

JOURNAL

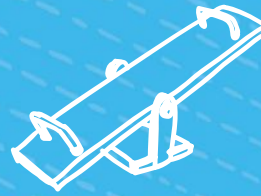
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Table Of Contents

JOURNAL

OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

ON THE COVER

Summer program a hit with kids, p. 14



Ross-Pike ESC and Ohio University-Chillicothe partner each year to offer Kids in College, an innovative summer enrichment program.

Photo by Gary Motz

FEATURES

p. 18



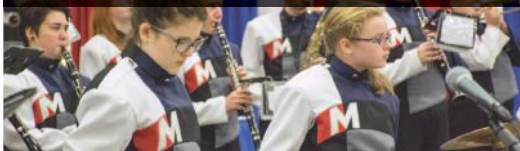
Commit to leadership for learning 18
OSBA Capital Conference provides many opportunities for success.

Future of public education 26
Explore what changes may come in the next 10 to 15 years.

What's in the stars for Ohio's public schools? 34
School board members discuss the challenges and opportunities to come.

NEWS

p. 22



Achievement fair spotlights wonders of public education 22

Looking ahead with Ohio's new state superintendent 28

What issues keep educators up at night? They told us 31

Schools face challenges in bridging the digital divide 40

DEPARTMENTS

p. 3



Executive Outlook 3

According to Law 4

Management Insights 6

Boardmanship 8

Capital Insider 10

OSBA: Working for You 12

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OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.

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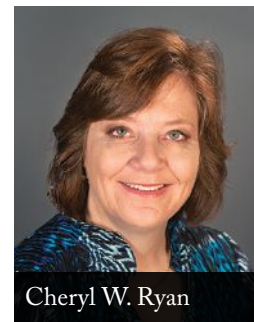
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Embracing opportunity

A vision of the school board of the future

Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director

It has long been up to school boards to bring together the community and organize resources as they connect the will of the people to the education of their children. Today there is an urgent call for public schools to ensure that all students are college- and career-ready and prepared to be productive citizens.

As we look at the path boards will travel in the next 10 to 15 years, it is important to identify issues that will directly affect our work. Our vision of the school board of the future must be shaped with a clear understanding of the challenges we face.

Some are challenges confronting public education. Others are issues of school board leadership, effectiveness and governance practices. In addition, all of the following will impact boards' focus and success: social shifts; technology changes; evolving demographics; over-regulation; state and mayoral takeovers; under-funded government mandates; school choice; and a negative perception of public schools. Taken together, these issues go to the very heart of what school boards should be doing.

We know school board leadership can promote student learning, and the best boards govern with a focus on achievement. We have seen the difference the management team makes when it provides sustained, focused leadership in a district.

This kind of leadership builds a positive culture and improves student achievement. And we know local boards have many other strengths, including grassroots democracy at its best.

The school board of the future must

embrace the eight characteristics of effective boards and employ them with vision. Effective boards must:

- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision. They ensure these goals remain their districts' top priorities and that nothing detracts from them.
- Have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn as well as confidence in the schools to teach all children at high levels.
- Be driven by accountability and spend less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement. High-performing boards establish a vision supported by policies that target student success.
- Collaborate with their staff and community, establish strong communications and engage internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving goals.
- Embrace and monitor data, even when it is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
- Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
- Lead with their superintendents as a united team, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- Participate in team development and training with their superintendents to build shared knowledge, values and commitment for improvement efforts.

Since the founding of our nation, locally elected school boards have accomplished

a key goal of their communities: providing high-quality education to their citizens. Despite the criticisms, school boards continue this crucial tradition.

But, we are heading into a new era. With new initiatives, increased focus on achievement and stronger accountability, public education is at a crossroads. It is school boards' responsibility to live up to these new expectations while defending their authority and unique status between themselves and their communities.

Public school boards are in the best seats to determine what the most effective methods are for ensuring young citizens achieve at the highest levels. At this time of division, with disagreements between reformers and traditionalists about the types of schools, curriculum, teaching and accountability methods, school boards must play an integral role.

It must be a team effort. Boards need to stand up and articulate their case for greater flexibility and the end of one-size-fits-all solutions. All board members, as trustees of this key to our democracy, must play a role in this battle.

It is critical that we not shirk our responsibility to public education — today and into the future. ■

Editor's note: Parts of this article were excerpted from a National School Boards Association draft white paper titled *The School Board of the Future*. In addition to OSBA's Richard Lewis, executive directors from the Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa and Tennessee school boards associations contributed to the white paper.



What new overtime pay rules mean for districts

Sara C. Clark, director of legal services

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has issued new final Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations that become effective Dec. 1. An overview of the new rules appeared in the June Journal. These new regulations significantly revise the standard salary level and total annual compensation requirements to distinguish more clearly between overtime-eligible “white-collar” employees and those who may be exempt.

This article reviews current regulations, summarizes the main changes in the new FLSA regulations and discusses how these changes might impact school districts.

Current regulations

FLSA guarantees a minimum wage for all hours worked and overtime premium pay of not less than one and one-half times the employee’s regular rate of pay for hours worked over 40 in a workweek. While these protections extend to many workers, FLSA provides a number of exemptions, including the executive, administrative and professional (EAP) or white-collar exemption.

To be exempt from both minimum wage and overtime protection under the EAP exemption, an employee must be paid a certain amount on a salary basis (currently \$455 per week). Also, the employee’s job duties must primarily involve “executive, administrative or professional duties,” as defined by the regulations.

Executive employees generally include those who manage the district or a department within the district, regularly direct other employees’ work and have

input on the employment status of other employees. In school districts, exempt executive employees typically include food service managers, transportation supervisors, office managers, and custodial and maintenance supervisors who oversee and direct other district employees.

Administrative employees are generally those who provide nonmanual work directly related to the management or general business operations of the district. In school districts, exempt administrative employees typically include human resource directors, fiscal officers and other positions in which the employee’s primary duties involve discretion and independent judgment on matters of significance.

Administrative employees in school districts also include academic administrators, like superintendents, principals and business managers, who are exempt from overtime so long as their salary is at least equal to the entrance salary for district teachers.

Professional employees are generally those whose work requires knowledge of an advanced type in science or learning acquired by a prolonged course of specialized instruction. School district employees who may qualify include school nurses, athletic trainers or physical therapists.

Teachers also are considered professional employees but are covered under a separate regulatory section. Under that section, teachers are exempt so long as they are “engaged in teaching, tutoring, instructing or lecturing in the activity of imparting knowledge.”

Teachers are exempt from the minimum salary requirement, meaning that even if teachers are paid less than the \$455 per week salary threshold, they are not entitled to overtime premium pay under FLSA.

Computer systems analysts, computer programmers, software engineers or other similarly skilled workers in the computer field also are eligible for exemption as professional employees. To be exempt, computer employees must be paid hourly and not less than \$27.63 per hour.

Current regulations also contain a relaxed duties test for certain “highly compensated” employees who receive total annual compensation of \$100,000 or more and are paid at least \$455 per week.

Presidential memorandum and rulemaking

On March 13, 2014, President **Barack Obama** signed a presidential memorandum directing DOL to update regulations defining which white-collar workers are protected by FLSA’s minimum wage and overtime standards. The memo instructed DOL to look for ways to “modernize and simplify” the regulations while ensuring that FLSA’s intended overtime protections were fully implemented.

The president noted that FLSA’s overtime protections “are the linchpin of the middle class,” and DOL’s failure to keep the EAP exemption salary level requirement up-to-date has left millions of low-paid salaried workers without the benefit of FLSA’s intended protections.

On July 6, 2015, in response to the presidential memorandum, DOL published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to propose revisions to the EAP exemption. DOL received comments from more than 270,000 individuals and organizations during the NPRM 60-day comment period and published its final rule in the Federal Register on May 23.

Final regulations and potential impact

The final regulations made several key changes to the EAP exemption.

Changes to salary threshold: DOL increased the current minimum salary requirement for the EAP exemption from \$455 per week to \$913 per week. DOL set the salary level at the 40th percentile of full-time salaried workers' weekly earnings in the lowest-wage census region (currently the South Region).

By Dec. 1, districts should identify which positions might be affected by the salary threshold increase. Keep in mind there are several employee categories that will remain exempt in light of the increase.

The teacher exemption, for example, is not subject to any salary level or salary basis requirement under FLSA. Accordingly, consistent with the current law, a teacher who meets the duties requirements related to the teacher exemption will be considered exempt, regardless of pay.

Similarly, so long as computer employees are paid at least \$27.63 per hour and academic administrative employees are paid "on a salary basis which is at least equal to the entrance salary for teachers in the educational establishment," they will remain exempt.

Nonacademic managers and supervisors are most likely to be impacted by the new regulations. Examples of such positions include transportation supervisors, custodial and maintenance supervisors or food service managers who supervise and direct other

employees of the district.

For instance, suppose a facilities and grounds supervisor makes \$40,000 per year. The supervisor currently is classified as an exempt employee and not eligible for overtime pay.

Under the new regulations, the district would need to increase this employee's annual salary to at least \$47,476 to retain the position's exempt status. If the district chooses not to increase the employee's salary, the employee must be reclassified as a nonexempt employee. The district also must keep accurate records of time worked, and the employee must be paid overtime for all hours worked over 40 per week.

While the minimum wage and overtime premium pay protections extend to many workers, FLSA provides a number of exemptions.

Updates every three years: The final regulations established a mechanism for updating the salary and compensation levels every three years. Beginning Jan. 1, 2020, the rate will automatically be updated to the salary level at the 40th percentile of full-time salaried workers' weekly earnings in the lowest-wage census region. DOL will publish the rate at least 150 days prior to the effective date of the increase.

Highly compensated employees: The final regulations raise the compensation requirement needed to qualify for the highly compensated employee exemption. To meet this exemption, an employee must receive total annual compensation of at least the annualized earnings amount of the 90th percentile of full-time nonhourly workers nationally, or \$134,004 annually. This amount also will be updated every three

years, beginning Jan. 1, 2020.

This change is unlikely to have a significant impact on school districts. Typically, the only school district employees whose salaries qualify them for the highly compensated employee exemption are the superintendent and a few other high-level administrators. However, these individual employees will almost certainly qualify for one of the other white-collar exemptions and would not need to have their salary increased to remain exempt under FLSA.

Changes related to nondiscretionary bonuses: The final regulations also made an important change related to nondiscretionary bonuses and inclusion of such bonuses within the weekly salary calculation. In particular, the final regulations now specifically permit school districts to count nondiscretionary bonuses, incentives and commissions toward up to 10% of the required salary level.

However, for them to count, school districts must pay those amounts on a quarterly or more frequent basis. The final regulations also allow districts to make a "catch-up" payment at the end of each quarter for employees to meet the salary level test.

Effective date

Remember, the final regulations take effect Dec. 1. Given the technical nature of the regulations, OSBA encourages boards of education to consult with their legal counsel to review the potential impact the final regulations will have on district-specific positions.

If you have general questions about the changes to the regulations, contact the OSBA Division of Legal Services at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. The legal hotline is (855) OSBA-LAW. ■

According to Law is designed to provide authoritative general information, sometimes with commentary. It should not be relied upon as legal advice. If legal advice is required, the services of an attorney should be obtained.



Avoiding surprises

So you've got a new contract; now what?

Van D. Keating, director of management services

As I read and review reported contract settlements, I frequently think to myself, "I sure hope that district is doing some follow-up with the board and administration on the new agreement before it is too late."

Schools are not always the most effective at following up with contracts. When a new contract is reached with the employees' union in the private

sector, management normally initiates manager meetings to go over new provisions, highlight language that did not change and discuss how the contract is to be followed or interpreted. That's a great idea and one schools need to follow.

So why aren't schools effective at reviewing new contracts? Based on my experience, there are primarily two reasons: School administrators

are very busy people, and anymore, contract changes only amount to about 10% or less of the agreement. Of that percentage, most of the changes are finance-related, something not all administrators handle on a daily basis.

Admittedly, in the past couple of years, changes in the evaluation systems have been a bargaining and administrative issue, but that's about it. Other than these changes, administrative/board meetings to review collective bargaining agreements that haven't changed much in the last 20 years seemed like an ineffective use of time.

Unfortunately, the subtleties in contract administration are often lost without these types of meetings. Instead of highlighting and discussing changes, individual administrators often are left to discover them on their own — frequently too late and with regrettable results. Administrators who were part of negotiations may be aware of these changes and have insight into why they were made. However, without a formal way of communicating this knowledge, others are in the dark and at a distinct disadvantage when questions or situations arise.

Consider how the union always meets with its entire membership to go over the new contract even before voting on it. It openly discusses changes and how they are to be applied. It also reviews what hasn't changed as well as important practices that are to be continued. The union strives for consistency in applying the contract terms among all buildings, grade levels and employees. This equally benefits new and experienced employees.

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School management seldom uses the same approach.

Instead, management has tended to hit the high points at various meetings, let administrators know where and when they can get a copy of the new contract and encourage everybody to read it (in their spare time) and ask questions later. At best, boards of education receive the same update; at worst, nothing is ever discussed at a board meeting.

Hopefully, your district does not follow this approach. However, between union members and administrative personnel, it is easy to see how one side is much more aware of the contract's provisions and uniformly understands them.

Meetings to review negotiated agreements certainly need to focus on what's new or changed but also should emphasize language that has *not* changed, especially as it may be related to specific district policy or procedures.

Inconsistencies between buildings or administrators are the inspiration for many grievances, so everyone needs to thoroughly understand the contract's details.

Informal resolutions of employee issues need to be shared and agreed upon, or they quickly become what is known as a past practice. Unions find it important that all members clearly understand the new contract, cover to cover. So should management, if for no other reason than to keep a level playing field.

Just as important is a review and discussion with board members so they understand what is and isn't required by the contract. Bargaining team members usually can provide valuable insights on language changes, so including them at the meeting is wise.

Also, it is important to review language proposals from both the union and management that were *not* agreed upon

and why. Discussions at the negotiating table can often provide insights on different reasoning related to problems and how the parties perceive they can be fixed without necessitating a change in contract language. Unfortunately, this particular aspect of bargaining is seldom communicated to the management team, which is why some problems never seem to go away.

If your district has a new contract, it merits congratulations. Now follow up with the entire management team and have a dedicated meeting to review and discuss the contract. Cover new and old language, proposals that didn't go anywhere and conversations that provided insight into how it is supposed to work.

All of this is valuable knowledge every administrator and board member needs to know to effectively and uniformly administer the new contract over the next couple of years. ■

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Keeping what works

The future must include more of the same

Cheryl W. Ryan, director of school board services

The more things change, the more they stay the same. We've all heard the cliché any number of times and, more than likely, said it ourselves. As we consider the future of education — the theme of this Journal issue — reflecting on the important aspects of school district leadership that *shouldn't* change seems pertinent.

When changes are considered or necessary, developing a shared understanding of which pieces of an organization or initiative must remain

“as is” should be a definitive part of the conversation.

Ohio's public school districts are doing much that is valuable and positive. There are traditions and cultures that serve to sustain this good work and form foundational values that give meaning to local control.

We talk about the importance of understanding the changes public education must make, understanding new skills students will need for success and understanding how school leadership must adapt to make continued progress.

For many of us, *understanding* isn't nearly as difficult as *accepting*. We understand with our heads; we accept with our hearts. Accepting will become easier if we're able to acknowledge and carry with us the best parts of ourselves and our work that should never change.

Board work is teamwork. Teamwork is a construct that is as current as any and as much a part of the successful future of education as any. Whatever we're doing right as teams shouldn't change. As we move forward, our ability to see ourselves within the context of the team will be tantamount to our success.

As always, individual passions and opinions are important. They are the ingredients in the recipe that produces final decisions and outcomes. But it's the team that chooses the recipe and turns out the end product. Teamwork shouldn't change.

Public schools boards in Ohio are locally

elected. Local control is what makes each of our districts unique and special. Parents and students choose school districts based not only on report cards and curriculum, but also on the “feel” of the community, the district's traditions and the track record of acceptance.

These are critical pieces we need to bring with us to the future. Our children are individuals, and although we embrace the highest of standards and expectations for all of them, the way we serve these expectations is different for each child and district. Local control shouldn't change.

Good board members and administrators are advocates. They advocate within the constraints of budgets and for their ideas with other board members. They advocate within their communities when decisions must be communicated, levies are necessary and personnel decisions rock the district's boat. They advocate at the state and federal level when necessary to inform legislators about the impact of decisions made in Congress and the Statehouse and the sometimes-unintended consequences of those decisions.

Most important, they advocate on behalf of their districts about the amazing “good stuff” happening every day with students and teachers. Board members are storytellers, and we need these stories. Advocacy shouldn't change.

Change is inevitable — another cliché. Let's continue to work together to make decisions that keep the best and improve the rest. ■

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ESSA affords school districts opportunities

Jay Smith, deputy director of legislative services

On Dec. 10, President **Barack Obama** signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. ESSA represents a shift from broad federal oversight of primary and secondary education to greater flexibility and decision-making at the state and local levels. The last time ESEA was reauthorized was through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001.

One key change in moving from NCLB to ESSA is the greater authority provided to states and local school districts. ESSA offers a clear directive to restore local governance and community ownership in public education while providing an opportunity for local school board members to meaningfully engage in the implementation process. Policymakers in Washington, D.C., recognized the importance of local

governance in making decisions to improve public education and ensuring that every child has an opportunity to get a high-quality education from those who know their communities best.

Ohio and the rest of the country are currently transitioning to the new law by developing state plans for accountability and school support and improvement. These plans will become effective in the 2017-18 school year. As part of the process, states are required to have meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including parents; teachers; principals and other school leaders; governors; legislatures; state boards of education; and others.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has said it is committed to comprehensive and collaborative stakeholder engagement in developing Ohio's plan. OSBA couldn't agree more.

Following is an updated ODE timeline in the development of Ohio's plan:

- initial outreach, early to mid-2016;
- engagement on specific topics and issues, mid- to late 2016;
- draft state plan available, late 2016;
- finalize and submit state plan, early 2017.

Over the next few months, ODE is expected to conduct regional meetings with stakeholders on specific topics and issues to be included in Ohio's state plan. They are:

- descriptions of Ohio's learning standards;
- explanation of meeting federal testing requirements;
- descriptions of Ohio's accountability (report card) system, including new requirements;
- descriptions of Ohio's state-level goals for student performance;
- descriptions of Ohio's system of

Administrative salary analysis

Need help determining how to compensate your administrators? It's more complicated than most people think, and OSBA has considerable experience in this area. We are able to assist school districts with a variety of important initiatives, including:

- compensation/classification system design;
- job description creation/modification;
- performance evaluation system design.

For more information, contact **Van D. Keating**, director of management services, at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA; or vkeating@ohioschoolboards.org.

support for struggling schools and districts;

- descriptions of Ohio’s equity plan to ensure poor and minority students have equitable access to effective teachers;
- descriptions of Ohio’s systems of support to address barriers for vulnerable populations, such as homeless students, students in foster care, students in the justice system and English learners, among others.

Once ODE has completed its stakeholder engagement process and draft plan, public comment will be accepted for at least 30 days. ODE will make final revisions based on the comments and submit the final plan to the U.S. Department of Education in early 2017.

It is imperative for local boards of education to become engaged in the process. This is an opportunity to craft a plan that best suits Ohio and its local districts. This also is an opportunity to build partnerships with a wide array of individuals and groups and strengthen the impact of our efforts while paving the way to success.

Local school boards need to examine the law and decide the issues they wish to impact (see “Key dates for ESSA implementation” at right, which has a list of ESSA resources at the end). Priorities for attention include assessments, accountability, educator capacity, family and community engagement and early childhood education.

Local boards should implement the following steps to develop a successful engagement strategy:

- Identify and develop knowledge — Identify what decisions or implementation items you want to impact and learn about those items.
- Design a strategy and action steps — Identify what actions you plan to take, which partners may be able to help you and the time period in which you hope to make changes.

- Execute — Execute your strategy and action steps. As circumstances change, which may cause you to reassess your strategy, go back to step two and see if you need to modify the action steps. After a period of time, assess your results and make adjustments accordingly.

After you have identified issues to impact and prepared to meet with decision-makers, keep the following tips in mind:

- You need to know your subject matter and, when possible, include local examples. Do your homework and consult with OSBA if you have questions.
- Practice what you are going to say and how you are going to say it. Consider what your main request is going to be and how it’s tied to ESSA. This may include drafting

talking points and thinking about what questions might be asked.

- Follow up with decision-makers after the meeting. Make sure you reiterate your requests and thank them for the opportunity.

The implementation period gives school districts and the state a significant opportunity to build upon or change how this new law will affect our schools. With the reduction of federal requirements, school districts and states have increased responsibility to define how they will be accountable for student success.

OSBA is actively involved in this process and will help you in every way possible to ensure school board members remain well-informed and have the resources necessary to advance achievement in their districts. ■

Key dates for ESSA implementation

Spring 2016

- State education associations (SEAs) began the process of developing new state plans.

Fall 2016

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act waivers expired Aug. 1.
- SEAs and local school districts will operate under guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE).
- As Congress appropriates funds for fiscal year (FY) 2017, changes to competitive grant programs become effective.

Spring 2017

- DOE begins process of reviewing new state plans as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- As Congress appropriates funds for FY 2017, changes to competitive grant programs become effective.

Fall 2017

- Requirements for formula programs, such as Title I, are presently expected to go into effect in the 2017-18 school year.

- State plans approved by DOE take effect at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.
- State-determined accountability systems and new ESSA provisions are to be implemented.

Spring 2018

- Requirements for formula programs, such as Title I, currently are expected to go into effect starting in the 2017-18 school year.
- State plans approved by DOE will take effect at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.
- State-determined accountability systems and new ESSA provisions are to be fully implemented.

ESSA resources

- National School Boards Association website: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/29977>
- Full text of the ESSA: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/95700>
- DOE’s Transitioning to ESSA FAQs: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/33939>



Endorsed programs deliver buying power

Scott Gerfen, assistant editor

Operating an efficient school district entails not only expertise but also top-notch services. The list of district needs — from property and group life insurance to debt collection, financial forecasting and safety concerns — is vast.

That's why OSBA has developed its endorsed services program, which features a wide range of reliable and innovative services that offer strategic solutions to the countless issues schools face daily.

OSBA takes great care in selecting the products and services it offers members.

"We're always attentive to the needs of our members and look for programs or products that can help them in their roles as board members," OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** said.

"Some of these programs are available

as part of districts' dues, while others are fee-based services offered by the association. Before we offer a new service or program, we always look to see if we can provide the superior service in-house or if a third-party provider is a better option."

The association's buying power allows OSBA to negotiate reduced prices, even when it uses third-party providers.

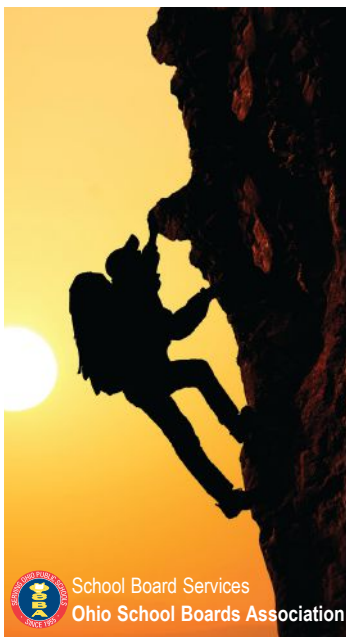
For example, BoardDocs, a paperless governance system, greatly streamlines the large task of assembling, printing, distributing and revising agenda items and policies.

The Power4Schools program provides long-term price reductions on electricity. The program currently serves districts in the Ohio Edison, Illuminating Co. and Toledo Edison service areas and has saved schools more than \$41 million

in electricity costs. Power4Schools is working to expand the program to districts in the Dayton Power and Light, American Electric Power and Duke Energy Ohio territories.

Other endorsed programs include:

- Accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance for school board members — OSBA provides free business travel AD&D coverage of \$100,000 to school board members. Board members also may purchase 24/7 personal AD&D for themselves and their dependents at low group rates.
- Accidental death and dismemberment insurance for school district administrative personnel — OSBA offers low-cost business travel and personal AD&D to all school district administrative employees. Employees who purchase business travel and personal AD&D for themselves are eligible to purchase coverage for their dependents at low group rates.
- BuyBoard Cooperative Purchasing — In partnership with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and several other state school boards associations, the program features a competitive bidding process that allows districts to get volume discounts via Web-based shopping.
- District financial forecasting service — Public Finance Resources Inc. provides information, resources and training on vital school district financial issues.
- Fleet, liability, property/casualty and violence coverage — The Ohio



THINK BIG!

When you are ready to help your district move forward, OSBA School Board Services can help. Choose the planning option that meets your district's specific needs:

- District strategic planning
- District goal setting
- Superintendent performance goals

For more information about planning options offered by OSBA School Board Services, go to www.ohioschoolboard.org/school-board-services. To schedule a session, contact OSBA at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.

School Plan, governed by school officials, offers alternative insurance and risk management solutions that meet state requirements and create safer schools.

- Managed care organization (MCO) — CompManagement Health Services Inc. helps school districts control their workers' compensation and unemployment compensation costs with access to 24/7 claim reporting, vocational rehabilitation counselors and local MCO specialists.
- NSBA National Connections program — Districts receive the needed tools and information to champion student achievement in their local communities. School districts' participation helps support NSBA's national advocacy agenda on behalf of local governance and public education.
- Online payment program — Esber Cash Register's PayForIt.net is a secure online payment program that

simplifies payment, collection and balancing of school funds.

- Online safety compliance program — PublicSchoolWORKS is a comprehensive, Web-based compliance program built specifically for public schools.
- Group term life, AD&D, disability, voluntary life and dependent life coverage — OSBA offers low rates and enhanced benefits to school districts for group term life, group term AD&D, disability, voluntary life and dependent life insurance through GradyBenefits.
- P-Card Program — EasyProcure creates efficiencies by simplifying the procurement and reconciliation process, which reduces paperwork and administrative costs.
- Risk management — The partnership with CompManagement is designed to lower premiums for workers' compensation.
- School safety and security software — NaviGate Prepared offers a

Web-based emergency preparedness system that works in conjunction with emergency and law enforcement personnel in a crisis situation.

- Superintendent, treasurer and position bond program — Ohio Revised Code requires certain district employees to be bonded. Through Travelers Insurance, the OSBA Bond Program provides surety and fidelity liability coverage for districts, including treasurer and superintendent position bonds.
- Unemployment compensation — CompManagement offers claim processing and representation for districts.

Hundreds of Ohio school districts benefit from OSBA's endorsed services, often participating in multiple programs to reduce costs. To learn more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/99010> or contact OSBA at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. ■

WHAT ENROLLMENT CHALLENGES DOES YOUR DISTRICT FACE?

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SCHOOL OVERCROWDING

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Summer program



Two aspiring forensic scientists analyze pieces of duct tape as they work to solve a theoretical murder case. The girls were among 125 students taking part in Kids in College, a summer enrichment program sponsored by Ross-Pike ESC and Ohio University–Chillicothe.

Kids in College extends learning opportunities

In a classroom on the Ohio University–Chillicothe campus, students in white lab coats took notes as they measured small strips of duct tape on a steamy June afternoon.

Their mission? To solve a murder.

The fourth- through eighth-grade youngsters in the Crime Scene Lab class were among 125 students taking part in Kids in College, a STEM-based summer educational program sponsored by **Ross-Pike ESC** and Ohio University–Chillicothe (OUC). The three-week program, launched nearly 30 years ago, offers children in grades kindergarten through eight about 20 classes each summer.

“The goal is to provide enrichment opportunities that extend

their learning through hands-on activities,” said **Joyce C. Atwood**, OUC resource development director and one of the program’s coordinators. “Everything is based upon the state standards in the various academic areas. We offer a variety of topics that are part of the curriculum in their schools: science, social studies, the arts, history and more.”

This year’s curriculum included classes on Mexican culture, tai chi, dance, superheroes and villains, animal adventures, basic Spanish, tennis, archeology, STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine), toy making, history and theater. Science offerings included Ooey, Gooney Science and Super Sticky Science, along with Astounding Astronomy taught by COSI on Wheels staff from the Columbus-based Center of Science and Industry.

a hit with kids

by Gary Motz,
editor

A diverse range of enrichment

Kids in College began as a program solely for gifted students, Atwood said. As the program evolved, the university developed a partnership with Ross-Pike ESC, and it became open to all students. Four years ago, **Chillicothe City Schools** joined the partnership.

Classes are conducted at Chillicothe Middle School, the university and a number of other sites in the community. For example, the nearby Hopewell Culture National Historical Park hosts the archeology class, which is taught by National Park Service rangers.

“The kids spend five days at Mound City at Hopewell where they study the history and culture of the Native Americans who lived there,” Atwood said. “One year they took part in a dig and actually found some artifacts.”

Another class based at a community site focuses on the lives of Ohio children in the early 1800s. It is conducted at Adena Mansion and Gardens, the 2,000-acre estate of **Thomas Worthington**, Ohio’s sixth governor and one of the state’s first U.S. senators.

The class enables students to compare and contrast the lives of children who lived in mansions like Worthington’s with the lives of children living in much more modest circumstances. They learn about the daily chores of both groups, the foods they ate, the clothes they wore and what they did for fun.

The Potter’s House in Chillicothe hosts a pottery class. In that weeklong program, students spend three days fashioning pots and other products out of clay and two days glazing them in preparation for firing.

Dedicated faculty, affordability are keys to success

The program, which is funded by class fees, is staffed by veteran instructors who are passionate about teaching.

“All of our instructors, with the exception of the ones who are with the community agencies, are certified teachers,” said **Christina Martin**, Ross-Pike ESC grants and programs administrator and another Kids in College coordinator. “We focus on hiring people who can engage the kids and get them excited about learning. They must have a passion for what

they’re doing.

“And we make sure everyone involved has passed background checks. Safety is a very important part of this program.”

OUC faculty members also teach some courses, and an art class this year was led by a Shawnee State University instructor. Joining Atwood and Martin in coordinating the program is **Janet Fink**, OUC continuing education administration specialist.

“We design classes we think the children are going to be interested in, with a focus on enrichment activities,” Martin said. “We survey students and parents at the end of the previous year and ask what they liked and what they would like to see next year. Basically we just ask them, ‘What do you



Sonja Rawn leads Crime Scene Lab, one of the more popular Kids in College classes. Rawn is an assistant professor in Ohio University-Chillicothe’s Law Enforcement Technology program.



Students learn that attention to detail is a critical component in crime investigations.

think we should be offering? What do you see as a need?"

Keeping the program affordable is essential to its success. The fee is \$40 for the first weeklong course, which includes a Kids in College T-shirt. Subsequent classes cost \$30 each. There also are materials costs for some classes.

"That is much less expensive than similar programs offered at other places," Martin said. "That is one of the things the parents like about it — they look at other programs and are really impressed that we are able to keep our expenses so low. They also like the variety of classes. One parent told me this year it took her son a long time to decide on classes because there are so many great offerings."

Crazy about science

Some classes are perennial favorites. One is Ooey, Goey Science, billed as "hands-on, messy fun!" for K-three students. Super Sticky Science, for the older students, takes a look at the difference between plant and animal cells and creates facsimiles of them using Play-Doh and toothpicks.

Another popular course is CommuniSCOPES (Science Cooperative of Physicians and Elementary Students), led by **Union-Scioto Local (Ross)** science teacher **Jenni Domo**. Based at Unioto Elementary School where Domo teaches, the class is an extension of the school's SCOPES Academy, a partnership with Adena Regional Medical Center that focuses on real-life, hands-on STEMM concepts.

"In CommuniSCOPES this year, the kids learned the basics of the additive manufacturing process (3-D printing), the history of 3-D printing and made their own items," Domo said. "It was totally up to them what to make. They created bracelets, chains, a shark. One even made a flute-type instrument that could be played.

"We also studied electronics and robots and different types of robotics with different power sources, like electricity, batteries, salt water and solar. They got to code and program their robots to do different things, like shooting discs out."

"The kids just loved CommuniSCOPES," Martin said. "Every day when they left they were so excited to tell their parents what they had learned. And everything relates back to the state standards. All our teachers are really good at what they do and the kids just have fun. It's almost like they don't realize they're learning."

The scene of the crime

Back in the Crime Scene Lab, the budding forensic scientists working on the murder case were being taught by a real forensic scientist. **Sonja Rawn**, an OUC Law Enforcement Technology assistant professor, works in the state fire marshal's lab in Reynoldsburg when she's not teaching.



Eighth-grader Clive Obi, center, shares his conclusions after examining handwriting samples from several "suspects."



Instructor Sonja Rawn shows Crime Scene Lab students how using multiple methods to analyze evidence can eliminate some suspects and draw stronger links to others.

“In this class we are developing a theory of a crime, in this case, a murder,” Rawn said. “We looked at a crime scene and talked how we would have to find evidence to prove that crime and gather data from that evidence.”

“We’ve done fingerprinting and made castings of footprints. We’ve analyzed handwriting, learned how to measure and diagram a crime scene and learned how to package evidence. One piece of evidence is duct tape. Our victim was found with a piece of duct tape on his mouth, and we’re going to take samples from that and see if we can match them up with any of our suspects.”

“I love teaching this class, because at this age they are curious and enthusiastic and they participate. I would really love my college kids to participate like this.”

Eighth-grader **Clive Obi**, a Crime Scene Lab student, attended his first Kids in College this year. Clearly enjoying the experience, he said Ooey, Goopy Science, CommniSCOPEs and the crime lab were his favorite classes.

“In Ooey, Goopy Science we learned how to make our own Play-Doh,” said Clive, who plans to become a doctor. “The teacher said that instead of getting it in a store, you can buy the ingredients, which is cheaper. We also learned how to make

different kinds of paint: liquid paint and buffy paint. Buffy paint is a mixture of shaving cream, baking soda and food coloring.

“In the crime class we’re learning how to be detectives and the various things they do, like analyzing fingerprints, footprints and testing blood.”

“It’s all pretty interactive and social, and you get to learn new things. It’s very fun to meet new friends and I like the teachers. I also like being on a college campus because you get to see what students do when they’re in college.”

Fifth-grader **Lorelei Claytor** also was a first-time Kids in College participant.

“It’s fun because we get to work together,” Lorelei said. “In here (the crime lab) we’re working on a fake crime, a murder, but we haven’t solved it all the way yet.”

Lorelei said she wants to become a singer when she grows up but has a fallback plan if that doesn’t work out.

“If I can’t do that, I want to be a doctor,” she said. ■

Editor’s note: For more information on Kids in College, contact program coordinator Joyce C. Atwood at atwoodj@ohio.edu.

Commit to leadership for learning



Attendees at the 2015 Early Bird Workshop with the Apple Leadership Forum work in small groups to test classroom exercises on iPads.

Capital Conference delivers opportunities for success

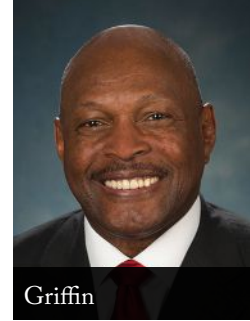
Scott Gerfen, assistant editor

Leadership and learning — these two mindsets are at the heart of public education and imperative for student achievement.

Those beliefs are the cornerstones of the annual OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show, Ohio's premier education convention. The event brings together over 9,000 school board members, administrators, district staff and guests for four days of exceptional professional development, networking and sharing success stories.

This year's conference — which runs Nov. 13-16 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center — features even more opportunities to absorb topics such as blended learning, technology, district leadership, school safety, school law and finance, among many others.

There are limitless opportunities to network and share ideas with your peers no matter if you're a first-time conference attendee or a veteran. There are more than 150 workshops, seminars, information sessions and networking events



designed for every level of school district leadership.

New for the 61st annual Capital Conference is the addition of 21 learning sessions. All learning sessions have been shortened to one hour to allow for more topics.

Learning sessions begin at 9 a.m., 1 p.m., 2:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 14, and Tuesday, Nov. 15, and 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 16. The conference also features Spotlight Sessions, which deliver even more in-depth information.

To open the conference, OSBA experts will present several free learning sessions covering school bus safety, student welfare policies, boardmanship and conflict resolution during the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 13.

As always, student achievement will be in the spotlight throughout the conference with performing groups entertaining attendees before General Sessions and career center students staffing relaxation stations.

A conference highlight, the Student Achievement Fair, will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 15. The fair will be filled with 100 booths of students, teachers and administrators from all over the state sharing their innovative programs that are boosting student achievement. This exciting event also showcases five performing groups, one from each of OSBA's regions, and a student fine arts display.

If you're looking to increase student achievement and maximize resources, look no further than the Trade Show, the nation's largest exhibition of education-related goods and services.

This enormous marketplace, with more than 550 vendor booths displaying school equipment, supplies and services, will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 14, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 15.

Outstanding keynote speakers will once again take the stage for the three General Sessions, hallmarks of the Capital Conference. These sessions also feature awards, recognitions and student entertainment.

There are plenty of other opportunities to hear from stimulating speakers and acquire newfound knowledge during

the Early Bird Workshop, OSBA Black Caucus Dinner and Conference Luncheons. Following are the 2016 keynote presentations.

Early Bird Workshop — Sunday, Nov. 13

Jeff Nischwitz found success as a lawyer, but the **Northmont City** Northmont High School graduate began to realize the legal field wasn't his true calling.

After building and expanding a law firm in northeast Ohio, he did what many would never consider: He left success to find his real passion.

For Nischwitz, getting by or simply succeeding without loving what you do wasn't acceptable. The founder of the Nischwitz Group, which delivers presentations to association and business leaders, focuses on conscious leadership, responsible teams and personal transformation.

Attend the workshop and hear about Nischwitz's journey of "self-awareness and discovery."

The author of two books, including "Unmask: Let Go of Who You're 'Supposed' to Be & Unleash Your True Leader," has been helping businesses, teams and people build relationships with prospects, clients, team members and themselves.

Ennis Britton Co. LPA is sponsoring this session, which begins at 2:30 p.m. Registration is \$100. Board members

Group registration provides value for conference goers

The OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show is only a few months away. Consider this great deal if your school district remains unsure about attending this year's conference. OSBA is again offering a special group registration rate for member school districts. The school district group rate is \$1,850 once more than six people are registered. This means an unlimited number of principals, treasurers, transportation supervisors and other staff can attend for one day or the entire conference without any additional registration fees. Registration is \$295 per person for each of the first six people from a member district.

should notify their treasurer to register. On-site tickets will be sold on a space-available basis.

OSBA Black Caucus dinner — Sunday, Nov. 13

Recognized nationally, Dr. **Rodney D. Coates** has developed sociological insights to not only identify but also research and pose solutions to real-life problems. The director of Miami University's Black World Studies program will discuss empowering African-American students through education.

Coates, a professor in the Department of Sociology and Gerontology, specializes in the study of race and ethnic relations, inequality, critical race theory and social justice.

The OSBA Black Caucus dinner raises funds for the Leo Lucas Scholarship, which provides graduating African-American seniors funds for college.

Music and networking begin at 6 p.m., with dinner at 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$70; the reservation deadline is Nov. 4. To register for the dinner, notify your district treasurer or indicate your request on the conference registration form. Registration is required; limited tickets will be sold at the door for \$75. Please note any special accommodations needed. All conference attendees are invited.

First General Session — Monday, Nov. 14

Actor **Ernie Hudson** has a lengthy list of credits and awards on his Hollywood résumé, including the iconic 1980s "Ghostbusters" movies and HBO's award-winning series "Oz."

But the road to fame had its share of hardships.

The film, TV and stage star and activist was born into poverty in the housing projects of Benton Harbor, Mich., and raised by his grandmother following his mother's death when he was just two months old.

It was his grandmother who taught him patience and kindness and supported him first and foremost in reconciling the loss of his mother and the absence of a father; serving in the Marine Corps; attending Yale University; overcoming racism in the entertainment industry; and raising his sons as a single father.

Nobody in his family had ever finished high school, but Hudson's persistence through the ups and downs has kept him working in the film industry for four decades.

He understands the challenges of surmounting overwhelming obstacles and encourages others to always persevere.



Anthony Muñoz, a 2015 Conference Luncheon keynote speaker, signs sports memorabilia for a conference attendee after his presentation.

Sponsors for the First General Session are Ennis Britton Co. LPA; Pepple & Waggoner Ltd.; Ross, Sinclair & Associates LLC; and Walter Haverfield LLP.

Monday Conference Luncheon

The Nov. 14 Collaboration Connection is a lunch-and-learn aimed at helping participants collaborate with fellow board members and administrators on topics that can help everyone become more effective leaders.

Attendees can take advantage of small-table discussions to explore areas of interest or concern. This is a unique opportunity to network with those who have already tackled difficult problems and are ready to share their solutions.

CompManagement and GradyBenefits are sponsoring the Monday Luncheon. Doors open at noon. To register, board members should notify their district treasurer or OSBA. Registration is \$55; on-site tickets will be sold for \$60 at conference Registration on a space-available basis.

Second General Session — Tuesday, Nov. 15

Fans of the popular TV show “Breaking Bad” know **Steven Michael Quezada**’s accomplishments as an actor. He won a Screen Actors Guild Award for his role as Drug Enforcement Administration agent Steve Gomez.

But the lifelong New Mexico resident also is well-known as an education advocate and an elected member of the Albuquerque Public Schools Board of Education, which oversees one of the nation’s largest school districts.

The actor, comedian, producer, writer, teacher and humanitarian has used his late-night talk show, “The After After Party with Steven Michael Quezada,” to provide on-the-job training for future filmmakers, including students from the Digital Arts & Technology Academy in Albuquerque.

Renowned for his charitable work, he has raised money for Youth Development Inc. (YDI) and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Quezada also has devoted time to Actors Core, Mi Voz, Elev8 and gang intervention programs sponsored by YDI.

Tuesday’s General Session sponsors are CompManagement Health Systems Inc.; Scott Scriven LLP; and Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP.

Tuesday Conference Luncheon

Legendary Ohio State University (OSU) football coach **Woody Hayes** described his team’s potent rushing attack as “three yards and a cloud of dust.” As a running back, **Archie Griffin** certainly helped the Buckeyes live up to that reputation.

Griffin, the only player in college football history to twice win

the Heisman Trophy, was a three-time All-American whose football career continued for seven years with the Cincinnati Bengals.

He returned to OSU following his playing career, serving as an associate director of athletics and the president and CEO of the Ohio State University Alumni Association. Griffin now works as a senior advisor in the university’s Office of Advancement.

Hayes once said of Griffin, “He’s a better young man than he is a football player, and he’s the best football player I’ve ever seen.”

The Tuesday Luncheon sponsors are CompManagement Health Systems Inc.; GradyBenefits; NaviGate Prepared; and Ulmer & Berne LLC. Registration is \$55. Board members wanting to register should notify their district treasurer or OSBA. On-site tickets will be sold for \$60 at conference Registration on a space-available basis.

Third General Session — Wednesday, Nov. 16

With an impressive background in entertainment and the news media, Emmy Award-winning journalist **Leeza Gibbons** is one of the most well-known pop culture icons on the air.



Gibbons

Gibbons has been the on-camera host of numerous entertainment news and talk shows ranging from “Entertainment Tonight” to her award-winning daytime talk show, “Leeza.”

She currently hosts the syndicated TV news magazine show “America Now” and the weekly TV news show “My Generation,” for which she won a Daytime Emmy Award.

Gibbons has become one of the leading voices for issues facing family caregivers. When her mother and grandmother struggled with Alzheimer’s disease, she created the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation. The foundation’s programs offer free services for caregivers.

Gibbons also is a New York Times best-selling author who published “Take 2: Your Guide to Creating Happy Endings and New Beginnings” in 2013 and “Fierce Optimish: Seven Secrets for Playing Nice and Winning Big” in April.

CompManagement sponsors the Third General Session.

For more Capital Conference information visit <http://conference.ohioschoolboards.org> or call OSBA at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. ■



Achievement fair spotlights wonders of public education

Crystal Davis, assistant editor

You never know what wonders you might see at the popular Student Achievement Fair at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

For instance, **Abraham Lincoln** might stop by with **George Washington**. This year, one of the featured programs is **Mentor EV**'s Interactive Historical Wax Museum. Students dress up as historical figures and deliver speeches that embody the figures' contributions to the world.

If it were actually possible, jumping into a time machine with some of those historical figures might be the only way you could learn *all* of the best practices in student achievement showcased at the fair's 100 booths.

Without a time machine, you'd only have about two minutes to visit each booth during the midday event, which runs from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 15, at the north end of the Greater Columbus Convention Center's Hall D.

The fair, created to promote student achievement and enlighten young people and school leaders, includes an impressive mix of cutting-edge curriculum ideas, musical performances and exquisite art projects.

School programs are selected to participate in the fair based on their originality and creativity in boosting academic performance. These superlative programs focus on themes such as leadership skills; STEAM (science, technology,



Morgan Local's (Morgan) Morgan High School Band performs during the 2015 Student Achievement Fair.

engineering, arts and math); community service; on-the-job career exploration; aquaponics; computer programming; Internet-based learning communities; video production; landscape design and management; student authors; robotics; fire academy training; interactive media; and invasive species research. The Capital Conference Guide provides descriptions of the programs and their locations.

The fair highlights these programs so districts can learn from each other, and those who staff the booths are ready to share their stories and accomplishments.

The fair was founded in 1999 by OSBA's Student Achievement Leadership Team (SALT), which includes school board members and OSBA staff. The fair is the largest of SALT's many initiatives.

Five student entertainment groups representing each of OSBA's regions also will perform:

- Noon-12:20 p.m. — **Spencerville Local (Allen)**, Spencerville High School Jazz Band, Northwest Region;
- 12:35 p.m.-12:55 p.m. — **Shelby City**, Shelby High School Dixie Dames, Central Region;
- 1:10 p.m.-1:30 p.m. — **Trotwood-Madison City**, Trotwood-Madison Middle School Choir, Southwest Region;
- 1:45 p.m.-2:05 p.m. — **Noble Local (Noble)**, Shenandoah High School Guitar Theory Class, Southeast Region;
- 2:20 p.m.-2:40 p.m. — **Akron City**, Miller South Rising Stars, Northeast Region.

Plan to spend some quality time supporting these students as well as getting to know more about the impressive programs featured at the fair.

The fair also features a display of award-winning student art projects sponsored by Pepple & Waggoner Ltd.

While the actual Abraham Lincoln and George Washington won't be able to make it, there certainly are plenty of other history-making items to see at the fair. Make sure you pencil in plenty of time to stop by, because just one idea you take home could forever change the educational experience of one or more of your students.

School districts, including their program titles, registered to participate in the 2016 Student Achievement Fair as of Aug. 5 are:

- **Akron City** — Robotic World Competitions
- **Akron City** — Sixth-Grade Youth Empowerment League
- **Athens City** — Small Engines and Entrepreneurialism
- **Batavia Local (Clermont)** — It's Electrifying!
- **Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Local (Greene)** — Elementary School Reading Garden



Vermilion Local (Erie) students explain how their school's International Clue Hunters program works at last year's Student Achievement Fair.

- **Belpre City** — Belpre High School Pottery Program
- **Big Walnut Local (Delaware)** — BWMS Service Day
- **Bloom-Carroll Local (Fairfield)** — Creating Aquaponics at Bloom-Carroll
- **Bloom-Carroll Local (Fairfield)** — The Next Level of Career Exploration
- **Clinton-Massie Local (Clinton)** — Coding Club
- **Coventry Local (Summit)** — Daylighting the Stream
- **Cuyahoga Falls City** — Interest-Based Learning Communities
- **Cuyahoga Falls City** — Tiger Voice — Where Student Voice Matters
- **Cuyahoga Valley Career Center** — Auto Tech Likes Their Chrome
- **Dalton Local (Wayne)** — Fifth-Grade Students Plan a Trip to Mars
- **Dublin City** — Classroom Libraries in HS English
- **Dublin City** — Creating a Culture of Enrichment
- **East Cleveland City** — Chapters 4.0 Literacy-Based Mentoring
- **East Cleveland City** — We The People
- **East Muskingum Local (Muskingum)** — Technology Program at LMIS
- **Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools** — Interactive Media
- **Fairview Park City** — Innovation Center Fairview
- **Franklin City** — Invasive Species Research and Cells
- **Franklin City** — Paper Roller Coasters
- **Franklin Local (Muskingum)** — Ready, Set, Code!
- **Franklin Local (Muskingum)** — Using Journals to Improve Learning
- **Goshen Local (Clermont)** — Planning for Postsecondary Success



- **Graham Local (Champaign)** — Farm-to-Table PBL Labs
- **Graham Local (Champaign)** — Career Gears
- **Green Local (Scioto)** — Green Elementary Catwalkers
- **Hillsdale Local (Ashland)** — Forensic Science and Zoology
- **Independence Local (Cuyahoga)** — Cleveland Cavaliers Art Mural
- **Indian Valley Local (Tuscarawas)** — Elementary STEAM
- **Jefferson County JVSD** — Auto Service Technology
- **Knox County Career Center** — Landscape Design and Management
- **Lake Local (Wood)** — Students in Action (SIA)

Additional districts providing services at conference

Several districts and career centers are offering their services to help make the Capital Conference a relaxing, healthful and beautiful event.

Attendees can drop by any of six career center booths in the Trade Show to relax. The free services include hand and arm massages, blood pressure checks, cosmetology makeovers and more. The career-tech programs showcasing their skills during the 2016 conference include **Coshocton County Career Center**, **Delaware Area Career Center**, **Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools**, **Mahoning County Career and Technical Center**, **South-Western City Career Academy** and **Trumbull Career & Technical Center**.

In addition, a videography team from **North Canton City** and **Plain Local (Stark)** is the 2016 Capital Conference student video documentary team. Students will complete a video that will be shared with other state school boards associations and used to promote the conference.



Mahoning County Career and Technical Center students greet a visitor during the 2015 Capital Conference. The students were offering blood pressure checks and wellness information.

- **Liberty Union-Thurston Local (Fairfield)** — Teaching about the Terrorist Attacks of 9/11
- **Lima City** — Lima Senior High School DECA marketing
- **Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking)** — Leader in Me
- **London City** — London FFA — Living to Serve
- **Lorain City** — Longfellow VEX Robotics Team
- **Lordstown Local (Trumbull)** — Lordstown High Political History Club
- **Mad River Local (Montgomery)** — Humanoid Robotics
- **Mad River Local (Montgomery)** — Project Lead the Way Pre-Engineering
- **Margaretta Local (Erie)** — Margaretta FFA Chapter
- **Margaretta Local (Erie)** — Margaretta Ruriteen Organization
- **Marion City** — Pathways to Diploma +
- **Massillon City** — Construction Trades
- **Meigs Local (Meigs)** — After School Kids (ASK)
- **Mentor EV** — Construction Management — Flip a House
- **Mentor EV** — Interactive Historical Wax Museum
- **Miami Valley Career Technology Center** — Improving our Future with Biotechnology
- **Mid-East Career and Technology Centers** — Students on the Board of Education
- **Middletown City** — The Middle Mobile
- **Painesville City Local (Lake)** — Book Box — Mobile Summer Book Swap
- **Plain Local (Stark)** — Celebrate Diversity
- **Plain Local (Stark)** — Lil' Eagles Productions
- **Portage Lakes Career Center** — Fire Academy
- **R.G. Drage Career Technical Center** — Bakery Program
- **River View Local (Coshocton)** — Teen Leadership Corps
- **Seneca East Local (Seneca)** — World Languages
- **Seneca East Local (Seneca)** — Junior High Quiz Bowl
- **Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City** — Augmented Reality Technology
- **Steubenville City** — Aviation Science
- **Tallmadge City** — Health and Health Careers
- **Twin Valley Local (Preble)** — Constellations that Glow in the Dark
- **Union Local (Belmont)** — Cell City Project
- **Union Local (Belmont)** — Honoring Student Accolades
- **Union-Scioto Local (Ross)** — The Scoop on the SCOPES Academy
- **Upper Valley Career Center** — Exploring STEM in the Middle School
- **Wayne County Schools Career Center** — WCSCC — Battelle for Kids Video Project
- **Waynesfield-Goshen Local (Auglaize)** — Fifth-Grade Guided Reading Castle Diorama
- **Zanesville City** — Build Your Own Robotics Program
- **Zanesville City** — Students Becoming Authors ■

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Future of public



What will public education look like in 2026 and beyond? Will the next 10 years see as much rapid change as the past decade has brought?

What new challenges will school boards face? How will they remain effective and relevant? What can be done to protect and strengthen local control?

Just as schools must prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist, school board members must prepare themselves for challenges that might not yet be visible on the horizon. To be ready for those unseen demands, they must be adaptable, open-minded and forward-looking.

Board members must remain alert to threats and

opportunities. This means standing firm in the face of those who would privatize public education and diminish a community's role in educating its children. This means keeping abreast of ever-evolving governance, management, and teaching and learning strategies. And it means remaining true to the core principle of public education: all students must have the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

The National School Boards Association has been working with its member state school boards associations' executive directors over the past year or so to identify difficult issues future school boards might face and explore possible solutions. That work has led to a draft white paper: *The School Board of the Future*. The state associations currently are sharing the white paper with their boards and executive leaders to generate

education

by Gary Motz,
editor

feedback and input. Once that is gathered, the working group will begin exploring solutions and a vision for the future.

Among the challenges presented in the white paper are:

- social and technological changes;
- poverty, language barriers and other nonacademic obstacles to learning;
- too many state and federal regulations;
- state and mayoral takeovers;
- inadequate funding coupled with increasing unfunded mandates;
- the school choice movement and privatization of public education;
- eroding community support fueled by negative perceptions of public schools, or the notion that public schools are “failing”;
- maintaining effective local governance.

A special section in this issue of the Journal also takes a look down the road.

New Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction **Paolo DeMaria** offers his insights into what might lie ahead. A Q&A article featuring five school board members from

around the state shares their thoughts on the future of public education, both in their districts and statewide.

Battelle for Kids Executive Director Dr. **James Mahoney** explores five challenges and opportunities school leaders should be focused on in the coming years. His piece is based on feedback his organization collected from educators about their challenges, frustrations and concerns for the future.

Technology will continue to play a greater and greater role in education. Journal Assistant Editor **Scott Gerfen** reports on several Ohio school districts’ struggles and successes with broadband service, Internet access and other technology issues.

And OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis**, in his Executive Outlook column, shares how the association is committed to help its members move into a successful future with confidence and foresight.

As all school leaders know, the only constant in education is change. OSBA hopes this issue of the Journal offers readers some insights into what lies ahead as well as ways to meet the changes looming just beyond the horizon. ■

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Looking ahead with Ohio's new state superintendent

Paolo DeMaria, Ohio superintendent of public instruction

When I think about the future, I'm both energized and a little afraid (and I'm not just talking about my future as Ohio's state superintendent!).

I'm energized because I think about all the changes I've seen since I was a child: the advent of the personal computer, the ubiquity of cellphones and Internet access, advances in medical science, and the transformation and globalization of industries like manufacturing, transportation and music. And I think the future will hold just as many, if not more, technological advances.

Driverless vehicles — really? We can't even begin to predict the differences we will see. It's exciting stuff.

My fears, on the other hand, are anchored in social issues. Powers like ISIS and North Korea are very real threats to peace and stability in our world. New struggles over equality and social justice seem to have no clear solution. The divide between the “haves” and “have-nots” continues to grow, and we are becoming more politically polarized.

Still, as I contemplate what might happen in the next 25



Two Mentor EV students collaborate on a reading project. Allowing students to work independently of teachers puts them at the center of the educational process and gives even the youngest ones a voice about their learning and goals.

years, I'm heartened and encouraged by our young people. The teams working on the futuristic Hyperloop that will transport people from Los Angeles to San Francisco in 50 minutes are college students.

These individuals understand their roles as makers of change. They love knowledge and know how to gain it from many sources. They embrace collaboration and working together to solve challenges and problems. I'm confident they will drive the innovative technological advances that are yet to unfold *and* resolve our social issues in ways that benefit everyone.

Where is our education system in this futuristic picture? Will our youngest generations still need us? Of course they will. But here I also feel energized and a little afraid.

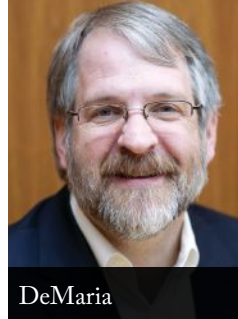
I'm energized because I think we have an absolutely fantastic asset base — people, organizations and communities — capable of helping every child develop a love of learning and graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve a fulfilling and successful life. My concern is whether we adults will have the will and sense of urgency to transform our capability into reality.

I'm optimistic that we will. When I walk into Ohio's schools today, most of them *look* the same as my schools looked many years ago. For example, there are distinct classrooms filled with desks, a chemistry lab and a library.

But in today's schools, I see increasing evidence that the character of teaching and learning is changing. What I love is that this new generation of students is teaching us what they need: "Make learning interesting. Make learning relevant. Let us work together. Build our confidence, so we can solve problems and try and fail and try again and succeed."

We adults are understanding more and more that teaching and learning is a collaborative pursuit, that the deepest learning takes place when students are really engaged in the discovery process. Yes, key academic content is still at the center of the process, but the context is one of self-directed learning, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving and building confidence in students' abilities to learn, persist and support each other.

We have learning technologies that were not even dreamed of in my day. The instant, automated feedback they provide tells our students what they have mastered or what they need more work on, enabling them to own their learning and work at their own paces. No longer are these students looking to the front of the classroom, waiting for a teacher to spoon-feed them knowledge from a hardbound textbook. They call on the teacher when they need help getting unstuck.



There's another advantage to this new, active way of learning, and it's one that bodes especially well for our education system — it puts the teacher in an even more satisfying professional role. I'd venture to guess that teachers who are now acting as guides and coaches of motivated, self-directed learners are finding their jobs more enjoyable and rewarding than ever before.

That really excites me. We're moving in the right direction for students and the right direction for teachers. We have to keep on going, getting better and better all the time. What does a commitment to getting better look like? Since we see it more and more all the time, we don't have to guess.

It starts by listening to students and putting them at the center of the process; even our youngest students have a voice to share about their learning and goals. It's followed by closely analyzing our own practice and data about the outcomes and impacts of our teaching and doing this collaboratively with those we work with to make sure we are as effective as we can be.

Getting better includes understanding research, uncovering best practices (possibly by learning from Straight A Fund grant winners), taking risks, trying and failing, and trying again to find strategies and actions that can make the education experience even better for students. Ohio has some great resources that can help, like our ESCs, the state support teams, the Ohio Improvement Process and the resources of the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council.

Maybe getting better means embracing project-based learning. Real work and commerce — and life — is project based. Our children must learn how to identify a problem or need, envision a solution and start to work, collaborating with others and testing their conclusions and progress all the way to the end. The same skills will apply whether they are producing a gyroscope on a 3-D printer or setting up a community program for senior citizens. Maybe this is accomplished by leveraging Ohio Department of Education Career Connections resources to link learning to future job opportunities.

Maybe getting better means further refining the role of the teacher as an essential guide, coach and supporter of students in their personalized learning. But, as we encourage schools to continually improve and urge teachers to act in this even greater role, we need to make sure every teacher has the support he or she needs and deserves. And we need to create the conditions for teaching to be a joyful and fulfilling pursuit. Maybe Ohio's Formative Instructional Practice resources and other online teacher-



development tools can help.

Maybe getting better means turning a laser-like focus on the achievement gap. We've been talking about achievement gaps between poor and minority students and students as a whole for decades, and we have yet to close them. There's no easy fix. Every community has to make its own commitment to addressing this issue in the way that makes the most sense — and by looking beyond the school walls.

Maybe Community Connectors is part of the solution. No one knows better than local community members, teachers and education leaders exactly who their struggling students are, what their needs are and how to tap the resources of their communities for the nonacademic support these children need to become academic achievers. Neither government social programs nor school alone can ensure a better life for students who struggle. We have to work together.

To do this, we'll have to be intentional. We'll have to vow to ourselves that every child from every walk of life is going to leave school every day with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful *the next school day*. We will have to make sure every challenged student has a strong relationship with an adult encourager and guide. We will

have to push to make sure we coordinate the whole range of public services and supports.

And we will need to keep these commitments all the way to graduation. We have to resolve that no child will leave school empty-handed on our watch. Improving our system is everyone's responsibility, all the time.

If we really commit ourselves, whatever we do will be good. The idea of "always getting better" isn't a sign of weakness in our system. The best always keep getting better — think **LeBron James, Taylor Swift, Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk**. Is it hard work? Yes. But it's most effective when people work together, supporting each other, and the payoffs are tremendous.

I'm fully, unapologetically optimistic that Ohio's schools of the future can and will look like this. I know we have what it takes. All the elements of success are in place for us. We just need to act faithfully and consistently on what we know.

I look forward to working with Ohio's districts and schools as we enter this new era of excitement and excellence. It won't be easy, but it will be so, so rewarding — for our children, for our teachers, for us as education leaders and for Ohio. ■

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What issues keep educators up at night? They told us

Dr. Jim Mahoney, executive director, Battelle for Kids

Recently, I took my 7-year-old granddaughter shopping for spring clothes. We sent photos of the dresses she was considering to her mom.

When we got home and hadn't purchased the dress mom liked, she asked me, "Why?" "My granddaughter didn't like it," I explained. When her mom asked me how I knew she didn't like it, I said, "She told me so."

In our work with school systems in Ohio and across the country, Battelle for Kids has been listening to educators about their challenges, frustrations and concerns for the future. Based on this feedback, I want to share five salient challenges and opportunities that school leaders should be focused on over the next few years. If someone asked me why we should be concerned about these issues, it's because "they told us so."

Attracting and retaining high-quality educators

Our ability to recruit, develop and retain educator talent has never been more critical. However, reports suggest that fewer young people are pursuing a career in education, and many school districts in Ohio and across the country are struggling to find and keep high-quality teachers.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, enrollment in teacher preparation programs decreased by more than 30% between the 2008–09 and 2012–13 school years. Data from the department also revealed that over a six-year period in the early 2000s, the dropout rate for new teachers in Philadelphia was higher than the student dropout rate.

This finding comes as many policies over the past decade have focused on "fring ourselves into excellence." Clearly, that approach has not been very successful, and we have managed to almost single-handedly kill our seed corn of highly capable young people who once saw teaching as a higher calling. They now, too often, see it as a low-paying job with limited prestige, intended only to raise students' test scores.

The changing talent market requires that districts develop a

new kind of human capital management system — one that is data-driven, strategic and proactive — to ensure teachers are valued and supported, and that education remains a career path that talented professionals believe is worth pursuing. I could make the same arguments for the importance of attracting and retaining principals and superintendents.

Personalizing education

A cynical person might suggest that eHarmony does a



An instructor helps a student with reading in the Putnam County ESC migrant education program. Personalizing education and improving equity and equality in the schools are key to preparing students to succeed in a wide range of careers.



much better job of connecting disparate adults than we do of trying to match teacher and student interests and learning styles. Why is it that I can go to an athletics store and have shoes custom-made according to my orthotics and in the color I like, but we haven't figured out exactly how to do that with student interests and needs?

Students have different learning styles, strengths and goals that cannot possibly be addressed by a one-size-fits-all approach. Herein lies one of our greatest opportunities. With the advent of technology, we have the ability to personalize education in a way that engages, motivates and ensures every student is equipped with the knowledge, skills, dispositions and overall well-being necessary for future success.

Harvard professor Dr. **Tony Wagner** argues that knowledge is now a commodity. What really distinguishes one person from another is their ability to use it. I agree.

I've taken to using Uber when I visit other cities, and I find the ride-sharing app quite remarkable. In fact, I've thought how Uber has become one of the most valuable transportation companies in the world, and it doesn't own a vehicle. Similarly, Amazon is the world's largest retailer and, to my knowledge, owns just one small store.

Airbnb is arguably the largest, most valuable lodging company, and it doesn't own a hotel. And Quicken Loans, one of the world's largest mortgage lenders, doesn't own a bank. It's not a stretch to believe that sometime in the future an entity could be the largest provider of educational services — directly or indirectly to students — and won't own a school.

Part of the challenge with personalized learning is getting started. We describe it as everything. It's like when I bought a new car recently, and the salesman spent 40 minutes showing me all the things the technology would do. I just needed my phone connected to start.

We need to help young people be intentional and thoughtful about pathways they might pursue that lead to a job.

Engaging stakeholders to develop accountability and improvement systems

Late last year, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This comprehensive rewrite of the five-decade old Elementary and Secondary Education Act gives states greater flexibility to shape policies around accountability, school turnarounds, standards, teacher evaluations and more. The bill takes effect in the 2017–18 school year, but Ohio and other states have already begun engaging stakeholders in conversations and planning around the new law.

As we transition from the No Child Left Behind Act to a new era of local innovation under ESSA, it represents an opportunity for states to rethink their accountability systems. When I was a young teacher, there certainly wasn't the accountability system we currently have in Ohio. Was there still accountability? Absolutely. In fact, I would argue it was a greater accountability. It was real ownership in the academic, social and emotional growth of students.

We have made education almost exclusively about academics these days. Yet, we all know that noncognitive factors such as grit, determination, resilience and perseverance all matter a great deal to our students' future success, and they can be taught. Hope is not some trait that kids have at birth. It is infused in kids by how we treat them. And the evidence is clear that hope is a better predictor of student success than any standardized test score.

Improving equity and equality

In a keynote speech at this year's Educators Connect for Success Conference, **Shanna Peeples**, the 2015 National Teacher of the Year, shared the best metaphor for understanding the difference between equity and equality I have ever heard.

"Imagine that we are unloading a truck full of shoes to give to a group of children," Peeples said. "If each child gets a pair of shoes, we have equality. But making sure that each child gets a pair of shoes that fits, that is equity."

We have a long way to go in both areas, and we have often



Early College High School students conduct an experiment at Lorain County Community College. The program, open to Elyria City and Lorain City students, is designed to give young people underrepresented in higher education a leg up on college.



The new Butler Tech Bioscience Center vividly illustrates how students are no longer looking to the front of the classroom waiting for a teacher to spoon-feed them knowledge from a hardbound textbook.

confused their differences.

I frequently say that at the little high school I attended teachers taught the best and hoped for the rest. Then, when Ohio built vocational schools in the 1970s, we taught the best and transported the rest.

The truth is, we never gave equal respect to those students who were pursuing anything other than a four-year college degree. Now, we've arrived at an intersection in this country where we must teach the rest as if they were the best. The challenge and opportunity for educators moving forward is connecting student's passions, interests and skills — along with all the other important things we teach them — to pathways through which they can be productive and satisfied.

Ensuring all roads lead to a job

I like to think of our educational journey as a freeway that begins at age 3 and keeps going the rest of our lives. There are a number of on and off ramps, but each one of these paths connects us to something viable and important.

As industries evolve with technology, the environment or other cultural shifts, people have had to get off the highway, be retrained and then get back on the road to a connecting industry. We need to help young people be intentional and

thoughtful about pathways they might pursue that lead to a job.

It would be disingenuous to encourage students to go down a path that will eventually lead to a mountain of debt and no viable career options to show for it. Does that mean schools are simply job shops? Of course not. But failure to recognize that eventually all students need to be productive is just as silly. We need to give kids pathways that will prepare them to succeed in a wide range of occupations, not just one job. And we, as a society, need to respect those choices — because we need them all.

By working together to address these challenges, states and local districts have an opportunity to elevate the teaching profession, increase educational equity and opportunity for all students and contribute to a growing economy. Or, as a professor I had once said, "Don't tell me what you believe. Show me what you do, and I'll tell you what you believe."

What we *do* with respect to these issues will mark what we really believe about the future of students. ■

About the author: Dr. Jim Mahoney is the executive director of Battelle for Kids, a national, not-for-profit organization in Columbus dedicated to moving education forward for students by supporting the educators who work with them every day. Learn more at bfk.org.

What's in the stars for Ohio's public schools?



Board members discuss challenges, opportunities

Gary Motz, editor

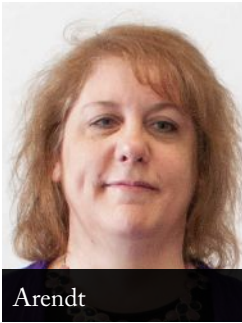
Not only is it essential for school board members and administrators to stay up-to-date on the demands of leading their districts, they also must look to the future with a keen eye.

Public education is always evolving, and leaders who can anticipate the challenges of tomorrow will be better positioned to meet those challenges. From funding system changes, educational equity issues and growing privatization to shifting standards, increasing unfunded mandates and political pressures, board members must have the foresight and

flexibility to steer their districts forward.

District leaders also must be prepared to meet new and unforeseen developments. To do that, they need to constantly hone their leadership skills, engage their communities and embrace lifelong learning.

The Journal asked five veteran board members — one from each of OSBA's regions — about their views on the future of public education and the demands that future might bring. Their districts range from urban to suburban to rural with



enrollments from just under 2,000 to more than 21,000.

Following are their responses, which have been edited for length and clarity.

What are some of the biggest challenges you see facing public education over the next 10 years, both in your district and statewide?

Jackie Arendt, board president, North Royalton City

While finding equitable funding streams for true public educational institutions will continue to be a challenge, I think the biggest challenges over the next decade will be developing a cohesive structure of services from pre-K to higher education, nurturing flexible and advanced learning environments for all students and stopping unnecessary legislative mandates that cause greater inequity by devaluing public education and dividing districts by wealth to compete for funding.

Our education system is too segmented from early education to higher education. While we need departments and personnel to support various educational levels, the disjointed attempts to provide quality services to all learners are failing.

Recent legislation continues to fragment the education process instead of helping it aid students on their road to success. What is the master plan from pre-K to higher education? I don't think there is one that helps all children succeed because sectors are too busy competing for funds. This has to stop.

Learning is very different today. Students need spaces that can be flexible and adaptable, from listening to information and instructions to hands-on lessons to small and large group interactions. The dollars to do this are not easily available to many districts because it is not seen as a priority.

The concept of the common school was created to ensure all children — not only those who could afford one — received an education. Today, districts lose focus on education because they are consumed by legislation, primarily from the state, that straps them to so many curriculum, operational and fiscal mandates that monopolize school personnel time and increase the costs to run a district. Therefore, local funding

drives what a district is able to do for the students it serves since the state adds mandates but not the means to support many of them.

Renda M. Cline, board president, Mansfield City

The biggest challenge I see facing public education is privatization. This challenge is being driven by two major factors. One is the funding by which they are operated. The other is the standards by which they teach and are held accountable. Though public and private sectors are frequently compared to one another, they are inherently different. The unspoken truth in the process is you get what you pay for — provided you meet the criteria.

Private educational opportunities are largely funded by private interest individuals or groups. Money allocated to these systems may be spent as they see suitable. The facilities may be upgraded and completely outfitted with the latest in technology and learning resources. This is the most visible and enticing difference the customer is able to see. The cost spent per pupil can be as high as the system can afford. Tuition is paid by either the family or a scholarship granted by the institution.

Public education is largely funded by public tax dollars and federal grants. Stakeholders of this group have a major influence on how this money may be utilized. The cost spent per pupil is closely monitored. Communities significantly challenged financially are not able to acquire great sums of funding for their educational systems.

Standards of operation and accountability are extremely different between the two groups. Public educational environments must accept and provide for the needs of all students who live in the area served by the public school system. The standards of education and services provided are strictly monitored by the sources of funding (right, wrong or indifferent). These standards frequently change and are often impossible to meet with the excellence and integrity of the educational process required for learners. Yet these standards directly affect the funding of these schools.

Private systems choose whom to serve through applications and qualifying admittance criteria. They may serve as they choose without following the same government standards

and public scrutiny. Dismissal from their institutions is also at their discretion, thus leaving the human services needs and educational responsibility falling back to the local public sector for those who fail to meet qualifications.

Bruce D. Nottke, Athens City, Tri-County Career Center

There are a number of challenges at the top of the list and, unfortunately, they all seem to concern money. Charter schools, unfunded mandates and what seems to be a lackluster concern for public education in general.

While there have been some increases in funding, there have not been nearly enough. Public schools still need more resources to effectively educate our children.

For some reason, people don't seem to understand that charter schools are taking tax dollars from public education. And, while there certainly are some mandates that need to be met for the safety of our kids, there also needs to be some financial assistance from our legislators to help cover these costs.

All of these issues are putting a huge burden on local district taxpayers but, more importantly, it is the education of our students that suffers. This has been happening for a number of years, and if we don't make all taxpayers aware of the problems and get more responsible people in office, it will continue for the next 10 years and more.

Warren Stevens, Urbana City, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center

The Urbana City School District is in the process of planning and implementing a new school facilities project. We are

planning to build a new high school at the present high school location and a K-eight building at a separate site. Our entire district is in a transition mode, which presents many challenges.

We are going to have to move some grades to separate buildings to accommodate the building contractors. The total construction project should be completed within four or five years.

With our new school building design, we have decided to go with the open classroom concept. That will be an adjustment for the teachers and students that could last 10 years into the future. And I am sure the district's financial stability will be a challenge for the next 10 years.

Ohio Hi-Point Career Center is presently in the process of upgrading and expanding its facilities. The goal is to transform it into one of Ohio's state-of-the-art career-tech centers.

The biggest challenge I see for Ohio K-12 education over the next 10 years is the problems that exist with charter schools and the anti-public school movement.

Bob Vasquez, board president, Toledo City

School finance has always been a challenge and will continue to be a challenge into the future. Finding an equitable method for financing public education is a very complex issue, however, it does not appear to be a priority for our state legislators.

In recent years, school financing has been further complicated by the charter school movement that by its existence redirects funds from the public schools to the charter school system. The charter school movement claims to be a response to the failures attributed to the public school system, yet it has not provided evidence that it is providing students a higher level of quality education.

Public education was created to provide education to all of our students. Creating a parallel system could undermine the original purpose of public education and denotes a significant philosophical shift with results that have a reach beyond just the educational system.

Our public schools are a microcosm of our society and communities. Our school systems are continually called upon to respond to those challenges that are inherent in our communities by providing many services beyond education and often with not more, but less funding.

Poverty has an adverse effect on the educational system and we need to find a way to counter those effects. Our students and families from our communities view schools as the "hub" of their neighborhoods and have increased expectations for the



Warren Stevens, Urbana City and Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, left, speaks with an aide to U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) during the 2015 National School Boards Association Advocacy Institute in Washington, D.C. Joining Stevens were Linda Haycock, Shawnee Local (Allen), center, and OSBA Director of Legislative Services Damon Asbury.

school district.

Parent engagement is critical to their student's success. The school systems need to take into account the issues that families deal with outside of the school building and make a commitment to tailor parent engagement opportunities by taking the issues within the community into account. The future success of education is to make our districts and communities operate seamlessly. Our communities are constantly changing, and the system needs to change with them.

We also need to develop a method for student assessment, teacher evaluations and school improvement that is measurable.

What can school board members do to find solutions to these challenges?

Arendt: Solutions to challenges can only be solved with active participants. School board members must attend professional development and have conversations with people within their district and around the state to promote the various ways public education has continually ranked as a wonderful investment.

They must lead efforts in their community to contact state and federal decision-makers about why public education is important to all members of society. Ask them to fund public education properly so local districts don't feel the burden of all the unfunded mandates. Many of the challenges facing districts stem from decision-makers not strategically analyzing education's big picture.

School board members across Ohio must communicate to state officials the unique value all public school districts have. By supporting local efforts, positive educational results for all students happen. It's a hard concept to understand that a united public education system does not mean that everything has to be exactly the same way everywhere. We need board members to be visionary leaders who work for all student needs.

Furthermore, when legislators craft faulty mandates, we must advocate for better solutions. I think it would be great if we could get all state and federal legislators to hit the pause button with education mandates before implementing anything else. Take a look at the landscape before plowing through it more.

Cline: School board members can first educate themselves. Learn about the laws and regulations that stifle and paralyze the educational processes children need. Then collectively speak to the governing bodies about the concerns.

Individual boards can hold themselves accountable for

ensuring policies and procedures within their realms and support a highly productive environment in which highly qualified educators produce highly resourceful, well-rounded and qualified students.

Accountability needs to be spread throughout the district and into the community the board serves. The board needs to educate citizens to positively support the school district and advocate for it.

Citizens need to expect as much from the city as they do local school districts. City officials need to take care of the city and seek business and development opportunities that will give families reasons to live in the community. The city also needs to support its local school district. A strong, supportive city has a strong and thriving local school district.

Boards need to educate local media outlets on their accountability. Local media outlets should promote positive attributes of citizens rather than perpetuate false stereotypes and negative human behaviors. They need to report the news with responsibility and integrity rather than sensationalism. While it may sell stories, it does not sell the community to prospective families or business owners.

"Being an active positive voice for public education means all children succeed. To defeat the negative attacks we must stop dividing ourselves and make sure public education has a future."

— Jackie Arendt

Notke: I believe that board members, superintendents, teachers and everyone associated with public education need to make sure the public is aware of the extra tax burdens put on them by inadequate funding of public schools.

Stevens: The Urbana City School District involved all of its community stakeholders when putting together its new school building plan. We also relied heavily on the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission and the state of Ohio. We hired the best construction contractor and architect. School administration formed committees made up of teachers and administrators to discuss the new, innovative idea of open classrooms.

Ohio Hi-Point Career Center administrators toured all of the state-of-the-art career centers in the state before the superintendent presented the final plan to the board for

approval. The superintendent also inspected each department facility within the school and the equipment.

Statewide, the Ohio legislature must set the same state requirements for charter schools that exist for K-12 public schools.

Vasquez: School board members need to educate Ohio legislators about the issues. Board members need to make school finance a priority for the governor's office and Ohio lawmakers. Incumbent legislators should be evaluated on their support for finding an equitable method for financing education, and support for legislative candidates should be decided upon based on their plans for a funding solution.

Board members also should make a concerted effort to educate the general public about the effects of societal challenges such as poverty on the educational process. These challenges have a significant impact on our students and their families. We need to be able to explain how these conditions and the educational process intersect and what the possible outcomes may be.

In addition, board members should direct their districts to spearhead efforts to review current best practices, introduce new ideas and pilot new programs.

Attacks on public education continue to increase. What can school board members do to rebut these attacks and ensure that local control of public schools remains strong and relevant in the future?

Arendt: Finding the right balance between rebuking the attacks and ignoring them as noisy grumbles is difficult. Many of the claims against the ineptness of public education are unfounded or built on an exaggerated piece of information. Most school boards want to distance themselves from any negative attacks, so ignoring them has been commonplace.

Board members probably need to do a better job at bringing positive messages into the public sphere. Boards also must correct any and all misinformation that can damage their district's name. Local control means all school districts receiving public dollars must have elected, not appointed, boards that answer to the community, not a political person.

The attacks happen because we, school board members, are not armed with enough information about the long historical positive role of public education, what local control means and what our local role is. Public education is not considered a valuable choice and the negative campaigning against us continually looks for ways to divide community members, parents, teachers, staff, administrators and boards by using anything to its advantage. The various factions focus on what they believe is beneficial for them, forgetting that students are the true focus for all of us.

When all parties are united around a strong positive message, the attackers will be stopped. All children need advocates who believe they are worthy of an education. Again, boards must look to continually support the accomplishments achieved not just in their own district but also around the state.

Being an active positive voice for public education means all children succeed. To defeat the negative attacks we must stop dividing ourselves and make sure public education has a future.

"I wonder how it would look if education is completely privatized, and you only get what you pay for?"

— Renda Cline

Cline: Boards can educate the community on understanding that grade cards and standards are skewed with inaccurate data. Society is data-driven and looking for outcomes and results. While it is excellent to use data to measure success, it can only be an effective tool when groups being compared are equally measured.

Stay approachable and accessible. Be as transparent as possible and promote your district during board meetings and when engaged in community activities.

Notke: Again, anyone associated with public education, along with organizations like OSBA, the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and others, need to make the public aware of all that their districts and other districts statewide are doing to give Ohio children the best education they can with the resources they have available to them.

Stevens: It sure does not help when some in the state of Ohio are fueling the anti-public education movement with the school choice issue. Although some charter school reform legislation has been enacted, there is much more that needs to be done.

Recently, the Urbana City superintendent told me, "The state auditor is always contacting the Urbana City School District about audits, but the state auditor never contacts the charter schools about anything."

I think school board members must get involved with OSBA advocacy efforts. State government must set the same accountability rules for charter schools as are in place for our K-12 school districts. Also, with the Every Student Succeeds Act now being law, the state is going to have to relinquish

some control to the local districts.

Vasquez: Local control is important because each state, and certainly each community, is different. School systems as institutions that are governed by elected school board members are essential to a democratic society. Local control by elected officials held accountable by the taxpayer combined with transparency is what separates public education from the charter school movement.

School board members must establish themselves as advocates for public education who are unwavering at resisting attempts at building a parallel system of education. Board members should maximize their relationships with the associations to which they belong. These associations possess the expertise to assist us with reaching our legislators and carrying our message to the public. Association staff members should request information from school board members regarding those issues so that they can adequately represent them.

Is there anything you would like to add?

Cline: I wonder how it would look if education is completely privatized, and you only get what you pay for? If you could only pay for a poor educational experience, you would most likely only be prepared for a life of poverty or perhaps a life

inside a privatized penal system.

I would add that public education has produced highly qualified and productive citizens since public educational systems began. The expectation was to produce excellence, and the support of these systems was excellent.

The public education system continues to be expected to produce excellence, so the support of the system should be excellent. Support of the system is support of the student — even the student who cannot pay and cannot meet the criteria of private education. It is public education that supports these students.

Notke: Please support public education. We, as board members in our local districts, do what we do so kids can get the best education possible. The bottom line is, it's all about the kids.

Stevens: One of the changes the Urbana City School District is working on to improve future financial stability is to convert our levy renewals to permanent. If any one of our levy renewals fails, we are going to have to make cuts.

Ohio has one of the largest charter school problems of any state in the country. The shame of the whole thing is the motivation of the choice movement is profit. ■

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Schools face challenges in bridging the digital divide

Not all broadband access is equal

Scott Gerfen, assistant editor

As students across Ohio prepared to take the annual spring state assessments, **Dalton Summers'** fears came to fruition.

The superintendent of **River View Local (Coshocton)**, which covers 376 square miles in rural eastern Ohio, had worried about the sporadic Internet coverage at Union Elementary School, one of the district's six buildings. The satellite Internet service had been down for a week, forcing a number of delays in administering the online tests.

That's when Summers decided to transport students to the high school and junior high campus in Warsaw — a 20-minute bus ride. The tests would be administered there.

"We were worried about having problems like this, and we're trying to make it work," said Summers, who has supervised operations in the district of approximately 2,100 students for five years.

At Union Elementary School, there are limited ways to connect with the outside world.

"If we have 12 kids on computers at the same time, the telephones don't work," he said. "There is no cell coverage. The radios we use for the buses don't work."

While the number of students with access to high-speed broadband in the classroom has surged over the last two years, Union Elementary School students are among those across the country still challenged by inadequate online connectivity.

In 2013, only 30% of school districts nationwide were meeting the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) minimum Internet access target of 100 kilobits per

second for each student, according to a 2015 report from EducationSuperHighway, a California nonprofit group focused on Internet upgrades in public schools.

Even where reliable Internet service exists, not all access is equal because some families cannot afford a data plan.

That meant 40 million students did not have the broadband speed needed for tablets, computer programs and other online material. The report said 20 million additional students are adequately connected today, with 77% of school districts meeting FCC's access goal.

Even where reliable Internet service exists, not all access is equal because some families cannot afford a data plan. While many low-income families have a cellphone, Internet service is challenging. And about 30% of households with an annual income below \$30,000 a year do not have a computer *or* cellphone.

"This is the civil rights issue of today, not only at school but outside of school," said **Keith Krueger**, CEO of the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), a professional association for district technology leaders in Washington, D.C. "It's referred to as the 'homework gap.'"

Increasingly, technology is becoming essential to learning. As teachers expect students to complete more and more classwork assignments online, access to high-speed Internet is just as imperative after school.

"Can you imagine trying to do an essay on your

smartphone or applying for college?” Krueger said. “The poorer you are, the more likely your access is from a mobile device.”

In **Bellaire Local (Belmont)** — a school district of approximately 1,200 students that sits along the Ohio River just south of Wheeling, W.Va. — those inadequacies are very apparent. Bellaire’s student demographics are similar to those in inner-city school districts, Superintendent **Darren C. Jenkins** said.

While district buildings have fiber connectivity, many families cannot afford high-speed service, or it’s not available in areas outside the village of Bellaire. The district has discussed implementing a one-to-one initiative that would supply each student with a laptop or Chromebook.

“We have a significant number of students who can’t complete assignments because they don’t have access at home,” Jenkins said. “On the other hand, we think it’s a great idea to move forward and increase the use of technology.”

Like Bellaire Local, **Symmes Valley Local (Lawrence)** has high-speed access in district buildings. However, residents rely on satellite and, in some cases, have no cellphone service. But the lack of sufficient Internet service hasn’t kept some of the district’s approximately 800 students from using technology.

“We have some kids who will maybe first thing in the morning use some stuff here at school or go to a friend’s house,” Superintendent **Jeffrey Saunders** said. “It’s just a big challenge, but we don’t want to have such low expectations that we never try to use it, of course.”

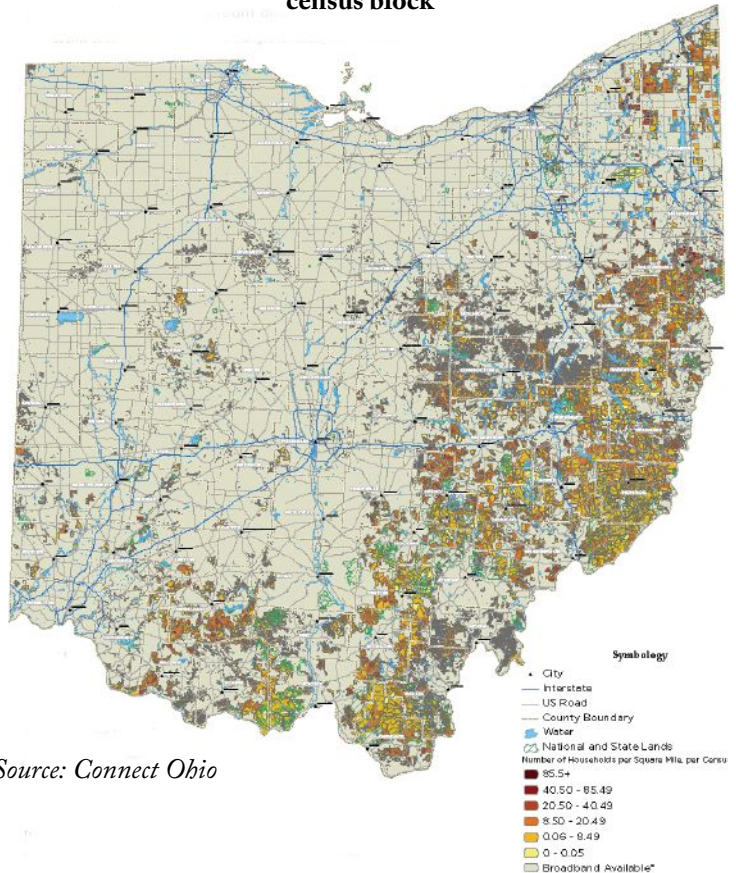
Ohio Rep. **Ryan Smith** (R-Bidwell), whose 93rd House District covers Jackson and Gallia counties and portions of Lawrence and Vinton counties, said residential broadband service remains a major issue in Appalachian Ohio.

Students do have access to local libraries, which provide broadband, but many of them lack the transportation or driving privileges to get there, said Smith, who chairs the House Finance Committee.

“Modern 21st century education takes place on iPads, on education sites and through podcasts that many students cannot access outside the classroom,” Smith said. “These digital resources can inspire a student’s educational interests and further engage students that may be struggling academically.”

“The education gap between Appalachian students and

Density of households unserved by a broadband provider by census block



their peers is already substantial, and without broadband access, I fear that the gap will only widen in years to come.”

Broadband coverage has been boosted in the region through recent partnerships with FCC’s Connect America Fund (CAF), which provides subsidies to the nation’s largest telephone companies to offer broadband service. Over the next six years, CAF will be funding broadband infrastructure to approximately 150,000 rural Ohio homes and businesses.

According to a new study from Connect Ohio, a Columbus-based group that works to bring affordable high-speed Internet to Ohioans, most people in the state have access to the Internet. However, adoption has not grown since 2013 and some regions of the state, like Appalachia, trail the more urban areas.

At No. 30 nationally, Ohio’s broadband adoption rate is 76%, according to the Ohio Broadband Trends report assembled by Dr. **John Hoag**, an associate professor at Ohio University’s School of Information and Telecommunications Systems.

Only 68% of Appalachian households in Ohio subscribe to



home broadband service, compared to 78% of households in other parts of the state. But Ohio's adoption rate exceeds those of neighboring states Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

People do not use broadband for three reasons, according to **Stu Johnson**, vice president of Digital Works, a Columbus organization that helps connect people with customer support and information technology jobs. They are cost, lack of skills and relevance, or the belief that even if you do have broadband service it will not impact your life.

"Those barriers are the same no matter where you live," Johnson said. "If you don't know how to spell or you don't know how to use a computer, (broadband) service wouldn't be relevant."

"Once someone realizes what they can do with the Internet ... all of a sudden it became relevant. We went down there (to Appalachia) and did a bunch of training and moved the needle."

Connect Ohio also provided research to **Columbus City Schools** four years ago that showed a 53% adoption rate among households.

"In many cases, it was purely a budgetary situation," said Johnson, the former executive director of Connect Ohio. "Why pay \$35 to get broadband when there's a library across the street?"

Students continue to benefit from improved connectivity during the school day thanks to FCC's E-Rate, a program mandated by Congress that went into effect in 1998. It provides broadband connections to schools and libraries as

part of FCC's Universal Service Fund discount program. Last year, FCC approved an additional \$1.5 billion in E-Rate funding, bringing the total annual budget to \$3.9 billion.

In 2013, President **Barack Obama** announced his ConnectED initiative, which is designed to outfit nearly every school nationwide with a high-speed broadband connection within five years. In March, FCC approved reforms to the Lifeline program, which provides discounted landline and cellphone services to income-eligible consumers. Those reforms include discounted broadband service, which could help more students connect at home.

According to a 2014 Pew Research Center study, nearly 75% of schools surveyed did not have strategies for providing connectivity to students at home and after school.

"Schools need to be increasingly working with communities to get broadband to low-income neighborhoods," CoSN's Krueger said. "Schools can't solve it alone, but they have to lead on it."

Some districts have adopted creative ways to connect students outside of school hours. California's Coachella Valley Unified School District parks school buses with Wi-Fi hotspots in nearby mobile home parks so students can connect. Wi-Fi kiosks have been installed in the public housing developments of Washington state's Kent School District.

CoSN released the Digital Equity Action Toolkit earlier this year to help schools and their students undertake community-based collaborations. Visit <http://links.ohio.schoolboards.org/62480> for more information. ■



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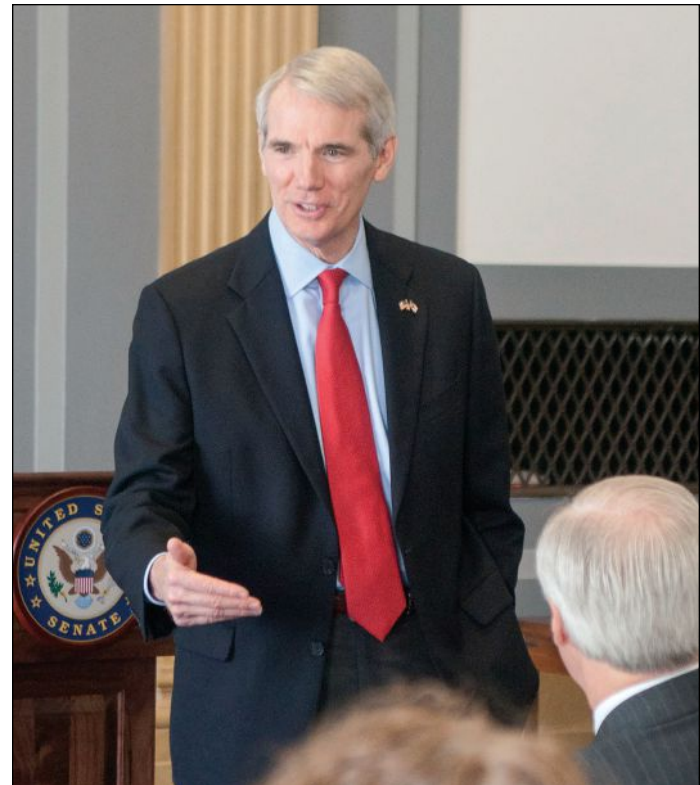
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OSBA delegation meets with national legislators

► *U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) speaks to OSBA Federal Relations Network (FRN) members at a breakfast meeting in Washington, D.C. Twenty-four Ohio FRN members, along with several OSBA staff members, visited the nation's capital in June for the National School Boards Association (NSBA) Advocacy Institute.*



▲▲ *Chris Varwig, Toledo City, speaks with an aide to U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio).*

▲ *Robert M. Heard Sr., Cleveland Municipal, listens to a speaker at the NSBA Advocacy Institute.*

► *Linda Haycock, Shawnee Local (Allen), asks a question during a breakfast meeting with Ohio's U.S. senators.*





◀ *Robert L. Faulkner Sr., Warren City and Trumbull Career & Technical Center, left, Lynda O'Connor, Lakota Local (Butler) and Butler Tech, and Jim Sommer, Greenville City, chat during a break at the institute.*

◀▼ *U.S. Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), left, OSBA Lobbyist Jennifer Hogue and Bill Ferguson Jr., Hamilton County ESC and Great Oaks Career Campuses, pose for a photo in Chabot's office.*

▼ *U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), right, shares a laugh with Thomas V. Tuttle, Mentor EV.*



▲ *Sharon E. Manson, Pike County Career Technology Center, watches CNN Senior Legal Analyst Jeffery Toobin sign his book for her following his keynote presentation at the institute.*

◀ *Gail Martindale, Cedar Cliff Local (Greene) and Greene County Career Center, meets with U.S. Rep. Michael Turner (R-Ohio).*

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