

*Shared services issue • Mad River Local STEM class rocks*

June 2013 • Volume 57, Issue 3

# JOURNAL

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## New digital edition available!

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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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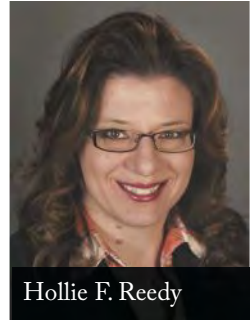
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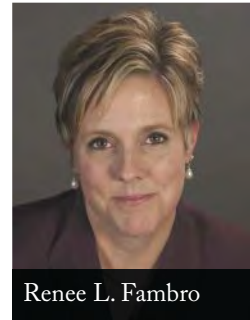
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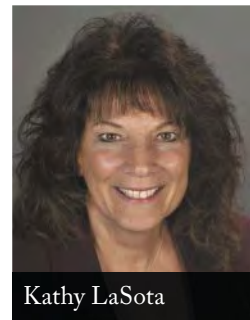
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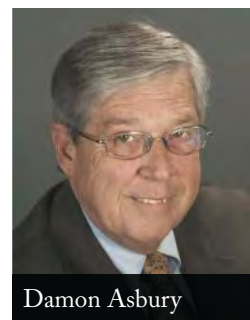
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Leading the community

# Leading locally, contributing globally

*Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director*

**T**his fall, Ohio voters will elect nearly 1,000 school board members. More than ever, our state desperately needs local leaders to step forward and serve in these crucial roles. The challenges that lie before Ohio's boards of education are unprecedented.

The task of running a school district grows more complex each year. The state and federal government continue to impose new requirements on public education and communities are demanding more. At the same time, school districts are being told to “do more with less.”

School boards are facing enormous fiscal pressures. The uncertainty surrounding Ohio's school-funding model coupled with unfunded mandates — and an increasing diversion of already scarce resources to voucher programs and substandard charter schools — are further eroding the financial stability of our education programs. Local support for levies is becoming more and more unpredictable.

Newly elected school board members must be ready to tackle the evolving educational issues of the day. In addition to the ongoing trials of high-stakes testing, graduation rates, special education, teacher quality, school safety, labor relations and administrator shortages, new boards will need to adapt to the Common Core, new teacher and administrator evaluation systems, the third-grade reading guarantee and more.

OSBA has long believed education is the heart of American progress — our

hope for tomorrow and passport to success. In today's highly competitive world, communities large and small are faced with ever-increasing educational challenges. Tackling those challenges is a responsibility placed squarely on the shoulders of the men and women who serve on boards of education.

While threats, opportunities and priorities vary from community to community, there is one constant: school boards greatly affect the life of every student, *as well as* the growth and future of every community.

*Successfully serving on a school board involves much more than just attending meetings — it requires a great commitment.*

The prerequisites to take on this vital public service role are simple. Candidates must be registered voters, U.S. citizens, state residents for 30 days and live in the school district they wish to serve. However, the requirements to be a good school board member are much greater.

Successfully serving on a school board involves much more than just attending meetings — it requires a great commitment. Members must devote the time to be knowledgeable about board business and keep abreast of the latest educational issues. They must dedicate

themselves to learning and growing by participating in training programs. And, as leaders in their communities, they must be prepared to respond to their constituents, both inside and outside of the boardroom.

School boards must be ready and willing to ask the tough questions and focus on results. Successful boards will not micromanage, but rather steer clear of unnecessary administrative details. They will affirm their roles as the “keepers of the vision,” and focus on the primary questions: “What? Why? How much?”

The OSBA book, *Board-Superintendent Partnership*, discusses these questions in more detail. “What are we trying to accomplish? To what end? What are our goals? Our policies?” These are the most important questions a board will ever answer and they must be asked repeatedly.

Good boards drill deeply into the “whys” and “how much?” How much is enough to meet our performance objectives, and how much can we allocate to get the job done? Without answering both questions — the first in terms of quality, the second in terms of quantity — there is no way for the board to maintain accountability.

Being a good board member means having an open mind to all issues facing your district. Good board members are not advocates for just part of a school district; they are champions for every child. Great board members contribute to improving public education in its entirety. A great board member works beyond the four corners of his or her

district to make a difference in the way public education is viewed across the state and nation.

The deadline to file petitions to run for a school board seat is 4 p.m. on Aug. 7. If you are an incumbent whose term is

expiring, please consider running for re-election. If you are up to the challenge, we need you. Your experience, training and perspective are priceless assets to your community.

If you are unable to continue your

service, please accept our thanks for your dedication and commitment. And, we leave you with one final charge — help recruit your successor. Encourage another individual committed to public education to run for your seat to help preserve the efforts you have made to make your district successful. Seek out someone who cares deeply about your schools and community and is dedicated to moving the district forward.

For those considering a first run for the board of education, begin gathering signatures for your campaign. Meet with your superintendent and the current board. Ask questions and learn as much as you can. Become an informed candidate who can hit the campaign trail ready to roll up your sleeves and address the issues.



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OSBA offers a wealth of board candidate resources to help you succeed, both before and after the election. For further information, see "OSBA encourages citizens to seek school board seats" on page 14, or visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org/candidate-for-school-boards](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/candidate-for-school-boards).

School boards are uniquely American institutions that keep the country's public schools flexible and responsive to the needs of local communities. Our boards of education have a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the most important task any community will ever have — seeing that the next generation receives the best education possible. Our students and communities deserve no less. ■

# District contracts gone wrong

*Hollie F. Reedy, chief legal counsel*



This is a story that occurs in every district in Ohio throughout the year. A district administrator, building principal or other building director needs goods or services that do not have to be competitively bid. Perhaps quotes are solicited, maybe a request for proposals is issued or a vendor or two is contacted to discuss availability and willingness to provide those goods and services.

The principal and vendor discuss the items needed or the job to be done and agree on the phone to proceed. Later, the vendor emails a contract noting, “it is their standard contract” signed by all purchasers.

The principal may sign and return the agreement without asking for legal counsel to review it and not ask for any modifications to the contract. The principal may read the contract, but not understand all the terms. He or she may not think anything will happen with the relationship, or may think all the “legal mumbo-jumbo” is “just there so some lawyer can justify a legal fee” or that it doesn’t apply to this particular deal.

After all, the parties made a deal and agreed on the goods and services to be provided, and usually that works out fine. The contract is really just a formality and besides, it’s a standard contract signed by everyone. Right?

Wrong!

Vendors usually write contracts to heavily favor themselves. The contract may contain damaging terms or severely restrict or eliminate the school’s right to end the contract early, obtain a

refund or sue in court for damages, among other things. It may completely omit the terms agreed upon orally between the parties. It may say that only the things in the contract represent the deal between the parties and any previous agreements or promises not in the contract are invalid.

A signed contract binds both parties to all the terms outlined in it. Unless you are deemed incapable of entering into a contract or there was some material misrepresentation, under contract law, your signature represents that you read, understood and agreed to enter into the contract — and are bound to comply with all its terms.

## **When things go wrong, the contract controls**

School districts regularly enter into contracts to purchase goods and services. Usually, there is no problem. But sometimes the principal, superintendent or board want to end a vendor relationship because there are problems with the quality of the goods or services purchased. Or, there may simply be a desire to buy different goods or services.

The ideal approach is to have board counsel review contracts. Is your board attorney reviewing your contracts in every case? There isn’t a good substitute for having your attorney review and deal with your contracts, because he or she is trained to read and detect potential problems, as well as negotiate to fix them.

You, as a public consumer entering into contracts on behalf of the public entity you serve, need to be aware of potential

areas of concern when you get a contract from a vendor. If you find a problem, you can ask the vendor to fix it or refer the problem to your lawyer.

Here are some contract terms to look out for when reviewing vendor contracts.

### **‘Entire agreement’ clause**

Many contracts have language that says something along the lines of:

“This agreement constitutes the entire and final agreement between the parties and supersedes any and all prior oral or written agreements or discussions between the parties regarding the subject matter of this agreement.”

There is nothing wrong with this clause in itself. But what it means is that whatever is written in the contract is the entire deal, and anything you were told that is not written into the contract is not part of the agreement. What should you do? Make sure that whatever goods, services or special terms (for example, the vendor will definitely deliver the promised items by June 3 because the district has an event on June 4) are written into the contract.

The vendor might provide items or services agreed to outside what is written in the contract, but doesn’t have to.

### **The ‘evergreen’ clause**

This is a part of the agreement that might be written something like this:

“This agreement shall be effective as of the reference date and shall continue in effect unless terminated earlier in accordance with this agreement.”

This means the contract will continue until you end it as described somewhere else in the contract. Is that what you wanted? If not, negotiate that the contract will automatically end on a certain date without further action or by giving some notice.

Do you know how to terminate the contract? Read through it to learn when and how to terminate by giving whatever notice is described in the contract. Many contracts require a 30-, 60- or 90-day written notice of the district's intent to end the contract.

### **Weird 'force majeure' additions**

The "force majeure" (French for "superior force") clause in a contract is another common addition that releases the vendor from its obligation to perform *if* that failure of performance is caused by things that are described as "acts of God," or crises that are not reasonably anticipated, such as tornadoes, floods, war, quarantines, fire, acts of terrorism or other calamities.

Sometimes vendors add things that should not be in a force majeure clause, such as delays or problems with transportation, suppliers, subcontractors, delivery service or telecommunications. These should be removed, because what the force majeure clause does is state that if the vendor doesn't deliver the promised goods or services for any of the listed reasons, the district can't hold the

vendor responsible. The vendor should be responsible for timely performance or delivery as promised unless some truly exceptional event makes it impossible to do so. Those types of attempts to relieve the vendor from performance aren't true force majeure events.

### **Exclusivity clauses**

Watch out for exclusivity clauses in contracts. If you promise a vendor will be "the only exclusive paper provider" or "the only photographer the district will use," this limits your flexibility. Unless an exclusivity clause benefits the district, don't sign it unless you are very sure you don't want or need alternate vendors for that service or product.

### **Term and termination — go ahead, make my day**

This is an important part of any contract. Are you agreeing to a specific time period for the deal and, if so, how long is it? When that time period is up, what do you need to do to let the vendor know the district wants to end the contract?

Many contracts will be for a specific term; know and keep track of when contracts end. Frequently, contracts will contain language that requires notice prior to the contract end date to effectively nonrenew it.

It's a good idea to keep a calendar tickler file so you know a few weeks

ahead of time when the nonrenewal deadline is approaching. This enables you to prepare and send the nonrenewal notice before the deadline. Why is this so important? If notice of nonrenewal isn't received when specified in the contract, the language may state the contract renews for another year. Just like the process for nonrenewal of district personnel contracts, there is a penalty associated with a failure to observe the procedural requirements of the contract.

Another provision to look for is your ability to end the contract without cause, not just for breach or failure of performance. Other options include allowing termination in the event of the vendor's insolvency, if the vendor is suspended from performing services on public contracts or other events.

### **Limitations on damages**

Most contracts address the issue of damages. The term "damages" generally means compensation available through the courts as redress for someone's breach of a duty under the contract. There are consequential and punitive damages, the former being to compensate a person for actual losses and the latter as punishment for the breach. There are other types of damages, but the point here is to review limitations on damages clauses to make sure that if something goes wrong, the limitations aren't such that the other party has no incentive to complete the contract as promised.

For example, a contract that limits damages to the purchase price of the item is probably not something you want to agree to for a large contract for goods or services.

Some contracts, particularly those from vendors that don't usually contract with public entities like schools, try to make schools liable for all kinds of damages, including punitive damages. Ohio law prohibits punitive or exemplary damages from being awarded against a political subdivision like a school district (Ohio Revised Code 2744.05).

### **Lessons learned**

Centralize district contracts in one place.

Consider creating a database of district contracts accessible by appropriate staff.

Create a spreadsheet for each contract that includes the status, term and other information, such as how and when notice of nonrenewal must be given.

Designate by board action and in policy the school officials who may enter into contracts on behalf of the public body,

depending on the term and amount of contract.

Consider obtaining a district standard contract for vendors to sign instead of using vendor contracts.

Have counsel review large or multiyear contracts.

Consult with your attorney about providing training on best practices about contracting.



### Indemnification

Ohio law has some limits on what political subdivisions of the state, such as school districts, may agree to in a contract. The concept of indemnification is essentially a risk-shifting provision. It means that one party is holding the other harmless for liability or damages, or will reimburse it for losses or damages it may incur arising out of the contract.

There is a value associated with the holding a party to a contract harmless by agreeing to an indemnity provision. Ohio law prohibits the state and its political subdivisions from agreeing to an indemnity provision unless it dictates the maximum dollar amount of the obligation.

Additionally, the indemnity provision must be appropriated (authorized by the board to be paid from district funds) and certified, if required, and consideration must be paid equal to the value of the indemnification (Ohio Attorney General Opinion 96-060, 99-049, 2005-007). Such clauses are void and unenforceable if these conditions are not met.

### Confidentiality

Because school districts are subject to Ohio's public records laws, confidentiality clauses that contain promises by the district to keep the contract or other items confidential generally may not be agreed to. Sometimes out-of-state vendors or vendors who do not routinely deal with school districts include clauses that attempt to protect information that meets the definition of a public record.

This is not a blanket prohibition. Items such as proprietary software, processes or testing materials may be considered confidential or trade secrets, and because certain items may be excepted from the definition of a public record, there may be confidentiality clauses that are permissible. Questions about the ability of a district to agree to a confidentiality clause should be addressed with district counsel.

### May the odds be *ever* in your favor

It is a given that any contract a vendor offers you to sign is going to favor the vendor. Some districts have developed a contract for use with vendors.

There are many reasons why this benefits the district. It ensures the terms are consistent, it is written to protect the district, it is easy to plug in the information needed and it avoids some of the confusion caused by multiple contracts describing varying legal obligations. Your district counsel can help you develop such a contract. This will keep administrators and the board from spending time looking for problems in a wide variety of vendor contracts, and prevent potential problems that may occur in the future as a result of those unfavorable terms.

### Conclusion

There is more to district contracting than can be addressed in this article. Involve your counsel in discussions about

contracting to obtain his or her advice and input on developing best practices for the district, developing a contract or contracting procedures. Some districts have worked with their counsel to create an information sheet to give to vendors, explaining the district's requirements. The sheet also provides vendors information about the district's legal limitations in agreeing to certain provisions, like indemnification clauses.

While OSBA attorneys write and manage contracts on behalf of the association, they may not represent member districts in reviewing, writing or negotiating contracts. OSBA, however, can answer any general questions you might have about the topic. ■

*"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.*



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*Finding the right fit*

# Is there a 'right way' to bargain?

*Renee L. Fambro, deputy director of labor relations*

**M**any schools have just begun labor negotiations or are getting ready to start the process any day now.

As board members and administrators are well aware, this round of negotiations promises to be challenging, to say the least. Many unions made concessions in 2011, which means they often come to the next round of negotiations with the “we-need-to-catch-up” mentality.

Add to that the impending implementation of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), the third-grade reading guarantee and the new biennial budget, and boards are certain to be facing an interesting negotiating experience.

So, what is the best way to tackle negotiations, Version 2013? Generally, there are three styles of labor contract

negotiation: traditional, interest-based bargaining (IBB) and hybrid. In traditional negotiations, both parties come to the bargaining table with proposals in hand; these are the predetermined solutions to whatever problems each side is trying to fix through negotiations. The process proceeds from there with counterproposals back and forth until the parties can agree on new language.

Interest-based bargaining requires the parties to focus on interests (the “why”) rather than on positions (the “what”). Again, the parties bring their issues to negotiations, but instead of coming armed with proposals, the parties bring their issues crafted as interests that reflect underlying concerns that are driving the need for change. From this point, the parties proceed through the IBB process, which is fairly rigid and requires both training and discipline.

True IBB is facilitated by a mediator, who directs the process (charting, brainstorming, developing options, establishing criteria, reaching consensus) and continually keeps the parties on task.

In hybrid negotiations, parties have developed their own unique bargaining process that combines elements of both traditional and IBB negotiations.

So, what is the trend right now in school negotiations? A federal mediator who works closely with many schools recently mentioned he was surprised at how many schools are choosing to do IBB this year. This is surprising for a number of reasons. First, IBB tends to work best when there is a significant degree of trust between the board and the local union. While trust certainly can exist, even in these trying times when there are significant issues to be negotiated (like OTES), even districts with “trust”

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You can donate online at [www.kidspac.org](http://www.kidspac.org). To learn more about *Kids PAC*, contact **Marcella Gonzalez** at [mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org) or call (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.



can lean toward more traditional negotiations simply as a way to tackle contentious issues.

Secondly, most schools do not have a sudden influx of revenue nor are they expecting the biennium budget to fix their financial concerns, so negotiating financial items will be a challenge for many districts. While this doesn't make IBB impossible, it does fly in the face of the traditional theory that "when there's no money, get language," because drastic changes in language can challenge the IBB process.

Even more interesting are those districts that seem to both efficiently and effectively self-direct their own unique negotiation process. These districts have, through the years, developed their own hybrid form of negotiations that works exceptionally well. Often, these negotiations use the rudiments of IBB, but the process has been altered to vaguely resemble IBB rather than be the true, structured IBB process. However, these schools often are the most successful at negotiating. Why?

In this mediator's experience, these districts consistently excel at negotiations because both parties are committed to their process, whatever that process looks like. In his opinion, this commitment is an acknowledgement that both parties want the best settlement possible, given the parameters and limitations under which bargaining necessarily occurs.

In these districts, the bargaining teams change, but the new teams often don't go through the full IBB training. So how do those team members who've never been trained on IBB theories end up being successful? Is it osmosis? Are some people just "born to bargain"? More likely it is that the district has developed an overall culture that encourages and supports working together cooperatively to make negotiations successful.

These are the districts that tackle challenging bargaining issues

successfully. Tough issues like OTES are resolved using their hybrid process. Concerns that lead to full-blown bargaining issues in other districts are handled here as so-called "housekeeping," with minimum ado.

What does this mean? It means that when there's a process that works, stick with it. There are no bonus points for saying, "We did IBB in two days!" or "We did traditional negotiations and still got a settlement!"

What matters more than labeling the process your district uses is ending up with a mutually acceptable final contract. If your district has a successful

process, stick with it. If you haven't had particularly successful negotiations in the past, be open to a different approach in the future.

Rest assured that districts that have developed their own hybrid approach didn't get it right the first time out of the gate; the process developed and matured over the years. Don't fall into the trap that there is a "right way" to negotiate, and that way must look exactly like traditional negotiations or follow the strictest IBB process. Instead, realize schools can develop and nurture their own hybrid process that will eventually lead to successful negotiations for years to come. ■

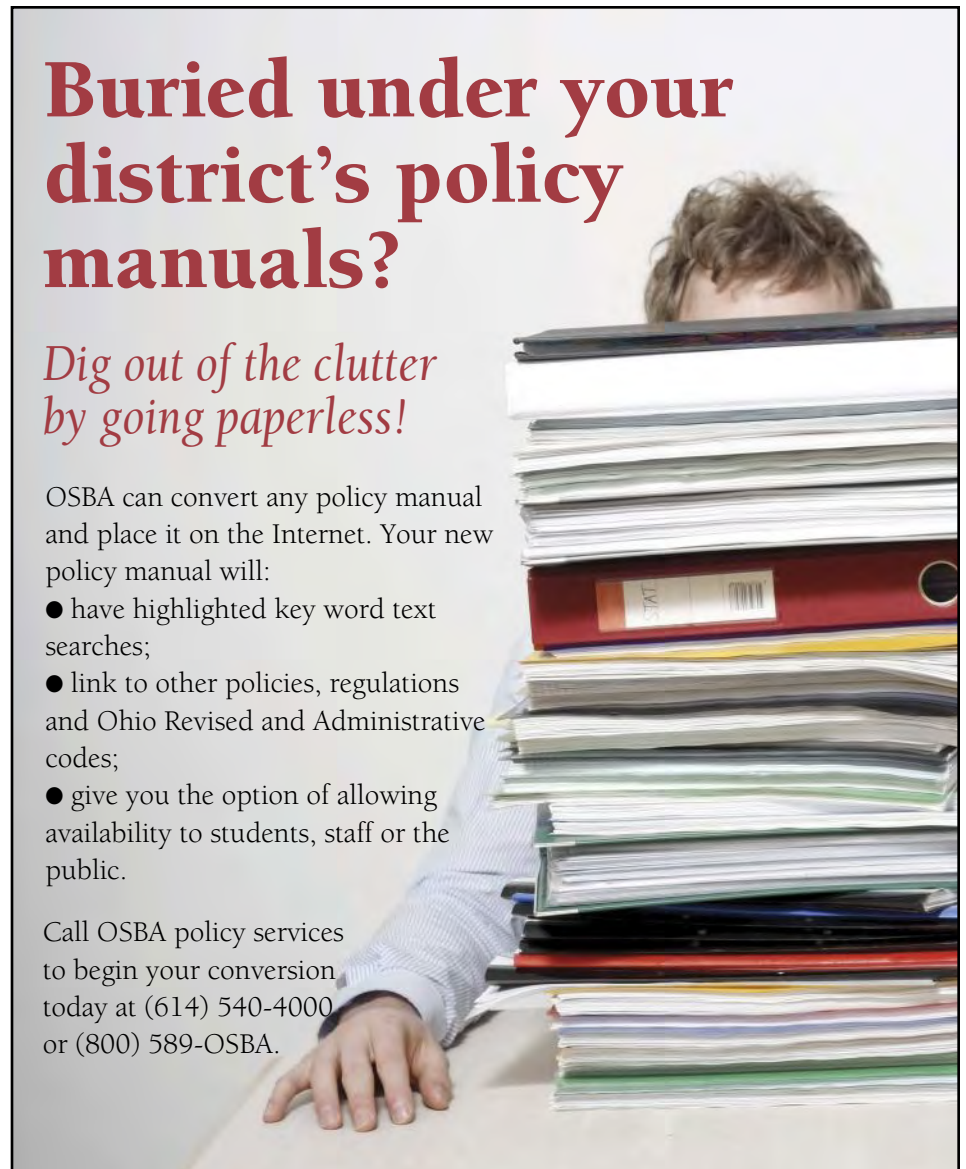
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# Building a legacy



*Piece by piece*

*Kathy LaSota, director of school board services*

**C**lose your eyes and think. Go back to the day you decided to become a school board member. Something motivated you.

Perhaps it was a group of friends or neighbors who suggested your skills were just what the school district needed. Maybe it was a personal experience working on a volunteer school project that got you thinking. Or, it could have been that you were simply motivated by a passion to serve.

No matter the reason, you jumped in with both feet and are now knee deep in policy, mandates and decisions that could transform your community for a lifetime. Whether you are at the end of your term or just starting on this journey, you came to the board with a certain reputation, something you were known for. Now it is time to think about what you will leave behind when you go. It is time to ask yourself if you know what you want your legacy to be — and whether you're on your way to achieving it.

In the December 2007 issue of *The School Administrator* magazine, **Robert Galford** wrote, “Your legacy doesn’t appear out of nowhere at the end of your career. Your legacy is today.” Galford goes on to write that your leadership legacy — how you balance the short term and long term, and the influence you have on the thoughts, actions and lives of the people you lead — is being built now.

*How will your work on the board impact what people do tomorrow, next year and long after your service?*

As a board member, you have a long arm of influence. It extends beyond the boardroom to the entire student population and out into the community. It also extends out in time.

Your actions and decisions will affect your community’s quality of life for generations to come.

How will your work on the board impact what people do tomorrow, next year and long after your service? Will they be better educators and leaders? Will the district be a better place to teach and learn? Will residents thrive in a vibrant and productive environment because of your steadfast advocacy for public education?

There are various ways you can ensure your board service legacy makes your schools and communities better places. Start with these five as food for thought.

*Earn your respect:* Respect is something you earn through your behavior and ability to learn. Appreciate the opinions of those with whom you disagree. Understand what motivates others and have patience with ideas different from yours. Your community will often judge the quality of your schools by the behavior of the board. Give them something to be proud of.

*See the forest through the trees:* The more the school board concentrates on its vision, the less it will be involved in day-to-day activities. Boards set goals, monitor implementation and communicate progress. Micromanaging — “majoring in the minors” — is a waste of precious time in the legacy-building process.

*Check politics at the boardroom door:* School board service is grassroots democracy at its best — or worst — depending on how politics play in your community. School boards can

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be crippled by partisan infighting and the district can slowly falter as a lack of leadership and vision creates chaos.

**Nicholas D. Caruso Jr.**, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education senior staff associate for field services, has this recommendation: “If you have a political board, I suggest you each get a blank sheet of paper, write your political affiliation on it, have someone collect them and throw them out the meeting room door! Leave politics out of board business, it doesn’t belong there.”

*Use policy as your book of law:* Policy is the only substantive thing you leave behind — the board’s legacy to the community. Rarely is there *no* connection to policy in a board decision. In fact, if board members routinely deal with non-policy issues, they should ask themselves: “Is this the board’s job or

the administration’s?” If you find yourselves regularly overruling board policy, rewrite the policy. How can you expect your administrators, teachers and students to respect the district policy manual if the board does not?

*Never forget what is most important:* As important as serving on a board of education is, *never* forget what is most important. Board members have lost their families, homes and jobs because they spent so much time and energy on board work.

While there is something incredibly noble about serving your community’s children, remember, you don’t have to do it all. While your obligation to the board is important, learn to say no to noncritical requests for your time. When your time on the board is over, you still need a life to return to.

As a current school board member, your leadership legacy is already reflected in your stakeholders’ faces. For those of you serving or considering service to the board, you can influence your legacy by charting your course now. You are planting seeds for a legacy that will start to bear fruit now and continue to flourish for generations to come.

The greatest legacy is that which benefits the widest number of people for the longest period without limit to value. ■

*Editor’s note:* Parts of this article were adapted, with permission of the author, from “12 mistakes board members make,” by Nicholas D. Caruso Jr., senior staff associate for field services, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education. The article was originally published in the February 2001 *American School Board Journal*.

## Why I serve: OSBA leaders share what drives their dedication

Crystal Davis, editor

In this final installment of an initiative first featured in the February *Journal*, we asked OSBA Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members, “Why do you serve as a school board member?”

We asked them to tell us what motivates them to spend so much time and energy working for Ohio’s schoolchildren. We also wanted to find out what drives them to be so involved in OSBA governance and other association activities.

Following — in their own words — is why they serve:

### **Albert Haberstroh, Trumbull County ESC**

“I am a school board member because of my belief that there is individual greatness in every child. As a board member, I work to provide those opportunities and resources so every student can achieve that greatness, knowing education is their key to success.”

### **Sue Steele, Goshen Local (Clermont) and Great Oaks ITCD**

“I serve on the board ... to make sure all students get the best education possible. So many things in education have changed in the 16 years I have served on the school board. Every day brings new challenges for public education.

“The mandate to measure student learning gains is an opportunity to focus resources on determining learning goals, assessing student

progress and then aligning our professional development to fill in the gaps. As new funding systems are instituted, I feel it is vital to keep our public officials informed of the implication of their decisions on our school districts and students.

“I am so fortunate to serve. I get to see the students as they begin their educational journey and then watch as they continue on for 12 more years. There is no greater feeling for a board member than to watch each and every student receive their diploma, and know that you are a part of getting those students to that point in their life.

“My thanks to the people in my community and the awesome staff ... for allowing me to be a part of the future of our students. The emotional rewards I receive as a board member are great.”

### **Hanifah Kambon, Columbus City**

“I serve to give back. As a retired teacher of 30 years, it warmed my heart to teach and reach hundreds of students. There is nothing more exciting than seeing the growth of students in nine months! As I provided instruction to them, they taught me about passion, about teaching, about diversity, about learning, about ability, about fun, about love, about family and about the value of teaching for the future!

“Who wouldn’t want to return the favor? Giving back is a way of life for me.” ■



*Constitutional changes?*

# Could a key school-funding principle be at risk?

*Damon Asbury, director of legislative services*

**A**s you know, the 1851 Ohio Constitution charges the state to secure “a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state.” Is that bedrock principle underlying Ohio public education funding at risk as a new Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission gets under way?

This is a key question the public education community must ask. Since there are no professional K-12 educators on the commission, who will speak for public schools? It must be school board members, administrators and other educators. They must faithfully attend and monitor commission meetings and reports. They must keep their legislators and communities apprised of any public education concerns that arise as the constitutional commission moves ahead with its work.

What do you know about our Ohio Constitution? When was it adopted? Is it a static document or has it ever been changed? If so, how does it get reviewed and changed or amended? Who is involved?

Well, believe it or not, state law requires voters be asked every 20 years if the constitution should be reviewed and revised. The period of 2011 through 2021 has been established as the time frame for a fresh look at the constitution, although most of the work to date has been organizational.

The Ohio Constitution has been modified several times since it was first adopted in 1802. Since then, there have been four major efforts to rewrite or modify it, including the 1850-1851

convention; the 1870 convention; the 1912 convention; and the constitutional commission in the 1970s.

These efforts generally resulted in piecemeal changes. The 1870 convention led to a rewritten constitution that was ultimately rejected by the voters. The 1912 convention saw the adoption of 34 amendments, including the right to initiative by voter petition.

The Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission is now beginning its substantive work after a year of organizing and preparations. This is the first such effort since the 1970-1977 commission.

*State law requires voters be asked every 20 years if the constitution should be reviewed and revised.*

The new commission, modeled after the 1970s Ohio Constitutional Revision Commission, was established in Ohio Revised Code 103.61 with the passage of House Bill (HB) 188 in the 129th General Assembly. The commission is charged with:

- studying the Ohio Constitution;
- promoting an exchange of experiences and suggestions respecting desired changes in the constitution;
- considering problems pertaining to amending the constitution;

- making recommendations from time to time to the General Assembly for amending the constitution.

A commission recommendation is void unless it receives a two-thirds vote of the commission’s membership. In the event of a call for a constitutional convention, the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission must report to the General Assembly its recommendations for organizing a convention and report to the convention its recommendations for amending the constitution.

The Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission must make reports to the General Assembly at least every two years until its work is completed. HB 188 specifies that the commission must complete its work on or before July 1, 2021, and shall cease to exist at that time. The terms of all members expire July 1, 2021.

**Steven Steinglass**, a constitutional scholar and dean emeritus of the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law at Cleveland State University, has been appointed to serve as the director of the work. According to Steinglass, constitutional changes recommended by conventions, commissions and submissions by the General Assembly fare better than voter-initiated amendments. Only 18 of 67 voter-initiated petitions, or 27%, have been approved, as compared to 102 of 150, or 68%, of the amendments submitted by the General Assembly. The 1912 convention and the 1970s constitutional commission experienced success rates of 80%.

Decisions continue to be made as to how the modernization commission will be organized and operated. An annual appropriation of \$550,000 is included in the current biennial budget request.

The commission will include several standing committees that will address such issues as the Ohio Bill of Rights and voting; education; the legislative, judicial and executive branches; public institutions and local government; finance, taxation and economic development; and relaying information to the public.

The commission is composed of 32 members, including 11 legislators and 21 members of the general public. Serving as co-chairs are House Speaker **William G. Batchelder** (R-Medina) and Rep. **Vernon Sykes** (D-Akron). Other legislative members are: Rep. **Ron Amstutz** (R-Wooster); Sen. **Capri S. Cafaro** (D-Hubbard); Rep. **Kathleen Clyde** (D-Kent); Senate President **Keith Faber** (R-Celina); Rep. **Matt Huffman** (R-Lima); Sen. **Shannon Jones** (R-Springboro); Sen. **Larry Obhof** (R-Medina); Sen. **Michael J. Skindell** (D-Lakewood) and Sen. **Charleta B. Tavares** (D-Columbus).

The 21 public commission members include practicing attorneys, six professors (law, political science and religion), four current or former politicians and one labor leader. No educators are on the commission.

The public members are: **Janet Gilligan Abaray** (Cincinnati); **Herb Asher** (Columbus); **Roger Beckett** (Ashland); **Karla Bell** (Shaker Heights); **Paula Brooks** (Upper Arlington); **Douglas Cole** (Upper Arlington); **Jo Ann Davidson** (Reynoldsburg); **Patrick Fischer** (Cincinnati); **Judith French** (Grandview Heights); **Edward Gilbert** (Akron); **Charles Kurfess** (Perrysburg); **Larry Macon** (Cleveland); **Fred Mills** (Upper Arlington); **Dennis Mulvihill** (Hudson); **Dennis Murray** (Sandusky); **Chad Readler** (Columbus); **Joseph Rugola**

(Columbus); **Richard Saphire** (Dayton); **Robert Taft** (Columbus); **Kathleen Trafford** (Columbus); and **Richard Walinski** (Toledo).

The Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission meets on

the second Thursday of every month. The topics to be considered during this lengthy process are essentially unlimited, but early indications suggest that redistricting, term limits and tax policy will be up for discussion. ■

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# OSBA encourages citizens to seek school board seats

*Cheryl W. Ryan, deputy director of school board services*

In most Ohio towns and cities, the school district is a focal point and among their greatest “calling cards.” Serving as a public school board member is one of the most important responsibilities a citizen can take on to support his or her local community. Ohio’s school board members make up one of the largest groups of elected officials in the state and are charged with a major responsibility — governing their local schools in a way that provides the best possible educational opportunity for *all*

students in their district.

School board members are truly public servants. This is a role that can be satisfying, but also demands commitment, energy and ability. The more than 3,400 men and women who serve on Ohio’s school boards dedicate their time and talents to guide the education of 1.8 million young people. Those elected to school boards make decisions that truly impact the community’s quality of life and its efficient use



*Board members can help ensure all students in their districts receive a high-quality education that prepares them for the future.*



of tax dollars.

Board members are policymakers, not education professionals. They come from all walks of life and all career fields. They are bankers, police officers, attorneys, soccer dads, football moms, retailers, farmers, volunteers, retirees, educators and former educators.

They do not manage the day-to-day operations of a school district, but see to it that the system is well managed. They ensure that those who *are* education professionals are able to do their best work for the district. Board members are directly responsible for hiring and evaluating the district's superintendent and treasurer. They are the chief advisers to the superintendent on community attitudes.

The Ohio School Boards Association is making an all-out effort to encourage qualified and interested citizens to consider seeking seats on their local boards. Residents interested in running for school board this year must file petitions with their local boards of elections by 4 p.m., Aug. 7 for the Nov. 5 general election.

The association has sent county boards of elections and school district superintendents information on school board elections, school board member roles and responsibilities, and OSBA's candidate training programs and candidate kits. Any of these materials can be obtained through a call to your local school district or OSBA. Following the election, the association will offer a series of seminars for newly elected school board members.

Veteran OSBA staff will present a series of five Board Candidate Workshops around the state designed specifically for those who have decided to seek a school board seat. The workshops are scheduled for Aug. 20, Aug. 22, Aug. 27, Sept. 5 and Sept. 7.

Individuals considering a run for the school board can attend a free Pre-Board Candidate Workshop at OSBA's offices in Columbus on Saturday, July 20, from 10 a.m. to noon. The session will cover the roles and responsibilities of school board members. It also will provide an overview on how to run an appropriate campaign, examining such topics as filing information, financial guidelines and reporting requirements. The workshop is designed for new board candidates, as well as current board members who were appointed to office between elections and have not yet run a campaign. Space is limited, so contact OSBA soon to register for this free session.

For those who decide to run, OSBA's Board Candidate Workshops will provide expert guidance on the nuts and bolts of being a board member, along with discussions on



*School board members come from all walks of life and all career fields.*

board member ethics and behavior. Topics include:

- roles and responsibilities;
- relationships with superintendent and staff;
- board meetings;
- board communications;
- board decision-making;
- educational issues;
- conflicts of interest;
- compatibility of public offices and positions;
- locally developed policies;
- collective bargaining agreements;
- campaigning.

Board Candidate Workshop tuition is \$90. In addition to presentations and a chance to interact with other candidates, attendees will receive a board candidate kit, which includes: *Candidate: A practical guide to running for school board*; a subscription to the *OSBA Journal*, the premier bimonthly magazine for school board members; a subscription to *Briefcase*, a semimonthly newsletter, which includes OSBA's "Legislative Report," a summary of key education legislation; and other useful materials.

For more information about the pre-candidate or board candidate workshops, see the ad on page 49, or contact OSBA Senior Events Manager **Laurie Miller** at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or [Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org). Information also may be found on OSBA's website, [www.ohioschoolboards.org](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org), by scrolling down to the OSBA Events tab and clicking on "View all events." ■

*Editor's note:* For more information on OSBA's board candidate resources, visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org/candidate-for-school-boards](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/candidate-for-school-boards).

# Sharing services



# on the rise

Gary Motz,  
managing editor

Ohio school districts have been sharing services for decades. However, economic necessity has spurred a sharp increase in recent years.

Districts have seen drastic reductions in state and federal funding over the last biennium. Further funding is being lost to the rapid growth of for-profit charter schools and expanding school voucher programs.

In addition, increased unemployment and plummeting property values caused by the global recession diminished districts' community support at the ballot and eroded local tax bases. This has forced deep cuts in staffing, programs and services. This combination of punches has challenged some districts to maintain even the barest minimum of educational programming.

As funding grows scarcer, costs continue to climb and school districts run out of places to cut. Education leaders are increasingly turning to each other for solutions. The June *Journal* takes a look at some of the many ways Ohio school districts are reducing costs by sharing services and staff, stretching their dollars through purchasing pools and cooperatives, and partnering on a number of other initiatives. This issue also offers resources for school districts seeking to learn more about shared services.

We will examine purchasing cooperatives, pooling programs, and other collaborations. We'll also explore the leading role ESCs play in shared services, innovative ways districts are cutting transportation costs, the growing trend of sharing superintendents and treasurers, and other cooperative ventures.

Recent calls from think tanks and others for school districts to combine resources and share services have failed to recognize how widespread the practice already is. A 2010 study, "Restoring Prosperity: Transforming Ohio's Communities for the Next Economy," by the Brookings Institution and Greater Ohio Policy Center, even went so far as to recommend eliminating at least 200 Ohio school districts through consolidation, suggesting substantial savings would result.

OSBA rebutted that contention and came to the defense of local control with its 2011 study — "School Consolidation."

That study found that "... (T)he evidence concerning the actual resulting savings from school consolidation is mixed at best. An analysis of public school expenditures in Ohio reveals that while small school districts may spend more dollars per pupil on administrative expenses, they actually spend less per pupil on total expenditures, with no loss in quality of educational outcomes.

"Shared services and purchasing cooperatives appear to be a more promising approach to saving money, while preserving a sense of community identity."

In a separate response to the Brookings study, the Education Tax Policy Institute, an independent research organization founded by OSBA, noted that "Ohio schools have created 10 regional cooperative initiatives for shared services ... offering 67 different kinds of cooperative service arrangements. ... Through these cooperatives, Ohio school districts can participate in a total of 245 cooperative purchasing opportunities."

OSBA — with the many programs it offers — has promoted cost savings through pooling and cooperative services for years. From electricity, insurance and workers' compensation pools to online board governance, legislative initiatives and legal partnerships, OSBA has harnessed the collective power of its membership to save Ohio school districts tens of millions of dollars.

The association also worked with Gov. **John Kasich's** administration and education and local government representatives from around the state on "Beyond Boundaries: A Shared Services Action Plan for Ohio Schools and Governments." The 2012 plan's objective is to provide a blueprint to promote cost-effective collaborations that increase efficiency and deliver better educational and government services.

OSBA pledges to continue seeking ways to help school districts maximize their resources and ensure efficient operations. The more districts can save on administrative and operational costs, the more money they can direct to their classrooms. And, that serves the ultimate goal of public education — increasing student achievement and preparing Ohio's children for the future. ■

# The power of partnerships



## *Purchasing cooperatives save districts millions*

*Gary Motz, managing editor*

**P**urchasing cooperatives have long offered Ohio schools opportunities to cut costs while providing the goods and services so essential to successful school operations. Hundreds of districts belong to these cooperatives.

By taking advantage of these programs, districts demonstrate they are sound stewards of taxpayer money, which strengthens community support. And, by saving on noninstructional costs, they can devote more funding to their classrooms.

Purchasing cooperatives bring together a group of buyers with common needs in goods and services. By aggregating purchasing needs, cooperatives can negotiate better pricing for their members by offering vendors high-volume sales opportunities.

In addition to saving school districts money, cooperatives save time by centralizing many purchases. This reduces the

administrative resources districts spend buying goods and services. Cooperatives also provide the advantage of market-savvy purchasing professionals whose experience and knowledge enables them to negotiate the lowest possible prices.

Let's take a look at a sampling of these programs to see how they enable school districts to do more with less and, in turn, allow them to increase their focus on student achievement.

### **Metropolitan Educational Council**

The Columbus-based Metropolitan Educational Council (MEC) has been helping schools harness their collective purchasing power since 1972. Its 204 school district members serve nearly 450,000 students. In addition to being a purchasing cooperative, MEC also is the site of one of the more than 20 Information Technology Centers serving districts around Ohio, and a member of the Management

Council of the Ohio Educational Computer Network.

“The purpose of the council is to save our members time and money through the economy of scale,” said MEC Purchasing Coordinator **Chris Reed**. “That makes it possible to really ratchet down prices on a lot of goods and services. The school districts would be spending a lot more if they were making these purchases on their own.”

The council offers everything from buses, food, natural gas and office supplies to science, art and physical education equipment. It also partners with the Ohio Council of Educational Purchasing Consortia (OCEPC) and the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA), which helps bring national purchasing power to its members.

“When you look at a district’s operating budget, 85% is tied up in salaries and benefits, which is fairly typical,” said MEC Executive Director **James Grube**. “We offer almost everything else the remaining 15% of the budget is used for.”

The MEC Governing Board oversees and approves the council’s programs and services. The board is supported by specialized committees that evaluate proposed offerings. Representatives from MEC member districts comprise both the board and committees.

“All of the decisions are made by committee and sent to the board for approval,” Grube said. “So, if it’s a food service bid, a committee of food service directors studies the bid and makes recommendations. We also have a purchasing committee that is made up of school business managers.”

School districts save a lot of administrative time and effort by coordinating their purchases through MEC. The council provides the expertise to handle everything from bids and advertising to product reviews and legal work. It also intervenes for districts if problems arise.

“If there are issues with a vendor, we go to bat for our districts and try to get things resolved,” Grube said. “So, it’s not just one individual district saying, ‘I’m getting poor service,’ it’s MEC, which might represent a huge volume of that vendor’s business. Vendors realize that if they have to address something with us, it’s serious and they follow through.”

Grube and Reed have been working to spread the word about the benefits of purchasing cooperatives to more school districts. Grube said that despite their widespread popularity, many districts aren’t taking full advantage of cooperatives.

“I think in some cases there’s been a lack of use because folks don’t always know everything we can do for them,” Grube said. “So we are trying to get out and tell them what we’re doing so they can feel confident and trust that we’re going to deliver.”

“There’s always going to be a chance that somebody’s going to beat a price on any given day. But if you’re regularly purchasing through our programs you’re going to save money, you’re going to be ahead and we’re going to make sure you’re getting good performance and follow-through from vendors.”

### **Unified Purchasing Cooperative of the Ohio River Valley**

The Unified Purchasing Cooperative of the Ohio River Valley was launched in 1963 when five Hamilton County school districts joined together to buy classroom and office supplies, audiovisual equipment and other commonly used items, said Director **Kenneth Koester**. Since then, its membership has grown to 56 public school districts and 48 nonpublic schools in Brown, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren counties. The districts serve approximately 185,000 students. Based in Cincinnati, it also counts about 50 schools in southeastern Indiana and northern Kentucky among its membership.

“In addition to pooling purchasing power to obtain the best prices for quality products and services, the cooperative serves as a resource on purchasing issues and their relevance to business operations,” Koester said. “It also provides in-service programs on purchasing, product information and government regulations.”

Koester estimates the cooperative’s members make \$25 to \$30 million in purchases each year. The offerings range from

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custodial, nursing, office, electrical and classroom supplies to audiovisual equipment, cafeteria food, natural gas, vehicle fuel and more. The cooperative also offers savings through its relationships with OCEPC and AEPA.

“The cooperative is a member-driven organization,” Koester said. “It is the membership that ultimately decides what products and services are made available. To assist in the process, member committees have been established to test products, review and analyze bid responses and make contract award recommendations.”

### **Southeastern Ohio Voluntary Education Cooperative**

Founded in 1972, the Southeastern Ohio Voluntary Education Cooperative (SEOVEC) provides computing services to school districts in Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Meigs, Morgan, Perry and Washington counties. Additional counties participate in its cooperative purchasing program. SEOVEC serves as an Information Technology Center and is a member of MCOECN.

### **Purchasing cooperative contacts**

- Ashtabula/Mahoning/Trumbull County Purchasing Cooperative  
(440) 576-9023  
<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/82515>
- Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies  
[www.aepacoop.org](http://www.aepacoop.org)
- Metropolitan Educational Council  
(614) 473-8300  
[www.mecdc.org](http://www.mecdc.org)
- Ohio Council of Educational Purchasing Consortia  
[www.ocepc.org](http://www.ocepc.org)
- Ohio Mid-Eastern Regional Education Service Agency  
(740) 283-2050  
[www.omeresa.net](http://www.omeresa.net)
- Ohio Schools Council  
(216) 447-3100  
[www.osconline.org](http://www.osconline.org)
- Southeastern Ohio Voluntary Education Cooperative  
(740) 594-7663  
[www.seovec.org](http://www.seovec.org)
- Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council  
(937) 890-3725  
(800) 589-6684  
[www.epcschools.org](http://www.epcschools.org)
- Stark County Schools Council of Governments  
(330) 492-8136  
[www.starkcouncilofgov.org](http://www.starkcouncilofgov.org)
- Unified Purchasing Cooperative of the Ohio River Valley  
(513) 728-7924  
(800) 452-6836  
[www.upcorv.org](http://www.upcorv.org)

The cooperative serves about 79,000 students in 23 public school districts, four nonpublic districts and two ESCs. It provides a wealth of software and data management services, including systems administration, fiscal, student, library and Education Management Information System services.

Its cooperative purchasing program operates through a partnership with OCEPC and AEPA. The catalog includes audiovisual and library equipment; food; buses; natural gas; and medical, musical, science, paper and janitorial supplies. The cooperative also offers a dental care consortium and consult-a-doctor care.

“By acting as a cooperative, we save school districts money by consolidating group purchases and reducing costs on larger software license purchases,” said **Jimmy Battrell**, SEOVEC chief executive officer and director. “We can provide better customer service since we are small and know our districts well. We are a one-stop shop and try to provide the most cost-effective service at the highest level of customer satisfaction.”

### **Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council**

Based in Vandalia, the Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council serves nearly 280,000 students in 127 school districts in 20 western Ohio counties. Launched in 1968, the council offers savings on goods and services such as audiovisual equipment; drug and alcohol testing; bus driver physicals; cafeteria products; library books; natural gas; buses; furniture; and classroom, transportation and building supplies.

Members spend more than \$200 million annually through the cooperative and save an estimated 30% to 40% by pooling their purchasing power to lower prices, according to **Ken S. Swink**, council executive director.

“We bring tremendous value to our member school districts,” Swink said. “We strive to work closely with the other cooperatives in Ohio through the Ohio Council of Educational Purchasing Consortia and nationally through the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies.

“Our services and supplies programs are run by committees made up of volunteers from our member school districts who determine the needs of their fellow members. Besides tremendous price savings, time is another great savings for each of our member school districts.” ■

*Editor’s note:* There are several other Ohio purchasing cooperatives that were not profiled in this article. They include: the Ashtabula/Mahoning/Trumbull County Purchasing Cooperative; Ohio Mid-Eastern Regional Education Service Agency; Ohio Schools Council; and Stark County Schools Council of Governments. See “Purchasing cooperative contacts” (at left) for more information on these cooperatives and others mentioned in this article.

# OSBA a longtime leader in pooling programs



*Gary Motz, managing editor*

Ohio school districts have long looked to OSBA for the best value in services. And nowhere has that value been greater than in the pooling programs the association offers.

Whether it's electricity purchasing, workers' compensation services or insurance programs, OSBA leads the way in savings, quality and efficiency. These pooling programs enable schools to take advantage of more competitive pricing through the collective purchasing power of OSBA's 713 member districts.

## **Power4Schools**

The association's electricity purchasing pool was launched in 2001, following the deregulation of Ohio's electricity market. Now known as Power4Schools, the OSBA-endorsed program saved 230 participating Ohio school districts nearly \$30 million last year — an average of \$130,000 per district.

Power4Schools is provided through a partnership of OSBA and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) and Ohio Schools Council. In addition to offering districts significant savings on electric bills, the program also provides budget certainty by allowing them to lock in rates.

"The collective purchasing power school districts bring to this program provides significant and ongoing savings," said OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis**. "But it not only saves money, it also provides budget predictability, which helps treasurers prepare more accurate financial forecasts and protects districts from price spikes."

A new partnership of Power4Schools and another OSBA-endorsed program, SchoolDude, will add to districts' electricity savings by increasing energy efficiency. SchoolDude provides Web-based energy conservation tools that enable districts to track and analyze utility use.

For more information on Power4Schools and SchoolDude, see "Energy programs power district savings" on page 31.

## **Workers' comp program offers value and savings**

OSBA also collaborates with OASBO to offer members the largest and most stable workers' compensation pool in the state. The program — SchoolComp — provides more reliable quotes and greater savings than any program of its type.

The two associations endorse the program and partner with third-party administrator CompManagement Inc. to provide a variety of programs that lower districts' workers' compensation premiums. CompManagement has nearly 30 years of experience in providing these services to Ohio employers of all sizes.

SchoolComp offers risk management services, unemployment claims processing and representation, and training and consultation on loss prevention and health and safety issues. Nearly 450 school districts participate in the program, and they have realized \$205 million in savings since 1991.

Risk management services are designed to save districts money on Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) claims, reduce the number of injury claims and reduce the time injured employees are off work. SchoolComp benefits include:

- a group rating program, with discounts ranging from 15% to the maximum discount allowed by BWC;
- a group retrospective rating program, offering estimated refund adjustments ranging from 25% to 45% for districts that do not qualify for group rating;
- up to a 4% rebate for districts that actively participate in a local safety council and reduce the frequency and severity of their claims;
- discounts of 4% to 7% for districts implementing programs to address use and misuse of drugs and alcohol;
- workplace wellness grants to implement wellness

activities that return injured workers to work quicker and reduce the severity and frequency of claims;

- a deductible program with discounts of up to 77% for large deductible plans and 26% for small deductible plans in exchange for agreeing to pay a set amount of claim costs;
- administrative, safety and transitional work discounts ranging from 1% to 10%.

“As sponsors, OSBA and OASBO have sought to develop programs available to all member districts that are comprehensive, provide the maximum savings possible and are carefully managed and honestly marketed,” said **Van D. Keating**, OSBA director of management services. “As associations, we constantly advocate with the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation for our members’ benefit and work closely with our third-party administrator, CompManagement, to deliver the best level of service. As participants in the public education arena, we realize the impact risk management can have on school budgets and employee health and safety.”

SchoolComp participants also have access to unemployment compensation management services. These include claims processing, client education, coordination of ancillary services, customized reporting and representation at hearings.

In addition, the program offers safety and loss control training and consultation. CompManagement experts provide risk, health and safety management support to help districts maintain regulatory self-compliance, improve workplace safety and limit injuries.

CompManagement also provides management care organization (MCO) services. These include medically managing workers’ compensation claims, around-the-clock claims reporting and access to vocational rehabilitation counselors and local managed care specialists.

“Workers’ compensation for public school districts in Ohio is best thought of as a single program with multiple aspects,” Keating said. “There are groups, retro rating, self-insurance, unemployment and managed care organizations (MCOs), to name some of the better-known pieces.

“And, unique to Ohio, school districts have the opportunity to sign up for service providers annually, except for the MCO, which is every two years. Therefore, schools should be very aware of how they are performing on a yearly basis. Similarly, districts also can evaluate how their program performs and whether it is living up to expectations or promises.

“SchoolComp strives for accuracy and has an unmatched track record for delivering results. That’s what our members

expect and, as sponsors, that’s what we have to deliver. We set out to design the best program for schools and I firmly believe SchoolComp delivers just that, so I invite all of our members to consider participating. You can’t do any better.”

*OSBA’s dozens of other services and programs also provide savings through the collective power of membership in a large, not-for-profit, statewide group.*

#### **Insurance programs? OSBA has you covered**

Another area in which OSBA helps districts maximize their resources through the power of pooling is insurance. These programs reduce premium costs and offer outstanding value and service.

The Ohio School Plan (OSP) was created in 2002 following the abrupt withdrawal of a major insurance company from the school market. OSBA, BASA and OASBO collaborated to launch and endorse the not-for-profit program to offer schools stable, affordable and comprehensive insurance coverage.

The plan serves a pool of approximately 265 school districts. It is administered by Hylant Administrative Services, part of the Hylant Group, which ranks among the 30 largest insurance brokers in the nation.

The plan offers school districts long-term stability and competitive rates for fleet, liability, property, crime, casualty and violence coverage. It also includes a unique plan that covers violent incidents. In addition, districts have access to on-site risk management consulting, bus driver in-service training and a legal hotline at no additional cost.

The Ohio School Plan also offers a number of Web resources at [www.ohioschoolplan.org](http://www.ohioschoolplan.org). They include quarterly newsletters; claims reporting tips and reminders; data security updates; upcoming OSP events; webinars and updates on timely topics; and a page of important links.

“The Ohio School Plan has been offering outstanding, affordable coverage to the state’s school districts for more than a decade,” Lewis said. “A major strength of the plan is that it is governed by Ohio school officials. The board of directors is made up of school board members, superintendents, treasurers and business managers from a diverse group of school districts that participate in the plan. These representatives know what schools need, which has enabled the plan to better target its services by developing



highly specialized insurance coverage.”

Another strength is that part of each district’s premium benefits program members by building equity in the plan. This growing equity — currently about \$2.6 million — enables OSP to increase membership value by providing additional services, increased rate stability and other benefits.

Other types of insurance are available through the OSBA Insurance Agency. The agency offers a number of services to school board members and school district administrators and their dependents. As a value-added membership service, all board members of districts belonging to OSBA receive free accidental death and dismemberment insurance (AD&D) through Prudential. The \$100,000 AD&D policy covers school board members when they are conducting board business, on school property or traveling in their capacity as board members.

The agency also offers personal AD&D coverage to board members and their families at affordable rates. This policy extends board members’ existing \$100,000 coverage to apply at all times, not only while on school board business. Board members who purchase personal AD&D for themselves also may buy the coverage for their spouses and children.

In addition, the OSBA Insurance Agency offers business travel and personal AD&D insurance for school district administrative staff and their dependents. Employees who purchase the insurance for themselves are eligible to buy coverage for their dependents at low group rates.

“OSBA’s AD&D coverage is a high-quality, very low-cost benefit,” said OSBA Chief Financial Officer **Janice Smith**. “For just \$4.55 a month, an entire family can be covered for a year.”

Another area of OSBA Insurance Agency coverage is group term life and voluntary disability insurance provided through Assurant Employee Benefits. These policies are offered to school districts to provide to their employees as a group benefit.

Assurant’s policies offer a range of flexible plan options to fit the unique needs of school districts. This enables a district to design its own plan from a variety of schedule options.

### **Membership itself taps the power of pooling**

It’s not only the pooling programs that save OSBA members money, it’s also the dozens of other services and programs that provide savings through the collective power of membership in a large, not-for-profit, statewide group.

These include legislative advocacy at the state and federal levels; access to OSBA’s attorneys; information on issues critical to school management; and consultation with experts in labor and management relations, human resource management, board policy, communication, technology and finance.

For districts that need additional help, OSBA has developed a variety of fee-based services. By charging affordable fees for services that not every member district needs, OSBA can keep its membership dues among the lowest of any state school boards associations in the nation. Visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org) to learn more. ■

## Contacts for OSBA pooling programs

### Power4Schools

- **Amanda Finney**, OSBA senior marketing coordinator  
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(614) 540-4000
- **Eyad Gheith**, FirstEnergy Solutions program representative  
(330) 315-7392

### SchoolDude

- **Amanda Finney**, OSBA senior marketing coordinator  
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- **Bryan Coble**, SchoolDude regional manager  
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(877) 868-3833
- [www.schooldude.com](http://www.schooldude.com)

### SchoolComp

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### Ohio School Plan

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- [www.ohioschoolplan.org](http://www.ohioschoolplan.org)

### OSBA Insurance Agency

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- <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/28189>

# Shared services yield

Ohio public schools have been hit with a depressed economy, diminished funding and declining revenues over the past several years, which has made it challenging to continue to offer the high-quality instruction and services residents have come to expect. Money, in short, is hard for school districts to come by, so school boards and school administrators are putting an increased emphasis on finding ways to stretch every dollar.

For decades, Ohio public schools have embraced shared services as a way to cut costs and increase efficiencies. The recent funding challenges facing schools in the state and nation have brought greater attention to these efforts, and encouraged districts to look for additional efficiencies.

Many Ohio districts currently are sharing services through partnerships with neighboring school systems or county, city and township governments, which have felt the pinch of the recession as well. These collaborations have resulted in major cost savings for taxpayers. Here are just a few examples of ways Ohio school districts have partnered with ESCs, local governments and community groups to share services and cut costs in recent years.

All figures represent annual cost savings from shared services initiatives unless noted otherwise. ■

**\$611,000\***

North Central Ohio ESC worked with local governments to consolidate public information technology and enhance data performance and security.

**\$65,000**

Auglaize County ESC and county schools partnered to offer an Alternative High School for the region's at-risk students.

**\$178,000**

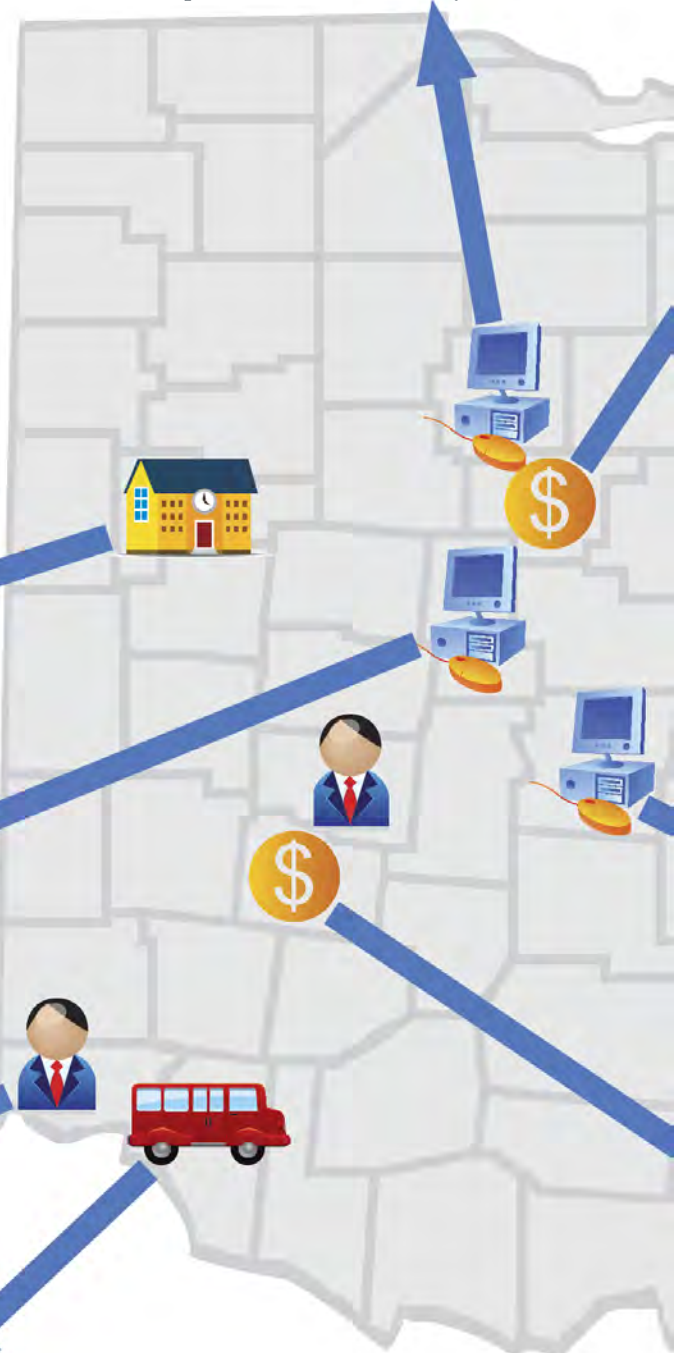
Marysville EV collaborated with the city and county government to consolidate its fiber network and operate a single, more efficient network.

**\$76,000**

New Miami Local (Butler) and Reading Community City entered an agreement to share an administrator.

**\$70,000**

Batavia Local (Clermont) and Williamsburg Local (Clermont) agreed to share a common bus garage and mechanics.



# savings for schools

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

**\$35,000**

Ridgedale Local (Marion) and River Valley Local (Marion) developed shared payroll clerk services.

**\$2.68 million\***

Wadsworth City worked with community partners to construct a facility to house a high school auditorium, field house and gym, as well as a public library, community center, senior center and hospital office complex.

**\$100,000**

Barberton City contracted with Norton City to provide bus maintenance services.

**\$175,000\***

Jackson Local (Stark) worked with a township to improve the local park system, share maintenance services and improve communications.

**\$388,000**

Orrville City and Rittman EV formed a compact to share administrators, teachers and services.

**\$633,000**

ESC of Central Ohio and North Central Ohio ESC partnered with a county board of developmental disabilities to schedule staff and services more efficiently using software.

**\$150,000**

Greene County ESC collaborated with county schools to provide training on suicide prevention, mental health issues and crisis response training.

## Beyond borders: shared services

This infographic highlights just a few of the many examples around Ohio of public school districts sharing services. In some cases, shared service initiatives are in their early stages and the cost savings are still being evaluated. Check out articles throughout this *Journal* issue for other examples of districts sharing services.

\* one-time savings

Sources: state auditor's office, [www.skinnyohio.org](http://www.skinnyohio.org), [www.mediatracking.com](http://www.mediatracking.com)



# Sharing school leaders

## Northeast Ohio districts split superintendent and treasurer

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

About five years ago, **Orrville City** and **Rittman EV** forged a partnership to share a superintendent and treasurer — a concept that was rare, if not unprecedented, at the time in Ohio.

Sharing administrators has become a more and more common practice in recent years. It's up to each school board to decide how and if the practice works in its district, and it is not always feasible. Orrville City and Rittman EV have found sharing administrators works for them and, over the years, pursued new ways to share services and additional partners in northeast Ohio for those endeavors.

The joint superintendent and treasurer for Orrville City and Rittman EV now oversee three school districts through an administrative compact. Superintendent **James "Jon" Ritchie** also works for **Southeast Local (Wayne)**. Treasurer **Mark Dickerhoof** also serves **Green Local (Wayne)**.

"It's not three times the work," Ritchie said. "You do things that streamline operations and increase efficiencies. We have three separate budgets, sports teams and boards of education, but we pool our resources to do more with less."

He said the efforts save taxpayer dollars and allow districts to direct more money to the classroom.

"There are three reasons our districts have partnered like this: to attract and retain quality staff members; to save money and continue to offer student programs; and to allow our taxpayers to see we are trying to do more with less."

The long-standing ties between Orrville City and Rittman EV have saved both districts a considerable amount of money. In addition to sharing a superintendent and

treasurer, the districts share an Education Management Information System coordinator, special education supervisor, superintendent's secretary and bus mechanic, as well as teachers and buses. They also have partnered to order materials and supplies in bulk. The collaborative efforts save the districts about \$388,000 a year.

**Doug G. Stuart**, a board member with Rittman EV and **Wayne County Schools Career Center**, said area districts are constantly looking for new ways to partner and share services.

"I'm very proud of the administrative compact and the cost savings associated with it," said Stuart, an OSBA trustee. "It keeps you off the ballot, at least it does in the Rittman area right now."

Stuart said he has received a number of calls from other school districts about shared administrators. He said he is happy to offer advice on the topic, but is quick to note it is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

"It doesn't work for everybody," Stuart said. "You have to have the right people in place. Joint superintendents or treasurers have to have the heart and compassion for all the districts they serve."

In the administrative compact, salaries for joint administrators are divided up based on each district's student enrollment. The superintendent and treasurer are evaluated once a year by each school board, and then two members from each of three boards meet together to conduct an additional review that looks at how the entire shared administrator process is going.

"From the beginning, Jon (Ritchie) made it clear he couldn't be at multiple districts at the time — and that's something all three boards understand," Stuart said. "He

can't be at every school event, but the important thing to know is that with modern technology, he is only a phone call away."

**Frank Besancon**, a board member with Green Local and Wayne County Schools Career Center, said sharing a treasurer has saved the district money and allowed it to employ a highly qualified staff member.

"We tend to be a starting ground for superintendents and treasurers who move on to bigger districts, but this agreement gives a district our size the ability to retain a strong individual," he said. "Plus, with school funding and the financial condition our state is in, you have to try and save money anytime you can."

Besancon noted that all of the districts overseen by Dickerhoof and Ritchie are collectively smaller than many mid-sized school districts. The largest district in the administrative compact, Orrville City, has 1,600 students and the smallest, Rittman EV, has 1,100 students.

"When you look at a superintendent or treasurer, you're mostly managing people and working with the community," he said. "If you're strong in those categories, it doesn't hurt to take on more school districts."

Besancon said sharing a treasurer has encouraged Green Local to look at other ways to share services. The district now shares its bus garage with and provides bus maintenance services for Wayne County Schools Career Center (for more on shared transportation services, see "Sharing services in school transportation"

on page 28).

"School districts have to be willing to put any animosity aside they might have in athletics and work together to save money," he said. "So far, it's working for our district and our area."

When it comes to athletics, what does a leader of two different school districts do when they play each other?

"I wear neutral colors that don't match either school, and I walk around the track and visit on both sides," said Ritchie. "If anyone asks, I say, 'I would love a tie.'" ■

## Ohio school districts sharing administrators

Below are districts that are sharing a superintendent and/or treasurer as of June 2013. The list is generated from the OSBA database and may not include every district that is sharing administrators.

### Superintendents

Michael E. Gray	Darke County ESC, Greene County ESC
Dr. Daniel R. Kaffenbarger	Madison-Champaign ESC, Mechanicsburg EV
Heather Neer	Logan County ESC, Shelby County ESC
James "Jon" Ritchie	Orrville City, Rittman EV, Southeast Local (Wayne)

### Treasurers

Christina Bennett	Crestview Local (Richland), Lexington Local (Richland)
Kerry M. Borger	National Trail Local (Preble), Preble County ESC
Mark Dickerhoof	Green Local (Wayne), Orrville City, Rittman EV
Lynn Ferguson	New Lebanon Local (Montgomery), Tri-County North Local (Preble)
Cary Furniss	Reading Community City, Three Rivers Local (Hamilton)
Kirk Grandy	Berne Union Local (Fairfield), Walnut Township Local (Fairfield)
Nick Hamilton	Ansonia Local (Darke), Mississinawa Valley Local (Darke), Newton Local (Miami)
James M. Hudson	Cloverleaf Local (Medina), Medina City
Ronda Johnson	Oak Hills Local (Hamilton), Wyoming City
Blaise Karlovic	Mahoning County Career and Technical Center, Mahoning County ESC
Larry W. Lifer	Clear Fork Valley Local (Richland), Lucas Local (Richland)
Scott Maruniak	Mechanicsburg EV, North Union Local (Union)
Bradley A. McKee	Greenon Local (Clark), Southeastern Local (Clark)
Daniel Schall	Valley View Local (Montgomery), Vandalia-Butler City
Michael Siebeneck	Miller City-New Cleveland Local (Putnam), Putnam County ESC
Sara Tracey	Hardin County ESC, Logan County ESC
Steve Vasek	Euclid City, Kirtland Local (Lake)
Melcie Wells	Fort Frye Local (Washington), Warren Local (Washington)



# Sharing services in school transportation

*Pete Japikse, senior transportation consultant*

As our public school administrators continue to search for cost savings and efficiencies, external groups continue to offer solutions they believe will save millions of dollars. One very popular concept has been shared services.

In 1999, Ohio commissioned a study by the accounting and business advisory firm Plante Moran to review the state's student transportation procedures. After studying two counties, it concluded merging public school transportation operations to a countywide level was not likely to be effective. The firm found this would reduce flexibility for the individual districts, cause personnel issues, and result in many conflicts of attendance times and the ability of districts to adopt their own local procedures. It found there was an opportunity for consolidating services with out-of-

district transportation for students attending nontraditional schools.

A significant finding in this study was that savings were achievable within existing transportation operations by evaluating routing scenarios and bus use.

In 2010, The Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business published a study of Ohio transportation procedures. Citing work done by the Xavier Leadership Center, the study reported privatization was not a viable solution, but that districts could make operating improvements within their existing framework. This report also suggested considering centralized management and back-office functions.

The report echoed the notion of increasing routing efficiency and achieving cost savings by reducing the bus count. This could be accomplished by adding "tiers" (additional trips) to each bus, maximizing the number of students transported while minimizing the size of the bus fleet. Interestingly, the report also called for longer bus rides, up to 70 to 90 minutes in length, to allow for the buses to pick up more students.

The study said any change to Ohio's student transportation practices must be driven from the bottom up, phased in and leveraged by technology. The study also suggested that legislative action might be needed to compel this change, seemingly in contrast with the bottom-up approach recommended.

A report issued in 2011 by Ohio Education Matters went so far as to quantify potential savings that could be achieved by changes in operations. The report recommended merging small districts, having a single school administration in a county and saving more than \$121 million in transportation costs by adopting best practices. Unfortunately the report did not go so far as to identify how to accomplish those savings, and seemed to assume that a best practice in one district would work in



*By increasing the effectiveness of our transportation administrators, we enable them to serve schools better with improved management practices and the capacity to manage for success.*

other districts with little restriction.

These notable studies all identified areas where savings could be achieved by sharing pieces of existing transportation operations without total mergers. But at the same time they pointed out that adjustments to current operations would provide the most significant cost savings. The most common recommendation in the studies is to consolidate out-of-district transportation. Only the Fisher report disclosed the impact on service by doing so — a notable increase in ride time for students.

Most school administrators will readily acknowledge that out-of-district transportation is the most costly service provided, due to the low number of students on buses and larger distances travelled. Reducing the number of buses sent out of the district would certainly produce cost savings, but must be balanced very carefully with the increased ride time that results.

With in-district traditional students riding on buses between 15 and 30 minutes, a ride time of 70 to 90 minutes for nonpublic and community school students is not likely to be accepted by families who are well-versed in the legal notion that they are entitled to the same level of service as traditional public school students. However, with careful planning and stakeholder input, some consolidation and subsequent cost savings are achievable.

Perhaps an easier place to start looking for savings is in our daily route service for traditional public school students, which represents more than 80% of the passenger volume of service provided. As identified in all of the reports previously cited, there are opportunities within this sector for savings. To find those areas, we can look within our own operations, determine what we do well and where we need help, and then consider potential solutions that are more palatable.

This starts with the premise that we have competent professionals on the job. We should look at what they do, how they get it done and see how we can help increase their effectiveness.

By increasing the effectiveness of our transportation administrators, we enable them to serve schools better with improved management practices and the capacity to manage for success.

In any review of student transportation, it becomes quickly apparent that most administrators responsible for transportation work long hours and are always on-call. Any superintendent or business manager who recently has been given the added role of transportation supervision can attest to the sheer volume of work in that role: bus drivers work

best under close supervision, parents make regular contacts about their children's bus, student discipline is a constant issue and vehicles require constant maintenance. And, there's the one given in managing a bus fleet — every bus will eventually wear out and need to be replaced.

Given this workload, it is not difficult to grasp that merging school districts into a single transportation operation does not make transportation supervision easier or more effective. In fact, bigger is most certainly not better. A common mantra among transportation administrators has been that they need more help to get their jobs done. The large work volume does, in fact, interfere with a manager's ability to manage for success.

With this in mind, there are some functions within the transportation operation that can be outsourced or shared with other schools. The goal should be to think about what tasks could be removed from the daily routine of transportation supervisors, thereby allowing them to invest more time in managing effectively. Similar to what we are doing now with drug and alcohol testing pools and driver training, we could consider pooling some of these tasks that are managed locally. Particular responsibilities that are well-suited for this include: routing, vehicle maintenance, vehicle purchase, driver in-service training, personnel management (including substitute driver training) and field trip management.

The question of where to move these tasks is not as difficult as it might appear. Staff members who excel in one or more of these areas can be found in any grouping of schools. By expanding a staff member's role within that field and having him or her provide the service for a number of other districts in addition to his or her own, we accomplish two goals: the other districts do not have to invest time on that task, allowing them to focus on other issues, and the individual who is specializing on a particular task, such as routing, can be limited to just that specialty and work with fewer distractions. In both cases, individual productivity increases, allowing schools to benefit through greater efficiency.

The key factor in implementing this effectiveness is the need for districts to meet with each other, review needs and strengths, and have the confidence to consider changes that enable them to work more effectively. While this has to be implemented from the bottom up, as cited in one of the studies mentioned earlier, it can be facilitated by an external source that is knowledgeable about the requirements, needs and existing practices in Ohio's school transportation operations.

In a matter of semantics, this is "sharing services." However, it might be more palatable and less threatening if we called it working together to achieve success. ■



# Wadsworth City school campus serves community

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

The Wadsworth High School campus is not your average school campus — it's a mixed-use development that houses a community recreation center, community television studio, public library, senior center and medical/office complex.

**Wadsworth City** Schools opened the high school and adjoining Wadsworth Community Center last fall. The northeast Ohio school district partnered with the city of Wadsworth, Summa Health System, Wadsworth Public Library and YMCA to construct a facility that serves the entire community and makes the most of taxpayer dollars.

"This all started through conversations with area leaders and a lot of spirit of cooperation," said Wadsworth City Schools Superintendent **Dale R. Fortner**. "The idea was to create a facility that serves the needs of the area and offers 'one-stop shopping' for the community."

He said the school district used its existing relationships with community partners to develop the building project. Voters approved a \$65 million bond issue in November 2008 to fund the project, which also included the construction of three new elementary schools. The bond issue was approved its first time on the ballot, a reflection of community support for the initiative.

"We built \$130 million worth of facilities and our taxpayers only paid \$65 million for it," Fortner said, noting funding from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission and local sales taxes also were used for the project. "With dollars being so tight and resources so limited, we took the opportunity to maximize our resources, personnel and expertise."

The project resulted in a one-time savings of \$2.8 million and annual savings of \$95,000 for the school district. "Why build four walls when we can build three and you can build three, and then we share a wall?" he asked.

The district has developed facility use and management

agreements with its partners. The Wadsworth Community Center comprises 70,000 square feet of the 450,000 square-foot building. It houses a YMCA-managed community recreation center, Summa Wadsworth-Rittman Hospital satellite facility, Wadsworth Public Library kiosk, Soprema Senior Center & Café and WCTV, the city's community television studio.

The collaborative nature of the campus offers students and community members a new world of opportunities.

"It's opened a lot of doors for us," Fortner said. "One of the things we've been able to do is offer intergenerational programming where high school students teach senior citizens computer skills."

*"With dollars being so tight, we took the opportunity to maximize our resources, personnel and expertise."*

The building's resources are shared among its partners. Wadsworth High School, for example, uses the YMCA's swimming pool facilities and the YMCA, in turn, uses the school's field house and track.

Fortner said Wadsworth City has received numerous calls and visits from other districts interested in pursuing collaborative building projects in their communities. His district continues to look at new ways to share services and increase efficiencies, including efforts to collaborate with schools throughout Medina County.

"The whole idea of shared services is to be efficient and maximize your dollars," Fortner said. "Even when there aren't significant cost savings to be had, it is helpful for school districts to share ideas and talk about what does and does not work." ■





Monitoring savings

# Energy programs power district savings

*Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator*

The electricity pooling program Power4Schools recently joined forces with SchoolDude, a firm that provides energy benchmarking and energy conservation software. The combined resources of the two energy programs are providing school districts with major savings and increased efficiency.

Power4Schools is jointly endorsed by OSBA, the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio Schools Council. The program serves school districts in northern Ohio and in the Duke Energy Ohio service territory, saving those districts millions of dollars on electricity costs and providing budget certainty on rates.

The partnership of Power4Schools and SchoolDude only increases the potential for savings and efficiency by giving Power4School members free access to SchoolDude's resources. This enables districts to continue reducing electricity costs while tracking energy consumption.

Power4Schools selected SchoolDude's benchmarking and energy conservation software to help identify additional savings by comparing consumption and utility costs among buildings and school districts. Power4Schools member districts can sign up to use SchoolDude's Web-based utility tracking tools to provide analysis and reports on their utility consumption and costs to identify savings opportunities. Also included in this complimentary service is the ability to track greenhouse gases, Energy Star ratings and utility use.

There are 230 Ohio public school districts participating in the Power4Schools program. Last year alone those districts saved a combined \$29.9 million on their electricity costs. Member districts currently receive a fixed price of 5.25 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity, which represents an average savings of 25% off the generation portion of a school's electricity bill.

The Power4Schools program could collectively bring as much as \$90 million in savings to participating schools over the term of the agreement. As opportunities arise, Power4Schools continues to seek ways to extend the program to other areas of the state.

School districts are already taking advantage of the cost benchmarking and analysis. **Cleveland Heights-University Heights City** Schools uses the program with much benefit and success.

"The Power4Schools and SchoolDude's programs enabled our district to track utility costs and consumption, identify and evaluate high- and low-performing buildings and identify savings opportunities and billing errors," said **George Petkac**, the district's assistant director of business services. Petkac said the programs also have helped the district evaluate utility expenditures for budgeting purposes and run historical comparison reports while tracking energy conservation efforts.

For more information about the Power4Schools program or how to integrate SchoolDude into Power4Schools, contact the author at (800) 589-OSBA, (614) 540-4000 or [afinney@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:afinney@ohioschoolboards.org). For more information about SchoolDude, visit [www.schooldude.com](http://www.schooldude.com) or contact SchoolDude Regional Manager **Bryan Coble** at (877) 868-3833 or [bryan@schooldude.com](mailto:bryan@schooldude.com). ■

## 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, ext. 241; or (800) 589-OSBA, ext. 241; or [vkeating@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:vkeating@ohioschoolboards.org).



# ESCs a vital link in Ohio's public education system

*Craig Burford, executive director, Ohio Educational Service Center Association*

Educational service delivery in Ohio is a massively complex system. Educational and related support services to Ohio schools are provided by a variety of publicly funded service providers: educational service centers (ESCs), information technology centers (ITCs) and educational technology centers.

Nevertheless, the system has been effective in meeting regional and local needs and priorities with limited resources through shared services and other collaborative models. The largest among these, Ohio's 55 ESCs, are an

important component of Ohio's State System of Support. This system includes ESCs and State Support Teams that serve as a distribution and support network to help school districts implement and sustain school improvement and other education reform efforts that improve instructional practice and increase student achievement.

## **Educational service centers**

Ohio's ESCs are defined as school districts in state law (Ohio Revised Code Section (RC) 3311.055) and local education agencies (LEAs) in federal law (20 United States Code Section 1401). ESCs were first established as county offices of education in 1914 to ensure "that every child in Ohio might attend a properly supervised school."

Over time, county offices evolved from regulatory agencies to service-oriented agencies and, in the mid-1990s, became ESCs and experienced several statutorily required mergers and consolidations. Subsequent voluntary mergers have occurred in the past decade, resulting in the current network of ESCs. Today, Ohio's ESCs employ more than 12,625 full- and part-time staff. More than 90% of those staff members are in school buildings and districts every day, providing services to students, teachers and other district personnel.

ESCs provide support and services that many districts do not have the ability or expertise to provide on their own. Last school year, ESCs served more than 1.7 million students in 614 public school districts, 234 nonpublic schools and 148 charter schools. Of these students, more than 233,000, or nearly 14% of the state's student population, received more direct, intensive and specialized services. These students range from the most gifted to the most at-risk, including special needs students and other at-risk populations such as dropouts and adjudicated youth.

ESCs also are large-scale providers of professional development to teachers, administrators and related service personnel. In the 2011-12 school year, ESCs hosted more than 6,275 different professional development activities

## ESC support services

### **ESC noninstructional support services:**

- Insurance consortia (38 ESCs)
- Group purchasing consortia (21 ESCs)
- Bus driver certification and physicals (52 ESCs)
- Teacher licensure (54 ESCs)
- Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation/FBI background checks (52 ESCs)
- Transportation (21 ESCs)
- Juvenile court liaisons (33 ESCs)
- Student attendance officers (40 ESCs)

### **ESC instructional services:**

- Itinerant special education and related services staff (55 ESCs)
- Preschool special education (53 ESCs)
- Shared teachers (38 ESCs)
- Ohio Improvement Process (52 ESCs)
- Curriculum and assessment (52 ESCs)
- Alternative schools (49 ESCs)
- Head Start (14 ESCs)
- Special education transition coordinators (35 ESCs)
- Public preschool (39 ESCs)
- After-school programs (27 ESCs)
- Summer enrichment (35 ESCs)
- Home schooling (52 ESCs)

attended by 174,000 teachers and administrators. During that same school year, for every \$1 received in state operating funding, ESCs provided \$34 in programs and services to school districts — services that districts chose to purchase from ESCs to drive down districts costs, support teaching and administrative personnel and provide direct services to students and the personnel who serve their unique needs.

### ESCs and shared services

Recognizing the importance of the ESC consortia model, House Bill (HB) 153 (129th General Assembly) required all districts with an average daily membership (ADM) of 16,000 or fewer to align to an ESC of their choice. This added 30 additional school districts to those required to align to and receive services from an ESC. In addition, HB 153 permitted the remaining seven school districts with more than 16,000 ADM to voluntarily align to an ESC. The bill also authorized ESCs to enter into service contracts with any other local political subdivision of the state.

In addition to requiring district alignment to ESCs, HB 153 included a requirement that the director of the Governor’s Office of 21st Century Education conduct a shared services survey and make recommendations relative to increased shared services through the regional education delivery system.

The shared services survey of Ohio’s school districts, regional education providers and other local political subdivisions was conducted in October 2011. More than 5,700 local political subdivisions were surveyed. There were 1,789 valid responses, a 31% response rate. In the education community, the response rate was 98%, with 598 school districts; 100% of the state’s 56 ESCs (a merger after the survey left Ohio with 55 ESCs); 22 ITCs; one science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) school; and 49 joint vocational school districts responding to the survey.

What did the survey reveal? It demonstrated that 97.45% of school districts use the services of Ohio’s ESCs. It also showed that the regional network is an important support system for schools. Smaller school districts were more likely to participate in shared services related to education instructional support, curriculum development, special education, information technology and school-based Medicaid services. Larger districts were more likely to use the system and other shared services models for purchasing and vehicle and facilities management services. ESCs are the primary provider of services to school districts.

However, the survey also revealed there are many opportunities for school districts and local governments to collaborate in more strategic ways to maintain service levels and lower costs. Why is this important? First are state and local budgetary realities. There also is an increasing demand from taxpayers for a return on their investment.



*ESCs are grouped into a 16-region structure to support state and regional school improvement initiatives.*

In addition, school districts continue to need support and assistance in a host of areas — particularly in a fiscally challenging environment. These include implementation of the third-grade reading guarantee; Race to the Top; Common Core standards; superintendent, principal and teacher evaluation systems; improved operational efficiencies; and other education reform efforts. And, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) needs a statewide system of support to provide universal access to school improvement, special education and other required support services.

### ESCs and Ohio’s State System of Support

In addition to their direct, local relationship with school districts, ESCs lead the way in deploying statewide initiatives for ODE. ESCs have provided district and building-level training around state content standards and assessments, student growth measures and learning objectives, and various other education reform initiatives. For example, more than 500 ESC personnel have been trained in the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP), Ohio’s school improvement methodology that uses a connected set of tools to continually improve instructional practice and student performance.

Sixteen ESCs also serve as State Support Teams (SSTs) under the Educational Regional Service System (ERSS) and provide school improvement services to the lowest-performing school districts, as well as universal access to districts for special education professional development and support services.

House Bill 115 (126th General Assembly) established ERSS and the 16-region structure to support state and regional



school improvement initiatives and promote a simplified approach to regional service. The purpose of the system was to support state and regional education initiatives and efforts to improve school effectiveness and student achievement.

It was the General Assembly’s intent, articulated in RC 3312.01, that the educational regional service system reduce unnecessary duplication of programs and services and provide a more streamlined and efficient delivery of educational services without reducing the availability of services school districts need. As a result, the number of regional service providers has been reduced from 181 to 85.

Other system improvements included:

- a limit of 7% on fiscal fees and State Controlling Board approval of fiscal fees exceeding 4% to drive more money to providing direct services;
- reduction in the number of contractual agreements between the state and fiscal agents;
- creation of a common set of 16 delivery regions for deploying statewide initiatives;
- creation of regional advisory councils with broad representation of education stakeholders;
- adoption of regional education delivery standards;
- annual, online evaluations of ESC fiscal agents and SSTs.

In the 2012-13 school year, the 16 SSTs served 484 public and community schools in No Child Left Behind Act differentiated accountability and 267 Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver Focus and Alert Schools across the state.

### Return on investment

Ohio’s ESCs offer a tremendous return on investment — for school districts and the state. In fiscal year 2011, for every \$1 invested by the state in the ESC operating subsidy, ESCs identified, secured and leveraged an additional \$3.72 in local, state and federal grants for client school districts.

If one factors in the estimated shared services savings as referenced in the Kasich administration’s June 2012 “Beyond Boundaries” report, the return on investment increases to more than \$5 in estimated savings and leveraged grant funds for every \$1 in state funding. This does not even take into consideration additional efficiencies and cost savings generated through the use of fractional labor and other consortia-based service models. This is a tremendous return on investment.

**Gallia-Vinton ESC** in southeastern Ohio is a leading example of how an ESC can maximize state, local and federal resources on behalf of its client school districts. This is particularly true for smaller, rural school districts that may be more reliant on ESC services. But, it also is true for larger districts that recognize the value of the economies of

### ESC return on investment

	Grand total
Funded ADM	\$1,340,112
State subsidy	\$46,500,000
Per-pupil subsidy	\$34.70
Local grants-expenditures	\$64,587,389
For every \$1 of subsidy	\$1.39
State grants-expenditures	\$20,953,371
For every \$1 of subsidy	\$0.45
Federal grants-expenditures	\$87,490,372
For every \$1 of subsidy	\$1.88
<b>Subtotal additional dollars leveraged for districts</b>	<b>\$3.72</b>

\*FY 2011 ESC Expenditure Data (Source: ODE)

scale available through the use of ESC services.

A closer examination of Gallia-Vinton ESC shows that for every \$1 in the statutorily required local funding contribution (the \$6.50 deduction) and every \$1 in state funding (per-pupil subsidy) combined, the ESC provides \$10.78 of grant-funded services and shared services savings.

How and why does this work? Because historic funding models serve as a catalyst for shared services. Those models use a state/local partnership approach, including the state subsidy and local contributions via supervisory services units, and the \$6.50 deduction. Through this model, districts have the flexibility to purchase the programs and services they need based on local needs and priorities.

### ESCs — the bottom line

ESCs are a vital component of the public education delivery system in Ohio. These organizations are more than just intermediaries. They serve as a direct line of support to both the state in the design and deployment of education initiatives, and to school districts in the implementation and long-term sustainability of these efforts.

As such, the state of Ohio should continue to support these types of shared services funding and service delivery models that maximize resources, drive efficiencies and provide high-quality programs and services to school districts and other local political subdivisions. ■

*Editor’s note:* For more information on ESCs and the Ohio Educational Service Center Association, visit [www.oesca.org](http://www.oesca.org), call (614) 846-3855 or email [info@oesca.org](mailto:info@oesca.org).

# School district collaboration, not consolidation



*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

As budgets tighten, school districts are increasingly looking at new ways to share services. Districts across Ohio have formed innovative and unique partnerships with governments, businesses and neighboring school systems to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

The heightened focus on shared services has renewed calls by some for districts to go a step further — consolidation. Some public policy advocates say consolidation would make school districts operate even more efficiently, saving taxpayer dollars. It's important to remember, however, that evidence to support this claim is mixed, at best.

A 2011 OSBA study showed that school district consolidation may actually increase the cost of educating Ohio's students. The 26-page report was researched and written by Director of Legislative Services **Damon Asbury** and Deputy Director of Legislative Services **Michelle Francis**, both from OSBA, and respected school finance experts **William P. Driscoll** and Dr. **Howard B. Fleeter**. Fleeter is an Education Tax Policy Institute consultant; Driscoll is a former institute consultant.

"The study's key findings remain true today," Asbury said. "While there are very real doubts about the cost savings associated with consolidation of Ohio public school districts, it is clear shared services are a powerful, proven way for schools to cut expenses."

The report's authors found that while small districts, on average, spend more on administrative costs per pupil, total expenditures per pupil are actually less than those of larger districts. The study also showed that consolidation wouldn't necessarily boost student achievement, noting academic performance in small districts is equal to or better than that of larger districts.

Consolidation is not a new concept in Ohio. The number of public school districts in the state has declined from 2,674 in 1915 to 614 today. Ohio school consolidation peaked during the 1950s when the legislature offered incentives to small

districts to merge or consolidate. The consolidation trend was similar in the U.S., which saw the number of school districts reduced from 117,000 in 1937 to 14,000 by 2007.

While consolidation made sense decades ago, research shows many school districts are at a point today where additional consolidation would actually raise costs. According to the OSBA study, projected savings from school district consolidation often overlook higher costs that result from "leveling up of staff salaries," additional transportation costs and front-end costs associated with the transition, such as new textbooks, equipment and technology.

The report also concluded there is little evidence to support the claim that consolidation improves student achievement, which is argued because larger districts can provide a wider variety of opportunities for students. The study found small school districts are academically competitive with larger districts, and they often have higher attendance rates and extracurricular participation, as well as lower dropout rates.

After closely examining data on Ohio public schools and consolidation, the report's authors concluded that sharing services among districts offers more promise for increasing efficiencies and reducing costs than consolidation.

School districts have long seen the benefits of collaboration through shared services. Combining resources and enacting joint purchasing agreements across regions can have the same advantages as consolidation, while allowing each school community to maintain its own unique identity. Examples include building use, transportation, scheduling, personnel, technology and attendance. ESCs, purchasing cooperatives and pooling programs offer districts many opportunities to save costs through economies of scale.

As funding challenges continue, it is likely more and more districts will seek ways to partner and curb costs.

To download the school district consolidation study, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/51778>. ■

# Making STEM



*Stebbins High School teacher Dave Jones works with a student in the machine shop. The manufacturing technologies instructor is one of three teachers in the Guitar Manufacturing using STEM Concepts class.*

## *Mad River Local's guitar-building class resonates with students*

**M**ad River Local (Montgomery) offers a wealth of engaging learning opportunities for students, but there's one class that rocks harder and louder than others.

The sound of an electric guitar is emanating from a classroom in Stebbins High School. A student is strumming the first few verses of the 1976 classic song "Hotel California" and a small group of teens gathers around to listen, clutching their

guitars. Their solid body electric guitars have varying shapes and designs. Some are splashed with vibrant, dripping colors, but others are two-toned or etched with graphics.

Each guitar is unique and reflects its creator — a Stebbins High School student. Over the course of 16 weeks, students in the school's guitar-building class turn a block of wood into a fully functional instrument. The class has generated a lot of buzz since it was introduced last school year in the district of

# education rock

*Bryan Bullock,  
assistant editor*

3,500 students near Dayton.

“It’s a unique experience,” said senior **Josh Keenan**. “I don’t know how many kids around the country, or in the world, get to say, ‘I built a guitar in high school.’”

The seniors-only class uses the guitar-building process as a vehicle to get students engaged in science, technology, math and engineering (STEM).

“This is a class that really resonates with students,” said **Thomas M. Singer**, a Sinclair Community College mechanical engineering technology professor and guitar-building class instructor at the high school. “The hook is building the guitar, but the focus of the class is really on the math and science behind the project.”

The course, Guitar Manufacturing using STEM Concepts, is open to students in the high school’s engineering or manufacturing technologies career pathways program. Stebbins High School offers these and 13 other career-technical programs on-site.

The guitar-building class emphasizes applied learning, problem-solving and inquiry-based education. Like any other course, it involves homework, including writing assignments and math problems. Unlike any other course, the final exam is the completion of a well-crafted and fully functional electric guitar.

“This is a great way for students to end their high school career: by applying the different skills they learned over the last three-and-a-half years,” Singer said. “They leave here with a product they created with their own hands.”

In addition to graduating with a guitar, students who successfully complete the class also can earn free college credit. While Stebbins is one of few high schools in the nation to offer students the chance to build a guitar, the STEM-driven program is gaining momentum in Ohio and the U.S. Whether they play the electric guitar or not, students are jumping at the chance to build the iconic instrument that’s shaped popular music for decades.

“This is a program that is spreading across Ohio and the

nation, with big pockets developing in the Midwest and on the West Coast,” Singer said.

## Sound learning

The guitar-building program was developed by faculty teams at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, Butler County Community College in Pennsylvania, College of the Redwoods in California, Purdue University in Indiana and Ventura College in California. The colleges received a National Science Foundation grant in 2009 to train high school teachers and college faculty nationwide to incorporate the program into their classrooms.

To date, Singer said, about 170 educators across the country



*Stebbins High School senior Ryan Ashbaugh plays a song on a guitar built by another student.*



*A student demonstrates swirl dipping, a technique used by many students to paint their guitars.*

have completed the one-week training program.

“Schools can pull the curriculum down off our website and immediately start using it — it’s all free,” said Singer, who also manages Sinclair Community College’s CollabNFAB Center.

“It’s all about the math, physics, engineering and technology they’re already teaching. We’re not asking them to teach something new. This is about using something kids have enthusiasm about — guitars — to connect with kids using your existing curriculum.”

He said it’s up to each school to determine how a guitar-building project might fit into its unique culture. **New Philadelphia City** was the first district in Ohio to offer the program, providing it as an after-school activity for high school students who have completed physics class. Other districts that offer the guitar-building program as a club or after-school activity include **Dover City, Greene County Career Center, Madeira City, Mariemont City** and **Worthington City**.

Stebbins High School and **Dayton City’s** David H. Ponitz Career Technology Center are the only schools in Ohio that currently offer the program as a class. In both cases, Singer helps lead the class, which is identical to the one he teaches at Sinclair Community College. High school students who pass the course can earn a college credit for engineering.

The class combines hands-on learning with classroom instruction. Students watch YouTube videos about STEM concepts involved in the guitar-building process and write reports about what they learn. They also have a 154-page workbook that includes a broad range of lessons, including determining string tension using frequencies, reverse engineering mechanical guitar parts and calculating sound levels and the force generated by sounds.

While math and science skills are needed, the guitar-building class does not require students to have any musical experience — and, in fact — many of those enrolled do not know how to play the instrument. Stebbins High School senior **Bryan Thompson** said he can play a few chords on the guitar, but no songs. He said his uncle plans to teach him how to play after he finishes building his guitar.

“I used to play cello, but I took this class more because of the engineering aspect of it than my interest in playing the guitar,” Thompson said. “I’ve always liked math, science and engineering.”

### **Guitar assembly**

Sinclair Community College provides kits, components and instructional materials for students to build their guitars. Each guitar starts as a block of wood with a milled-out body and neck. At Stebbins High School, engineering teacher **Jim Prater** and manufacturing technologies teacher **Dave Jones** help lead the 32 students in their joint class through the guitar-building process. The semester-long class meets four days a week in back-to-back periods.

“Students spend the first couple weeks of the project working on their guitar body and necks in the (machine) shop,” Jones said. “It’s a lot of fun, but they quickly realize there are a lot of steps involved in the process.”

Along the way, students learn to use hand tools, power tools and soldering equipment. Students craft their headstock — which attaches to the top of the neck of the guitar — and design the look of their body and headstock. Many students chose to swirl dip their guitars in paint, which involves dipping the wood in a large container of water, borax and assorted paint colors. The result is a psychedelic swirl of paint that is nearly impossible to replicate.

Senior **John Netherton** said he chose to swirl dip his guitar body in blue and white because they are the colors of his church. “I wanted to paint it like that so I can take it and show it to my church,” he said.

Netherton said the guitar-building process has been enjoyable,



*Stebbins High School students work on intonation by connecting their guitars to a computer program and adjusting their instruments.*





*Sinclair Community College professor Thomas M. Singer helps a student string her guitar.*

but it can be challenging. He was working on intonation for the third consecutive day with his nearly complete instrument — a process that involves connecting the guitar to a computer program that analyzes the frequency of notes. Students have to adjust the length, tension and distance from the body of each string to achieve precisely the right sound — not too flat, not too sharp. Students apply a variety of complex math equations to calculate fret spacing and the linear distance of string per turns of a knob using a given gear ratio.

“It tries your patience because you have to make such small adjustments,” Netherton said. “We broke one of the strings and I had to start over.”

Students have to make precise measurements, secure their fretboard, attach their headstock and solder electronic components before they can move on to intonation and, ultimately, tune their guitars.

“For some kids, working with these tools is new and it can be scary because they don’t have the background in it,” Prater said. “But when they’re successful at these new challenges, it builds confidence.”

Students have been able to use the skills they’ve developed in class to help the school produce components needed for the guitar kits. Stebbins High School manufactures a fretwire bender and ferrules press it designed, which are sold back to Sinclair Community College to help offset the costs associated

with the guitar-building program. The high school students help produce the components and help Jones and Prater keep track of inventory and manage the small business.

“It allows us to cover the cost of the guitar kits each year so the district and the students don’t have to pay for them,” Prater said. “We hope to take it a step further next year and generate additional revenue.”

*“When you have a project like this that students really get into and have a deep personal interest in, I think you tend to get more out of them.”*

*— Marilyn Steiner*

The custom-built guitars that students complete during the class are said to appraise as high as \$2,000 — much higher than the \$175 guitar kits.

Stebbins shared its guitar-building program with Ohio educators, school administrators and school board members at the Student Achievement Fair at the 2012 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show in Columbus.



*Stebbins High School students pose with their completed guitars at the end of the school year.*

### **Striking a chord with STEM**

Completed guitars are displayed around Stebbins High School, which helps promote the manufacturing technologies and engineering career-tech programs.

“The freshmen are seeing all this going on so it piques their interest in the programs because they may want to build a guitar too,” Jones said. “It’s kind of an incentive for them to take the class or at least check out the program.”

He said the guitar-building class has been extremely well received by students, administrators and school board members. Board member **Marilyn Steiner** said the course has been a great addition to the high school.

“When you have a project like this that students really get into and have a deep personal interest in, I think you tend to get more out of them,” Steiner said. “They’re proud of the project so they end up working harder and learning more.”

She said the district had an open house last school year for business and community leaders, and guests got to check out the educational offerings at Stebbins, including the guitar-building class.

“We got to witness the kids working on their projects and see how they’re not just not building a guitar, they’re learning about STEM,” Steiner said. “We have some very talented staff and it flows over into the children and what they’re learning.”

“STEM is the foundation of a lot of different fields and we’re always looking into how we can integrate it even more into our programs. A lot of our staff members start working with kids when they’re freshmen to get them thinking what they

want to do when they graduate high school.”

Stebbins High School’s manufacturing technologies and engineering career-tech programs are designed to prepare students to go on to careers, college or additional technical training.

“We have a very high percentage of our students who graduate and go into STEM disciplines in college, such as engineering and computer science,” Prater said.

Mad River Local’s partnership with local businesses and Sinclair Community College gives its high school students the opportunity to receive a \$3,000 scholarship to the college upon meeting all graduation requirements.

Senior **Nikki Hyatt** said she would like to continue studying machine technologies after high school. She said she has played guitar for five years and enjoyed building the instrument.

“It was a bonus for me because I already like working with machines and my hands,” Hyatt said.

She already owns a guitar, but the one she built is special. Hyatt said she already has a spot picked out for it to be displayed at home once she finishes it.

“I have a stand made up for it,” she said. “It’s going to be in the corner of my room and I am going to play it frequently.” ■

*Editor’s note:* For more information about the guitar-building STEM program and curriculum, visit [www.guitarbuilding.org](http://www.guitarbuilding.org) or contact Thomas M. Singer, Sinclair Community College mechanical engineering technology professor, at [thomas.singer@sinclair.edu](mailto:thomas.singer@sinclair.edu) or (937) 512-2838.

# Leadership for learning



## Plans under way for the 2013 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show

*Angela Penquite, assistant editor*

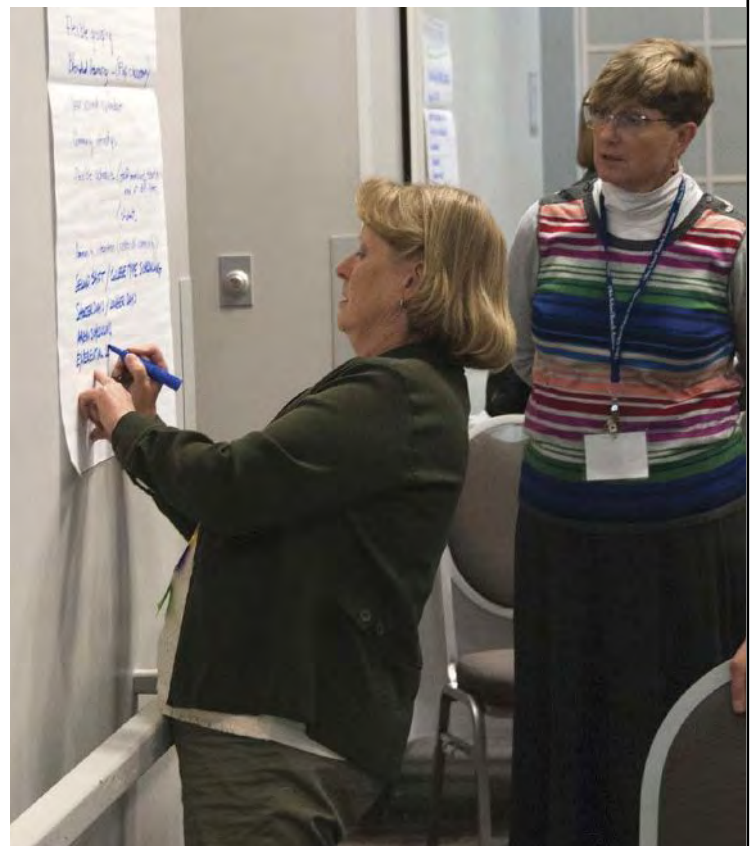
Although the school year recently ended, OSBA is shifting into high gear as it prepares for the 2013 Capital Conference and Trade Show. Breakout sessions have been chosen, keynote speakers are being selected and the Student Achievement Fair is filling up — all with the goal of providing board members, administrators, staff and guests the year’s best professional development opportunity.

The 2013 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show is set for Nov. 10-13 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The annual event draws nearly 10,000 attendees, and features outstanding keynote speakers, more than 150 learning sessions and many ways for attendees to build their leadership skills to help their students achieve at higher levels.

“Leadership for Learning” captures the essence of the conference, which centers on exceptional professional development for board members, district administrators and staff. Conference breakout sessions run the gamut from school law, finance and school safety to blended learning, district leadership and technology in the classroom. Spotlight sessions delve deeper into topics such as current legislation and school safety.

The Student Achievement Fair — a highlight of the conference — is set for Tuesday, Nov. 12, from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Teachers and students from districts across Ohio will be on-site to share innovative programs that are increasing student achievement and preparing students for the future. A sampling of student achievement programs to be featured at the fair include leadership camps, second-grade world travelers, Invention Convention and an outdoor classroom. An entertainment group from each of OSBA’s five regions will perform during the Student Achievement Fair, showing how Ohio students succeed on all levels.

Attendees can explore the Trade Show on Monday, Nov. 11, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Tuesday, Nov. 12, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Trade Show — the largest exhibition of school equipment, supplies and services in the U.S. — will host nearly 700 vendor booths. Drawings will be held throughout the show to give attendees chances to win valuable prizes for their districts.



*Breakout sessions at the Capital Conference range from panel discussions and lectures to interactive presentations.*

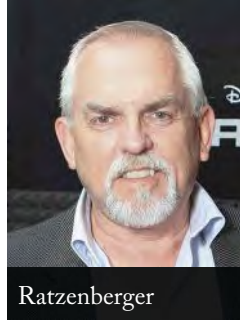


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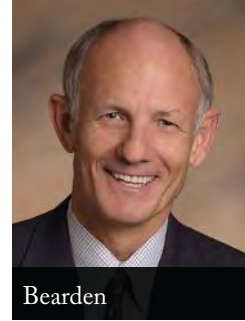
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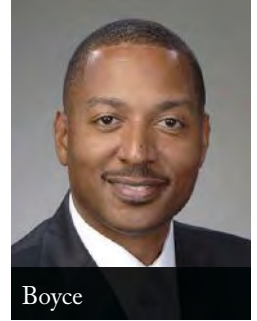
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Ratzenberger



Bearden



Boyce

The Capital Conference features an outstanding lineup of keynote speakers that will inspire, inform and enlighten attendees. The General Session speakers are:

- Nov. 11: **Wil Haygood**, acclaimed author, *Washington Post* journalist and Pulitzer Prize finalist. Haygood grew up in a Columbus housing project, where going to college was only a remote dream. With the help and encouragement of others, he persevered and graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. As a biographer, he has written about **Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Sammy Davis Jr. and Sugar Ray Robinson**. His 2008 story for *The Washington Post* on longtime White House butler **Eugene Allen** became the inspiration for “The Butler,” a feature film due to be released in August
- Nov. 12: Dr. **Yong Zhao**, presidential chair and associate dean for global education at the University of Oregon’s College of Education. An advocate for student learning supported by modern technology, he has been recognized by *Tech & Learning* magazine as one of its 2012 Most Influential in EdTech. Zhao has designed schools that cultivate global competence, developed computer games for language

learning and founded research and development institutions to explore innovative education models. He has published more than 100 articles and 20 books, including *Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization*.

- Nov. 13: **John Ratzenberger**, an Emmy-nominated actor, entrepreneur and philanthropist. Best known for playing the character Cliff Clavin on the sitcom “Cheers,” Ratzenberger has had roles in numerous movies, including voice roles in every Pixar feature film, from “Toy Story” to “Cars” to “Brave.” He also produced and hosted “Made in America,” a Travel Channel show, which celebrated the work ethic that fueled America’s growth. Ratzenberger is a champion for skilled workers in the U.S., recognizing that without skilled labor, there aren’t people to repair the nation’s crumbling bridges, buildings and water systems, or operate the gears of America’s military machinery. He encourages students to consider attending a career center or apprenticing to learn an industrial trade that will increase the strength of U.S. manufacturing.

The General Sessions also will shine a spotlight on outstanding student entertainment groups; recognize Ohio’s top school board members, administrators, educators and support staff; and welcome special guests.

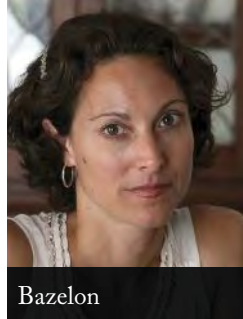
The Early Bird Workshop speaker on Sunday, Nov. 10, will be **Jim Bearden**, a leadership expert and author of *The Relentless Search for Better Ways*. A former Marine Corps officer, decorated Vietnam War veteran and corporate executive, Bearden has learned why some people step up and others don’t. An advocate for the heroic effort, he helps leaders close the gap between what sounds good and what gets done. Inspiring attendees to acknowledge and improve the choices they make, Bearden delivers dynamic programs and encourages processes that illuminate the relationship between personal accountability and success.

The OSBA Black Caucus will host its annual dinner on Sunday, Nov. 10, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Ohio Rep. **Kevin Boyce** (D-Columbus) will be the featured speaker. Boyce, a former state treasurer, was appointed to the Ohio House of Representatives in May 2012.



*Districts share innovative programs that are helping students succeed at the Student Achievement Fair.*

He previously served as executive director of KnowledgeWorks Ohio, a nonprofit organization created with the mission of improving Ohio's school systems through public development and advocacy. While at KnowledgeWorks, Boyce was part of a team that invested more than \$100 million in Ohio's public school systems, implementing cutting-edge education models such as Project GRAD, Small Schools and Early College.



During the Conference Luncheons, attendees can network with colleagues and enjoy outstanding keynote speakers. The Nov. 11 luncheon speaker is **Emily Bazelon**, senior editor at *Slate*, a *New York Times Magazine* contributing writer and Truman Capote Fellow for Creative Writing and Law at Yale University's Yale Law School.

Her groundbreaking investigative journalism and extensive legal knowledge makes her one of the leading authorities on the shifting landscape of cyberbullying. She explores such questions as: What constitutes bullying? What can parents

and educators do about it? What roles do personality traits such as grit, character and empathy play in overcoming childhood trauma and finding social success?

Her recent book, *Sticks and Stones: Defeating the Culture of Bullying and Rediscovering the Power of Character and Empathy*, has won widespread acclaim and was featured in *The New York Times Book Review*.

The Nov. 12 Conference Luncheon speaker will be announced once confirmed.

OSBA is again offering a special group registration rate that, in effect, reduces the per-person cost once seven or more individuals are registered. Six people can attend the conference for \$1,650; there is no charge beyond that for an unlimited number of additional registrants. That means the more people a district registers, the lower the per-person rate. Single registration is \$275. Details will be included in registration packets to be mailed to the district in mid-July.

For more information about the Capital Conference, visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org/2013-capital-conference](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/2013-capital-conference) or contact OSBA at (614) 540-4000. ■



## Budget Analysis and Discussion (BAD) Seminar

Monday, Aug. 12, Hyatt Regency, Columbus

Attend the Budget Analysis and Discussion (BAD) Seminar for the most in-depth analysis on the fiscal year 2014-15 state budget, Amended Substitute House Bill (AM. Sub. HB) 59.

This comprehensive seminar, hosted by the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA), Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) and Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), will provide insights and answers on the budget process and final version of the legislation.

Am. Sub. HB 59 contains more than 5,000 pages, including a new school-funding formula and many new policy provisions. Attend the BAD Seminar and hear from legislative experts and lawmakers on what was included and the impact this legislation will have on Ohio school districts.

This workshop is \$195 per person for OSBA, OASBO and BASA member school district representatives. The fee covers workshop registration, materials, lunch and refreshments. Visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org/25055](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/25055) for registration information and directions.



# Battelle leads Ohio teams on tours of world's top schools

## *Battelle for Kids study reveals key drivers of student success*

### *Battelle for Kids*

*"It isn't just about test scores. It's about grit, perseverance, curiosity, self-control. The one thing that separates extraordinary, from ordinary, isn't the knowing. It's the doing."*

— **Jim Mahoney**, executive director, Battelle for Kids

**H**ow do the highest-performing school systems across the world consistently achieve impressive results? In spring 2012, teams of Ohio education and business leaders joined Battelle for Kids in a Global Education Study to answer this question by embarking on fact-finding trips to five of the world's 12 highest-performing school systems: Finland; Hong Kong; Long Beach, Calif.; Ontario, Canada; and Singapore.

These systems rank as sustained improvers that have seen more than five consistent rises in student performance based on results of national and international assessments:

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

The Global Education Study teams interviewed and observed leaders, teachers, students and others to explore how these systems consistently rank at the top in terms of quality, equity and productivity of all children. Although we discovered many differences among these systems, there were six common drivers leading to student success.

#### **Early learning**

Early learning and ongoing intervention are important to ensure no children are left behind. High-performing school systems invest in early learning because it contributes to the development of highly skilled, knowledgeable and caring citizens.

While most U.S. educators believe in and value early learning, they may not be fully aware of its impact. Of the U.S. children who drop out of high school, half were behind before entering kindergarten. In fact, 30% to 60% of young children in the United States are not ready to be successful when they begin kindergarten.

"That first golden ticket you can give kids in a school system — an effective use of literacy and numeracy skills — is critically important to their learning down the road," said **Mary Jean Gallagher**, Ontario Ministry of Education assistant deputy minister of education and chief student achievement officer.

#### **Personalization and pathways for student success**

In high-performing systems, personalization and pathways



*Singapore Ministry of Education official Eugenia Yunchin Tan speaks during a Global Education Summit session in Singapore.*

for student success are designed and delivered so that all students secure core competencies and engage in educational programs that are relevant to their personal and career interests.

High-performing countries have a system in which their lowest-performing students are ranked only slightly lower than their best-achieving students — essentially, there is no significant academic achievement gap. This success stems from coherent and accessible pathways for all students, from pre-elementary to postsecondary, from basic education to vocational education and from job training to the workforce.

“No matter which track you start off with, there’s always opportunity to go all the way to university,” said **Eugenia Yunchin Tan**, deputy director-curriculum policy office, Singapore Ministry of Education. “We want them to be a confident person, self-directed learner, an active contributor and a concerned citizen.”

### **Focus on learning**

High-performing systems do not overly rely on test results and performance evaluations to reward or punish educators and schools. Instead, they focus on learning, not assessments.

The schools the Global Education Study teams studied focus considerable time, attention and resources to provide incentives to implement and improve effective feedback and build teachers’ ability to employ formative assessments. This focuses teachers on learning versus testing, preventing teachers from becoming goal-oriented on test results, rather than what’s best for the child.

“In Finland, we hardly do any testing,” said Dr. **Minna Riikka Järvinen**, executive director of the Centre for After School Programs. “The main focus in research is how learning evolves, not in what has been learned.”

### **Teacher selectivity, quality and growth**

Many educators in the U.S. worry about alignment among curriculum, instruction and assessment. But there is another alignment that is even more important: alignment between the quality of the teacher in the classroom and the expectations for success that educators have for students through planned teacher selectivity, quality and growth.

“Every Friday afternoon, we sit together to co-plan lessons, demonstrate lessons and, more importantly, help teachers to reflect on their own teaching,” said **Leona Lam**, a retired Hong Kong principal.

### **Education linked to economic development**

High-performing school systems recognize that education is linked to economic development. These communities understand the importance of educational capital and therefore train students for relevant future jobs. Education

has always been the ticket to the middle class way of life and to sustaining our democracy, and in high-performing countries, this is even more apparent.

“Long Beach has one of the largest ports in the country, and realized that they could accommodate all of their high school pathway programs to prepare students to graduate ready to enter the workforce,” said Battelle for Kids’ **Mark Hartman**, a Long Beach team member. “They have human services. They have business opportunities. They have engineers.”

### **Cultural expectation of value**

We set the cultural expectation of value for our children by the programs we run, schools we provide and classes we offer. In high-performing systems, the culture enables students to assimilate content and process information consistent with high academic expectations.

In some ways, everything comes down to systems grounded in strong relationships and mutual trust.

“In our system, the focus is always on collaboration,” said **Rhonda Kimberley-Young**, secretary-treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Teachers. “It’s not on competition. There’s not a system of punishment and reward for good results. In fact, if a school is seen to be doing a little less well, they’re given extra help and support. They’re not punished for it. It’s quite the opposite.”

Despite the enormous complexity of developing young people in any culture, there are lessons from this study related to the six drivers of student success that we must consider in the U.S. if we want to increase college and career readiness for all students.

It’s Battelle for Kids’ hope that through this study, we can improve our practices to accelerate student success. We also hope this will encourage a commitment to creating pathways for the unique success of every child, because student performance is inextricably linked to our economy, to individual student lives and to our future as a society.

To learn more, visit [www.battelleforkids.org/go/global](http://www.battelleforkids.org/go/global), or access the “Global Education Study LumiBook” at [www.schoolimprovement.com/battelle-for-kids-lumibook](http://www.schoolimprovement.com/battelle-for-kids-lumibook). The LumiBook is a free online collaborative reading and learning resource developed in partnership with the School Improvement Network. ■

*Editor’s note:* Battelle for Kids is an Ohio-based, national, not-for-profit organization that provides counsel and solutions to advance the development of human capital systems, use of strategic measures, practices for improving educator effectiveness and communication with all stakeholders. For more information, visit [www.battelleforkids.org](http://www.battelleforkids.org).



# Supporting teachers key to Singapore's success

## *OSBA president shares views from visit to one of the world's best school systems*

*Charlie Wilson, OSBA president, Worthington City board member*

When I awakened to embark on a 30-hour trip to Singapore, I had no idea my most profound insight as to why that nation's school system had become one of the highest-performing in the world would come before I next slept.

After arriving at my hotel, I was unable to sleep due to the 12-hour time difference, so I switched on the television. On the screen was a public service announcement by the Singaporean government touting the virtues of being a teacher and the importance of teachers to everyone's well-being. Among the messages were:

- "The difference a teacher makes is felt long after the class is over."
- "Teach. You'd be amazed at the difference you can make."
- "Thank you for teaching me. I am a teacher now! You inspired me!"
- "Make a difference. Teach."

Having just left the United States, where teachers are often under-appreciated and under-supported, what I witnessed in my sleep-deprived daze was jarring. Over the next week, I learned that these were not just advertising jingles, but that supporting, not maligning, teachers was the linchpin to Singapore's educational success.

Early in 2012, I was invited to participate in the Global Education Study led by Battelle for Kids. The study's purpose was to engage, observe and learn from educators in five of the highest-performing school systems in the world. I was assigned to the team traveling to Singapore.

How does Singapore consistently achieve such impressive results on international assessments? After much study and observation, I concluded that teacher recruitment, selection,

training and professional development are critical to the nation's educational success.

When Singapore achieved independence in 1965, it was a poor, small, tropical island with few natural resources. It had no compulsory education, few schools and not many high school and college graduates. Most of its two million people were illiterate and unskilled. Furthermore, recurring conflict among its numerous ethnic and religious groups was rampant. Race riots were common.

*Singapore is committed to eliminating the gap between high- and low-achieving students by leveling up its education system systematically.*

Over a 40-year period, Singapore has raised its educational level from one similar to that of most developing countries to one of the best in world. At the beginning of the 1990s, Singapore did not have a high-quality teaching profession. Teaching was not a valued profession and most teachers were poorly paid and ill-trained. Later in the decade, the country's leaders took deliberate policy actions to develop a comprehensive system for selecting, training, compensating and developing teachers and principals.

Prospective teachers are carefully selected from the top one-third of high school graduating classes by panels that include principals and teachers. A strong academic record is essential to being selected, but so are student





*Students engage in hands-on learning while working on a computer in a Singapore classroom. With its focus on recruiting, training and supporting high-quality teachers, Singapore boasts one of the leading educational systems in the world.*

empathy, a long-term commitment to the profession and a demonstrated desire to serve diverse student bodies.

While in training, pre-service teachers receive a stipend equal to 60% of a teacher's salary. Interest in teaching is seeded early through internships for high school students and deliberate government policies touting the importance of the teaching profession, such as the public service announcement I saw right after I arrived.

All teachers are trained in the Singaporean curriculum at the National Institute of Education (NIE). There is a close working relationship between NIE and schools, and all new teachers are mentored for their first few years. NIE focuses strongly on pedagogical content knowledge.

The Singapore Ministry of Education keeps a close watch on starting salaries and adjusts them for beginning teachers to ensure new graduates see teaching as an attractive occupation. Teaching is regarded as a 12-month position, and there are many other career opportunities within

education for teachers.

Teachers are entitled to 100 hours of professional development each year to enable them to keep up with rapid changes in the world and constantly improve their practice. Each school has ample funds to support teacher growth in a number of ways, including allowing teachers to develop fresh perspectives by going abroad to examine aspects of education in other countries, especially the U.S. Teacher networks and learning circles encourage peer-to-peer learning, and the Academy of Singapore Teachers encourages teachers to continuously share best practices.

By putting its energy into recruiting high-quality people and giving them good training and continuing support, Singapore does not have the massive attrition problems afflicting America's education system. Since the 1990s, teaching in Singapore has developed into a desirable and well-regarded profession. It is considered an honor to be a teacher in Singapore, and teaching is open to only the very best.



Singapore does not use test results and performance evaluations to reward or punish teachers and schools, rather its approach is to concentrate on learning, not assessments. Singapore focuses teachers on student learning, not on testing, so the emphasis is always on what is best for individual students.

The nation is focused on attracting, retaining and rewarding the best teachers; making great use of their skills; and honoring the collaborative nature of work in schools. To accomplish this, Singapore eschews reliance on student test scores. Instead, it has built a system that provides feedback that teachers trust by using multiple measures, primarily classroom observations by experienced colleagues.

Singapore identifies and nurtures talent, then creates systems that encourage and develop fantastic teachers. It believes teachers would not be more motivated or become better teachers by competing with other teachers or receiving differential compensation. To the contrary, Singapore provides teachers with an environment based on collaboration, one in which they can rely on one another to share lesson plans, get advice and understand what works well in other classrooms.

Instead of using differential compensation to encourage teachers to improve, Singapore provides all its teachers with high-quality professional development opportunities; strong, experienced, empathetic school leaders; engaged, supportive families and communities; and the chance to work closely with like-minded colleagues.

Singapore's education system is dedicated to creating feedback and evaluation systems that reflect the patience and involvement of teachers and administrators.

As one Singapore school administrator told me, "Everything comes down to having a teacher feedback and evaluation system grounded in strong relationships and mutual trust." In Singapore, the emphasis is always on collaboration, never on competition.

The Singapore system does not punish schools or teachers for struggling. Instead, if schools or teachers are underperforming, they are given extra help, support and resources — the opposite of punishment — to help them improve.

Finally, Singapore is committed to eliminating the gap between high- and low-achieving students by leveling up its education system systematically. Those efforts are premised on two underlying assumptions: differentiated curriculum and learning experience for weaker students, and equity is about equalizing opportunities, not outcomes.

First, Singapore believes a differentiated curriculum and learning experience — if implemented efficiently by dedicated teachers with all the resources they need — can benefit weaker students. The nation uses a targeted approach toward intervention through a "pull-out program" for weaker students who are taught by specially trained and highly experienced teachers in a class of six to eight students.

Besides being given a differentiated curriculum and learning experience, weaker students receive far more resources than their higher-achieving peers. These additional resources include more experienced and better-trained teachers, small class size, computer literacy classes and better computer labs.

In addition, Singapore is now exploring the possibility that delivering differentiated learning can become more inclusive, like in Finland where inclusive learning experiences bring about qualitative benefits for all students.

The second assumption underlying Singapore's leveling-up efforts is that equity is about equalizing opportunities, not outcomes. The Singaporean approach adopts a pragmatic stance simply because tailoring learning experiences that consider diverse student backgrounds in the hope of equalized outcomes is not practicable.

The educational leveling-up effort is similar to the country's health care industry, where the focus is to provide high-quality, patient-specific health care to all patients, not to equalize outcomes among all patients regardless of their disease or condition.

Singapore understands any system that focuses on equalizing outcomes risks becoming desensitized to the specific needs of different students by being too concerned with the differences in learning outcomes for students or groups of students. Singapore fears that too much focus on differences of outcomes in students or student groups will result in too much attention and blame being attributed to the students, and not to the system itself.

Finally, and most importantly, while Singapore seeks to equalize learning outcomes, it has spent much time grappling with the critical question of whether the definition of "outcomes" can be more embracing, comprehensive and holistic. Singapore realizes that the most important attributes cannot always be measured objectively, precisely or scientifically.

The nation is greatly concerned that if its educational system focuses solely on narrowly defined outcomes based on single-dimension test scores, then it may not be leveling up students with an ability to leverage more opportunities for a fulfilling life in all its dimensions. ■



# OSBA Board Candidate Workshops

If you wish to become one of Ohio's nearly 3,400 school board members, prepare yourself by attending one of OSBA's Board Candidate Workshops. Veteran staff of the association will serve as your workshop presenters. Directions to each location are on the OSBA website at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/event\\_listing](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/event_listing). All sessions (except Sept. 7) run from 6 p.m.–9 p.m., with registration and buffet beginning at 5:30 p.m. The session on Sept. 7 runs from 9 a.m.–noon (registration begins at 8:30 a.m.).

## What will I learn from this workshop?

- school board powers and duties
- the most difficult things to learn about being a school board member
- campaign issues, including campaign finance
- board member ethics and behavior
- conflicts of interest
- compatibility of public offices and positions
- locally developed policies
- Ohio's Open Meeting Law

Time for a question-and-answer session is included.

## Board Candidate Kit

Workshop registrants also will receive a Board Candidate Kit, which includes:

- *Candidate: A practical guide to running for school board*
- a subscription to the *OSBA Journal*, the premier bimonthly magazine for school board members
- a subscription to *Briefcase*, a semimonthly newsletter
- other useful materials

Mail registration to:  
OSBA, 8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235-6481

## 2013 OSBA Board Candidate Workshops registration form

Please enclose \$90 to cover registration, the meal and an OSBA Board Candidate Kit.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I am a candidate for the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education in \_\_\_\_\_ County.

- This is my first campaign for a board seat       I am running for re-election

Check the seminar you wish to attend. Space is limited. Reservations are accepted in the order received. Walk-in registrations are welcome on a space-available basis.

- Aug. 20 — Ohio University Inn, Athens       Sept. 5 — Northeast Ohio Medical University, Rootstown  
 Aug. 22 — Hilton Garden Inn, Perrysburg       Sept. 7 — OSBA office, Columbus  
 Aug. 27 — Dayton Marriott, Dayton

Pay by check       Pay by credit card      Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_

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# Districts value business recognition program



*The Goshen Local (Clermont) School District recognizes OSBA Business Honor Roll recipients for their contributions.*

## *Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator*

**B**usinesses play a key role in supporting local schools. That support has never been more important as school districts deal with state funding uncertainty, staff layoffs and a lingering economic downturn.

To help districts recognize these valuable contributions, OSBA launched the Business Honor Roll program in 2011. This year, more than 40 districts participated in the program, recognizing more than 100 businesses for supporting their schools and students.

Districts value the opportunity to recognize local firms for their support. The Business Honor Roll helps them say “thank you” for these vital contributions. This gives businesses well-deserved recognition and helps encourage future support.

Businesses large and small, corporate-owned or family-run, play an essential role in supporting the community and local schools. From helping schools with in-kind or financial contributions, donating to scholarship programs, supporting extracurriculars, offering internship opportunities, volunteering in districts and sponsoring field trips, businesses contribute to their schools in many ways.

OSBA mailed personalized recognition certificates and letters of congratulations for each firm to district superintendents in time for school boards to present them at their May meetings. A full list of honored businesses can be found on OSBA’s website at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/business-honor-roll](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/business-honor-roll).

Although OSBA cannot name every firm recognized in the *Journal* due to space limitations, below is a sampling of comments from districts about their selections.

### **Fort Recovery Local (Mercer)**

Cooper Farms, Fort Recovery Industries, Cheeseman Trucking and J & M Manufacturing have supported the district in many ways. All of these businesses show consistent support by naming representatives to the district’s Business Advisory Council. They regularly provide judges for Fort Recovery Local’s annual science, technology, engineering and math fair and support the staff appreciation breakfast each spring.

They invite staff to tour their facilities to learn more about each business’ operations. The knowledge gained from these tours helps staff offer students guidance on career choices. Students also benefit from the financial support these businesses provide.

### Southern Hills Career and Technical Center

Holman Motors Inc. supports the career-tech center by continually hiring its students. Students from the Automotive Technology and Agriculture Mechanics programs have the opportunity to work for the company during their senior year on early placement; three are doing so this year.

Students also have remained with the company after graduation. There currently are eight graduates working full time and two working part time while going to college. Holman Motors has been a huge supporter of Southern Hills Career and Technical Center for many years.

### Springfield City

McGregor Metalworking has served the district in many ways. Chief Executive Officer **Dane Belden** and company owner **Dan McGregor** collaborate with the district on an internship program. The company also works with other local businesses to create student internship opportunities. The company plays a critical role in moving the district and community forward.

### Tri-County Career Center

Rocky Brands Inc. provides career center students the opportunity to work in its retail center, giving them real-world job experience. Rocky Brands also deeply discounts clothing

and footwear for students involved in the center's many outdoor programs.

American Electric Power has provided many pieces of needed equipment for Power Line Technology program students. The company also supports the program with clinicians, adjudicators for special events and in many other ways.

Hocking College continues to support all programs by providing opportunities for dual credit and articulation credit. Hocking College offers a culinary arts lab for students in its adjacent culinary school, which gives students hands-on experience with chefs from the college.

### West Geauga Local (Gauga)

Fairmount Minerals generously donated more than \$70,000 to the district to buy iPads for every fifth-grade student. This promoted student achievement and prepared students to live and work in an increasingly technical world. The company also allowed its employees to participate in a day of caring to help the schools clean up and beautify their athletic fields.

OSBA thanks Business Honor Roll participants and encourages districts to share their feedback, success and photos on OSBA's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/OHSchoolBoards](http://www.facebook.com/OHSchoolBoards). ■

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# Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools

Public Schools Make a Difference



Crystal Davis, editor

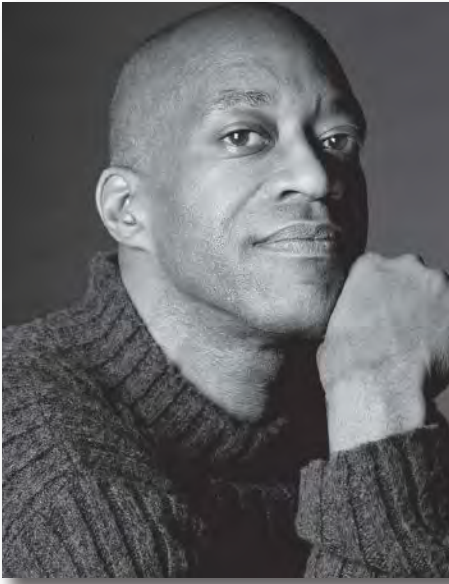
From accomplished alumni to ever-mounting educational achievements, Ohio's public schools have much to be proud of as they continue to outperform charter schools. Data from the 2011-2012 state report card show that public school districts have steadily improved, while efforts to strengthen accountability over the last few years have led to just slightly improved performance for the state's privately operated, publicly funded charter schools. As Ohio's public schools progress, they continue to produce many exceptional graduates who have made a real difference in the world.

For the third year, OSBA is featuring Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools in this special section of the *Journal*. As part of OSBA's Public Schools Make a Difference campaign, we're presenting living examples that prove public schools are going above and beyond to prepare Ohio schoolchildren for bright futures. Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools highlights graduates who have achieved great success in their chosen fields — people like Olympic gold medalist and physicist Dr. **Edwin C. Moses**; entrepreneur and Angel MedFlight founder **Jeremy T. Freer**; University of Findlay College of Education Dean Dr. **Julie D. McIntosh**; Academic All-American, author and teacher **Jeffrey A. Berk**; and one of the nation's leading cancer doctors Dr. **Michael E. Williams**. More Proud Products, including late NASA Astronaut **Donn Eisele**, are posted on OSBA's website at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/proudproducts](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/proudproducts).

From Proud Products to solid statistics, Ohio's public schools have much to brag about based on these figures from the 2011-2012 school year:

- Ninety-two percent of Ohio school districts were rated Effective or better on the state report card, compared to fewer than 30% of charter schools.
- Sixty-three percent of public school districts were rated as Excellent with Distinction (A+) or Excellent (A), up from 58% in 2010-2011. Only about 10% of charters were rated A+ or A.
- About 40% of charter schools were rated in Academic Watch (D) or Academic Emergency (F), while only 2.1% of public school districts received those ratings.
- Public schools' performance far outpaced charter schools despite the fact that \$737 million was deducted from traditional public schools and transferred to charters.

Numbers don't lie. It's easy to see public schools are not only cost-effective, but are making a difference as they evolve to meet the changing needs of society. The Proud Products profiled here are just a few examples of the many Ohio students who have used the paths laid by public education as stepping-stones to greatness. ■



## Dr. Edwin C. Moses

*Olympic champion*

### Gold medalist, physicist and drug-testing pioneer

It was apparent from an early age that when Dr. **Edwin C. Moses** puts his mind to anything — from academics to athletics — he excels. *Really* excels.

Moses won gold medals in the 400-meter hurdles at the 1976 and 1984 Olympics. From 1977-1987, Moses collected 122 straight victories, 107 of which were finals; this winning streak remains unbeaten and is in the Guinness Book of Records. He received a Congressional Gold Medal after the 1980 U.S. Olympic Team was forced to boycott the Moscow Olympics.

In addition to his running, Moses also was an innovative reformer in the areas of Olympic eligibility and drug testing, and the rights of amateur athletes. In 2000, he was elected the first chairman of the Laureus World Sports Academy, an international service organization

of world-class athletes, a position he still holds.

Born the son of two educators, Moses attended **Fairview Park City's** Fairview High School. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in physics and engineering from Morehouse College in Georgia, and later a master's degree in business administration from Pepperdine University in California. He was elected into both the U.S. and international track and field halls of fame and is president of the International Amateur Athletic Association.

Moses is known for using applied sciences to perfect the technical aspects of his athletic performance. This knowledge also enabled him to create, implement and administer the world's most stringent random and out-of-competition testing systems for performance-enhancing drugs in sports. Currently, Moses is a financial consultant for a division of Salomon Smith Barney. He also is a registered securities agent, licensed private airplane pilot and scuba diver.

### Education inspiration

Guided by his parents' influence as educators, he accepted an academic scholarship in engineering from Morehouse College rather than an athletic scholarship elsewhere.

### Giving back

Determined to find a method through which U.S. athletes could generate financial support to offset training expenses, Moses helped persuade The Athletics Congress to begin the Athletes Trust Fund program. The trust fund enables athletes to create accounts administered by their respective sport bodies, within which government or privately supplied stipends, direct payments and monies derived from commercial endorsements could be deposited and withdrawn by the athlete for training and other expenses, without jeopardizing Olympic eligibility.

The trust fund is currently the basis of many Olympic athlete subsistence, stipend and corporate support programs. Moses also has worked with the Special Olympics, Goodwill Games and Montana's Big Sky State Games. He was a founding partner in the Platinum Group, a management partnership that represents world-class athletes in their business endeavours.

He's chairman of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency's board of directors. The International Fair Play Committee and International Sports Journalists Association honored Moses with The World Fair Play Award.

In 2011, Moses, alongside former president of the Soviet Union **Mikhail Gorbachev**, received the "Pyramide con Marni" award for social work and activities around the world for children in need. ■

***"Hopefully, as the guy nobody could beat. Maybe in the years to come, people will understand the things I have accomplished and realize, 'Wow, this guy was really something. Nobody's ever going to do that again.'"***

Moses to ESPN, when asked how he would like to be remembered.



## Jeremy T. Freer

Founder, CEO and president, Angel MedFlight  
Worldwide Air Ambulance

Movers & Shuckers

### ‘Farm boy’ saves lives and cultivates hometown growth

As if founding an Arizona-based air medical transportation company wasn't enough, **Jeremy T. Freer** wanted more. He wanted to give back to his hometown of Fredericktown, Ohio, that he says has given so much to him. So, he started a new, successful business there.

Freer's drive to succeed became apparent at an early age — he grew up on a dairy farm where he learned what hard work felt like. This foundation led him to participate in many local activities, including Future Farmers of America, 4-H, football and basketball. He

became the youngest volunteer fireman in Fredericktown. He earned his paramedic credentials while he was still a teen. Freer graduated from **Fredericktown Local's (Knox)** Fredericktown High School in 2000, then became a full-time firefighter/paramedic and a flight paramedic. Freer continued to work while attending college at Midwestern University's Glendale, Ariz. campus, earning a bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences with a summa cum laude distinction.

“I had already started to attend medical school, but after seeing the inconsistencies in the industry and a lack of patient-centered care, I knew I could do it better,” Freer said. “It was then that I created Angel MedFlight.”

Angel MedFlight is now the largest and leading fixed-wing air medical transportation provider for people in need in the country. In 2010, Freer was named one of *Phoenix Business Journal's* 2010 Class of 40 Under 40. He also was named a semifinalist in the 2010 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year program for Orange County/Desert Cities.

### Education inspiration

“There are two teachers from my younger years that particularly stand out,” Freer said. “They believed in me even when I may not have deserved their support ... **Betty Weller** and **Erika Reiss**. Even to this day, Betty continues to believe in me and be an advocate for my goals and myself. And, back in the fourth grade, Erika chose to recognize that as an active kid, I just needed to be cultivated and to have guidance to channel my energy. Her kindness and willingness to see me for who I was has never been forgotten.”

### Giving back

As a self-proclaimed “farm boy,” Freer says he has never forgotten his small-town roots and passion for farming. After founding Angel MedFlight in Arizona, Freer wanted to start a company that would bring jobs and resources back to where he grew up. His vision was fulfilled with the creation of Movers & Shuckers, a custom farming business with many other services, including equipment rental, excavation, hauling and maintenance. Today, Movers & Shuckers is an active sponsor of countless local initiatives. ■

**“Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

— Margaret Mead



*“I believe in public education. It is our responsibility to educate all children to their highest potential and make them productive citizens in a global society. Although our society sometimes focuses on the negative, we need to do more to lift up the excellent public school teachers we are fortunate to have and celebrate the amazing things our young people are accomplishing.”*

## Dr. Julie D. McIntosh

Dean, University of Findlay College of Education

### ‘Reynolds Raider’ now molds future teachers

Findlay High School graduate Dr. **Julie D. McIntosh** is giving back to her alma mater in one of the most meaningful ways possible — by helping mold the teachers of tomorrow in her hometown district and the state.

“Throughout my public school education, I was fortunate to have amazing teachers that strived to make a difference in my life every year, kindergarten through 12th grade,” McIntosh said. “I always felt supported and cared for in the **Findlay City School District**.”

McIntosh went on to become a classroom teacher at Findlay and **Bowling Green City** high schools before moving into higher education. She’s now dean of the University of Findlay’s College of Education.

“At the University of Findlay, we work closely with the public schools to place our teacher candidates in field experiences each year of their program,” McIntosh said. “It is critical for our candidates to apply what they are learning in their classes. This partnership also provides a service to public schools.”

McIntosh says her positive public school memories are too numerous to count, but she believes her teachers were preparing her to make a difference in the world and help others. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Findlay and a master’s degree and doctorate in leadership studies from Bowling Green State University. She has been an environmental specialist for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, as well as a teacher, professor, program director, assistant dean and dean. Her work has been published in prestigious journals in the areas of leadership, science education, social responsibility, classroom management and professional learning communities. McIntosh lives in Findlay with her husband **Bill** and daughter **Britney**. Her daughter attends **Liberty-Benton Local’s (Hancock) Liberty-Benton High School**.



### Education inspiration

“**Tom Reynolds** was my biology teacher in high school,” McIntosh said. “He always took lessons a step further.

“One day he dressed up as **Gregor Mendel** so that we could experience first-hand what challenges this scientist faced at that particular time in history. We were engaged daily in hands-on experiments that allowed us to further question why things worked the way that they did. He also had an incentive for students who received an A in his class; you became a ‘Reynolds Raider,’ and when someone asked if you were a Reynolds Raider in the hall, your response had to be, ‘You bet your gluteus maximus I am!’”

### Giving back

“Education has always been important to me and preparing the future teachers of Ohio has become my passion,” McIntosh said. “The University of Findlay has strong professional development relationships with many area public schools. ... I am privileged to collaborate with these districts to make us both stronger.” ■

*“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”  
– Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

## Jeffrey A. Berk

*Special education supervisor, Huber Heights City Schools*

### **From struggling student to Academic All-American**

School proved challenging for **Jeffrey A. Berk** until a **Huber Heights City** teacher made a discovery that changed his life forever.

“Reading comprehension tasks were always a major challenge for me,” said Berk, who has a learning disability. “My sophomore year (at Wayne High School), my English teacher identified a strategy to improve my comprehension skills. After learning this technique, I began to succeed academically and realized the importance of a solid education.”

Berk went on to attend West Virginia University (WVU) on a full athletic scholarship, where he received a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in special education. He was a four-year starter on the university’s Mountaineer football team. In 2004, Berk received the prestigious Scholar-Athlete award from the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame. The award is only given to 15 student-athletes in all divisions of college football. Berk also received All-Conference honors and was an Academic All-American.

Today, he is an advocate for people with disabilities, a special education supervisor for Huber Heights City Schools and a varsity offensive line coach.



“Starting in the fall of 2013, I will be an assistant principal at Wayne High School,” Berk said. “In January 2013, I published ‘NCAA Eligibility: Student-Athletes with Education Impacting Disabilities,’ a resource guide for student-athletes with disabilities. I also am the founder of Success for College Students with Disabilities, a resource website for current and future college students with disabilities that can be found at [www.disabilitysuccess.com](http://www.disabilitysuccess.com).”

### **Education inspiration**

“**MaryAnn Moore**, my high school intervention specialist, provided one-on-one tutoring after school to assist me in maintaining my grades,” Berk said. “As a student with a learning disability, Mrs. Moore understood my academic strengths and weaknesses. I will always be grateful for her ability to advocate and encourage me.”

### **Giving back**

Always active in the community, Berk speaks and mentors special education students, and is a “Buddy Leader” in the West Virginia State Special Olympics. A vacation bible school group leader, he makes numerous WVU Children’s Hospital visits and volunteers for Alzheimer’s disease fundraisers. A tutor for grade school math and reading, Berk also coaches peewee football. ■

## Dr. Michael E. Williams

*Byrd S. Leavell professor of medicine and pathology chief, Hematologic Malignancies Section, Hematology/Oncology Division and Cancer Center, University of Virginia School of Medicine*

### Giving is in the blood of doc fighting bloodborne cancers

He's been named one of the top doctors in America on several prestigious lists, and Dr. **Michael E. Williams** attributes part of his success to the strong foundation provided by public education.

"Attending school in southwest Ohio was a great stroke of luck, as **East Clinton Local (Clinton)** provided a cadre of dedicated teachers who reflected the rural community's values of hard work, self-discipline and consideration for others," Williams said.

Williams graduated from East Clinton High School in 1969, received his undergraduate degree from The Ohio State University, and went on to earn his doctor of medicine from the University of Cincinnati and a master of science from Harvard University. He completed his internal medicine residency, chief residency and fellowship in hematology/oncology at the University of Virginia Health System in Charlottesville, Va., where he joined the faculty in 1986. He currently serves as chief of the Hematologic Malignancies Section.

Williams' clinical and research interests are focused in lymphoma and leukemia, including novel treatment approaches for bloodborne cancers. He has written more than 150 scientific articles and reviews, and serves on the scientific advisory boards of the Lymphoma Research Foundation and European Mantle Cell Lymphoma Network. He has chaired a number of scientific and educational programs for the American Society of Hematology and American Society of Clinical Oncology, and is the current chair of the Hematology Subspecialty Board of the American Board of Internal Medicine.

"It's a rare day in my professional life where I'm not called to draw upon the lessons learned (in public schools), and I remain grateful that those individuals set me on a path to continued — and continuing — education. Most importantly, East Clinton is where my wife, **Rebecca Custis**, and I first met. We're happily celebrating our 40th anniversary this year."

### Education inspiration

"My high school vocational agriculture teacher for four years, **Adrian Roberts**, stands out among many superb educators," Williams said. "He had an ability to motivate and challenge each of us, with a clear expectation that one's best effort was always put forth. He taught a remarkable spectrum of topics rooted in biology, business, mechanics and public speaking — all aimed to prepare us to be self-sufficient and confident in our knowledge. Although I ultimately pursued a different field, I still convey his mandates to my students and trainees as 'Roberts' Rules' — they work as well now as they did then."

### Giving back

Besides helping save lives every day, Williams contributes regularly to national and international programs devoted to lymphoma research and education. You might say giving back runs in his family's blood; **Donna J. Myers, Northwestern Local (Clark)** and **Springfield-Clark Career Technology Center** board member, is his sister. ■



*"Education is the key."*

# Expanding collaborations to enhance teacher quality

*Project creates critical links between local schools, teacher preparation programs*

*Dr. Aimee Howley, Ohio University Patton College of Education*

Efforts to connect local schools and university programs that prepare teachers contribute to a “win-win” situation for districts and the communities they serve. When schools and teacher preparation programs are in close and frequent communication, new teachers graduate with the knowledge and skills that school districts find most effective for meeting schoolchildren’s needs. One model of this type of collaboration has been gaining ground in southeast Ohio.

The Southeast Ohio Teacher Development Collaborative (SEO-TDC), with support from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, started

to take shape in 2008. Its partnering schools are located in the 163 Appalachian districts affiliated with the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools (CORAS). In addition to Ohio University, its university members include Marietta College, Muskingum University, University of Rio Grande and Shawnee State University.

After an extensive process to establish long-term goals, the collaborative began to take steps each year to accomplish what renowned educator **John Goodlad** called “the simultaneous renewal of teacher education and the public schools.” Renewal efforts under this model create a cyclical process in which

improvements in schools promote improvements in teacher preparation and vice versa.

## Recent progress

The objectives guiding the collaborative’s 2012 work were to:

- support the development of an aligned system of professional education preparation;
- enhance the quality of mentoring provided to pre-service and early-career teachers;
- assist pre-K-12 teachers and teacher educators in gaining greater understanding of the educational needs and assets of Appalachian Ohio.



*Connecting schools with universities that prepare teachers creates a “win-win” for students and local communities.*

Addressing these objectives, the SEO-TDC project generated four products for use by educators in public schools and teacher preparation programs:

- an online professional development workshop for cooperating teachers who mentor student teachers and the principals who supervise their work;
- a mentoring style assessment instrument;
- an internship evaluation instrument;
- a white paper analyzing the data collected from the two instruments and recommending best practices for program improvement in teacher preparation.

### **Simultaneous renewal: the clinical model**

In response to the need for quality teachers in Ohio's schools, the SEO-TDC teacher education programs are turning toward an intensive, research-based clinical model of teacher preparation. This model emphasizes learning to teach in classroom settings with the help of experienced mentor-teachers. Teacher education majors will now participate in a carefully structured internship that immerses them in the classroom, where they can observe, teach side-by-side with and receive guidance from the mentor-teacher.

### **Enhancing the quality of mentoring: the online workshop**

SEO-TDC partners developed an online workshop to help mentor-teachers improve their skills. This workshop, composed of three self-paced modules, focused on helping experienced teachers understand their mentoring styles, interact effectively with student teachers they supervise and contribute to improvements in teacher preparation. A pilot cohort participated in the workshop and provided feedback to workshop developers. A revised version of the workshop is now being offered to mentor-teachers in the region.

### **Mentoring style inventory**

The project team also developed a mentoring style inventory, a short, self-report instrument measuring the mentoring styles of mentor-teachers in four domains:

- directiveness;
- collaborativeness;
- convergence;
- openness to experimentation.

Basing items on relevant research, the team used rigorous research methods to ensure the inventory would be an accurate and consistent measure. In the future, the team will work to modify the inventory for use with other school-based supervisors, such as principals.

### **Professional internship evaluation instrument**

The collaborative also developed and

began using an instrument enabling student teachers to evaluate the quality of their student teaching — both the guided learning they received under the supervision of a mentor-teacher and the quality of the support they received from their college or university. The research team adapted some survey items from an earlier instrument, the Pre-Service Teacher Education Survey, developed by the Ohio Confederation of Teacher Education Organizations ([www.ohioteachered.org](http://www.ohioteachered.org)). The team developed other items based on suggestions from focus groups of current student teachers.

### **Future applications**

The two new instruments have immediate applicability in the pre-K-12 classrooms where prospective teachers receive their clinical preparation. Mentor-teachers can use the mentoring style inventory to assess and reflect on their mentoring styles, and teacher preparation programs can use the internship evaluation to get useful program-specific feedback from their student teachers. Stakeholders in the Appalachian region have already expressed interest in using the instruments in their programs. A more extensive report of the instrument development work can be found, along with other SEO-TDC publications, at [www.coras.org/seotdc/publications.html](http://www.coras.org/seotdc/publications.html).

### **Connecting teacher quality to the realities of teaching**

Any initiative to improve student outcomes must include pre-K-12 stakeholders in discussions that connect issues of teacher quality with the day-to-day realities of teaching. In an effort to promote such discussions and disseminate the findings of research to the broader community, SEO-TDC member institutions organized an Assets Perspective Conference focusing on the Appalachian region called The Common Core: Implications for Deep Learning and Excellent Teaching. Seventy-nine participants attended one or both days of the conference, including 27 college or university faculty members and higher education administrators, 24 pre-service teachers and 22 pre-K-12 educators.



## **RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT**

### **An in-depth look at what works in public education**

OSBA is proud to introduce a new initiative aimed at sharing the latest education-related research with school board members and administrators. The association is working with Ohio colleges, universities and education organizations to disseminate studies about what works in K-12 public education. In addition to the "Research Spotlight" section appearing in the *Journal*, OSBA will be rolling out a new page on its website to serve as a research repository for members. For more information about this initiative, contact **Bryan Bullock**, OSBA communication coordinator, at (614) 540-4000 or [bbullock@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:bbullock@ohioschoolboards.org).

### **Next steps: implementing a coordinated approach to supporting teacher quality**

The initiatives outlined laid the groundwork for a program to improve teacher preparation in southeast Ohio. Although these efforts have taken place in a rural part of the state, their fundamental principles are applicable everywhere. Pre-K-12 schools and teacher preparation programs can create deep and enduring partnerships. Those partnerships can conduct practical research and design relevant products that will foster systemwide reform — or to use Goodlad's term, "renewal."

Existing partnerships between pre-K-12 schools and higher education institutions — partnerships like SEO-TDC — can share their work with wider audiences. Not only can what they learn help schools across Ohio, it also can help schools nationwide. ■

*About the author:* Dr. Aimee Howley is senior associate dean for research and graduate studies at the Ohio University Patton College of Education.

# Board members network, learn at 2013 BLI

► Board members could browse a variety of materials and OSBA publications.

▼ Central Regional Manager Dr. Michael G. Grote, left, discusses the region's activities with board members.



▲ Jaime L. Beamer, Seneca East Local (Seneca) and Vanguard-Sentinel Career and Technology Centers, attends a BLI session.

► State Board of Education President Debe Terhar speaks with BLI attendees following her speech during the Saturday Closing Luncheon.





◀ Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine speaks during the Opening General Session.

◀◀ OSBA Deputy Executive Director Rob Delane discusses board-superintendent partnerships.

▼ OSBA President Charlie Wilson, center, congratulates BLI graduates Steve Miller and Kathy Trace, both from Trimble Local (Athens).



▲ Board members listen attentively to Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's keynote address.

◀ Board members pick up materials at registration on BLI's opening day

# 2013 Treasurers' Clinics

*Sharing knowledge, developing solutions  
and growing professionally*

- ◆ *Designed for treasurers, business managers, board members, administrators and treasurer's office personnel*
- ◆ *Attend general sessions and multiple breakout sessions*
- ◆ *Fulfill local and state professional development needs, including CPE and auditor of state in-service credits*
- ◆ *Five convenient locations across Ohio*

## **Choose the date and location that best fits your schedule:**

Friday, Sept. 6	Northeast Ohio Medical University, Rootstown
Tuesday, Sept. 10	Ohio University Inn and Conference Center, Athens
Wednesday, Sept. 18	Savannah Center, West Chester
Friday, Sept. 20	Embassy Suites, Columbus
Tuesday, Sept. 24	Hilton Garden Inn, Perrysburg

Plan now to attend the 2013 OSBA Treasurers' Clinics to be held in five locations around the state. These clinics provide the most current information on school district fiscal issues. Treasurers, business managers, board members, administrators and treasurer's office personnel are all encouraged to attend.

The Treasurers' Clinics offer timely information on a multitude of topics relevant to all members of a district's management team. Attendees also can fulfill their local and state professional development needs, including in-service, LPDC and continuing professional education credits.

Registration and continental breakfast begin at 8 a.m. The fee is \$150, which includes registration, continental breakfast, lunch and materials. You can register by contacting OSBA's **Laurie Miller** at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or [Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org).