

'Green' issue • Recognizing Ohio school board members

April 2013 • Volume 57, Issue 2

# JOURNAL

OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION



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OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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## New digital edition available!

You can access the *Journal's* new digital edition on the OSBA website at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal).

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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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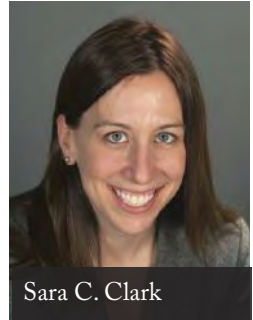
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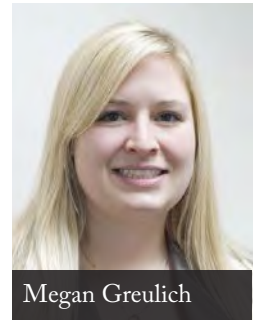
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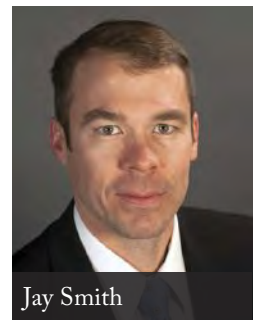
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# Dismantling democracy

*Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director*

While there have been assaults on our education system for decades, the artillery is now being redirected squarely on its foundation — elected boards of education. Examples can be found on every type of school board.

## Local boards

In Columbus, Ohio, Mayor **Michael B. Coleman** and city council president **Andrew J. Ginther** created the Columbus Education Commission to “examine the challenges and opportunities facing all children living within the **Columbus City** Schools district, from preschool to career, and develop specific recommendations to the mayor and council president.”

Any interest in student success should be applauded as a noble ambition, and any community would normally be blessed to have a group of influential leaders willing to partner with the locally elected school board to make such advancements. However, in the Columbus commission, the board’s role has been relegated from elected leader to ex-officio participant. Even more disturbing is a perception that the group is more fixated on the board’s governance model than confronting the unique challenges facing most urban districts.

The commission is relying on reports from groups such as the Center for American Progress that tout the accomplishments of mayoral governance. That group’s March 2013 report, “Mayoral Governance and Student Achievement: How Mayor-Led Districts are Improving School and Student Performance,” boasts

that support of mayoral leadership in schools is increasing, but glosses over the fact that the majority of parents still favor elected school boards. The report highlights 11 mayoral takeovers of school districts over the past decade. Conveniently, what is ignored is that academic gains occurred in less than half of the mayoral controlled districts and those advancements were not sustained after the initial year.

Arguments by self-appointed outside experts assert that our citizenry does not involve itself deeply enough in the selection of school board candidates. That statement lacks credibility when Franklin County Board of Election results show several Columbus school board members received more votes than city council members, and they did so with fewer voting precincts.

Another fallacious argument is that local voters are not informed enough about education to vote for the best school board candidates. Ironically, we are asked to accept that voters are smart enough to elect the best city council, mayor and governor, as well as choose the right school option through charters and vouchers and initiate a school takeover through a parent trigger. If voters can determine these positions and issues, it’s no stretch to say they can elect a person who best represents their family’s needs on a local school board.

OSBA understands that in the right circumstances, the mayoral governance model can work. The mayoral-appointed **Cleveland Municipal** Board of Education is a valued member of this association. But true to the foundation of OSBA’s steadfast support of local

control, the organization of the Cleveland board was directed by a vote of its citizens. Such decisions should be left to the parents and the public — not just the politicians and the powerful.

## Educational service Centers

Gov. **John Kasich**’s state budget, House Bill (HB) 59, proposes eliminating publicly elected educational service center (ESC) governing boards and replacing them with a yet-to-be determined governance model that uses appointed members from all “client” groups, including local government, community schools, chartered nonpublic schools and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) schools. Under the plan, it is likely many ESC boards would transform into bodies of unmanageable size and polarized agendas.

This would potentially eliminate public accountability and transparency for ESC operations, and even more importantly, dilute the educational mission of these organizations. ESCs are effectively governed by locally elected boards of education that are accountable to Ohio taxpayers. They are a vital link and partner in the primary and secondary educational process, providing a range of services to their member school districts, including curriculum development, professional development, technology assistance, administrative and supervisory services, preschool and special education programs, specialist staffing and support services for at-risk youth. ESCs have embodied and delivered the concept of shared services long before it was introduced as a political concept of cost control. Frankly, it’s the reason they exist.



### JVSDs and career centers

While HB 59's stated intent is to give customers more say in the governance of ESCs, a rumored proposal in the Ohio Senate would dismantle that approach for career centers and JVSDs. Some lawmakers are considering removing the local school board members of career centers and JVSDs in favor of appointed representatives of business.

The assertion that local boards have an inherent conflict of interest in serving on JVSD boards is paradoxical at best. These school board members don't reflect the needs on a single vocation. They represent the needs of our society.

The proffered solution to a nonexistent problem that does not exist is that business owners know more about what Ohio needs from our career centers than school board members. School board members are business leaders. Our elected school boards represent every facet of our society. They have backgrounds in agriculture, clerical fields, education, medicine, law, management, manufacturing, government, finance, retail, skilled labor,

construction, communication and more. Tell me again, what's missing?

The roots of our system of school governance date back more than 200 years. John Hopkins University research published in the *Review of Educational Research* in 2002 affirms "... school boards today face traditional challenges such as securing and allocating adequate finances and recruiting and maintaining talented staff. They also face new issues such as state and federal interference, greater public apathy toward and lack of confidence in public schools and school boards, a more diverse student population and more controversial and pervasive social problems making governance more difficult and complex. Yet school boards continue to be valued and supported."

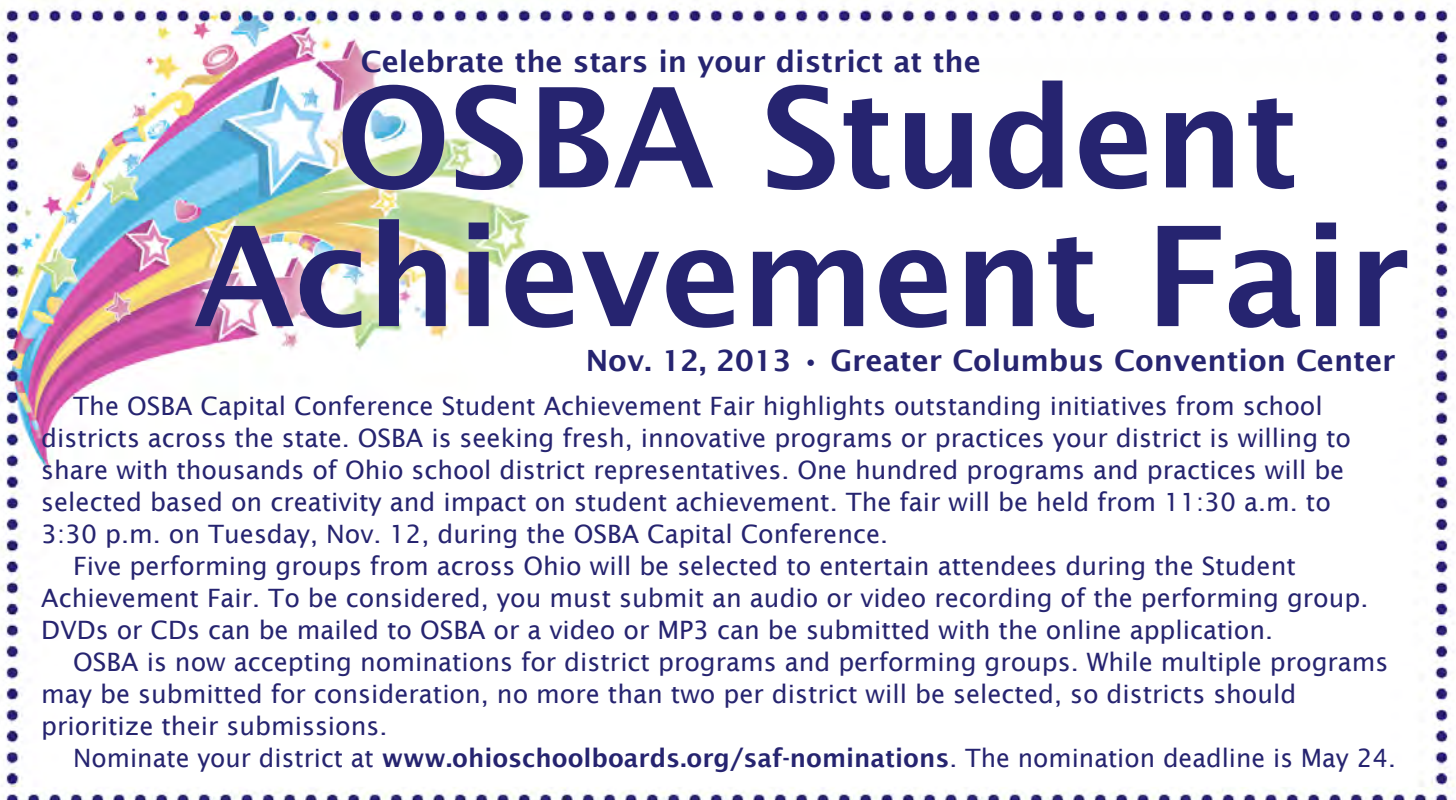
The public's trust and confidence in their school boards' decisions remain high. Recall last year's Ohio Omnibus Survey, conducted by Fallon Research & Communications Inc. Almost two-thirds of Ohioans said they most trust their local school board to make good decisions on education policies, whereas

15% said they most trust the state superintendent of public instruction, 6.6% the governor and 3.3% the state legislature.

OSBA and its members are not opposed to reform. There are ways to improve our best practices in governance. However, it is critical that in contemplating change, we not blur the line between the perceptions of individual school board members with the realities of the institution of elected boards.

The Center for Public Education, a research initiative of the National School Boards Association, concludes that, "In this era of fiscal constraints and a national environment focused on accountability, boards in high-performing districts can provide an important blueprint for success. In the process, they can offer a road map for boards in lower-achieving school districts nationwide."

We cannot allow the institution of publicly elected boards of education to be minimized by political agendas. ■



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Five performing groups from across Ohio will be selected to entertain attendees during the Student Achievement Fair. To be considered, you must submit an audio or video recording of the performing group. DVDs or CDs can be mailed to OSBA or a video or MP3 can be submitted with the online application.

OSBA is now accepting nominations for district programs and performing groups. While multiple programs may be submitted for consideration, no more than two per district will be selected, so districts should prioritize their submissions.

Nominate your district at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/saf-nominations](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/saf-nominations). The nomination deadline is May 24.

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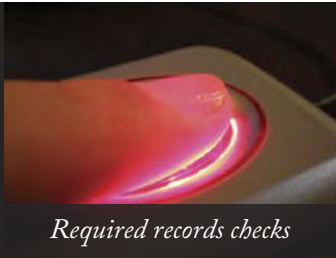
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# Criminal records checks – what you need to know

*Sara C. Clark, deputy director of legal services*



*Required records checks*

If Ohio's criminal records checks laws confuse you, rest assured you are not alone. There are more than 20 statutes and rules outlining who must be checked and how frequently, the process and procedures that must be followed and the requirements for maintaining or releasing the results.

Once you add the list of disqualifying offenses and an employee's options for rehabilitation, more than 100 different statutes are involved. Add to that the fact that the laws underwent several major legislative overhauls over the past decade, and it's no wonder there is confusion over the current legal requirements in this extremely important area.

Let's take a good look at the current status of criminal records check requirements in Ohio and identify resources available to school districts.

## Why

In light of the confusion, why is it so important to do criminal records checks? The simplest answer is also the one reiterated through the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) rules. The rules governing criminal records checks for licensed (Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3301-20-01), nonlicensed (OAC 3301-20-03) and transportation employees (OAC 3301-83-23) all state the same thing: "The purpose of this rule is to provide for the safety and well-being of students."

People with serious criminal records may not be fit to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children. Additionally, your district cannot legally hire individuals with certain criminal

offenses. Running a criminal records check will bring those offenses to light and help ensure the district is protected against an unlawful hire.

## Who

Section 3319.39 of the Ohio Revised Code (RC) requires the appointing or hiring officer of a board of education to request a criminal records check for anyone who has applied for employment with the school district, educational service center or school. This requirement casts a fairly wide net and includes most individuals who routinely work with the district, including, but not limited to administrators, teachers, bus drivers, substitute teachers, coaches, educational aides, custodians and food service workers.

However, there are some individuals who are not required to have criminal records checks under Ohio law. For example, state law does not require criminal records checks for traditional public school board members, and school boards are prohibited from requiring them by policy. Requiring a public official to submit to a criminal records check could limit the ability of an individual from serving as a public official and would be an unconstitutional limitation on the individual's right to political expression.

Ohio law also does not require criminal records checks for most volunteers, although a school board may require them by policy. Regardless of whether the district requires the checks, if the volunteer will have "unsupervised access" to a child on a regular basis, the district is required to notify the volunteer that fingerprints and a criminal records check

may be conducted at any time.

"Unsupervised" means that no other person 18 years of age or older is present in the same room with the child or, if outdoors, no other person 18 years of age or older is within a 30-yard radius of the child or has visual contact with the child.

OSBA has developed two resources to help districts determine the criminal records check requirements for specific groups of employees. Check out the "Criminal records check" fact sheet and the "Criminal records check requirements for school employees" chart, which are both available on the legal division's "Resources by Topic" page at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/resources-by-topic](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/resources-by-topic).

## What

The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) offers two separate types of criminal records checks. The first is a state background check. This check uses an individual's name, Social Security number and two fingerprints, and checks the state's central repository for criminal records in Ohio. In order for a "match" to be generated, the record must match at least two out of the three identifiers.

The check currently costs \$22, but the Ohio attorney general's office has filed an administrative rule that would raise this to \$25 by July 1, 2013, and \$28 by July 2, 2014. The second check is the FBI check. The FBI check provides official nationwide checks and runs a check on all 10 fingerprints. This check costs \$24.

In general, the first time an individual is checked, he or she is required to



have both a BCI and FBI criminal background check. If the individual can demonstrate that he or she has been a resident of Ohio for the preceding five years and has previously been subject to a BCI check, only the FBI check is required on subsequent checks.

Although a school district may accept a certified copy of a criminal records check that took place within the year, school districts should not accept a criminal records check from another state. States apply different standards when they conduct their criminal records checks and a “clear” check from Texas doesn’t necessarily mean the individual would be eligible for employment in Ohio.

### When

Generally, criminal records checks are required upon a new employee’s initial hire. In most cases, the school board may employ an applicant conditionally until the criminal records check is complete and the board receives the results of the check. However, this is not the case with transportation employees, including school bus drivers and drivers of vehicles other than school buses used for pupil transportation. OAC 3301-83-06 requires certain transportation employees to have a satisfactory criminal background report prior to being hired by the district.

Subsequent criminal records checks are required for most employees, but the length of time that may pass between the initial check and any subsequent check depends on the type of employee. Most licensed employees, for example, are required to have a subsequent criminal record check when they renew their license or certification. Nonlicensed employees and permanent certificate holders are required to have criminal records checks every five years by Sept. 5.

Since criminal records checks became mandatory for most nonlicensed employees in 2008, many nonlicensed employees will hit the five-year mark this year and be required to have a new check. Keep in mind that so long as the individual can demonstrate that he or

she has been a resident of Ohio for the preceding five years and has previously been subject to a BCI check, only the FBI check is required.

See the “Criminal records check” fact sheet and the “Criminal records check requirements for school employees” chart on OSBA’s website for a list of when subsequent criminal records checks are required for each category of school employees.

### Rap back

BCI is required by law to establish and maintain a database of fingerprints from prior criminal records checks. This database is called the retained applicant fingerprint database, and is more commonly known as “rap back.”

Under RC 109.5721, when the bureau receives information that an individual whose name is in the rap back database has been arrested for, convicted of or pleaded guilty to any offense, BCI is required to promptly notify any participating public office. ODE is a “participating public office” under the statute and receives notification from the bureau on any person to whom the state board has issued a license.

Presumably, ODE would notify the local district when it receives any notification from BCI. For nonlicensed individuals, schools may choose to participate in rap back for their nonlicensed employees by paying a \$5 initial fee per person and an additional \$5 per person annually

While the rap back database may help school districts determine their employees’ continued eligibility for employment, the system is not foolproof. An offense only goes to rap back if fingerprints were taken, which leaves a number of offenses out of the database.

Additionally, rap back doesn’t pick up open-ended cases, so if an individual was arrested, but the case was never resolved and entered into the system, it would not show up in the rap back database.

As a result, the school may hear about an individual’s offense not from the rap back database, but from the arresting entity or members of the community. Schools may need to follow up with the clerk of courts in their jurisdiction to learn how the case was resolved and whether the offense will have any impact on the individual’s continued employment with the district.

### Where

There are a number of entities that conduct criminal records checks for school district applicants and employees. Many school districts and ESCs serve as agents and transmit fingerprints and other data electronically to BCI. The Ohio attorney general’s website also has a list of local law enforcement agencies and other WebCheck locations that users can search by county or ZIP code. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/72276> for a complete listing.

### Disqualifying offenses

When a district requests a criminal records check from BCI, the district will receive any information the bureau determines exists on an individual, including information contained in sealed records. Offenses that appear on criminal records checks fall into three categories: offenses that are absolute bars to employment, disqualifying offenses that are eligible for rehabilitation and offenses that do not disqualify an individual from working in the district.

The list of disqualifying offenses varies significantly depending on the type of position. OSBA has created a list of the offenses that serve as absolute bars to employment — as well as a list of disqualifying offenses that are eligible for rehabilitation — which are available on OSBA’s website.

The rehabilitation rules in OAC clarify when and under what conditions an applicant or employee with a criminal conviction may be employed by a school district. OAC 3301-20-01 sets forth the conditions for licensed employees; OAC 3301-20-03 sets forth the conditions for nonlicensed employees; and OAC

3301-83-23 sets forth the conditions for transportation employees.

All three rules state that a district may employ an individual with a criminal conviction that is not an absolute bar to employment provided certain criteria

are met. That criteria includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- At the time of the offense, the victim of the offense was not a person under 18 years of age or enrolled as a student in the district.
- The district has received written

confirmation from the court, a parole officer, a probation officer and/or a counselor that the individual has been rehabilitated.

- A reasonable person would conclude that the individual's hiring would not jeopardize the health, safety or welfare of the persons served by the district. Evidence includes, but is not limited to, factors like the nature and seriousness of the crime, the extent of the applicant's past criminal activity, the age of the applicant when the crime was committed, whether employment will have a negative impact on the local education community and any other factors the board considers relevant.

It is the applicant or employee's responsibility to provide written evidence of rehabilitation. If the applicant or employee can demonstrate that he or she meets the rehabilitation criteria, the applicant or employee is eligible for employment. There is no mandate or requirement that employment is granted. It is still left to the discretion of the district as to who is to be recommended to the local board of education for employment.

OSBA has updated several of its resources on criminal records checks for school districts in Ohio. To locate those resources, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/43698> or contact the division of legal services.

The legal division will host a webinar on the criminal records checks requirements on May 9 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. The webinar will review who needs to be checked and when. It also will include practical resources to help districts comply with the law. The cost to view the webinar is \$35. Visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org/event-listings](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/event-listings) to register. ■

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# A future superintendent?



*Inspiring students*

*Dr. Richard J. Caster, senior school board services consultant*

I had the honor and pleasure of working with the **Lorain City** Board of Education on its most recent superintendent search. Part of the OSBA search process is to conduct focus groups with various constituents in the school district. Community members, school staff, parent support groups and others are invited to meet with the OSBA consultant to discuss what they want and need in the next superintendent.

In conducting these focus groups in Lorain in June, I had the privilege of meeting a young lady, **Bailey**, who was preparing to enter Lorain High School in the fall.

Bailey wanted to do anything she could to assist with the focus groups. She would help in any way possible, such as setting up and taking down chairs, which she did at a number of these meetings.

I was so impressed with her contributions that during the last focus group, I brought Bailey up in front of the participants. I told the audience that if, in about 20 years, Lorain is seeking a superintendent, someone needs to talk to Bailey and convince her to apply for the position.

The search reached its successful conclusion and I went about the business of doing other searches and workshops across the state. One day, I received a letter. Inside the envelope was an “application” from Bailey detailing her current qualifications for the position of Lorain City Schools superintendent.

She put her application in the format OSBA uses in executive

search marketing brochures to list qualifications. Some of her qualifications included:

- earned academic honors since kindergarten;
- crossing guard for three years;
- altar server for four years;
- likes to sing;
- great personality and smile;
- very artistic;
- community driven;
- encourages positive change;
- leadership qualities;
- creative;
- got an “A” in math this year.

She ended her application with, “References available upon request.”

If Bailey represents the majority of youth in our public schools — and I believe she does — our education system is doing extremely well. Her application showed ambition, ingenuity, humor and maturity. She presented herself as a young woman who not only hears, but also listens.

I would defy anyone to argue that these critical qualities are not fostered and supported by our public schools. I do not know of a “test” that measures these attributes, which are so important to a high-quality education.

By the way, if anyone is interested in hiring a 14-year-old superintendent, give me a call. ■

## Struggling to reach a peaceful resolution? Let OSBA help!

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# When does policy mean board policy?

Megan Greulich, policy consultant



Highlighting the differences

The term policy often gets tossed around, especially when it comes to boards of education and school districts. It can sometimes be difficult to understand the difference between board policies and procedures, as opposed to district-specific policies, plans and procedures.

We're probably all guilty of using the term policy interchangeably at some point. What is interesting is that while people don't usually specify they are seeking board policy, it's the first thing on everyone's mind when the term is

used. But more often than not, requests for policy don't mean board policy.

So, how can you tell the difference? Let's look at some of the basics, as well as an example that recently caused quite a bit of confusion.

*Policies represent the "who, what and why," while regulations represent the "how."*

Board policy manuals can include policies, regulations and exhibits. Policies represent the "who, what and why," while regulations represent the "how" — essentially, how do we implement the who, what and why. Any exhibits that appear in board policy are usually forms. Policies are adopted, regulations are approved and exhibits require no board action to be added or removed from the board policy manual.

Now that we've considered the basics, let's look at when the need for board policies and regulations can arise.

This need can result from a legal requirement on the state or federal level. It can stem from an authority such as the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation or state auditor's office. Or it can arise from an individual district's unique need. There are other situations where board policy on a topic is not required, but the district is required to carry out a procedure in a

certain way whether or not there is a board policy.

In these cases, some boards choose to include board policy language for informational purposes. Other boards choose to exclude the language from board policy and rely on the associated legal provisions when a situation arises.

Separate from board policies, regulations and exhibits are district-specific policies, procedures and/or plans. These are day-to-day procedures often used to implement the overarching requirements of board policy. These procedures typically include detailed information referred to generally in board policy.

For instance, districts are required to have board policy dealing with interdistrict open enrollment. Board policy on the topic reiterates the minimum legal requirements set forth by state law. This language sufficiently meets the legal requirement for board policy on the topic.

In addition to board policy, districts should have district-specific procedures detailing the topics mentioned in board policy, such as specifics about capacity limits and application procedures. Keeping the specific procedural information separate from board policy gives the district more flexibility to make changes. This is especially important with topics like capacity limits that often change annually.

Let's look at another example of the differences between board policy and district-specific policies. Many districts make the mistake of putting their plans for testing security in board policy

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because the topic is required to appear in board policy.

This is a bad idea for many reasons, not the least of which is that putting security procedures in a public document allows people to access the information and circumvent the system. For this reason, your board policy and regulation dealing with testing security procedures should include the minimum legal standard for what is required to appear in your testing security plan. The details of handling and securing testing materials should be kept separate in the plan itself.

An even more important and timely example deals with emergency safety plans. Board policies and regulations are often included on this topic, but the actual emergency safety plan details belong in the safety plan itself. The emergency safety plan is a confidential document, as opposed to board policy, which is a public document.

For this reason, your board policy and procedure on this topic should reiterate the minimum legal requirement of what must be included in the emergency safety plan. The actual emergency safety plan includes details of emergency safety procedures. Similar to testing security, putting the details of this plan in board policy could enable people to circumvent your emergency security plan.

Let's consider a recent example of a policy request that caused confusion in many districts. The state auditor's office has been auditing districts for financial policies and procedures, and requesting district procurement policies. As a result, OSBA has received several requests for sample board policies dealing with procurement. There is no legal requirement for board policy language dealing with procurement and, in fact, when the auditor's office requested procurement policies, it was really looking for district-specific policies and procedures, rather than board policy language on the topic.

It makes more sense for language to be kept separate from board policy in

district-specific policies and procedures, or even in a treasurer's handbook when dealing with a topic as specific as procurement, as well as other financial procedures. This enables the treasurer to use his or her expertise to develop efficient procedures and make necessary adjustments to district practices without having to seek board action every time.

The questions remain, how do you know when the policy request is for board policy or district-specific policy? The best way to know is simply to ask.

OSBA often directs districts back to the auditor's office to ask whether it is requesting board policy or district-specific procedures. In such cases,

the auditor's office often clarifies it is seeking the latter.

There are certainly times when the auditor's office is seeking a board policy that was not previously required or requested. If this is the case, OSBA is glad to touch base with your contact at the auditor's office to clear up any confusion.

And, don't forget, you're always welcome to contact OSBA with your policy questions. If your district doesn't use OSBA's policy services, contact your district's policy services provider. Regardless of who you call, don't hesitate to ask for more information or clarification if you're unsure. ■

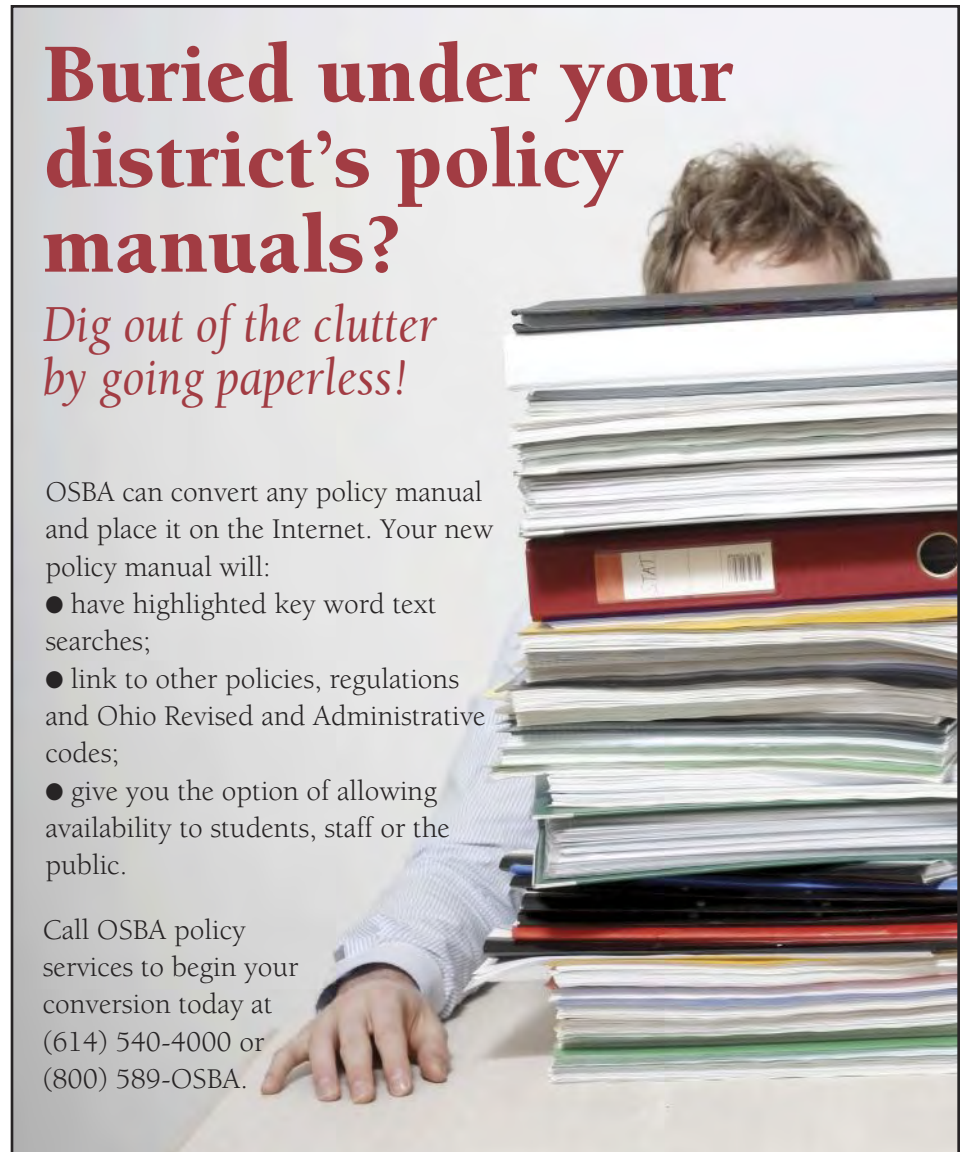
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Legislation affecting schools

# What else is going on at the Statehouse?

Jay Smith, lobbyist

The 130th General Assembly is off and running, and debate over the state biennial budget — House Bill (HB) 59 — is in full bloom. Ohio House of Representatives members are immersed in discussions as the proposal makes its way through the House chamber.

Meanwhile, the Ohio Senate is gearing up for its own debate over specific issues contained in the budget that will be passed by the House. Despite extensive news coverage of these discussions and debates, the biennial budget is not the only legislative proposal circulating during this busy time.

Let's take a look at some of the other education-related bills introduced this legislative session.

- HB 8 focuses on revising school safety laws. This bill, sponsored by Rep. **Kristina Roegner** (R-Hudson) and Rep. **Stephanie Kunze** (R-Hilliard), is a draft in progress based on input from interested parties, research and suggestions from the public. The legislation has been referred to the House Education Committee.
- HB 14 deals with a school district's withholding, or transfer to another school district, of records of a child adjudicated as abused, neglected or dependent. The legislation was introduced by Rep. **Dorothy Pelanda** (R-Marysville) and has been referred to the House Education Committee.
- HB 18 proposes assisting school districts that are seeking financial assistance to acquire and install metal detectors in schools. The legislation was introduced by Rep.

**Bill Patmon** (D-Cleveland) and referred to the House Education Committee.

- HB 30 would create a process for the State Board of Education, or the state superintendent of public instruction on behalf of the State Board, to present a "letter of admonishment" (written reprimand) to a licensed educator for conduct unbecoming of the educator's position. Therefore, the State Board would not take action under Ohio Revised Code Section 3319.31 for revocation of a license if it decides to issue a letter of admonishment under this newly proposed process. The legislation has been referred to the House Education Committee.

*Despite extensive news coverage, the biennial budget is not the only legislative proposal circulating during this busy time.*

- HB 32 would establish a minimum school year for school districts; science technology, engineering and math (STEM) schools; and chartered nonpublic schools based on hours, rather than days, of instruction. The legislation was introduced by Rep. **Bill Hayes** (R-Granville) and Patmon, and has been referred to the House Education Committee.
- HB 58 proposes changing the voting membership of the State Board of

Education to a representative from each of several electoral districts with boundaries coinciding with the state's congressional districts and a president appointed by the governor if there is an even number of electoral districts. The bill was introduced by Rep. **Ronald V. Gerberry** (D-Austintown) and has been referred to the House Education Committee.

- Senate Bill (SB) 6, with the recommendation of Auditor of State **Dave Yost**, seeks to establish continuing education requirements for township and municipal fiscal officers, develop procedures for removing those fiscal officers and create fiscal accountability requirements for public schools. The legislation was introduced by Sen. **Tim Schaffer** (R-Lancaster) and has been referred to the Senate Public Safety, Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.
- SB 11 calls for requiring school districts to allow alternative summer meal sponsors to use school facilities to provide food service for summer intervention services under certain conditions. The bill also would allow the distribution and consumption of meals on a school bus, and create a healthy food license for child day care centers and school programs for children. The legislation was introduced by Sen. **Edna Brown** (D-Toledo) and has been referred to the Senate Medicaid, Health and Human Services Committee.
- SB 15 seeks to prescribe a system and time line for the General Assembly to deliberate and determine the components and cost of a high-quality public primary



and secondary education; make property tax law changes to fund a high-quality public primary and secondary education; and provide that the provisions of this act take effect only after being approved by electors. The legislation is sponsored by Sen. **Tom Sawyer** (D-Akron) and has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

- SB 21 proposes removing language passed under HB 555 requiring a reading teacher to be actively engaged in the reading instruction of students for the previous three years. The legislation, sponsored by Sen. **Peggy Lehner** (R-Kettering), has passed through the Senate and been referred to the House Education Committee.
- SB 31 would grant a nonrefundable income tax credit of up to \$100 for teachers who purchase classroom instructional materials. The legislation is sponsored by Schaffer and is being heard in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.
- SB 35 seeks to eliminate special elections in February and August. This legislation is sponsored by Sen. **Kris Jordan** (R-Powell) and is currently pending in the Senate State Government Oversight and Reform Committee.
- SB 42 proposes authorizing school

districts to levy a property tax exclusively for school safety and security purposes. The bill was introduced by Sen. **Gayle Manning** (R-North Ridgeville) and Sen. **Randy Gardner** (R-Bowling Green). It was passed by the Senate on April 10.

- SB 59 would allow a joint purchasing pool of school districts the option of issuing tax-exempt bonds to pre-purchase electricity. The legislation was introduced by Sen. **Bill Beagle** (R-Tipp City) and has been referred to the Senate Public Utilities Committee.

In addition, the Ohio Senate held hearings on school safety before a joint committee made up of members from the Senate Education Committee and the Senate Public Safety, Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee. The joint committee's purpose was to focus on a broad range of prevention and protection issues rather than hear testimony on a particular piece of legislation.

Lehner chaired the first two hearings, which focused on mental health and featured testimony from panelists with educational, medical and law enforcement backgrounds. Sen. **Frank LaRose** (R-Copley) chaired the



*Pending legislation could establish a minimum school year, help districts install metal detectors in schools and grant a tax credit for teachers who purchase classroom materials.*

committee's last two hearings, which focused on protection and responding to events.

As we proceed through the 130th General Assembly, OSBA encourages you to take advantage of the BillTracker link on OSBA's website, [www.ohioschoolboards.org/billtracker](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/billtracker). BillTracker includes the current status of legislation, as well as any additional talking points, testimony or analysis on bills OSBA is following. For questions, contact OSBA's Division of Legislative Services. ■



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# Ramping up



*Environmental science class students volunteer at one of several waste stations in Loveland High School's cafeteria during lunch. Students help their peers determine which waste can be recycled or composted.*

## Loveland City makes going 'green' a priority

It's no secret teenagers can be picky about what they eat. At Loveland High School, students are just as particular — if not more so — about what they do with waste from their meals.

After students finish lunch in the cafeteria, they stack their compostable trays and file slowly by a series of waste receptacles. Each day, a group of students from **Tracy Burge's** environmental science class stands by the bins and helps their peers identify which waste can be recycled, composted or — as

a last resort — thrown away. A separate group of high school students will go through the bins later to make sure nothing was misplaced. It's a dirty job — they literally dig through the trash.

"I remember the first time we went through the trash to pick out recyclables three years ago," Burge said. "I just dug in my hands and started picking out bottles."

"The students were literally backing away from me in disgust,"



# recycling

*Bryan Bullock,  
assistant editor*

she said with a laugh.

The next day, Burge said, students began digging through the trash for recyclables with the same zeal.

“The kids have really taken hold of this project and taken ownership of it,” said **Chris Kloesz**, Loveland High School principal. “They’re the ones who have pushed the school to expand recycling and they’re constantly coming up with new ways to reduce waste.”

Students have already achieved meaningful results at Loveland High School. About 1,500 students and school staff eat lunch in the cafeteria each day. In just a few years, the school has reduced the number of bags of trash it produces each day during lunch from 60 to two. For this and other accomplishments, the school has been recognized as a zero-waste facility — meaning it has cut its waste by more than 90% — and named one of the nation’s first Green Ribbon schools.

“It’s truly amazing what students are doing and it really represents a culture shift at the school,” said Kloesz. “We get calls now from schools and other groups asking how we’re doing this or what I have done as a principal to make this happen. The answer I give is that I didn’t do anything. The students did this. I love to be able to say, ‘I can’t stop them.’”

With the support of the administration and school board, the Cincinnati-area school district of 4,500 students has made strides to model environmental stewardship. Rated excellent by the Ohio Department of Education, **Loveland City Schools** has made efforts in all its buildings to go green and reduce energy, water and natural gas consumption, saving more than \$450,000 a year. Students also are exposed to hands-on learning about the environment beginning in elementary school through an innovative, four-year garden program that aligns with state standards.

## **A high school’s green movement**

Loveland High School has offered an environmental science class for about 10 years, and Burge began teaching the course three years ago. The elective course is open to students in all grades and, due to its popularity, Burge typically teaches three units each semester. The class emphasizes hands-on learning

and students are charged with sustaining and expanding a variety of green initiatives at the school.

“I run the class like a corporation,” said Burge, who has been teaching for 20 years. “We might have a recycling group, a video-making group and a grant-writing group. Each group works together on projects.”

Her class asked the school’s waste service provider to conduct a trash audit, which found the school spent about \$660 a month for two dumpsters of trash that were picked up daily. Students worked with the school’s food service director and custodial staff to find ways to reduce waste. The class solicited donations for recycling bins and implemented recycling and “stackation” in the cafeteria, a way of stacking lunch trays so they take up less physical space in the trash.

The first day, those two techniques alone cut the cafeteria’s trash volume by more than a third. After students put recycling bins in classrooms, the school saw its trash output slashed in half.

“The students had to make videos to show the school this is how, what and why we’re doing this,” Burge said. “It’s very important for people to understand the why.”

The class has been eye-opening for many students — and it’s



*Loveland High School students sort trash, recyclables and composting material after lunch.*





*Banners in Loveland High School's cafeteria promote recycling.*

changed the way they think.

"I was surprised to learn all the things we throw away that we could recycle or compost," said sophomore **Willie Lutz**. "When I go to throw something away now, I think, 'Can I recycle this?' Right now, I'm trying to get my family to get on a composting program."

He said he enjoyed learning about the environment, but he liked the soft skills the class developed, too.

"I learned a lot of life skills, like making calls to companies, writing grants and talking to adults," Lutz said.

Students in the environmental science class operate largely self-directed, and they are tasked with contacting school leaders and businesses to coordinate green initiatives. The students have presented in front of the board of education, and they have planned and coordinated class field trips on environmental issues.

Sophomore **Casey Smith** said he was shocked to see on a field trip to a local landfill that about 60% of everything that gets thrown away could be recycled. "That kind of blew everyone's minds," he said.

Smith said he liked the hands-on nature of the environmental science class.

"Every day was hands-on," he said. "We were out recycling, picking up trash, working on new projects and learning about the environment."

Lutz and Smith won more than \$900 in a local watershed improvement grant competition in March. Burge helped students with their grant application, which earned Lutz and Smith second place out of 50 proposals. The money will be used to purchase compostable silverware for the cafeteria; the school has already adopted compostable cafeteria trays.

Loveland High School began composting this year, which brought its waste output down even further. The school needed to reduce its daily cafeteria trash volume from 60 to six bags in order to be considered a zero-waste facility.

"We got it down to two bags," Burge said. "The first day we

implemented composting, the second bag wasn't even full."

She said the savings from reducing trash pickups at the school has outweighed the extra cost of having a company collect composting. Students help food service staff sort and take out waste each day, as well as put chairs on top of tables in the cafeteria.

"We've implemented all these programs at no additional costs," Burge said. "The myth is that recycling is going to be more work and more cost, and it's been neither."

### **An eco-friendly school district**

Loveland High School was named a Green Ribbon school last year by the U.S. Department of Education. It was one of only 78 schools in the nation to receive the honor, which highlights the best environmental practices and green curricula. *(See the sidebar on page 18 to learn about Adams County/Ohio Valley Local's (Adams) North Adams Elementary School, the only other school in Ohio to receive the Green Ribbon distinction.)*

"The Green Ribbon designation encapsulated all of the energy, effort and passion that Tracy (Burge) and the students have for what they do," said Kloesz. "Naturally, it has brought a lot of very positive attention to our district, which continues to feed on that momentum."

The high school has inspired, and been inspired by, other green initiatives in the district. Loveland Early Childhood Center invites parents and community members to bring in paper for recycling. Loveland Middle School collects gently used school supplies at the end of each school year, which are passed on to those in need and kept out of a landfill. The district's elementary schools have recycled more than 30,000



*Roberta Paolo, founder of Granny's Garden School, holds up a plastic water bottle. Loveland Primary and Elementary schools collect the bottles, which are repurposed as flower vases by students.*

juice pouches this year, earning the schools about \$1,000 to fund a field trip for first-graders to learn about recycling and composting. Each Loveland City school building:

- recycles classroom and office paper;
- reduces paper consumption by using electronic communications;
- uses occupancy sensors for classroom lighting;
- uses nontoxic cleaning solutions;
- uses hand dryers instead of paper towels in restrooms for most buildings;
- serves filtered drinking water in the cafeteria instead of bottled water;
- recycles in the cafeteria.

The district has reduced its utility usage and costs through a series of efforts over the past few years to make its facilities more efficient. In 2009, Loveland City developed a plan to become more energy efficient and received \$6 million in interest-free loans through a House Bill 264 project, which allows districts to make energy-related improvements and use the cost savings to pay for them.

Loveland City Business Manager **John A. Ames** said the district used the funding to replace boilers, install low-flow faucets, upgrade indoor and outdoor lighting, and modernize heating and cooling systems, among other improvements. As a result, the district has cut its natural gas usage by 48% and electricity usage by 39% over the past four years. The district has seen water usage drop by as much as half in some buildings. The environmentally friendly changes saved the district \$466,000 in 2012, when compared to utility costs in 2008.

“Part of it is an awareness piece,” Ames said. “The kids won’t just leave sinks or lights on anymore, and they’ll tell people if they’re doing something wrong. It’s a culture change for everyone. We’re constantly looking at ways to be more efficient.”

Dr. **Kathryn M. Lorenz**, a board member with Loveland City and **Great Oaks ITCD**, said the board of education has made it a priority to be as environmentally friendly and financially responsible as possible.

“Our district is very proud to be academically sound and economically efficient,” she said. “The recycling efforts at Loveland High School, along with other environmental efforts, show that we have students learning in and outside the classroom, and that we have a very well-rounded public education system.”

### **Green education**

When the weather is warm, the property surrounding Loveland Primary and Elementary schools is lush with vegetables, flowers and leafy green plants. The 24-acre shared campus has more than 100 vegetable gardens, a variety of flower gardens, an apple orchard and a three-quarter



*A Loveland High School student stacks compostable lunch trays. Students help cafeteria staff by sorting waste and taking it outside for collection after lunch.*

mile nature trail. The property provides hands-on learning opportunities for more than 1,600 Loveland City students in grades one through four. The gardens are maintained by an army of volunteers and operated by Granny’s Garden School, a nonprofit group that works with Loveland City.

**Roberta Paolo** — better known as Granny — came up with the idea for the garden school in 2001 when she was picking her grandchildren up from Loveland Elementary School. The project, which started as a simple flower garden, has blossomed into a major operation.

“When Roberta brought this to the board (of education), I don’t think any of us dreamed that Granny’s Garden School would become as well-known and long-lasting as it has, or affect as many people as it has,” said Lorenz, a 21-year school board member.

The garden school, she said, has become a source of pride for Loveland City and helped the district strengthen ties with the community. About 600 volunteers from colleges, businesses and community groups pitch in at the garden school each year. Granny’s Garden School and Loveland City have partnered with a number of groups to obtain donations for the gardens,

including many items that are repurposed. The garden school, for example, collects 4,000 water bottles each year, which are used as vases for students to take flower bouquets home.

The garden school has seven outdoor learning centers and students visit the areas regularly throughout the year. A large part of the program's success, Paolo said, is due to the fact that garden educators are available to assist teachers with outdoor instruction. Students visit the garden school 24 times a year and the program has developed lesson plans that are applicable to each grade level and what students are learning in class.

"Our lesson plans and calendar of activities make the connection between the classroom and the outdoors," Paolo said. "Everything is connected to state standards and we're in the process right now of realigning all the lessons so they are connected to the new (Common) Core standards."

The lesson plans are available for free on the garden school's website, [www.grannysgardenschool.com](http://www.grannysgardenschool.com). In addition to learning about math, science and other core academic subjects in the garden, students are learning about the environment, nutrition, gardening and plants and vegetables. Each class maintains two garden beds, and students observe and taste

food as it grows; some of the vegetables and herbs from the gardens are used in the school cafeteria.

"Students are learning there is a much wider variety of fruits and vegetables out there than what you see in the supermarket, and they're discovering new ones that they like," Paolo said. "We're learning they're changing buying habits at home, too."

The garden school also exposes students to recycling and environmental stewardship at a young age. In the last two years, the school has diverted 60 truckloads of wood chips, 40 truckloads of leaves, thousands of pots and more than 1,000 kitty litter buckets from landfills, in addition to tons of garden refuse. The gardens also soak up rainwater, reducing runoff from blacktop into streets, sewers and the Little Miami River.

"We recycle everything, and we use and reuse whatever we can right here in the garden," Paolo said. "We're bringing the environment home and helping students understand it in their own backyard." ■

*Editor's note:* For more information about Loveland High School's green initiatives, contact environmental science teacher Tracy Burge at [burgetr@lovelandschools.org](mailto:burgetr@lovelandschools.org) or (513) 683-1920.

## Green Ribbon school embraces solar power

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

More than 1,250 solar panels run along the roof of North Adams Elementary School, turning sunshine into clean, renewable energy.

The Adams County/Ohio Valley Local (Adams) school produces about 30% of the energy it uses on-site with renewable resources. For this and other reasons, it was one of only two schools in Ohio – and 78 in the nation – designated as a Green Ribbon school by the U.S. Department of Education last year. The awards highlight the best environmental practices and green curricula. They debuted in 2012 and are modeled after the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, which honors high-performing schools.

"The district is very proud of the (Green Ribbon) award and of what has been accomplished at North Adams Elementary, and of the energy-efficient environment at all of our schools," Adams County/Ohio Valley Local Superintendent **Rodney A. Wallace** told local newspaper *The People's Defender* after the first-ever Green Ribbon awards were announced.

North Adams Elementary School opened in 2009. The building's design includes many sustainable features, including daylight harvesting, variable room lighting and a geothermal heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. The school began using solar energy in 2011. As of early April 2013, the building has generated more than 633,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity from

its solar panels. That's enough energy to power 55 homes for a year. School staff, students and community members can monitor the solar energy being collected at the building in real time by visiting the district's website, [www.ohiovalley.k12.oh.us](http://www.ohiovalley.k12.oh.us), and clicking on "solar update." A second building in the district, Peebles Elementary School, also is outfitted with solar panels. The solar panels were installed at no cost to the district in exchange for a power purchasing agreement.

About 700 students in grades kindergarten through six attend North Adams Elementary School, which is located in the Appalachian region of southwest Ohio. The building has received a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Schools rating of Silver. LEED is a national benchmark for green building design and construction. North Adams Elementary School also has earned two ENERGY STAR labels, including a building score of 97 on a 100-point rating system. ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy.

The school campus consists of 850,000 square feet of land, and the building only uses 11% of this space. More than 90% of the building's interior offers views to nature outside. The school grounds include an outdoor classroom and a weather station that can help teachers discuss climate and weather with students. ■



# OSBA's 'green' initiatives save greenbacks

*Crystal Davis, editor*

While OSBA's official colors are blue, red and yellow, the association has developed an affinity for green over the last few years. From changes as simple as installing motion sensor lights to recycling tens of thousands of pounds in paper, OSBA has been ramping up its green initiatives and saving greenbacks in the process.

Sensor lights were installed last summer at OSBA's Columbus headquarters, and more automatic light switches will likely be installed during a scheduled renovation of the building. The association also is planning to reuse existing ceiling tiles during the renovation. Employees recycle aluminum cans, and automatic paper dispensers were installed in our restrooms to save paper and money.

Since 2010, OSBA has trimmed more than \$100,000 in printing and paper costs by sending electronic versions of the *Briefcase*, *School Management News*, *Policy Development Quarterly* and *School Law Summary*. In addition, the association is expanding virtualization of its computer servers this year, which is expected to reduce cooling and electricity costs by a few thousand dollars annually. And, OSBA is using carpooling more than ever, which saves the

association money and reduces its carbon footprint.

Another way OSBA is helping the environment is through its endorsement of BoardDocs paperless governance services. BoardDocs solutions have saved an estimated 300 million sheets of paper from being printed across the country, replacing the costly method of compiling, copying and distributing board meeting documents. In total, Emerald Data Solutions Inc. estimates BoardDocs services save taxpayers a staggering \$10.5 million each year as board members access documents online instead of reviewing printed hard copies.

Finally, OSBA is pitching in, literally, thousands of pounds of paper each year in its internal recycling campaign. In 2012, employees recycled 13,140 pounds of paper (7.41 tons), saving 22.2 cubic yards of landfill space and 30,396 kilowatt-hours of energy.

So, while OSBA isn't considering changing its official colors anytime soon, as you can see, green has become a part of the association's work environment as OSBA does its small part to help protect the environment. ■

## You really can make a difference ... because kids count!

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# Ohio's 'green' story



*Cincinnati City's Taft High School is one of only three LEED Platinum-certified district projects in the state.*

## *State leads nation in environmentally friendly schools*

*Lisa Laney, Ohio Facilities Construction Commission*

For the past six years, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), formerly the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), has quietly gone about making Ohio the national leader in designing and constructing environmentally friendly schools.

To promote schools that are environmentally friendly and provide a healthier indoor environment, it has been a requirement since September 2007 that all buildings funded through commission programs be designed using the

U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Schools design criteria. Specifically, the commission wants projects to focus on energy efficiencies to help offset future operating costs.

The LEED criteria reflect a points-based system used to rank schools at various levels of sustainability. Those levels include Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. OFCC requires the design of each project to seek at least Silver certification. Currently, OFCC has 298 LEED for Schools projects, with



63 schools having achieved certification. Interestingly, nearly half of the projects have stretched beyond the minimum and exceeded the Silver certification goal. To date, the results include three Platinum certifications, 29 Gold, 30 Silver and one Certified.

There has been a corollary benefit to this effort: teachers and administrators are using these opportunities to bring environmental education to their students. There are green teams, environmental stewards, eco-guides (student-led tours) and numerous sustainable initiatives being taught in these environmentally friendly schools.

### Why go green?

LEED is a holistic green building program that provides a framework for solutions that contribute to healthy and high-performing schools. That's critically important.

For example, Americans spend approximately 90% of their time indoors where pollutant concentrations of two to 100 times higher than outdoor levels can exist. LEED-certified schools provide teachers, students, staff and visitors with clean and healthy air to breathe, better acoustics, regular access to daylight, thermal comfort and moisture control. All of these things lead to a better learning environment for students.

LEED schools also are designed to save energy, water and money. The U.S. Green Building Council Center for Green Schools estimates that through the use of green design, an average building can see savings of \$100,000 a year on operations and maintenance. For instance:

- Commercial and public buildings represent 38% of U.S. primary energy use, including 72% of electricity consumption. A green school can reduce this consumption by 30% to 50%.
- The U.S. uses 400 billion gallons of water a day, with buildings accounting for 12% of this usage. Through the sustainable design process, water consumption for a green school can be reduced by 40%, and even more if a water harvesting system is used.
- Commercial and public buildings are responsible for 40% of the nation's carbon dioxide emissions. A green building can reduce these emissions by 35%.

One other interesting fact: One of the credits under the LEED for Schools rating system is for properly handling construction waste. Just using OFCC certified projects as an indicator, this green school effort keeps more than 100,000 tons of construction waste out of landfills. In addition, the schools are required to have an ongoing recycling program for the building, which keeps a huge amount of material from entering the waste stream.

### What have the results been?

Each of the schools certified under the LEED program is a success story in itself, so it's difficult to develop a list of "top

schools." There are a couple of places we should mention, however.

Three districts across the state are home to Platinum-certified projects: **London City's** London Middle School, **Cincinnati City's** Taft High School and **North College Hill City's** North College Hill High School. These buildings used integrated project delivery that emphasized decisions benefiting each building's energy performance outcomes. For example, a team may decide to add more insulation to the building envelope and downsize the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system to pay for the additional insulation. The result is an energy-efficient, high-performing building.

**Adams County/Ohio Valley Local (Adams)** was one of the first school districts in the nation to qualify for the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program in the pilot year of 2012. The nominated school was North Adams Elementary School, representing one of three new schools constructed under the OSFC Classroom Facilities Assistance Program. (See sidebar on page 18 for more about the school.)



*Taft High School's 33,000-square-foot green roof was funded by a grant from the Cincinnati Metropolitan Sewer District.*

Cincinnati City is a wonderful example of initiating sustainable design and pursuing partnerships within the community to further these green initiatives. The district received \$1.3 million in grant funds from the Cincinnati Metropolitan Sewer District to fund green roofs, such as that at Taft High School — a 33,000-square-foot green roof, the largest in the midwest. The district's science curriculum director worked with design teams to develop environmental education opportunities for the green features and distributed these to the district's science teachers.

**Reynoldsburg City** has dedicated its Summit Road



Academies campus to energy efficiency. The campus is home to numerous cutting-edge technologies, such as 390 geothermal wells controlled by an automated logic control system. The schools are open so kids can see the interior building systems and learn how they operate.

The high school has a greenhouse and gardens on the roof, along with a rain catchment system used to water the plants. Both elementary and high school students have access to an outdoor eco-lab, complete with two Mongolian-style yurts to use as classroom space at the outdoor lab.

### Summing it up

The role of the commission is the design and construction of school buildings for districts across Ohio. As such, once the construction and certification are complete, the buildings belong to the district to maintain and operate.

For a green school, however, success doesn't just happen with

LEED certification. It takes continued effort by the occupants and building owner to ensure the facility maintains the healthy indoor air quality, high-efficiency operations and sustainable practices put in place during design and construction. The most successful districts will be those that seek to improve their sustainability efforts in their green school long after OFCC is gone.

One final thought. We are always looking for an opportunity to speak on the subject of green schools and the green schools program in Ohio. As part of our efforts to improve this program, we want to hear your thoughts and stories about what has worked in your district. If we can be of assistance, or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the author at (614) 466-6290 or [lisa.laney@ofcc.ohio.gov](mailto:lisa.laney@ofcc.ohio.gov). ■

*About the author:* **Lisa Laney** is the sustainability manager for the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

## Is going 'green' worth the green?

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

Green buildings have been heralded as a way for schools to reduce energy costs, but do the savings outweigh the extra construction costs associated with eco-friendly design?

The Central Ohio Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC-COH) has won two different types of grant funding to help answer this and other questions about the real-world benefits of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

The group received one grant to study LEED-certified schools throughout Ohio, which was selected because it has more LEED school projects than any other state in the nation. "There has never been a study of green buildings with this scope and magnitude," said **David Scott**, USGBC-COH vice chair. "Green schools are just green buildings, so the results of this study could theoretically prove or disprove the value of LEED in any building."

Ohio has 63 LEED-certified schools and roughly 300 additional schools seeking certification. In addition to examining energy savings, the study will look at the potential impact of green buildings on student achievement, absenteeism and the work environment.

"Schools are a unique testing ground for the value of LEED because they have uniformity of purpose," said Scott, a Columbus attorney knowledgeable in green-building law. "By comparing test scores, attendance records and other data from traditional and LEED schools, we seek to determine whether or not kids do better in LEED schools."

Scott said the grant pays for a research associate to lead the study, with initial findings to be presented by the end of the year in what USGBC-COH is calling the "Ohio Green Schools Compendium." How extensively the data will be studied, and for how long, depends on continued and additional grant funding.

USGBC-COH also has received a \$120,000 grant from the National U.S. Green Building Council to hire an employee to visit every LEED-certified school in the state and talk to superintendents, principals and teachers about their buildings. "We need to know how LEED facilities work in the real world," he said.

According to the Center for Green Schools, the average green school uses about a third less energy and water than a traditional school, and saves \$100,000 a year on operating costs. But there are a number of factors that can influence energy savings, and some come down to training and proper usage of available tools. "The greatest building in the world won't perform properly unless it's used and maintained properly, so educating our educators and staff about use and upkeep of their facilities is critical," Scott said.

The numbers vary, but Scott said that preliminary evaluations of data suggest that LEED certification costs about 4% more upfront than traditional buildings. "The bottom line is return on investment," he said. "Taxpayers who foot the construction bill should know whether or not objective and scientifically validated data proves that green schools contribute to a more healthy, prosperous and sustainable future."

To learn more about USGBC-COH, visit [www.usgbccentralohio.org](http://www.usgbccentralohio.org). For more information about the Ohio Green Schools Compendium, contact Scott at [vicechair@usgbccentralohio.org](mailto:vicechair@usgbccentralohio.org). ■

# House Bill 264 — saving energy for schools



*Ramzi Najjar, Ohio Facilities Construction Commission*

For a quarter of a century, Ohio school districts have had the unique opportunity to finance energy conservation measures in buildings they own, operate or maintain.

The Energy Conservation program — or as it is more commonly known, the House Bill (HB) 264 program — has been hugely popular, with more than 550 school districts putting one or more projects into place. The total savings have been a boon for taxpayers also, with some estimates exceeding \$1.25 billion in savings.

The Energy Services Division of the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) is responsible for administrating this important program.

The HB 264 program is based on the concept that these energy-efficiency retrofits typically require a relatively large initial capital investment and have a relatively long payback period. Under the program, a board of education works with an architect, professional engineer or energy service company to develop the project scope, arrange financing and install the energy conservation measures.

If the money spent on improvements will result in energy, operational and maintenance cost savings sufficient to pay off the cost of the improvements within 15 years, the board can request approval from the commission to incur bonded indebtedness without going to the ballot to finance the proposed energy conservation measures. The school board also can request approval to enter into an installment payment contract for the purchase and installation of energy conservation measures. If the commission, following a rigorous review of several key elements, determines the board's findings are within the required payback period, it approves the request.

## **What type of work can we do?**

A wide variety of energy conservation measures (ECMs) are eligible for inclusion in a HB 264 project, and it's impossible to say any type of ECM or package of ECMs is

“typical.” That said, there is always high interest in heating/cooling replacements, energy-efficient lighting, automated building controls, window upgrades and roof work.

As with any business decision, a careful consideration of return on investment is crucial. Some common ECMs have high initial costs and limited annual returns, making them questionable for inclusion. However, when combined with other projects — with low initial cost and high immediate return — an eligible ECM package can be developed.

The attached chart (on page 24) provides a list of common ECMs, along with estimates of the investment required



*The HB 264 program allows districts to make improvements to schools that will save money and energy over the long term.*



and how long a payback period you can expect. Don't assume that any of this is written in stone; as they say on TV, each situation is unique and results may vary. However, if a vendor tells you an improvement will pay itself back in two years and you'll live off the gravy for the next 10 years, you might want to look a little more closely at the numbers and see how they compare.

### How can OFCC help?

OFCC's Office of Energy Services (OES) is tasked with reviewing proposed projects and considering them for recommendation to the commission for approval. The review process centers on three specific questions:

- Is the engineering involved reasonable and valid?
- Are the estimated savings reasonable, achievable *and* verifiable?

### Common energy conservation measures and estimated costs, savings

Type of energy conservation measure	Estimated project cost	Estimated payback period	Estimated annual savings
Increase R-value for roof system	\$250,000 - \$500,000	20-30 years	\$10,000-\$20,000
Caulking/weather stripping	\$50,000-\$150,000	5-10 years	\$10,000-\$15,000
Window replacements	\$250,000-\$1million	20-30 years	\$20,000-\$30,000
Increase wall insulation	\$50,000-\$250,000	10-20 years	\$5,000-\$10,000
Building system commissioning/re-commissioning	50 cents-\$1 per square foot	2-5 years	Based on square footage
Building automation systems installation/upgrade	50 cents-\$2.50 per square foot	10-20 years	Based on square footage
Variable frequency drive (VFD) applications	\$20,000-\$100,000	10-15 years	\$2,000-\$10,000
High-efficiency boiler replacements or additions	\$100,000-\$250,000	15-30 years	\$6,000-\$10,000
Chiller replacements	\$150,000-\$300,000	15-20 years	\$10,000-\$30,000
Rooftop unit (RTU) replacements	\$250,000-\$500,000	15-20 years	\$2,000-\$5,000
Solar thermal water heating systems (also HVAC)	\$50,000-\$150,000	20-30 years	\$1,000-\$3,000
Energy management systems (PCs)	\$25,000-\$50,000	10-15 years	\$5,000-\$15,000
Domestic hot water heater replacement or addition	\$10,000-\$50,000	15-25 years	\$500-\$1,500
Vending machine occupancy sensors (each)	\$300-\$500	2-5 years	\$100-\$150
Interior lighting	\$150,000-\$300,000	5-10 years	\$15,000-\$30,000
Exterior lighting	\$100,000-\$200,000	5-10 years	\$10,000-\$20,000
Motion/occupancy sensors	\$100,000-\$500,000	2-5 years	\$50,000-\$100,000
Hot water recirculating timers	\$500-\$1,000	1-3 years	\$500-\$1,000
Water efficient faucets	\$50,000-\$250,000	5-10 years	\$5,000-\$25,000
Cooler/freezer thermal mass temperature controls (each)	\$500-\$1,000	5-10 years	\$100-\$200
Energy-efficient kitchen equipment	\$50,000-\$200,000	5-10 years	\$10,000-\$20,000
Kitchen hood ventilation control system	\$15,000-\$50,000	5-10 years	\$3,000-\$5,000



- Is the payback period achievable based on the information submitted?

A positive answer to all three questions means the proposal is a prime candidate for approval. For the last 16 years, OES (originally housed in the state architect's office) has been assisting state agencies and state-supported colleges and universities with energy audits and managing performance-based energy conservation contracts. With the 2012 consolidation that established OFCC, HB 264 technical reviews now incorporate the wealth of energy-savings data under the OES programs. As you might guess, this data has been a huge asset for the review and decision-making component of the HB 264 program.

In addition to proposal review, however, we like to think of ourselves as a resource for school districts. OES staff provide technical support and advise districts that submit HB 264 proposals. OES is able to inform districts that a proposed energy conservation measure may not provide the anticipated savings, and work with districts to recommend alternatives to the proposed project scope. The districts have then adjusted their proposed project accordingly.

#### What's the future of the program?

We believe the HB 264 program is a strong tool for districts

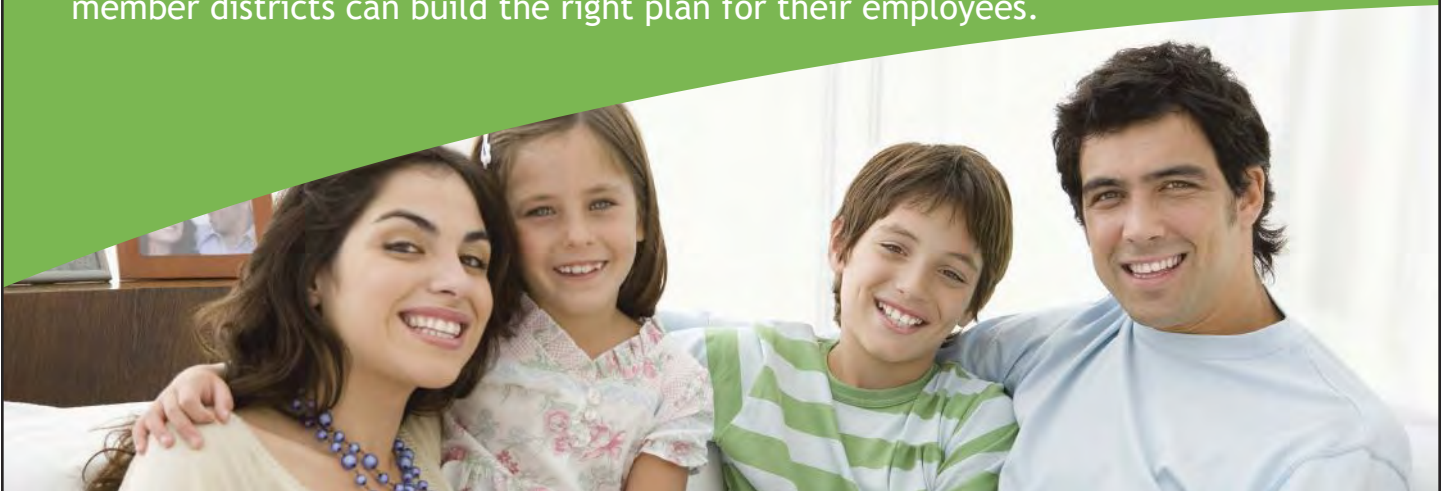
looking to make their buildings more energy efficient. Like any program, however, there is always room for improvement. OFCC is currently seeking legislative changes that would incorporate the concept of performance-based contracting into the HB 264 program. Performance-based contracting requires measuring and verifying the energy savings, and requires an energy service company to provide an energy guarantee to ensure districts realize the projected savings.

We also are requesting the ability to approve requests based on whether the HB 264 project is consistent with any other state-assisted school facilities project in that district, and to have districts that are under the oversight of either a state fiscal or academic oversight commission seek approval from that commission first before submitting a request. We believe all three of these proposals will make the program stronger and more transparent.

OES looks forward to working with Ohio districts to implement this innovative program and seeing the rewards reaped by the state's taxpayers. If you have questions or if we can be of any help, contact **Mike Mendenhall** or the author at (614) 466-6290. ■

*About the author:* **Ramzi Najjar** is energy services manager for the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

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# The big 'green' yellow bus

*Pete Japikse, senior transportation consultant*

Every day in Ohio, there are nearly 13,000 school buses on the road transporting more than 800,000 children to and from school. Collectively, those buses travel more than 156 million miles a year and burn more than 18 million gallons of diesel fuel to do their job.

With this many vehicles consuming fuel, it is reasonable to consider the impact school transportation has on our environment. Fortunately, bus manufacturers, school officials and government regulators like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been paying attention, making changes and adopting new, more efficient technologies as they emerge.

## **Alternative fuel technologies**

Electric hybrid power has become commonplace in the automotive market. Engineers and manufacturers in the bus market have been working to implement the same technology, although there are some different challenges to overcome.

School buses have a much larger mass-to-power ratio than a passenger car, limiting the usefulness of electric power from batteries. The higher torque of an electric motor is great for starting a bus in motion, but the ability of electric

motors to keep the bus moving at speeds over 30 mph quickly exceeds the capacity of the batteries to provide power. Adding more batteries is not a viable solution, because that would add even more weight to the vehicle. The engineering solution used in these vehicles is to have the diesel engine running all the time, and to rely on the electric motor only for starts and traveling at low speeds.

In today's bus market, two manufacturers are selling diesel-electric hybrid buses. Two Ohio school districts have purchased some of these units, and are experiencing mixed results. These buses cost at least \$40,000 more than a standard bus. The forecasted fuel savings on the buses was supposed to be 30%, but the actual results are significantly less. As a result, it appears the fuel savings may not be sufficient to pay off the additional cost of the buses during their life cycles. This could change if the cost of diesel fuel continues to climb.

Another bus manufacturer has introduced a prototype small school bus that is 100% electric powered. The vehicle has not been introduced to the marketplace yet, so we do not know if it will be viable, what the bus will cost and what its working range will be.

Propane has been used as an alternate fuel in motor vehicles for many years. It is most common in warehouse operations — propane is the dominant power source for forklifts. In the 1990s, several aftermarket companies sold equipment to convert diesel school buses to propane. A number of districts in Ohio tried this, and ultimately abandoned the effort as a failed one. Lack of engine power and reliability were the primary concerns.

In today's market, Blue Bird has partnered with Roush motors and introduced a new generation of propane-powered school buses. A number of these vehicles are in use across Ohio, and while we are only a couple years into the experience, no major complaints are being presented. A variety of school bus fleets across the country have recently converted to propane power.



*It takes 42 cars to replace each school bus we take off the road and would require more fuel, incur more costs and contribute to road congestion.*

There are three primary benefits for propane power: lower operating cost, lower incremental bus cost and cleaner emissions. Cost is a bit difficult to evaluate, because propane does not produce as much power as diesel. One estimate is that it takes 1.45 gallons of propane to produce the same amount of power as one gallon of diesel. Stated in dollar values, if the cost of diesel is \$4 per gallon, propane would be more cost-effective only if the net price of propane is \$2.72 per gallon or less.

The other factor to consider with propane-powered buses is fuel availability. A school district would need to install a propane filling station on its property to refuel these buses. That works great for districts when buses stay within the district boundaries; it is not as convenient for buses that take extended field trips and require refueling along the course of their trip. The infrastructure for propane filling stations is not in place throughout most of the country.

Compressed natural gas (CNG) is the third alternative fuel being researched in the school bus industry. Currently, the only way a school can implement this is to buy equipment from aftermarket vendors and convert existing buses. One district in Ohio has done this with five buses and has been happy with the results. Thomas Built Buses is developing a CNG-powered school bus, and plans on launching a demo bus later this year, with production beginning in early 2015.

CNG use analysis is very similar to propane. CNG requires 1.11 gallons of fuel to match one gallon of diesel, so while there is a power loss, it is not as significant. CNG also has a much lower cost per gallon than diesel fuel — in fact, current market rates show it to be lower than propane. If the cost of diesel is \$4 per gallon, CNG is more cost-effective if the net price of CNG is \$3.56 per gallon or less. CNG is currently priced significantly less than this, making it a seemingly more effective power source.

With CNG-powered buses, there will be an incremental cost of the new vehicle. The cost, estimated to be about \$50,000 per vehicle, must be factored into the operating cost of the bus. For CNG buses to be a good investment, the district must be able to recoup the incremental cost of the bus in a reasonable time, and then realize operational savings based on lower fuel costs.

The other factor that must be considered is fuel availability. Districts that use CNG will need to install or have access to CNG filling stations. Fortunately, government and industry incentives across the country are encouraging municipalities to convert to CNG and install their own filling stations. If this trend continues, it is possible that CNG-powered school buses will begin to look very attractive.

The final aspect of these three power types is air quality. Industry experts tell us CNG is the cleanest technology

available for internal combustion engines.

### **Diesel engine technology**

The most common source of power for buses for the last decade has been the diesel engine. While this has been good for bus longevity and durability, diesel engines also are known for their pollutants. The stigma includes smoky and dirty exhaust, as well as diesel engines' inherent loudness.

Fortunately, there have been drastic changes in technology over the last 20 years. Diesel engines used in highway applications (known as "on-road diesel" in the industry) have seen significant improvements, including reduced noise levels and fewer pollutants. EPA regulations have been progressively implemented, with the most significant change in clean air diesel emission standards being enacted in 2010. All school bus engines manufactured today incorporate clean-burning technology and highly advanced exhaust emissions technology to reduce, if not eliminate, particulate and nitrogen oxide emissions.

Engines also are burning cleaner because of changes in the formulation of diesel fuel, which is now sold with an ultra-low sulphur content. With these fuel and engine changes in place, engineers say the air coming out of a 2010 diesel engine is now cleaner than the air being taken into that engine.

All of these changes notwithstanding, the reality is school bus fleets span many model years. Most school districts will keep school buses 12 to 15 years before replacing them. With the budget restraints of the last five years and the loss of state funding to help pay for new buses, many districts have foregone their bus replacements. As a result, the state's fleet is aging more than it ever has.

Recognizing this, EPA established grant programs to help districts install exhaust emission control devices on some buses and assist with replacement costs for the oldest buses. EPA's goal is to help take the oldest and highest-polluting vehicles off the road sooner.

### **Procedural changes**

There are three actions school bus users have taken to help mitigate pollution: idle time limits, more effective routing and enhanced vehicle maintenance.

Regulations have been enacted statewide that require schools to adopt idle time restrictions. In all cases, buses in loading and unloading zones cannot be idled for more than five minutes. While this conserves fuel, the real savings is improving air quality by reducing emissions.

Perhaps the most significant change districts are making is reducing the size of their bus fleets and revising school bus routes to increase efficiency. This sometimes causes





students to walk a little farther and wait at group stops with other students. The real savings come from reducing the bus' operating miles and time, which minimizes both fuel consumption and engine operating time.

The third change taking place in the industry is enhanced maintenance procedures. All of the newest bus engines are now computer controlled, and have the ability to link to

laptop computers to perform diagnostics. This technology allows technicians to keep the vehicle running at peak performance and fuel economy.

### Fuel consumption

Last, but certainly not least, we need to consider fuel use. The actual fuel efficiency of school buses ranges from a low of six mpg to a few vehicles that average 12 to 14 mpg. The newest buses provide the best fuel economy.

## The carbon footprint of school transportation in Ohio

Statewide total  
(2011-2012 school year)

Number of regular education students transported	834,600
Number of buses used daily	12,972
Average students per bus	64

### Key facts for transporting students in private cars as opposed to school buses

	School buses	Private cars
Number of vehicles required to transport your community's students*	12,972	556,400
Total miles per year to transport all students in your community**	156,655,260	2,003,040,000
Gallons of fuel required per year	18,430,031	96,300,000
Community cost for fuel per year	\$69,112,615	\$365,940,000
Cost of fuel per vehicle per year	\$5,327.83	\$657.69
Cost of fuel per student per year	\$82.81	\$438.46

Pollutants***	School buses	Private cars
Nitrous oxides (pounds per year)	3,635,506	3,057,504
Total hydrocarbons (pounds per year)	225,321	4,751,705

\* Assumes average of 1.5 students per car

\*\* Assumes average distance from home to school of five miles (10-mile round trip)

\*\*\* Pollution rates per mile based on EPA emission facts, October 2008

Average cost of diesel fuel (gallon)	\$3.75
Average cost of unleaded fuel (gallon)	\$3.80
Average mpg for school buses	8.5
Average mpg for passenger cars	20.8

With a state fleet average of 8.5 mpg, it is tempting to say school buses are not very fuel-efficient. Taken by itself, with a single passenger, that assumption would be correct. However, in Ohio the average school bus transports 64 students to school daily. The number of cars it would take to transport these students would consume far more fuel than the single school bus. Based upon national studies completed by the American School Bus Council, we can calculate the number of cars and fuel that would be required if no school buses were used.

Ohio's 12,972 school buses transported 834,600 students last school year. This would require 556,400 cars to get children to school if there were no school buses, based upon an average of 1.5 students per car.

School buses travelled more than 156 million miles last year. Cars transporting these same students would have to travel more than two billion miles in a school year to do the same work. If we translate this to reflect fuel consumption, school buses used 18 million gallons of diesel. Cars would require more than 96 million gallons of gasoline. Taking into account the current price of fuel, the cost of fuel per student is \$82 per year by bus and \$438 per year by car.

An added advantage of school buses is that the newest vehicles actually have fewer exhaust emissions than passenger cars.

The bottom line is that it takes 42 cars to replace each school bus we take off the road. This would require more fuel, incur more costs and contribute to road congestion. This, in turn, would lead to increased community cost for road maintenance and emergency services, and increased pollution and fuel consumption.

In short, our school buses are indeed a green solution for our student transportation needs. OSBA provides an online tool (*shown at left*) that allows members to check the fuel consumption, fuel cost per student and carbon footprint for any school district in Ohio. Access the tool by visiting [www.ohioschoolboards.org/transportation-calculators](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/transportation-calculators).

For more information, contact the author at (614) 540-4000, ext. 256 or [pjapikse@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:pjapikse@ohioschoolboards.org). ■





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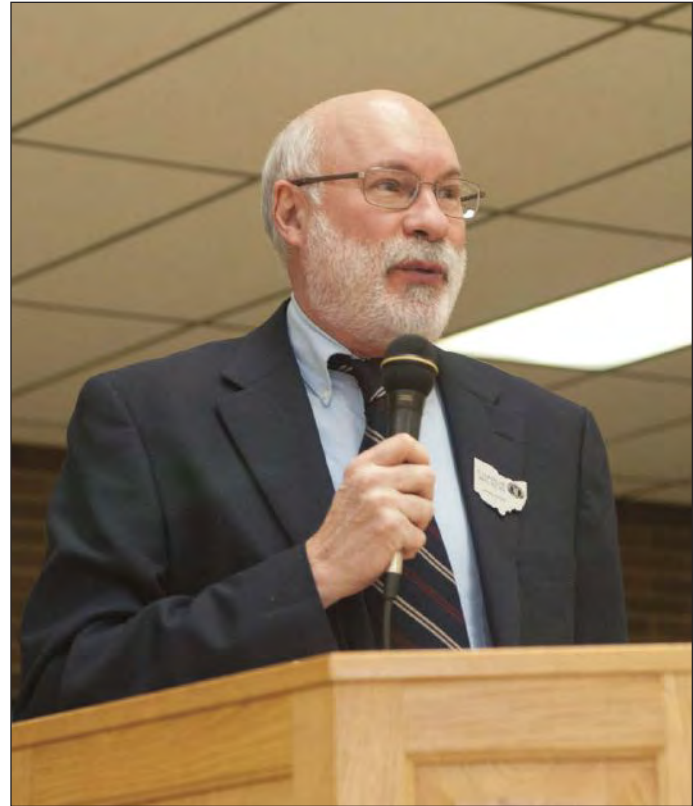




# Spring conferences showcase achievement, talents

► OSBA President Charlie Wilson, Worthington City, addresses attendees at the March 6 Northeast Region conference.

▼ Switzerland of Ohio Local (Monroe) board member Ronald G. Winkler, left, and Superintendent Larry Elliott enjoy the social period before the March 7 Southeast Region conference. A roundup article about the spring conferences was published in the April 8 OSBA Briefcase. Visit OSBA's Flickr page at [www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards](http://www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards) to view more photos from the spring conferences.



▲ Wilson congratulates Kay Jean Lauer-Furlong, Elgin Local (Marion), for receiving the OSBA Award of Achievement at the March 19 Central Region conference.

► Copley-Fairlawn City's Introduction to Theatre class entertain attendees with the play, "Check, Please!" during the Northeast Region Spring Conference.



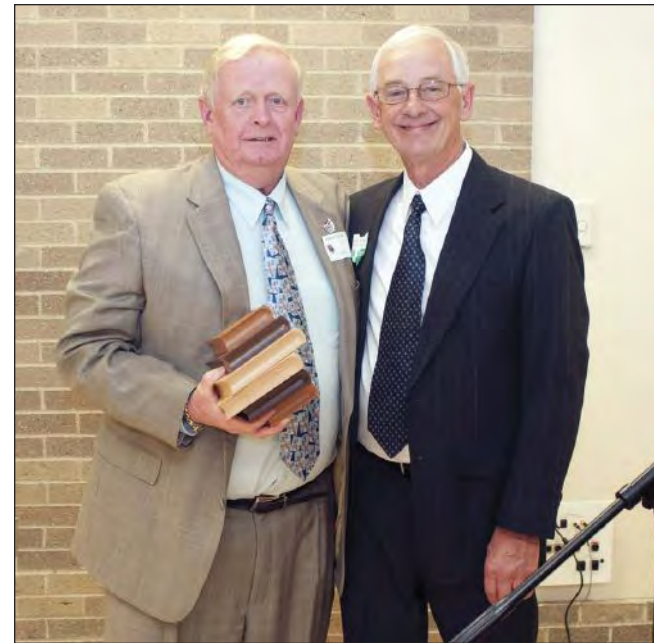




◀ *Ohio University President Dr. Roderick J. McDavis delivers the keynote address on the importance of university and K-12 school collaboration during the Central Region conference.*

◀▼ *Gibsonburg EV elementary, middle and high school student councils receive Excellence in Community Service awards during the March 14 Northwest Region conference.*

▼ *Southeast Region President Daniel L. Hothem, River View Local (Coshocton) and Coshocton County Career Center, right, recognizes Dannie Greene for his service as an at-large member of the State Board of Education at the March 5 Southeast Region conference.*



▲ *Toledo City's Start High School Chamber Winds perform during the social hour at the Northwest Region conference.*

◀ *Bill Light, left, entertains OSBA Executive Director Richard Lewis and attendees while accepting the 2013 Southwest Region President's Award on behalf of his son, Matt Light, president/founder of the Matt Light Foundation.*



# Raising up Ohio school board members



*Deer Park Community City board members, from left, Tom M. Griswold, Steve Smith, Lisa B. Hodge, Donna R. Farrell and Terri Morrissey show off framed artwork created by the district's students.*

## *Crystal Davis, editor*

**N**orthmont City's elementary students raised up their board members in January, literally, with a science experiment that involved levitating the board members with plastic bags, straws and air. It was students' uplifting way of thanking the board during School Board Recognition Month and incorporating their selected theme, "You Raise Us Up."

Districts across the state come up with unique and fun ways to show appreciation for the dedication of their board of education members every January. This year was no different.

Ohio's annual celebration of school board leadership coincided with a nationwide campaign to spotlight the important role

board members play in public education.

OSBA supported the state's recognition activities by providing members a Web-based resource kit with tips on ways to honor board members; sample news releases, editorials, newsletter articles, public service announcements and resolutions; and a poster carrying the 2013 theme. That theme — "School Boards Make a Difference" — highlights the positive impact board members have on student achievement and the future of Ohio's 1.9 million schoolchildren.

Close to 3,500 board members lead the state's more than 700 school districts. Their dedication goes far beyond attending one or two board meetings a month. They volunteer countless

hours studying issues, reading reports and advocating for their schools. Board members are always “on call” when constituent concerns arise, whether it be in the grocery store, at an athletic event or after a meeting. They also participate in a plethora of school and community events. Most of them perform this juggling act while also making time for family and holding down a full-time job.

The decisions they make have the power to shape public education and local communities for generations to come. Being a board member is rewarding, but it’s also very demanding. The hours are long, the responsibilities great and the “thanks” are few and far between.

OSBA is pleased to support School Board Recognition Month and showcase the many celebrations districts conducted. In addition to the resource kit, the association provides personalized certificates — signed by the OSBA president and executive director — for every board member in the state.

The association features school districts’ celebrations in the *Journal* and online, [www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month). Information and photos are submitted by school districts and collected from local news media.

While most districts honored their members with a proclamation, OSBA certificates and small gifts, others — like Northmont City — came up with elaborate ways to say “good job.” Northmont City Science Mania students also performed two experiments with board member’s help: One showed convection using balloons, water and fire; the other taught about evaporation and condensation when students created clouds. All of this was topped off with the presentation of floral arrangements and certificates, and followed by cookies and punch supplied by the parent-teacher organization.

Students at **Mentor EV’s** Brentmoor Elementary School thanked school board members by singing them two songs and handing out “emergency kits.”

Inside the kits were rubber bands “to stretch the budget”; sticky notes to help them remember everything; tissues for parents with issues; and Band-Aids, Tums and aspirin “for the bad days,” among other items.

“It’s days like this that make it worthwhile, even the days when we need the Tums and Band-Aids,” board member **Alan J. Mihok** told the children after the presentation, according to the blog MentorPatch. A video of the celebration can be viewed at the Web address listed above.

**Lisbon EV’s** McKinley Elementary School second-grade class made a witty, fun, large poster with candy bar wrappers attached to it that replaced some of the words. A small

sampling of the poster read: “We were going to send you a whopping ‘100 Grand’ to show our appreciation, but the money slipped through our ‘Butterfinger.’”

While honoring **Greenville City** board members, Treasurer **Carla G. Surber** told *The Daily Advocate*, “The maximum a board member might receive is \$2,125 per year for putting in approximately 400 hours a year. That comes to about \$5.31 per hour, less than minimum wage.

“It’s not unusual for us to have 50 meetings a year, with an average length of about two to three hours per meeting. It becomes very much volunteerism; even though they receive some compensation, that compensation is not commensurate to the amount of time they spend.”



*Northmont City board member Jane Woodie, left, participates in a student-led science experiment that incorporated the district’s board member recognition theme, “You Raise Us Up.”*

In **Portsmouth City**, student artists created special pieces to present to each of the five board members during their monthly meeting, which followed a student art show.

“The art club made a few things for school board members,” Portsmouth High School art teacher **April Deacon** told the *Portsmouth Daily Times*. “They made a little quote from **Gandhi** with watercolor and the art club members each put a thumbprint next to that.”

Board members were Facebook stars in **Sycamore Community City**. You could link to their biographies from the district’s Facebook page, where their pictures were posted, as well. More than 2,000 people viewed the posts. Board members also were presented OSBA certificates of appreciation.

**Warren County Career Center** board members were pampered for their dedication with gift certificates for the



career center's Cosmetology Salon and a black spice cake. Learning Lab Preschool children also made a poster for the board using the 2013 OSBA theme, "School Boards Make a Difference."

**Deer Park Community City** students created a special token of appreciation for board members. Several hundred students' thumbprints were collected, each color representing a different grade level. The prints were placed on a large sheet of paper, frame mats were cut in the shape of Ohio and a heart was placed over the location of Deer Park. Framed and wrapped, the heartfelt and handmade gifts were presented to each board member as a reminder of the number of lives they touch through their service. A quote from **Elvis Presley** was read aloud as board members opened the gifts — "Values are like fingerprints. Nobody's are the same, but you leave them all over everything you do."



*Lisbon EV second-graders use candy bar wrappers to show their appreciation for their board of education.*

A quartet representing the Indian Hill High School Premiers performed a song for **Indian Hill EV** board members in honor of their service.

Superintendent Dr. **Mark T. Miles** presented OSBA certificates of appreciation, saying: "School board members face complex and demanding challenges. ... Few people fully understand the scope and far-reaching implications of board members' responsibilities. In essence, you make a difference for our students, our staff and our community."

**Whitehall City** presented board members with a small bag of gifts, along with several items from the schools, according to the *Whitehall News*. They also were treated to a light dinner by the district's administration.

"(Board members) represent a continuing commitment to local citizen control and decision-making in education," Superintendent **Judyth Dobbert-Meloy** said. "Even though we are making a special effort during January to show appreciation to our school board members, we recognize their

contributions reflect a year-round commitment on their part."

**Mid-Ohio ESC's** governing board received a special surprise to recognize their dedication and service. Preschool students from the six Mid-Ohio ESC sites filled the boardroom with artwork.

Some preschoolers drew life-sized portraits of each board member and smaller drawings of themselves. Others created banners of handprints, snowmen and cut-out snowflakes, as well as iPad placemats and paperweights. Another class contributed photos of the preschoolers saying "thank you."

According to the *Salem News*, **South Range Local (Mahoning)** Superintendent **Dennis J. Dunham** praised the hard work and commitment of board members, particularly those who have served within the past five years and were instrumental in the construction of the K-12 campus.

**Fort Recovery Local (Mercer)** board members were recognized with certificates, student artwork and a cake to celebrate their successes and to thank them.

In **Port Clinton City**, the theme for a board meeting was "thank you." Each board member received an envelope full of thank-you notes from Bataan Memorial Intermediate Elementary School students who recently moved into their brand new school. Board members were given a giant cookie with the words "thank you" on it, as well as a video of thanks produced in cooperation with the Port Clinton High School Multimedia Class.

**Southern Local (Meigs)** board members took the cake, literally. Board members were presented with plaques and a cake for their service and devotion, according to the *Pomeroy Daily Sentinel*.

In **Mogadore Local (Portage)**, district band students treated the board to a private concert and presented members with Mogadore Wildcat memorabilia. Superintendent Dr. **Christina Dinklocker** congratulated each board member as they were presented OSBA certificates.

**Riverside Local (Logan)** Superintendent **Scott Mann** gave each board member a gift and publicly thanked all of them for their hard work throughout the year, according to WPKO 98.3.

The *Morrow County Sentinel* wrote that **Northmor Local (Morrow)** Superintendent Dr. **Brent Winand** presented certificates of appreciation to board members while paying homage to their terms of service, ranging from five to 24 years on the board.

"We're very fortunate here to have board members that are dedicated, and have been for a long time," Winand said. "I

believe just as an athlete or scholar gets better with the time they give to their focus, (board members) get sounder, better and become more knowledgeable. I believe that's why things go as smoothly as they do. People tend to forget this board is responsible for a \$15 million budget. There's some pressure that goes with that kind of work."

The **Lincolnview Local (Van Wert)** Board of Education received a large amount of thank-you cards and mementos from students and teachers. Board members were thanked for their continued dedication to the district and students to help promote learning, according to the *Times Bulletin*.

At the January board meeting, **Western Buckeye ESC** Superintendent **Brian Gerber** told the *Van Wert Independent*, "This is an opportunity for us to take a moment and thank our board members. ... The board at Western Buckeye Educational Service Center functions with the team concept: they know their role as policy setters and enforce it; they work with the community, staff and administration."

**Union Local (Belmont)** Superintendent **Harry Kirk Glasgow** began the board's regular meeting by distributing certificates of appreciation to board members for their service. He told *The Times Leader*, "I appreciate everything the board has done. We have a very caring board, tops, as far as that goes."

**Patrick Henry Local (Henry)** second-grade students created thank you cards for the school board to commend them for exemplary leadership. Each board member received an individually written card signed by the class that created the card.

In **East Liverpool City**, as he presented certificates of appreciation, Superintendent **James Herring** told the *Mining Journal News*, "People don't realize the hours behind the scenes by the board. You really have to love a school district to be on the board."

The *Van Wert Independent* reported that **Crestview Local (Richland)** Treasurer **Laura Metzger** handed out certificates recognizing board members as part of School Board Recognition Month.

**Upper Arlington City** Superintendent Dr. **Jeffrey W. Weaver** presented board members with a framed graphic of a circle of hands with their names printed on the graphic, according to *This Week Community News*.

"We want to thank the school board for their selfless duty in representing our community and all they do for our children," Weaver said.

In **Dublin City**, Superintendent **David Axner** wrote a letter featured in the *Dublin Villager* thanking board members.

"Our board members have full lives, careers and families, but willingly make sacrifices for the betterment of our district," Axner wrote. "Their public service is an excellent example of the tradition of volunteerism that is a hallmark of our society. Their commitment as individuals and as a group is one of the reasons our district continues to be one of Ohio's best."

**Akron.com** wrote that **Coventry Local (Summit)** Superintendent **Russell Chaboudy** presented each board member with a certificate of appreciation and said the board displays "exemplary leadership."

"It is a difficult job, and I am proud to be involved with a group that puts kids first," Chaboudy said. "They always ask if something will benefit the students in the district. They are informed and involved in what is happening in our school district and community."

**Manchester Local (Summit)** Superintendent **Samuel Reynolds** handed out certificates and told the board, "You have been providing a service to the children ... and we appreciate your time and talents."

A standing ovation was given to the **Fort Jennings Local (Putnam)** Board of Education during its January meeting in honor of School Board Recognition Month.



*Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Board President Ron Register, right, accepts a plaque from Cleveland Heights City Council member Jason S. Stein.*



**Chagrin Falls EV** board members were honored by students from all district buildings.

Gurney Elementary School students recognized board member **Anne B. Thomas'** volunteer work and service. They recited a poem and presented her with a photo of students in front of a "thank you" sign. Chagrin Falls Intermediate School students presented a watercolor painting of a Celtic knot to board member **Harry Cashy** for his dedication and leadership. They also created a pop-up card with a drawing of the intermediate school.

Middle school student council officers also gave a brief biography of board member **Robert Weber's** service to the schools and thanked him for his efforts. They identified specific ways Weber has enhanced the district. Finally, the high school student council president and vice president gave speeches honoring the service and commitment of board members **Mary Kay O'Toole** and **Michael F. Hogan**.

board, students organized a program involving the high school pep band. Two student board representatives planned the surprise performance of the school song. The student representatives then presented OSBA certificates to each board member.

**Sandy Valley Local (Stark)** Superintendent **Dave Janofa** publicly thanked board members for their sacrifice, dedication and commitment to the district's success, according to the *Carrollton Free Press Standard*.

In an article for *The News Democrat*, **Ripley-Union-Lewis-Huntington Local (Brown)** Superintendent **Charles P. Kimble** thanked board members, writing, "Our board is focused on the prize ... of higher expectations of academic success for all students, even in the face of reduced budgets and reduced staffing." OSBA certificates were given to board members at their January meeting.

**Benton Carroll Salem Local (Ottawa)** board members received commendations from Superintendent **Guy Parmingian** for their hard work and dedication to students and citizens of the district.

In an article for *The (Youngstown) Vindicator*, **Canfield Local (Mahoning)** Superintendent **Alex Geordan** thanked board members by writing, "Our community is very lucky to have these individuals who care so deeply for their school system."

Students and staff members in **Willard City** sent cards and made posters thanking board members for their service; the items were displayed at the school board's January meeting.

**Wyoming City** honored board members with a presentation emphasizing the importance of mathematics in 21st century education and its relationship with other disciplines in the district's science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) initiative.

This follows last year's theme of emphasizing the "A" for art. Members were presented with certificates and tokens of appreciation for their service and dedication to the community by using a simple math equation: "School Board Leadership + Great Students + Committed Parents + Dedicated Staff + Supportive Community = Excellence in Education."

**Arcanum-Butler Local (Darke)** board members were commended for their hard work by a *Daily Advocate* columnist, and **Clay Local (Scioto)** board members were applauded and presented with OSBA certificates at their first meeting of the year.

To see how other districts celebrated School Board Recognition Month, visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month). Photos and videos links of celebrations also are posted on the page. ■



*Board members were featured on Sycamore Community City's Facebook page, which included photos of the recognition program and their biographies.*

School Board Recognition Month was a high-profile event at **Cleveland Heights-University Heights City**. Board members were presented with a proclamation of appreciation issued by Cleveland Heights Mayor **Ed Kelley** and University Heights Mayor **Susan K. Infeld**. The proclamation recognized "their steadfast commitment to providing the children of our community with the best possible public education."

In addition, photos of the board members were posted on the home page of the district's website in January.

To recognize board members on the **Cambridge City** school



# Why I serve



## OSBA leaders share what drives their dedication

*Crystal Davis, editor*

Continuing an initiative first featured in the February *Journal*, the association asked OSBA Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members, “Why do you serve?”

OSBA asked them to share what motivates them to spend so much time and energy working for Ohio’s schoolchildren. The association 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.

**Doug G. Stuart, OSBA Northeast Region immediate past president; board member, Rittman EV and Wayne County Schools Career Center**

“With no mentoring in place locally, I looked to OSBA for guidance. I engaged myself to learn more through OSBA services such as the Board Leadership Institute, Capital Conference and legislative visits.

“Via OSBA, I started running into the same board members with a genuine interest to improve knowledge and understanding of boardmanship. Sharing stories and ideas from other districts within the state is priceless. Through my 10-plus years of experience on the board, I have always listened for fresh ideas to improve the learning environment. This includes all children, but pre-14 provides the best opportunity to achieve educational potential. I completely enjoy being a school board member at all levels. Receiving the All-Ohio School Board Award from OSBA was rewarding, and I thank all those who trust in my beliefs.”

**Sharon E. Manson, OSBA immediate past president; board member, Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center**

“I found that interacting with younger students was a great learning experience. Their ideas about education and self-esteem can be very eye-opening. They want our knowledge and they believe we don’t want to share it, or at

least not all at once. I loved talking with them and sharing ideas.

“Twenty five years ago, I took the plunge and decided to run for our school board and the rest is history. I love our students and want to continue fighting on their behalf to have the best education possible.”

**Robert McPheron, board president, Bath Local (Allen)**

“I began my term on the Bath Local School Board with hopes of stabilizing our school finances and budget problems, along with bringing our test scores up to the highest levels. With the driving force and cooperation of a great staff and administration, it has become the standard. The community has come together to fund a new elementary and our ‘excellent’ ratings in all of the buildings have made us proud of our students.”

**Eric Germann, OSBA Northwest Region president; board president, Lincolnview Local (Van Wert)**

“With the incredible pace of change occurring in the delivery of a universal public education to all, there will always be some who are for and some who are against the proposed changes.

“When faced with these changes, one generally has three options:

- work within the system to effect change on the proposed efforts to improve them;
- assume it is never going to get better, bite your lip and let it eat at you;
- completely disengage, give up and leave.

“I choose the first option. No one wins, especially the next generation, if we all sit back and do nothing. Sometimes you may effect change and sometimes you may not, but no one is ever a failure if they tried.”

Watch for more motivational comments from OSBA leaders in the June issue of the *Journal*. ■

# All you have to do



*Third-grade teacher Beth Bay, right, leads students in civics discussion. Bay combines literacy and social studies by having students read aloud together from their civics book and talk about what they read.*

## *Meigs County district's after-school program fulfills a vital need*

One by one the youngsters straggle in at the end of the school day, plopping backpacks and coats down on cafeteria tables. What begins as the quiet chatter and laughter of a few grows to a crescendo as more and more children file in.

A single voice brings the Southern Elementary School lunchroom to order — **Brenna Call's**. The **Southern Local (Meigs) After-School Kids (ASK)** program coordinator takes attendance as the kids settle into another late afternoon session.

The southeastern Ohio school district launched the ASK program six years ago with a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. The program began in the elementary school (grades one through eight) and, three years later, expanded to the high school. The elementary school was not awarded the grant this year, but the school board stepped up with funding to keep ASK running. Attendance in the program is voluntary.

“We have two separate programs, one for the high school and one for the elementary,” Call said. “Ninety-two kids are



# is 'ASK'

*Gary Motz,  
managing editor*

enrolled on the elementary/middle school side and 75 at the high school. That's nearly 17% of the elementary/middle school population and 37% from the high school. We typically have 40 elementary and middle school students and 20 high school students attend each evening.

"We offer the program to everybody, but make a point of reaching out to students who are struggling."

ASK begins with snacks and socializing to help students unwind from the regular school day and get ready for the two-hour after-school session. The program blends curricular learning with hands-on activities, games and just plain fun. Tutoring and intervention are provided for those who need it.

"The primary goal is to make sure these kids have reading and math skills they can carry on to the classroom," Call said. "But it's not just about academics; we also work to promote positive social interaction among the kids."

"We incorporate art, music and other activities, things they might not be exposed to otherwise. When it's warm, we'll play games outside. In cold weather, we head to the gym for basketball and other activities."

Southern Local fills Ohio's "boot" along the Ohio River in southeastern Meigs County. The high school and elementary school are on a single campus in the riverfront village of Racine, where a new high school is under construction. Looming over the village is the massive American Electric Power Mountaineer plant on the West Virginia side of the river.

The region faces many challenges. Poverty rates are high. Unemployment in Meigs County stands at 14.4%, the second highest rate in the state. Fifty-seven percent of Southern Local students qualify for free or reduced meals under the National School Lunch Program.

"Some students who attend our program come from great homes, but some don't; that's why they're here," Call said. "We have foster kids. We've got kids whose parents are in jail, kids living in poverty. We've got kids where the primary language spoken at home is Spanish. There are just all sorts of social issues we're dealing with."

"A lot of our kids just don't have anywhere to go after school where they feel as safe as they do here. And while we are open to anyone, we especially reach out to the kids we feel need us the most, academically *and* socially."

### 'They're my kids'

In addition to Call, the elementary school program is staffed by nine teachers; all but one work on alternating days of the Monday-through-Thursday program.

Following snacks, teachers lead students to their classrooms to finish homework and study math, reading and other subjects. They use a variety of innovative methods to keep kids engaged and entertained while they learn.

Third-grade teacher **Beth Bay** has been with the ASK program since its inception. The dedicated educator works every day of the after-school program. During regular school hours she teaches reading to third-graders, both with books and iPads.

Asked why she got involved with the program, Bay said:



*Sixth-grader Shawn Sayre talks to Brenna Call about a book he's reading. Call, Southern Local After-School Kids program coordinator, said the boy talks to her almost daily about books.*





*Emily Sanders, Meigs County District Public Library children's services coordinator, left, leads the duct tape wallets session.*

"They're my kids and I feel like I can do the best for them after school. And now, with the third-grade reading guarantee coming on, I know what they need."

But Bay focuses on much more than reading. Students spend time in the computer lab working on Study Island. For a math exercise, she took the kids to the gymnasium concession stand where they bought snacks with play money and learned how to count back change. She makes social studies a literacy activity by having children read aloud together.

There also are board games, and students have made cookies and Chia Pets in class. For science, they conducted the classic science experiment oobleck, named for the Dr. **Seuss** book *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*. A concoction of water, starch and food coloring, it has properties of both a liquid and a solid, depending on how it's handled.

One of the students' favorite games combines physical education and spelling. They take turns pushing each other along a hallway on flat, wheeled scooters. Farther down the hall, a student and Bay wait with a list of spelling words. Once they spell their word correctly, students scooter back to the starting point.

"The challenge is keeping their interest level up by finding things they think are fun enough to stay here two hours after school ends," Bay said. "So I'm always trying to find different learning activities that are fun so they want to stay in the program."

"The reward is watching them grow and becoming a part of their lives and being able to help with any problems they have. With all the increasing (academic) expectations, it's hard to do that during the school day. But being together after school gives me the chance to actually sit down and talk with them about their problems."

### **High school program incorporates school clubs**

The high school ASK program combines academics and school club activities.

"We offer tutoring and intervention by certified teachers in every subject area," said **Tricia McNickle**, director of the grant that helps fund the program. "This gets them ready for

the OGT (Ohio Graduation Test) and prepares them for college."

The high school session starts with about an hour of homework and tutoring before students turn to their club activities. Their choices include the Scrapbook Club, Video Gaming Club, Board Gaming Club and Cooking Club. There's also a Fitness Club that meets in the high school's workout room.

Upper level elementary students, those in grades six through eight, also participate in activities at the high school. One is especially popular.

"They spend time with Ms. (**Ann**) **Ohlinger**, the high school science teacher, and dissect many different species of animals," McNickle said. "This is a hands-on activity the kids love. They feel special to be included in what they feel are high school activities."

Some high school students spend part of their after-school time as peer tutors to elementary school kids.

"Often the tutoring takes the form of high school students



*Eighth-grader Tammara Sayre helps clean up after snack time in Southern Local's after-school program. The older students also help pass out snacks. Program coordinator Brenna Call said letting the students take a leadership role in the program helps them feel a sense of ownership and pride.*

reading to first- or second-graders, or listening while they read,” McNickle said. “They also play educational games on iPads with the younger students. The older kids serve as role models for the younger ones and feel a sense of pride and accomplishment.”

### Challenges and rewards

When the elementary program lost its grant, it also lost five classroom aides, Call said. But everyone continues to work hard to maintain a high-quality program.

“Money is definitely a challenge,” she said. “We’re a little scaled back from previous years, but the school board thought it was a viable program and important to the community, and continues to support it. I feel like it’s been successful, and we’re working on a sustainability plan to keep it that way.”

But amid the challenges are many rewards.

“There’s a sense of doing something important with kids who need the help and attention,” McNickle said. “And kids in this program feel like they are part of an important group at the school, like any other group, such as sports teams or the Quiz Bowl team.”

“What I really notice, day-to-day, are the social benefits of the program,” Call said. “Today, you saw that little girl give me a necklace she made and the boy talking to me about books. You also see improvement in their interactions with the teachers and other kids.

“My personal reward is knowing that these kids are my buddies and feeling like I make a difference in their lives. I had to leave for a few days for a conference earlier this year and when I got back, the kids said, ‘Where were you? Were you sick? We were worried about you.’



*Third-grader Candice Mills listens to a story as she reads it on an iPad in the district’s after-school program.*

“It’s gratifying to know the students think about me as much as I’m thinking about them. The relationships you have with them are so rewarding, you are so invested in them.

“And even though some things in their lives are out of my control, I just do the best I can and work hard to be a positive role model for them.” ■

*Editor’s note:* For more information on Southern Local’s ASK program, contact Tricia McNickle at [tricia.mcnicke@southernlocal.net](mailto:tricia.mcnicke@southernlocal.net) or Brenna Call at [brenna.call@southernlocal.net](mailto:brenna.call@southernlocal.net). The district’s phone number is (740) 949-2611.

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*Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator*

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# School-funding proposal dominates legislative conference

► Attendees packed the Statehouse Atrium for the March 20 State Legislative Conference.

▼ Ross Local (Butler) board member Edward Bosse Jr. listens to presentations during the event. An article covering the event was published in the April 22 OSBA Briefcase. Visit OSBA's Flickr page at [www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards](http://www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards) to view more photos from the conference.



▲ Lancaster City board member A. Lise Ricketts meets with Rep. Gerald L. Stebelton (R-Lancaster) during the lunch with legislators.

► OSBA Lobbyist Jay Smith and Deputy Director of Legislative Services Michelle Francis, center, meet with Susie Lawson, prior to the conference. Lawson serves on the Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center boards.







◀ OSBA Director of Legislative Services Damon Asbury, left, moderates a panel discussion between Reps. Debbie Phillips (D-Albany) and Bill Hayes (R-Harrison Township).

◀◀ Ohio Reps. Ross W. McGregor (R-Springfield), seated, second from left, and Bob D. Hackett (R-London), standing, second from left, meet with constituents during the lunch with legislators.

▼ Barbara Mattei-Smith, the governor's assistant policy director for education, provides the governor's perspective on school funding.



▲ St. Marys City Superintendent Shawn Brown, right, shares concerns with Sen. Cliff Hite (R-Findlay).

◀ Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) discusses the value of career-tech programs and his support for the third-grade reading guarantee.



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