provide academic information and that fail to test at least 50% of students that are required by law to be tested.
9. Direct that any report card data not reported by a charter school be logged as a zero until the charter school reports the data required by law.
10. Require school districts to solicit data upon a student's return to a traditional public school from a charter school. These data will help guide future accountability measures.
11. Eliminate the requirement that school districts offer property suitable for classroom space for sale to community schools under certain conditions.

Measures of Progress:

- Parents will be provided with public school choice that is of the highest quality and that holds all schools accountable for academic quality and financial reporting.
- The state will have an efficient and effective system for closing academically and fiscally unaccountable charter schools.
- The charter school system will not undermine the traditional public school system.
- All charter schools will be staffed by certified teachers.
- No charter schools in the state of Ohio will be operated by for-profit companies.

Enhancing School Board Leadership

The local board of education is a long-time democratic tradition. Effective school boards help ensure that Ohio’s diverse array of communities provide citizens a voice in determining how local schools will reflect community values and deciding how local revenues will be used. The varied experiences of board members—some in business, others in education or other areas of the public sector—can be an important asset in ensuring that districts are successful and that schools can meet the demands of preparing children for future success in a rapidly changing global economy.

Ohio’s Current Status and Challenges

In Ohio, local boards of education are elected at large by the communities in which they live. Combined, they make up the largest body of elected officials in the state. The quality of local school boards in Ohio is enhanced by the following provisions:

- Statutory prohibitions in the Ohio Revised Code to prevent conflict of interest and that which, while not all-inclusive, guide potential candidates in determining eligibility to run for school board seats
- A law authorizing boards to put aside dollars in a “service fund” that may be used for board member training or for expenses incurred by members in the performance of their duties
- Voluntary opportunities for school board members to attend workshops and training sessions provided by the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA)

To run for a school board seat in Ohio, an individual must meet minimal eligibility requirements: he or she must be a United States citizen, at least 18 years of age, a resident of the state for 30 days preceding the election, a resident of the school district and a registered voter for at least 30 days.

The quality of Ohio’s local boards of education is uneven at best. Most local school board members are not required by law to attend training sessions. While some boards set aside funds at the maximum allowable for board training, others, due to budget constraints, provide only minimal funds for that purpose. Consequently, some local boards in Ohio have very little preparation for their roles and responsibilities and are inadequately informed about the arenas in which they are charged with making policy. Although Ohio requires ethics training for specific groups of people based on numbers of students, there is no general requirement that all boards of education have this information. Poorly trained boards can lead to poor decisions and struggles with ethical issues, both of which can impact the effectiveness of the district and erode community trust.

OEA's Vision

In a world-class public education system, local boards of education provide appropriate, well-informed oversight for schools and add significant value to school district policy decisions. Board members understand and discuss the challenges of educating students in a global economy and play a proactive role in community and economic development. Building system capacity for enhanced board leadership would include the following improvements:

Mandatory Training: School board members should complete mandatory training in general board member responsibilities and the role of boards in district policy making. Thorough training in education issues also is imperative.

Quality Board Training and Information: The state should offer and promote high-quality information and training to Ohio's school boards. Content should be clear, concise and easy to access. Local school district sites, the Ohio Department of Education and regional facilities, such as Educational Service Centers, should provide those opportunities through computer access and face-to-face training.

Board Member Access to Online Learning: All board members around the state should be able to access accurate, consistent online training any time from home via Ohio's statewide broadband computer infrastructure.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Mandate training for all board members in the core areas of ethics, the role of boards of education as policy makers, the basics of school finance and school law as it pertains to boards of education and basic rules of good boardsmanship (including, but not limited to, running a meeting, public rules of participation, general responsibilities of members of a board of education and the use of email communications). Training should be either through traditional face-to-face sessions or through online training and information sessions. Completion of board training should result in appropriate leadership certification.
2. Create an Ohio School Board Leadership Institute to provide consistent, accurate information and promote school board quality.
3. Provide a range of opportunities for state and local school board members to increase their knowledge of education issues, initiatives, innovations and trends. The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), with guidance from other organizations, should provide additional online training and workshops for school boards. The ODE and other relevant education organizations should assist OSBA in assessing needs and promoting board training opportunities. To ensure that all board members have access to online training,

Ohio also should promote the expansion of broadband access to areas of the state that do not offer such access.

Measures of Progress

- Mandatory requirements for core training of board members will be in place.
- Programs/curricula in the core areas will be developed for use in training and information sessions for board members. Those sessions will result in leadership certification.
- Criteria for determining satisfactory completion of the training/curricula to attain leadership certification will be in place.
- Resources will be provided for district boards of education to use online programs/curricula or to provide traditional workshop sessions.
- A technology infrastructure and appropriate resources for maintaining the local school board training program will be in place.

Promoting Shared Accountability

A system that identifies low-performing schools without providing the tools and professional development those schools need is like a search-and-rescue mission that locates someone in distress but fails to come to their aid (Achieve, Inc., 2002). Yet such accountability systems have become the norm following the passage of No Child Left Behind. The next wave of accountability measures in Ohio must move away from sanctions and toward support.

Effective teaching remains the most important link to high performance (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Ingersoll, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000), but good teaching results from both a teacher's qualifications and "appropriate supports, including time, materials and opportunities to learn" (Darling-Hammond & Loewenberg Ball, 1996). Furthermore, the effectiveness of even the best teachers can be limited when families are vulnerable and community services are inadequate. Efforts to analyze the value added by educators must be balanced by measures of how well the entire system has performed.

The Governor and the Ohio General Assembly must be accountable for meeting the challenge of adequately funding Ohio's public schools, and they must join with a range of state and local agencies in ensuring that all children receive the health and social services, early learning experiences and other family and community supports necessary for their well-being and development. The Ohio Department of Education and State Board of Education must be accountable for the quality of services and supports they provide to schools and districts. All who have a stake in Ohio's future economic growth—including businesses, community development organizations and nonprofit organizations—must be accountable for appropriately investing resources, time and expertise in improving public education.

The sharing of accountability among all education stakeholders must not become a new cycle of blaming or making excuses for poor results. Instead, we must reach for a new paradigm defined by authentic collaboration and the effective integration of services.

Ohio's Current Status and Challenges

The Ohio Constitution provides for the establishment of a state board of education and the employment of a state superintendent of public instruction, with powers and duties of the board and superintendent to be set by the General Assembly. The board has 19 voting members, 11 elected by districts and 8 appointed by the Governor. The chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees serve in *ex officio* capacity. This lay board sets and administers standards for student achievement and for the preparation, licensure and career development of educators.

An appointee of Ohio's State Board of Education (SBE) leads the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). ODE sets expectations for students in compliance with federal and state legislation. It measures and communicates school, district and state progress. It provides information and

guidelines to assist schools and districts in educational improvement. Regional service providers, coordinated by ODE, provide technical assistance, professional development and other services for building school and district capacity.

The General Assembly and local school boards are responsible for generating and controlling the revenue necessary to operate a system of public schools. While the legislature's decisions have often increased resources to critical education problems in the state, it has not yet established a school funding system that meets the constitutional mandate of an adequate education for all Ohio children. In resisting the need to define the costs of an adequate education, the legislature is demanding results without being accountable for providing appropriate levels of state resources.

In light of all these distinct but interconnected elements of Ohio's current education system, it is reasonable to conclude that many factors contribute to the academic success or failure of students in particular schools and classrooms. While the research on student learning shows that accomplished teachers under favorable conditions can prepare students for success in school and life, educators often face very real barriers to effective teaching that originate in the larger education system and in other health and human services' systems.

Through its task forces and other study activities, the SBE often succeeds in articulating and raising public awareness about important issues, such as achievement gaps among student subgroups. However, when the SBE identifies an area of low performance it may only recommend budgetary appropriations. It has no power to raise revenue and make the appropriations at either the state or local levels. Furthermore, the SBE does not have the capacity to develop and implement systemic solutions to problems and deficiencies.

The structure of ODE and the regional system for delivering services (Educational Service Centers, Special Education Regional Resource Centers, etc.) are not always responsive to the needs of students and educators in a specific district or school. While businesses and households can obtain a wide range of information and services customized to their needs and preferences, schools, districts and regions must be content with long distance, "one size fits all" support.

While the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council, established in the 1990s, has generated a number of collaborative efforts among health and human service agencies to mitigate barriers to learning, the system continues to operate with varying levels of coordination and collaboration at county and local levels. Furthermore, programs that prevent academic failure by promoting children's health and well-being, early childhood learning and family stability, as well as programs that provide effective interventions to families in crisis, are seldom funded adequately and continually face budget cuts.

OEA's Vision

In a world-class public education system, the quality of public schools and the learning outcomes that students achieve are responsibilities shared by all stakeholders. Building system capacity for shared accountability would include the following improvements:

Shared Accountability Across the System: Clear lines of accountability should be established for the public education system, the education profession and the delivery of health and social services to children and families. All stakeholders should share accountability for closing achievement gaps and increasing levels of student learning to meet world-class standards. Government should not hold educators accountable for system failures caused by inadequate funding or poorly conceived regulations. Schools and districts should not be expected to meet the expectations of unfunded mandates or to implement a disjointed set of improvement strategies designed to address common state needs but not necessarily the most critical barriers to their own students' success.

Teachers should be accountable to effective principals and teacher leaders in their buildings and to their Local Professional Development Committees, as well as to their colleagues, students and students' families. At the state level, the Educator Standards Board should be the primary mechanism for holding teachers accountable.

Principals and superintendents should be accountable for effective planning, leadership and management, as well as for establishing positive relationships with families and the community.

State government should be accountable for adopting a school funding system that matches the expectations it sets with adequate resources and for providing services that successfully build the capacity of schools and districts to promote effective teaching and learning. A district's low performance on standardized tests in comparison to that of districts with similar typology should trigger constructive support mechanisms from regional and state service providers with assistance that addresses the needs of teachers and students. The poor results and achievement gaps that correlate with low income levels should be viewed as a statewide concern that cannot be addressed effectively without significant increases in support from all stakeholders.

Collaboration Across Agencies: The health and human services and education systems should work together to implement a wide range of strategies for keeping children safe and healthy, preventing academic problems and helping students to overcome academic difficulties and succeed. The state should develop a seamless, responsive network of state and local services to ensure that schools have the expertise and resources needed to respond immediately and decisively when health and safety issues arise.

Systemic Support for Teachers: Educators should have access to information, training, technical assistance and other services that are aligned with the most important needs and challenges in their classrooms and buildings.

Policy Recommendations

State

1. Articulate the specific responsibilities of the General Assembly, the State Board of Education, the Board of Regents and the Governor's Office for achieving a high-quality public education system.
2. Provide schools with funding that matches what the legislature expects them to accomplish. Adequately fund all legislative mandates.
3. Redefine the State Board's responsibilities to ensure that decisions are made with an appropriate balance between professional expertise in education and representation of public concerns. Increase public access to State Board of Education meetings and improve communication from the board.
4. Delineate clearly the authority for revenue generation and the process for appropriating funding for public schools. Decisions about appropriations and the delivery of services to public schools should be responsive to data-driven input from building leadership teams of teachers and administrators. Intermediaries, such as regional service entities, should be accountable to building leadership teams.
5. Fund, support and expand the effective initiatives of the Ohio Families and Children First Cabinet Council to ensure collaboration and the implementation of school-based services that respond to the needs of children and families. The Cabinet Council should promote, direct, incentivize and support interagency collaboration to ensure that vulnerable children and families have ready access to health, behavioral and social services, including job counseling. Further, the Cabinet Council should promote, incentivize and support community organizing activities that empower vulnerable families to advocate for their children and strengthen their communities.
6. Develop, implement and disseminate effective strategies for increasing family involvement in schools.
7. Develop, implement and disseminate effective strategies for involving businesses in supporting local schools.

Measures of Progress

- All stakeholders will have clear responsibilities in providing an adequate education for all Ohio students.
- The state will have mechanisms for ensuring that services to schools and educators are aligned with student needs, are of high quality and are delivered in an efficient and effective manner.
- Ohio children and families will have seamless access to the services they need to ensure health, safety and academic progress.

Conclusion

Beginning the Work of Systemic Change

To prepare Ohio's young people for success in the 21st century, our state must develop an innovative, world-class education system that inspires creativity and supports the development of innovative teaching practices and dynamic learning environments. The systemic transformation needed to meet this unprecedented challenge requires all education stakeholders to share responsibility and accountability for results.

Educators must pursue innovation like never before, continually learning and collaborating. Policy leaders at both the state and local levels must foster that transformation in the classroom by freeing teachers from the current overuse of standardized testing, giving them the time and professional development needed to collaborate effectively and providing them with the instructional tools needed to teach 21st century skills. With a shared commitment to educating the whole child, educators and policy leaders must find new ways to integrate the work of those who provide health and human services with the work of educating children well—a systemic innovation that will require new partnerships and collaborations among multiple organizations. The Governor and General Assembly must work together to create a school funding system that will reduce the heavy burden that has been passed on to local taxpayers, provide the resources necessary to ensure adequate and equitable education for all of Ohio's children and pave the way for world-class performance.

Ohio needs all of its education stakeholders—educators, students and their families, business and community leaders and citizens—to support a new vision of education in the state and become full partners in the transformational process. Each of us should begin to view public education as a long-term investment in our future—an investment that must be fiercely protected, constructively criticized and continually strengthened to meet the rapid changes and complex problems of the 21st century. We must all join together in reaffirming the vital, timeless purpose of education—ensuring that every student begins a lifelong process of acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for future success in work, citizenship and other areas of life.

The Ohio Education Association is committed to providing continued leadership in pursuing a bold vision of educational transformation and to collaborating with other stakeholders in creating the world-class education system that our children deserve and that Ohio citizens want. Only by working together can we craft a system that prepares our children for the challenges of a rapidly changing global society.

References

- Achieve, Inc. (2007). *Achieving a world-class education system in Ohio*. Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc.
- Achieve, Inc. (2002). *Staying on course: Standards-based reform in America's schools: Progress and prospects*. Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc.
- Alliance for Excellent Education (2007). The high cost of high school dropouts: What the nation pays for inadequate high schools. *Issue Brief*, October 2007. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- American School Counselor Association (2005). *Position Statement: Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*. Retrieved May 5, 2008, from <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>.
- Billingsley, B. S. (2003). *Special education teacher retention and attrition: A critical analysis of the literature* (COPSSE Document No. RS-2E). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education.
- Blum, R.W., McNeely, C.A., & Rinehart, P.M. (2002). *Improving the odds: The untapped power of schools to improve the health of teens*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Center for Adolescent Health and Development.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008). Regional and state employment and unemployment (monthly).
- Cohen, J. (2006). Social, emotional, ethical and academic education: Creating a climate for learning, participation in democracy and well-being. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2, Summer, pg 201-237.
- Commission on the Whole Child (2007). *The learning compact redefined: A call to action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). Reclaiming educational excellence: What it will take to create a 21st century education system. Presentation at the National Superintendents' Forum, Palo Alto California, October 2007.
- Darling-Hammond, L. & Loewenberg Ball, D. (1998). *Teaching for high standards: What policymakers must know and be able to do*. Philadelphia, PA: CPRE Publications, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education.
- DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service and Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Florida, R. L. (2004). *The rise of the creative class: and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Florida, R. L. (2008). *Who's your city? How the creative economy is making where to live the most important decision of your life*. New York: Basic Books.

- Friedman, T.L. (2008). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. Second Revised and Expanded Edition. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Garmston, R. & Wellman, B. (1999). *The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.
- Goldhaber, D., Perry, D. & Anthony, E. (2004). *National Board certification: Who applies and what factors are associated with success?* The Urban Institute Education Policy Center working paper. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
- Ingersoll, R. (1999). The problem of underqualified teachers in America's secondary schools. *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (March 1999), pp. 26-37.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). *Teacher turnover, teacher shortages, and the organization of schools*. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Lake Research Partners (2008). *The imagine nation: Moving America's children beyond average: Imagination and the 21st century education*. Retrieved May 5, 2008 from <http://www.theimagination.net>.
- Levy, F. & Murnane, R. (2004). *The new division of labor: How computers are creating the next job market*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- National Center on Education and the Economy (2007). *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The report on the new Commission on the skills of the American workforce*. Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy.
- Ohio Coalition for Public Schools (2007). *Ten years and still failing: An analysis of Ohio charter schools - August 2007*. Retrieved May 5, 2008, from <http://www.osba-ohio.org>.
- Ohio Collaborative (2005). *Beyond the numbers: Conditions of teaching in charter/community schools in Ohio*. Columbus: Ohio State University.
- Ohio Department of Education (2007). School building ratings, *Interactive Local Report Card*. Columbus: Ohio Department of Education.
- Ohio Department of Education (2005). *Conditions of Teacher Supply and Demand in Ohio*. Columbus: Ohio Department of Education.
- Ohio State Board of Education (2003). *Toward high achievement for all students: The report of the Ohio State Board of Education's Closing Achievement Gaps Task Force*. Columbus: Ohio State Board of Education.
- Osterman, K.F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70, 323-367.
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007). *Beyond the 3 Rs: Voter attitudes toward 21st century skills*. Tucson, AZ: Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

- Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2006). *Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century U.S. workforce*. Tucson, AZ: Partnership for 21st Century Skills.
- Quality Counts 2008 (2008). Tapping into Teaching*. Retrieved May 5, 2008, from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2008/01/10/index.html>.
- Sanders, W. & Rivers, J. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center.
- Schweke, W. (2004). *Smart money: Education and economic development*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- Sims, R.G. (2004). *School funding, taxes and economic growth: An analysis of the 50 states*. NEA Research Working Paper. Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Strickland, T. (2007). *Turnaround Ohio*. Retrieved May 5, 2008, from <http://csa.das.ohio.gov/TurnaroundOhio>.
- Strickland, T. (2008). *2008 State of the State Address*. Retrieved May 5, 2008, from <http://governor.ohio.gov>.
- Vandevoort, L. G., Amrein-Beardsley, A. & Berliner, D. C. (2004, September 8). National board certified teachers and their students' achievement. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 12(46).
- Weiss, J. D. (2004). *Public schools and economic development: What the research shows*. Cincinnati, OH: KnowledgeWorks Foundation.