

Health and wellness issue • Board president spends day as teacher

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JOURNAL

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Health and wellness issue: South Euclid-Lyndhurst City program brings fresh produce to school cafeterias. — *photo credit: iStockphoto*

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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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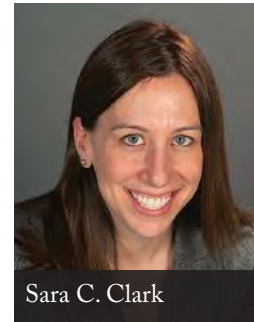
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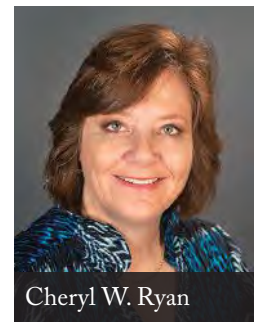
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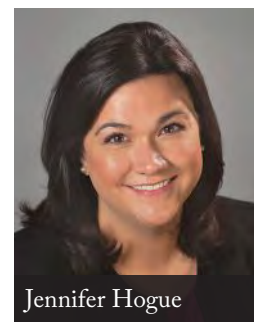
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Your voices continue to make a difference

Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director

The voice of Ohio's school board members in our legislative process has always been important. While some have cynically viewed grassroots advocacy as "tilting at windmills," your efforts already have resulted in several positive changes in 2015. With that in mind, it is more critical than ever to stand up for public education.

Your voice helped protect the "thorough and efficient" clause in the Ohio Constitution. School board members, superintendents, treasurers and their respective associations helped convince members of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission's Committee on Education, Public Institutions and Local Government to vote unanimously to retain this important language. The phrase has been the subject of school-funding court cases, and is a cornerstone of Ohio's responsibility to offer and support public schools.

Chad A. Readler, chair of the committee, ignited passionate debate in April 2014 by suggesting a constitutional change that would have required the General Assembly only to "provide for the organization, administration and control of the public school system of the state supported by public funds." *The Columbus Dispatch* recognized the value of the original language, writing: "The 164-year-old phrase has defined Ohio's school-funding battles, including four straight 4-3 rulings by the Ohio Supreme Court through 2002 declaring the state's setup unconstitutional." Your voices made a difference.

Continuing pressure over the years

was instrumental in pushing the Ohio Senate to move forward with Senate Bill (SB) 3, a proposal to reduce at least *some* unfunded mandates created by prior legislation. Sens. **Keith Faber** (R-Celina) and **Cliff Hite** (R-Findlay) both called for reducing reporting requirements, curbing testing and revising the competitive bidding threshold for school building and repair contracts. SB 3 also would give high-performing districts the opportunity to employ certain individuals with unique skill sets to teach under alternative licenses, if the local board approves. Your voices made a difference.

Longstanding frustration and outcry from teachers, administrators, board members and parents is leading the House and Senate to take another look at testing, and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing in particular. House Bill (HB) 74, introduced by Rep. **Andrew Brenner** (R-Powell), and the Senate Testing Advisory Commission, under Sen. **Peggy Lehner** (R-Kettering), both provide promise for greater local control over testing as well as relief from some state-mandated assessments. Your voices made a difference.

Finally, the voices of many have led the legislature to re-examine several aspects of charter school operations. While not going as far as we believe necessary, HB 2, sponsored by Reps. **Mike Dovilla** (R-Berea) and **Kristina Roegner** (R-Hudson), will increase transparency and accountability for charter school sponsors and operators. Again, your voices made a difference.

As we near the midpoint of the state budget process, all these issues — as well as the need for a more equitable school-funding formula — will require members to continue to make their voices heard. Other items will continue to require our constant vigilance, including yet another legislative effort to eliminate one of the two special elections (HB 81) and a proposal to prevent school boards from seeking property valuation adjustments (SB 85).

In his 2015 State of the State address, Gov. **John R. Kasich** likened special interest groups to "barnacles layering up on a pier in the ocean," clinging to the status quo and opposing any change as disruptive. The governor continued by insisting, "We have to continue to battle special interests that want to lock us in where we are today." I agree. But let me be clear: School boards are not special interest groups. They are public officials representing the constituents who elected them. They were elected to speak up for public education and their voices must be heard.

Your legislative team will continue to act on behalf of the OSBA membership and work to provide board member input into the process. But in the end, it will be the voices of the collective body of nearly 3,500 public school board members that carry the day.

Lawmakers are beginning to understand, but they must be reminded that the pendulum needs to swing back toward local control and away from Columbus. Keep up the good work and take every effort to ensure that local control is successful. ■

An update on federal guidance documents impacting schools

Sara C. Clark, director of legal services

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has issued more than a dozen guidance documents in the last year of key interest to school districts. Through the use of “Dear Colleague Letters” (DCL), frequently asked question documents (FAQ) and other memoranda, these documents attempt to explain the

department’s interpretation of its regulations. Let’s examine these documents and why they matter to Ohio public schools, as well as review DOE’s authority in issuing guidance.

Racial disparities

In January 2014, DOE partnered with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to

issue a DCL on the nondiscriminatory administration of school discipline. The DCL’s stated purpose is to “assist public elementary and secondary schools in meeting their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin.” While the letter focuses primarily on race, it also reminds schools that federal law prohibits discriminatory discipline based on other factors, including disability, religion and sex.

In response to the DCL, district administrators are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their district’s discipline data; receive regular reports on student discipline, disaggregated by subgroup; identify parents or problems that need to be addressed; and act on data that may indicate a problem in the district. A copy of the letter is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/14726>.

In October 2014, DOE’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued a separate DCL that focuses on “chronic and widespread racial disparities” for student access to educational resources. The letter significantly expands the areas of a school district’s operations that are covered and now subject to examination. Previously, “educational resources” meant faculty and staff, facilities, school funding and instructional resources. The DCL’s new understanding of “educational resources” now includes extracurricular and cocurricular programs, gifted and talented programs, musical programs and rigorous academic programs; teaching quality, facility quality and instructional quality; technology and

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equipment capabilities; and more.

The letter states that OCR will focus on the scope and severity of resource disparities and the district's process for allocating resources to determine if it is exacerbating or eliminating such disparities. It recommends that districts proactively self-assess and monitor Title VI compliance. The letter also delineates remedies OCR could implement if a violation is found, including additional programs, training and resources. A copy of the DCL is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/68009>.

Privacy and use of student data

DOE, through its Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), issued a document in February 2014 designed to address privacy and security considerations related to computer software, apps and other Web-based tools that students access online and use as part of a school activity. The guidance document provides the legal requirements and best practices on the use, storage and security of student data when schools use online educational resources. A copy of the document is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/74574>.

In July 2014, PTAC issued another guidance document with the stated goal of helping schools and local educational agencies achieve greater transparency with their data practices. It informs schools and districts of the basics of legal compliance, and encourages educational organizations to go beyond the minimum notifications required under federal law and keep parents and students better informed about what student data is collected and how it is used. A copy of the document is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/33052>.

Sex discrimination

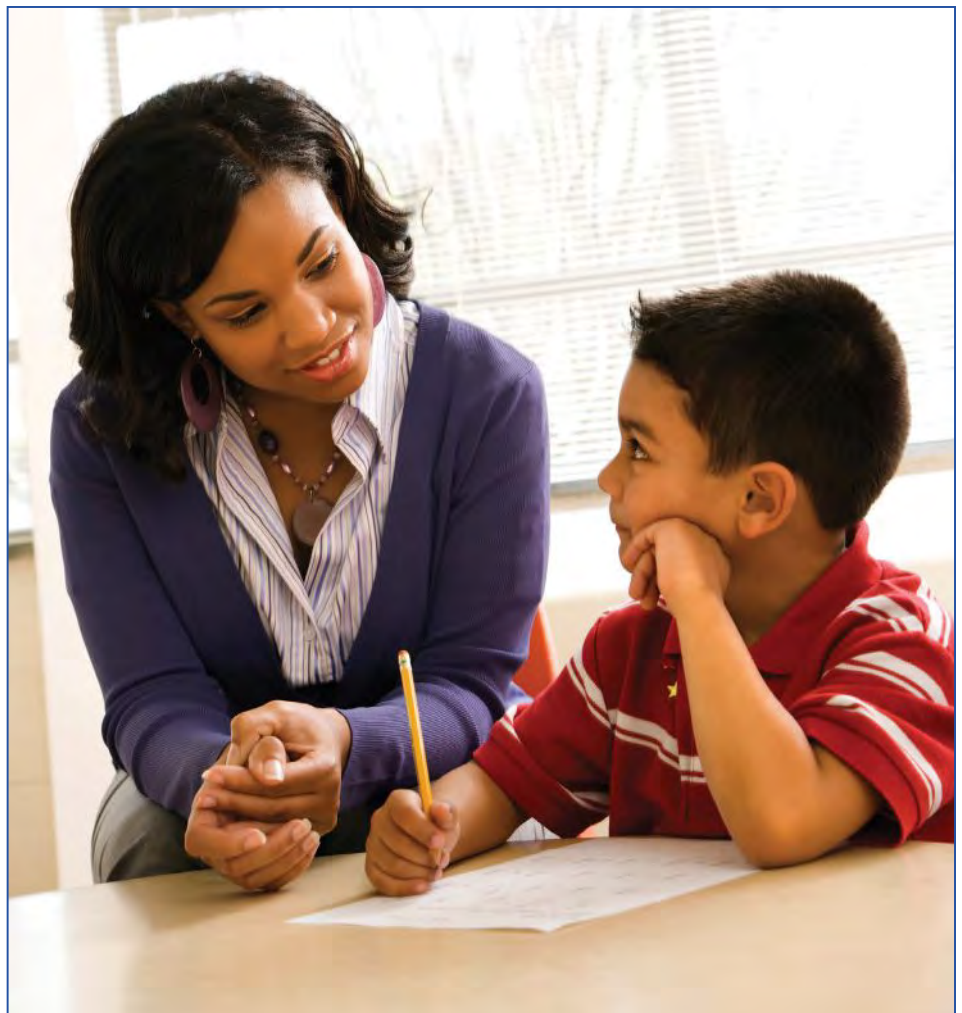
OCR issued a question-and-answer document (Q&A) in April 2014 that discusses a school's obligation to respond to sexual violence. Although posed as a clarification of earlier guidance, the document provides what appears to be a

multitude of new steps OCR considers required for districts to complete in order to be found in compliance with Title IX with respect to sexual violence. Title IX is the federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

The new guidance includes an expanded definition of the type of sexual violence claims that fall under Title IX, which now specifically includes claims of discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. It also expands the concept of the "notice" requirement

as it relates to a district's obligation to address any sexual violence act about which a responsible employee "knew or should have known." A copy of the Q&A is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/56575>.

In December 2014, OCR issued a Q&A on Title IX and single-sex classes and extracurricular activities. In the document, OCR indicates that schools may offer single-sex classes and extracurricular activities, but only when there are contact sports in physical



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education classes; when classes or portions of classes deal primarily with human sexuality; and in nonvocational classes and extracurricular activities when certain criteria are met.

That criteria includes a showing that the separation is based on the school's "important objective" to either improve its students' educational achievement through its overall established policies to provide diverse educational opportunities or to meet identified educational needs of its students. In either case, the single-sex nature of the class must be "substantially related" to achieving the important objective. A copy of the Q&A is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/17998>.

Charter schools

In May 2014, DOE issued a DCL affirming that federal civil rights laws, regulations and guidance that apply to public schools also apply to charter schools. The DCL makes clear that federal civil rights laws extend to all operations of a charter school, including recruiting; admissions; academics; educational services and testing; school climate (including the prevention of harassment); disciplinary measures; athletics and other nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities; and accessible buildings and technology. A copy of the DCL appears at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/25191>.

Students with disabilities

Building on guidance issued in 2013 by DOE's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), OCR issued a DCL in October 2014 explaining that bullying a student with a disability on *any* basis can result in a denial of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under Section 504 that must be remedied. In other words, even if OCR determines there is no disability-based harassment violation, OCR still may investigate whether the alleged bullying or harassment resulted in a denial of FAPE under Section 504.

In addition, the letter reiterates schools' obligations to address conduct that

may constitute a disability-based harassment violation and explains that a school also must remedy the denial of FAPE resulting from disability-based harassment. The guidance also offers some insight into what OCR might require of a school to remedy instances of bullying upon a finding of disability discrimination. A copy of the DCL is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/59132>.

In November 2014, OCR and OSERS partnered with DOJ to issue a two-page DCL and a 30-page FAQ. In the documents, the departments take the position that school districts must make a separate and distinct analysis under both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as to what services students with hearing, vision or speech disabilities may be eligible to receive. The documents acknowledge that, in many cases, an appropriate individualized education program (IEP) developed pursuant to IDEA also will meet the effective communication regulations under ADA. However, there may be situations where districts may have to provide auxiliary aides or services in addition to, or different from, those required to provide a FAPE under IDEA. A copy of the DCL is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/61050>. The letter includes a link to the FAQ.

DOE's authority

DOE's stated purpose in issuing many of these documents is to "clarify" the agency's interpretation of its regulations or enabling legislation. However, some argue that these types of documents go beyond just "clarifying" the laws and regulations and actually step into the realm of imposing new requirements on public school districts. This belief seems to be garnering support as courts begin to rely on and cite language from comparable guidance documents issued by DOE.

Those who share this belief argue that these types of documents, because they

impact individual rights and impose new obligations, should be subject to the notice and comment procedure provided for in the Administrative Procedure Act. That procedure requires federal agencies to notify the public of proposed rule making and allow them to participate by submitting comments and concerns within a specified period of time. After considering issues raised by the public, the agency may publish its final rule, but it must first respond to any comments received and explain how the agency resolved any significant problems raised by the comments.

In October 2014, the National School Boards Association joined other state and local government associations in an amicus brief in the case *Perez v. Mortgage Bankers Association*. In the brief, the associations argued that the notice and comment procedures should be followed before federal agencies make significant changes to definitive agency interpretations of regulations. They also argued that such a procedure is necessary to safeguard state and local reliance interests and preserve the appropriate balance between state and federal power. In early March, a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court rejected these arguments, holding that because a federal agency is not required to use notice-and-comment procedures to issue an initial interpretive rule, it also is not required to use those procedures to amend or repeal that rule.

At a minimum, the guidance documents serve as a look at some of DOE's current priorities and initiatives. The documents provide best practices and strategies that many districts will successfully implement in their schools. If you have questions about any of the documents or their guidance, contact the OSBA Division of Legal Services. ■

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A policy perspective on health and wellness

Kenna S. Haycox, policy consultant

Student health and wellness encompass a range of topics, including nutrition, exercise, medication needs and allergy management. Your board policies cover these topics to a varying level of detail. As you look at health and wellness in your district, consider some of your board policies on these issues.

Physical activity is an important aspect of encouraging student health and wellness. While boards are not required to adopt a physical education policy, many choose to do so. Adopting a statement recognizing the importance of

physical activity shows your community that fitness is an important part of your students' educational process.

The policy language should not say exactly how the district will provide for physical activity; it is really more of a philosophical statement by the board. The policy generally emphasizes the health and academic benefits of physical activity for students and delegates district administrators the responsibility for implementing physical activity plans. In addition to providing physical education classes, the district also can offer opportunities for students to be active through interscholastic athletics, intermural sports and recess, as well as encouraging activities such as biking and walking.

Board policies on physical education and activity should not unnecessarily tie administrators' hands. An example of this would be a policy that mandates a certain number of minutes of physical activity students must be provided each week or specifies what students are expected to do during recess. These details are developed by the administration as it implements the board policy and should be spelled out in district-level procedures or student handbooks.

In addition to physical activity, nutrition is an important part of student wellness. Over the past several years, there have been significant changes to nutrition standards for food and beverages sold during the school day. The requirements stem from both state and federal regulations, and essentially restrict all food and beverages sold to students on school campus during the school day

in addition to fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. Boards are required to adopt a policy on food sale standards that complies with federal and state requirements.

It is important to know that board-adopted policy should not include specific details about what products can and cannot be sold. These details should be in place to ensure food sales comply with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and state regulations, but are more appropriate for a district-level document such as a food service handbook or procedure manual.

OSBA sometimes is asked if boards are required to restrict food and beverage items brought into the school for events such as class parties. These items do not fall under USDA or state regulations; however, some districts have chosen to restrict these items and list them as part of their required local wellness plan.

Your wellness program board policy should be fairly general, and list components to be developed as part of the wellness plan. It also should identify which stakeholders will further refine these components.

Your district-level wellness plan is where the details live. The plan must be developed collaboratively among parents, students, food service workers, administrators, the board and the public. Wellness plans must include goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. They should list nutrition guidelines for all foods available in the district during the school day in order to promote student health

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and reduce childhood obesity.

In addition, the plans must ensure that district guidelines for reimbursable school meals are, at a minimum, equal to the guidelines issued by USDA, and also establish a plan of implementation and evaluation. These locally developed wellness plans are where some districts might indicate restrictions on what food and beverage items can be brought to school for class parties, and may even include ideas for alternative food to be served at celebrations.

Student health and wellness also are addressed in policies on food allergies and student medications. Although boards are required to adopt policies on accommodating students with food allergies, they should not be student or accommodation specific. The district should work with each student with an identified food allergy to develop a customized allergy management plan. While an individual student plan may

include having a nut-free table in the cafeteria, this specific protocol is not one that has to be in your board policy.

Boards are not required to restrict food and beverage items brought into the school for events such as class parties.

Another aspect of student health is the need for children to receive medications during the school day. This medicine is critical for many students' daily functioning, and boards are required to adopt policies and procedures for administering medications. Most districts allow students to receive medicine at school, and board policies should reflect this.

There are procedural requirements students and their parents must go through to authorize the school to administer medications at school and these are outlined in your policy. Your policy also should state that only district employees who are licensed health professionals or employees who are appointed by the board and complete state-mandated training can administer prescription drugs to students. There also are specific distinctions that should be included in your policy for students who need to carry inhalers or EpiPens.

There are several other aspects of student health and wellness woven through your policy manual and found in district-level policies and procedures. Review the board policies mentioned here and make sure your language on these topics is up-to-date with current law and requirements. In addition to reviewing board policies, encourage conversations among district administration and staff on how you can promote a healthy school environment. ■

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Creating a healthy team

Is your school board a 'healthy' board?

Cheryl W. Ryan, deputy director of school board services

Settling on a topic for an article on boardmanship normally doesn't present a difficult task — there are many ways to explore how board members can work together in the most productive way possible.

In thinking about the focus of this *Journal* issue, however, I wondered about "health and wellness" as it affects a board of education.

I'm a believer that "as the board goes, so goes the district." A healthy board may not guarantee a healthy district, but you can most assuredly bet that an unhealthy one will result in a district that runs aground in a variety of ways.

So what exactly does a healthy board look like?

A healthy board is one in which all members are devoted to the basic but critical notion that their key purpose is to work toward higher levels of student achievement for every child in the district. This is a high purpose, indeed, and one that seems to become more

difficult all the time.

Higher standards, new accountability benchmarks, less funding and diverse stakeholders groups — each with different priorities or challenges — make achieving this purpose a continual challenge. But that doesn't mean the purpose should alter. In fact, it makes holding to it more important.

A healthy board is one that knows its role and performs it to the best of its ability.

A healthy board is one where all members resolve to really listen to one another, even when it's hard. Even when individual board members seem entrenched, unwilling to move toward consensus or are tuned out.

Your board may not come to decisions easily, but you must be willing to listen to each other to operate effectively.

Most people just want to be heard, and board members are no different.

A healthy board is one that knows its role and performs it to the best of its ability. Board members are not administrators, but should hire, guide, evaluate and expect the best from the administrators in their districts.


A healthy board is one where each member individually is an avowed lifelong learner. Education changes. Challenges change. People (sometimes) change. The players definitely change.

Board members need to change, too. Stay current. Understand what the research is saying. Study your district's report card, and perhaps the ones from the districts you compare yourself to. Know your legislators and their positions on issues of importance to your district. Use available — and often free — resources through organizations such as OSBA to invigorate your own learning or the discussion at your board meeting.

A healthy board stays positive. Maybe not at every moment. Tough situations cause stress and difficulty. All board members, particularly those who are the most dedicated, get frustrated. Really frustrated.

But there are always things to celebrate. There are great staff and students in your district. Good things are happening because other good people are as devoted to your purpose as you are.

Maintaining personal health and board health requires constant thought and attention. Be well. ■



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The world is run by people who show up

Jennifer Hogue, lobbyist

I learned a valuable lesson when I worked in the legislature. Then-Sen. **Joy Padgett** (R-Coshocton) used to tell me, “The world is run by the people who show up.”

I have witnessed this phenomenon in action many times. Each and every day, legislators hear from constituents and lobbyists who provide information to help them make decisions. It is imperative that local board members be a part of these conversations, especially on key pieces of legislation.

Right now, no piece of state legislation is more important than House Bill (HB) 64, the biennial budget. Ohio’s budget will have a profound impact on local districts. It is up to each and every one of us to make sure we are not silent bystanders during the budget process, but active participants advocating on behalf of our districts and students.

Below are action steps from the OSBA booklet *Effective advocacy for school leaders* that you can take to make sure you have the most influence. You can view the booklet at <http://links.ohio.schoolboards.org/33658>.

Step 1 — know the issues

Make sure you are receiving the information you need to make decisions.

- Read OSBA email updates, alerts and calls to action. These messages are issued frequently throughout the budget process to provide members with the most up-to-date information.
- Join in legislative webinars offered by OSBA. Be sure to check out OSBA’s events page for more

details at www.ohioschoolboards.org/workshops. These free webinars provide opportunities to gain in-depth information on the latest budget developments and have your questions answered.

- Sign up to receive communications from elected officials.

Step 2 — know your district

Working with district staff, prepare a report on the key facts about your district to compare with state and regional averages, including:

- current enrollment, trends and projections;
- characteristics of students and the impact on program costs, including special education, low-income and at-risk students, limited English proficient programs, career and technical education, transportation costs and turnover;
- student achievement measures, such as state and local assessments and graduation rates;
- curricular and extracurricular programs, as well as special programs and services;
- budget trends, including total and per-pupil spending, major categories of revenue and expenditures, state aid versus local revenues under current formulas and federal funding;
- budget allocations and spending in major categories, such as instruction, student and teacher support, administration, operations, maintenance, transportation, food service, capital expenditures, debt service and cash balances and reserves;
- economic trends in your district as reflected by population changes,

employment, major employers and the impact of the schools.

Share all this information with your legislators so they will know how their decisions at the state level affect your district.

Step 3 — know where you stand

Have a process in place to express positions on major issues and policies by:

- adopting positions on major policy questions as a board, including action by the Ohio General Assembly;
- approving as a board a district legislative priority list that includes OSBA positions.

Step 4 — know the decision makers

Build personal relationships with your elected representatives. Introduce yourself by phone, email or letter and request a personal meeting. Present yourself as a concerned constituent, fellow elected official and information source on education.

Build relationships between your district and elected representatives.

- Set up meetings with your legislators and superintendent, board president or legislative network members.
- Invite your legislators to discuss issues at a regular or special board meeting.
- Ask legislators to visit your schools. Show them special programs, meet with staff and review student achievement data and share information about issues facing students and schools in your community.

Build relationships with other leaders.

- Host or participate in a joint meeting of several boards in your county or area.
- Identify and collaborate with local leaders who understand and value public education and are willing to communicate with elected officials and opinion leaders.

Information on legislators, including contact information, biographic data and legislative districts, is available on the Ohio House of Representatives website (www.ohiohouse.gov) and Ohio Senate website (www.ohiosenate.gov).

Step 5 — know how to contact decision makers

Plan for ongoing communications.

- Make sure you have phone numbers, addresses and email addresses for your state senators and representatives (see links, above).
- Ask your elected officials how they prefer to be contacted — by phone, mail or email — and ask the best way to reach them for urgent information before voting.
- Provide your phone, cellphone and email information; sign up for email newsletters; and encourage legislators to contact you, especially before voting on key education issues.

Contact after action or vote.

- When elected officials vote as you want, thank them personally and publicly.
- When officials do not vote as you want, politely express disappointment and urge reconsideration if the issue comes back up for consideration.

For all forms of communication.

- First, state your position (what you want them to do).
- Second, support your position (why you want them to do it and why they should support it).
- Third, offer to provide more information or alternatives, if any.
- Finally, thank them for listening and encourage further communication.

Step 6 — know the calendar for decision making

The biennial budget process runs from early February until June 30, when the final budget must be passed by the General Assembly. There are several points at which advocacy can result in a change in the final product.

- Late January or early February: governor introduces the biennial budget.
- Early February to mid-April: House considers governor's budget proposal and makes changes (focus your communication on House members).
- Mid-April to late May or early June: Senate considers House version and makes changes (focus your communication on Senate members).
- June: conference committee works out the differences in the House and Senate versions of the bill (focus your communication on leadership in each chamber and members of the conference committee).
- June: bill goes to governor for signature and/or line-item vetoes (focus your communication on the governor).

Step 7 — know how to state your case

Consider delivering testimony.

- Most elected officials want to hear from constituents.
- Discuss how the issue will affect your district as you see it; don't worry about being an expert.
- If you want to provide testimony at legislative hearings, contact the committee chair's assistant for the time, room and rules. OSBA's Division of Legislative Services is happy to help you with arrangements.

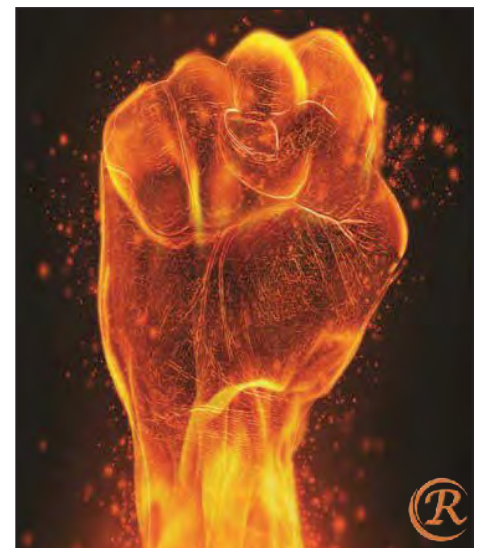
Participate in office meetings in Columbus.

- Meet with your representative when visiting as a private citizen or as part of organized activities. OSBA holds an annual State Legislative Conference in the spring that provides opportunities to meet legislators.

- Lawmakers are extremely busy during the legislative session; appointments may be brief.
- Have an agenda to discuss and keep the conversation focused on your district's issues.
- Bring written materials to leave with them.

Don't forget meetings in your district or community. In meetings prior to the legislative session, schedule time to present your issues to senators and representatives as well as share the impact of proposed legislation on your district. Allow legislators to discuss their own priorities, but make sure to question them about their views on school district concerns.

While contacting your legislators may be intimidating, remember that you can be a valuable resource as they make decisions about public education. Many legislators look forward to hearing from board members and appreciate your input. ■



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Growing healthy



Greenview Upper Elementary School fifth-graders Paul Miozzi, left, and Arthur Bargainer load lunch trays with fresh, local produce at a salad bar in the cafeteria. South Euclid-Lyndhurst City has salad bars in each of its schools as part of a broader effort to encourage healthy eating and lifestyles.

South Euclid-Lyndhurst City program brings fresh produce to school cafeterias

An effort by one northeast Ohio school district to provide fresh fruits and vegetables in its cafeterias is winning over students and generating high-profile attention from across the nation — even by first lady **Michelle Obama**.

South Euclid-Lyndhurst City Schools is helping even some of the pickiest students turn over a new leaf and discover that eating healthy is not only good for you, but can be delicious too.

The district has partnered with a county board of health,

food service provider and local farmer to create a farm-to-school pipeline that delivers a steady stream of freshly grown produce. The farmer picks the fruits and vegetables in the morning, drives 59 miles and delivers them to schools the same day. They end up in grab-and-go salads, salad bars and seasonal menu items in each of the district's six schools, which serve 3,900 students.

“The driving force behind all of this is to get kids eating healthier and get them more accustomed to eating fresh produce,” said **Kevin Needham**, who manages South Euclid-Lyndhurst's food

students

*Bryan Bullock,
assistant editor*

services program in partnership with AVI Foodsystems. “In the past, our produce was being shipped in from 2,000 miles away. What we’re getting now is local, fresher, tastes better and lasts much longer — I think the kids can really tell the difference.”

The end result is more students are choosing to put leafy greens on their lunch trays. Salad consumption has doubled at the high school, Needham said, and students as young as kindergarten age are learning how to eat from a salad bar and what a balanced meal looks like.

Schools across the country are increasingly embracing farm-to-school programs, citing their benefits for students and the local economy. More than 4,300 districts and 40,000 schools use at least some local foods in their cafeterias, according to the most recent Farm to School Census by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These rural, urban and suburban schools serve more than 23 million children and spend an estimated \$386 million annually on local foods.

South Euclid-Lyndhurst’s farm-to-school program has received local, state and national interest since it was launched in 2010. The program has been awarded a variety of major grants, earned national honors and helped land a group from the district a trip to the White House this school year.

Growing the seed

“Everyone always asks how we started our farm-to-school program,” Needham said. “It really wasn’t that hard. You just have to find a farmer who will work with you and go from there, build that relationship.”

The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) introduced the school district to the federal Farm to School Program, which provides help to schools through research, training, technical assistance and grants. CCBH Project Manager **Alison Patrick** also introduced South Euclid-Lyndhurst City Schools to **Floyd Davis**, the owner of Red Basket Farms in Kinsman, who grows produce for the school district.

“One day Alison and I drove out to his farm, sat outside and talked to him,” Needham said. “Next thing we know, Floyd’s delivering produce to us.”

South Euclid-Lyndhurst outlined its needs for produce and

Davis let the district know what it could expect in terms of availability and pricing. Contrary to what some might expect, Needham said transitioning to local produce was not more expensive. Because fresh produce lasts longer, he believes it may actually be more cost-effective to buy close to home.

The district started by ordering locally grown lettuce, tomatoes and other staple produce items. Davis helped kick off the farm-to-school program by visiting schools and talking to students about where their food comes from.

The program grew from there. Working collaboratively with the county board of health over years, South Euclid-Lyndhurst’s farm-to-school program has received more than \$130,000 in grants from the USDA, Cuyahoga County Board of Health, American Dairy Association and Whole Foods. The funding has allowed the district to expand its program, buy new kitchen equipment and promote healthy eating at school and at home.

“The farm-to-school program is a great opportunity to collaborate and combine the resources of the county and federal government with our local schools,” said Superintendent **Linda N. Reid**. “It is always very exciting for us to enter into these kind of partnerships, and we’re always looking for new opportunities.”



Greenview Upper Elementary School students, wearing white, joined peers from across the nation for a visit to the White House Kitchen Garden with first lady Michelle Obama in October.



South Euclid-Lyndhurst City's farm-to-school program has been recognized at the national level and named a model practice.

She said it also is exciting to see students embrace healthy eating. Reid recently dined with elementary students and was delighted to see so many fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students choose to eat salad — especially when pizza was available.

Students not only eat healthier, but she said they know more about where their food comes from, and take pride in eating right and supporting local growers.

White House recognition

South Euclid-Lyndhurst's farm-to-school program, which has been named a Model Practice by the National Association of County and City Health Officials, recently caught the attention of Michelle Obama. The first lady launched a "Let's Move" wellness initiative and makes encouraging healthy lifestyles a cornerstone of her public service.

A group from the district was invited to join her at the White House Kitchen Garden in October. The students joined a handful of others from across the country in picking fruits and vegetables from the garden, preparing a meal and dining with the first lady. Several Greenview Upper Elementary School students and Needham, Principal **Reginald Holland** and teacher and garden club advisor **Mardea Hunt** all made the

trip to Washington, D.C.

"It was just mind blowing — I don't even know how to explain it," said **Paul Miozzi**, a fifth-grade student at Greenview who visited the White House.

Paul and his classmate **Arthur Bargainer** helped out in the garden when they arrived at the White House. Paul picked lettuce and lemons, and Arthur collected eggplants and herbs. After they were done, Arthur helped a chef prepare pumpkin soup and Paul assisted with ratatouille, a dish he loved so much he later made it at home with his mom.

When it came time for dinner, Arthur made his way to the table where Obama was sitting — even though that meant sitting with a group of girls.

"He bailed on me," Arthur said, with a laugh, about Paul's decision to sit with the chef he worked with at a different table.

Arthur said the first lady was easy to talk to.

"It was kind of like a normal talk with a regular mom," he said. "We talked about movies, things that were coming out, stuff we wanted. No one acts like they're any different for living in the White House."

Paul and Arthur both said the dinner was healthy and delicious. After the meal, the students took a group photo with the first lady. It was a moment Paul said he will never forget.

"When everyone was taking a picture in the garden, I went around to the back and stood right next to her, and she just put her arm around me," he said with a wide grin. "It was just insane."

The Greenview students were chosen for the visit, in part, because of their involvement with the school's garden club, known as the Green Team. Green Team groups meet after school every other week to work on gardening and recycling projects. Students grow their own produce at the school and learn about healthy eating and environmental stewardship.

"I think Green Team teaches students about cooperating, being patient and that it's not that hard to grow your own food," said Hunt, who leads the program. "If we start kids out early with healthy eating, they're more likely to keep those habits as they grow older."

Sprouting upward

Grant funding has allowed South Euclid-Lyndhurst to grow its farm-to-school program each year. An \$18,000 grant from Whole Foods shortly after the program was launched allowed the district to create salad bars in each of its schools.

"The kids really like the salad bars because they can make their own choices," said **Ann Brizee**, district food services assistant. "It seems like almost every kid takes a salad of some kind."

The program received a major funding boost — and national recognition — when it was awarded a grant last year of \$92,000 from the USDA Farm to School Program, a federal initiative to better connect school cafeterias and students with local farmers and ranchers. The district's program was one of only 71 projects across the country awarded USDA funding in 2014.

"The goal behind the grant was to start flash freezing some of produce in the summer and using it in the winter," Needham said.

The grant will finance a new walk-in freezer, blast chiller, vacuum packaging machine and other kitchen equipment. It also will help pay for some promotional materials to encourage families to eat fresh local produce both at school and at home.

The farm that supplies South-Euclid Lyndhurst has a variety of greenhouses and hothouses, which allow it to grow some produce during the winter. Schools that use local produce have to be flexible and understand how growing seasons and weather impact their supply chain, Needham said.

"So goes the weather, so goes your program," he said. "If the farm is not doing well, then you're going to struggle too, on your end, so you have to plan accordingly."

Needham advises schools interested in launching a farm-to-school program to start small and expand gradually. Red Basket Farms provides South-Euclid Lyndhurst about 40% to 50% of its produce now and Needham hopes to grow that figure to 100% someday — if possible.

The district currently is exploring the possibility of offering other locally sourced foods, including eggs, ice cream, pork and grass-fed beef.

Many students, Holland said, are more adventurous and sophisticated about eating than people realize. Fresh local foods and seasonal ingredients give school cafeteria staff a chance to experiment with healthy, flavorful dishes — like spinach salads and grilled veggie wraps with squash.

"It's given the kitchen a chance to create some new dishes that they haven't done before, and I think people really like that," Holland said. "They did grilled chard and it was good. It's something that our kids would never have tried."

And eating a well-balanced diet is about more than just a healthy body.

"The idea is healthy bodies, healthy minds," Reid said. "Eating healthy helps with your energy level and attention level, which helps you in school. The habits you form as a young person are ones you can sustain throughout your entire life." ■

Editor's note: For more information about the farm-to-school program at South Euclid-Lyndhurst City Schools, contact Superintendent Linda N. Reid at (216) 691-2000 or reid@sel.k12.oh.us. To learn more about federal resources available to schools, visit www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool.



A shipment of fresh spinach from Red Basket Farms is bagged in the kitchen at Greenview Upper Elementary School. The district's use of a local farm means produce is shipped 59 miles instead of 2,000 miles.



School nurses play vital role in student health, learning

Ohio Association of School Nurses

Medically fragile children are attending school in higher numbers than ever before. Research has shown that an estimated 18% of students have a chronic health condition.

Among the chronic health conditions researchers cite are:

- The number of students diagnosed with diabetes has nearly doubled in the past 10 years, with 23% of students having pre-diabetes or Type I or Type II diabetes.
- The prevalence of food allergies among children

under the age of 18 has increased 18%. It is estimated 19% of all children have a food allergy; 40% of them have had a severe reaction requiring emergency medications.

- Asthma affects more than 10 million children in the U.S. In Ohio, approximately 419,000 children have been diagnosed with asthma.
- Epilepsy affects more than 326,000 schoolchildren through age 15, and 30% of these children cannot be adequately treated.
- Obesity rates have tripled in school-aged children; 32% of students are considered overweight or obese, affecting their physical and mental health.
- One in five children and adolescents has a diagnosable mental health disorder in the course of a year. It is estimated 20% of students may have an undiagnosed mental health disorder that could cause difficulty with academic work. It is reported that school nurses spend 32% of their time providing mental health care to their students.

A Day in the Life of Your School Nurse



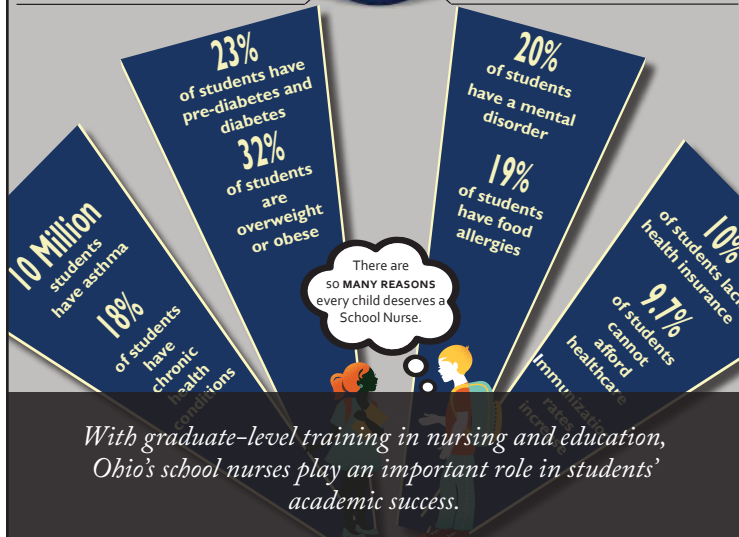
20 minutes saved per day for the Teacher by the School Nurse

60 minutes saved per day for the Principal by the School Nurse

32% of time is spent by the School Nurse providing mental health services



45 minutes saved per day for the School Clerical Staff by the School Nurse



With graduate-level training in nursing and education, Ohio's school nurses play an important role in students' academic success.

Even with the increasing numbers of students with health conditions, only 39% of Ohio's schools have a full-time registered nurse who provides health services to students. Ohio school nurses have reported having a caseload of more than 2,000 students in multiple buildings. The national recommendation for caseload for one school nurse is 750 for the general population, 225 for student populations that require daily school nursing services or interventions, and 125 for students with complex health care needs.

School nursing is a specialty practice of nursing that combines expertise in nursing and education. In Ohio, a school nurse is a registered nurse (RN) with a bachelor's degree and licensure from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The school nurse licensure requires specific graduate-level coursework in the practice of school nursing and education, including: advanced physical and mental health assessment; emergency preparedness; school law and its impact on health care; and special education regulations.



Hundreds of school nurses gathered in Dublin in February for the 42nd annual Ohio Association of School Nurses state conference. Workshop topics ranged from student fitness, nutrition and diabetes care to mental health, safety, seizures and more.

Because of this unique background of specialized knowledge, school nurses play an important role in promoting academic success. Besides the public perception of school nurses caring for ill and injured students and conducting health screenings, school nurses write Individualized Health Plans (IHPs) and Emergency Action Programs, and are vital in the federal Section 504 process for students who are medically fragile or have chronic health conditions. School nurses also contribute to Individual Assessment Teams (IATs), Evaluation Team Reports, Multi-factored Evaluations and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with medical needs that affect their learning. They also make recommendations for home tutoring. The ability to develop these plans is what sets school nurses apart from other nurses who do not have the school nurse license.

School nurses influence attendance, which impacts student achievement and graduation rates. Repeated studies have identified school nurses as playing an integral part in reducing absenteeism, and shown that a higher nurse-to-student ratio is positively correlated with increased attendance. In a study done in a large urban school district in Ohio, it was found that 57% fewer students left school early when seen by a school nurse, compared to those who were not.

School nurses are essential in promoting public health and wellness and preventing injury. Ohio has one of the lowest immunization rates in the U.S., and the presence of school nurses has been shown to increase those rates. Studies

indicate that parents are significantly less likely to request an exemption from immunizations from a school nurse than from other school personnel.

Thanks to their public health background, school nurses can recognize epidemiological patterns of symptoms, their significance and implications, and are able to develop a plan of intervention for the school community. It was a school nurse who first identified the H1N1 flu outbreak, based on an increase in illness in her school.

Studies have shown school nurses play an integral part in reducing absenteeism, and that a higher nurse-to-student ratio is positively correlated with increased attendance.

School nurses also are case managers. They coordinate care among health care providers, families and schools to support the health of students. They are instrumental in connecting students and families to health insurance resources, and comprehensive medical and dental services.

School nurses save time and money for public school



boards. According to several studies, the school nurse saves a teacher 20 minutes per day, the principal 60 minutes per day and school clerical staff 45 minutes per day by caring for student health concerns. This allows these critical staff members to be more productive in their teaching and leadership roles. An article published in the May 19, 2014, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics* titled “Cost-Benefit Study of School Nursing Services” showed that every dollar invested in school nursing services saves \$2.20 by averting medical costs and lost work for parents, as well as increasing teachers’ productivity.

There is sometimes confusion among non-nursing professionals as to the definition of a nurse or school nurse. Nursing practice is regulated by the Ohio Board of Nursing and in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code (RC). School nurse is a title that can only be used by a registered nurse who holds a school nurse license from ODE. That means others — such as licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and unlicensed assistive personnel (UAPs) — are not qualified to be school nurses and must work under the supervision of higher-level health professionals in a school setting.

According to RC 4723.01, LPNs must practice nursing at the direction of a licensed physician, dentist, podiatrist, optometrist, chiropractor or RN. Licensed practical nurses have limited education and training in children’s health care, sometimes as little as six hours of clinical experience. They cannot practice independently, cannot assess health status and cannot create or change a plan of health care. Therefore, they must work under the supervision of a doctor or RN in a school.

UAPs have no required education or training in student health care and cannot provide health care without supervision by an RN. Recently, some districts have hired RNs as school nurses who are not licensed by ODE as well as LPNs or UAPs.

According to the Nurse Practice Act, RC 4723.03, “No person shall engage in the practice of nursing as a registered nurse, represent the person as being a registered nurse or use the title ‘registered nurse,’ the initials ‘RN’ or any other title implying that the person is a registered nurse for a fee, salary or other consideration, or as a volunteer, without holding a current, valid license as a registered nurse under this chapter.” Therefore, having UAPs working as school nurses is practicing nursing without a license.

A licensed school nurse (LSN) is an independent practitioner not requiring direction by another health professional. LSNs can simultaneously provide independent health care; conduct public health surveillance; contribute to IHPs, IATs and IEPs; care for illness and injury; administer medication; and perform myriad other nursing tasks, all of which leads to better educational outcomes.

When school districts contract services with outside agencies for school nurses, they should make sure they are getting the most value for their expenditure by requiring the nurses be LSNs. Only in this way can they best meet the students’ health needs and promote academic success.

Fully licensed and experienced school nurses save lives and help students learn every day. For more information, contact the Ohio Association of School Nurses at (330) 749-5068 or visit www.oasn.org. ■

Editor’s note: This article was written by Ohio Association of School Nurses (OASN) Executive Director **Gabrielle Karpowicz**, RN, LSN; at-large representative on the OASN Board of Directors **Joan Keith**, RN, LSN at **Upper Arlington City Schools** and a Nationally Certified School Nurse (NCSN); OASN representative to the National Association of School Nurses Board of Directors **Kathy Strasser**, RN, LSN at **Norwood City Schools** and NCSN; and OASN Past President and Legislative Liaison **Kate King**, RN and **Columbus City Schools** director of health, family and community services.



Presenters lead a discussion on healthy schools assessments and nurse-led educational programs at the Ohio Association of School Nurses statewide conference.



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Rx for success — optimal health for optimal learning

School-based health centers boost achievement

Gary Motz, managing editor

There are many nonacademic barriers to student learning. But there is probably no greater barrier than poor health, both physical and mental.

Sick and hungry children can't learn. A child with a mouth full of cavities can't learn. Depressed and anxious children can't learn.

A common denominator among most of these students is a lack of access to regular health care. Children living in poverty or unstable homes are particularly vulnerable. For many, a hospital emergency room serves as the family doctor.

Alliance offers resources for starting school-based health centers

Is your district interested in exploring the benefits of school-based health centers? The Ohio School-Based Health Alliance (OSBHA) has resources to help you learn more.

For further information, contact OSBHA President Dr. **Marilyn Crumpton** at marilyn.crumpton@cincinnati-oh.gov or OSBHA Immediate Past President and Voices for Ohio's Children CEO **Sandy Oxley** at sandy@raiseyourvoiceforkids.org.

Crumpton will be presenting a workshop on school-based health care at Voices for Ohio's Children's upcoming state conference. The 2015 Ohio Kids Health Conference: Healthy Inside and Out is set for May 6 and 7 in Columbus. For details and registration information, visit www.raiseyourvoiceforkids.org/event/6.

The National School-Based Health Alliance also has information posted at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/43817>.

What's more, these students will move into adulthood unable to manage their own health. Without adequate care, they will become more prone to chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity and more. This, in turn, will lead to shortened lifespans, permanent disabilities, a reduced quality of life and billions of dollars in avoidable health care costs.

However, for children who gain earlier access to health care and health education, these trends can be reversed. That goal is what's fueling the rise in school-based health centers in Ohio and across the nation, helping connect under-served children to the health care they so badly need.

"We know that kids cannot reach their full educational potential if they are hungry and sick or absent all the time," said **Sandy Oxley**, immediate past president of the Ohio School-Based Health Alliance and CEO of Voices for Ohio's Children. "School-based health centers look at students in a holistic way, recognizing that if they have unmet health needs, they're not going to be able to perform at the top of their academic scale."

The Ohio School-Based Health Alliance, founded in 2001, works to promote the growth of locally tailored and sustainable school-based health centers through educational programs, advocacy, technical assistance and sharing best practices. It is an affiliate of the National School-Based Health Alliance and has about 50 centers as active members.

Ohio's school health centers range from **Cincinnati City's** full-service Oyler School clinic to mobile units in **Columbus City** and **Cleveland Municipal** districts. Some schools do not have centers, but access services at other school buildings in what is known as linked health care.



By focusing on prevention as well as treatment, Ohio's school-based health care centers not only promote better student health, they also reduce absenteeism, improve academic achievement and boost graduation rates.

“Behavioral and mental health is a big piece in a lot of the school settings,” said Oxley, who also serves on the School-Based Health Care Advisory Workgroup created last year by the Ohio General Assembly to research ways to improve academic achievement through better student health. “Behavioral problems may be related to an untreated health need; a number of the districts focus on that. But the services run the gamut, because programs are developed at the community level based on need.”

A major challenge for the Ohio centers has been sustainability. But that has eased somewhat since the state expanded Medicaid coverage in 2013 under the Affordable Care Act. The expansion also helped overcome a major barrier that had prevented many children from getting health care — a lack of insurance. And, it provided a big boost for students and school health centers alike.

“Since the governor helped expand Medicaid, we are able to use that as a resource for children,” said pediatrician Dr. **Marilyn Crumpton**, Ohio School-Based Health Alliance president and medical director for the Cincinnati Health Department’s Division of School and Adolescent Health. “It really represented an opportunity for Ohio’s school-based health centers. Now that they have insurance, we have a responsibility to make sure it translates into health access and better outcomes.”

School-based health care services encompass what a child would receive at a conventional doctor’s office, said Crumpton, whose role at the health department includes overseeing 11 of Cincinnati City Schools’ 21 school-based centers. The district, a leader in school-based health care, is home to about half of all the centers in Ohio. The staff at Cincinnati’s health centers includes, at a minimum, a nurse practitioner or physician.

“Prevention is a big part of what the centers do, such as comprehensive physicals and preventive health care like health education, immunizations and routine screenings,” Crumpton said. “In addition, the centers provide acute illness care, including prescriptions. Identifying and managing chronic diseases, like asthma, is another piece that helps drive the greatest improvements, because those are some of the highest costs of health care.

“The annual direct health care cost of asthma is approximately \$50.1 billion. Asthma also is the No. 1 cause of illness-related school absence in the U.S., which has a huge impact on academics.”

Dental and vision care also play a big role in Cincinnati. The district has two centers with comprehensive dental facilities and full-time dentists, with a third to open soon. Crumpton said dental screenings reveal a 22% rate of tooth



decay among students, about the same as the national rate. But, she said, the rate of advanced decay is high.

“We had our first high school student who had to get dentures in 2014,” Crumpton said. “That’s really a strong statement of, not only is the decay among students significant, but it’s also more advanced. And we’re still seeing high school students who have never been to the dentist.”

The Cincinnati district also focuses strongly on vision care, with Oyler School the center of that effort. One component of that began several years ago through a partnership with the OneSight foundation.

“For one week during the school year, OneSight provided free vision services at a temporary site and we would have anywhere from 700 to 1,000 kids get glasses that week,” Crumpton said. “The problem was, if you missed that week, you were out of luck.”

“Since so many of the kids are from low-income families and have Medicaid, we started talking about creating a billable model that might be self-sustaining and ongoing throughout the school year.”

Now, thanks to Medicaid payments and a partnership among OneSight, the school district, Oyler School, the

Cincinnati Health Department, Cincinnati Eye Institute, Ohio Optometric Association and local fundraisers, Oyler has its own vision center, complete with an on-site optometrist and an optician who visits schools to fit children with glasses. The program served 60 schools and provided 3,000 eye exams last year.

In addition to lowering absenteeism by improving student health, the centers offer another advantage: Students who don’t have leave school for medical appointments spend more time in class.

“It’s certainly true that healthy kids are going to learn better,” Oxley said. “But the fact that students don’t have to leave school to go to the doctor really reduces the out-of-school time. And the centers schedule the appointments so there is the least academic interruption by making them during non-core classes and not taking students out of important classes like math or reading.”

There also are benefits for parents: less time away from work, not to mention convenience.

“A great example is kids with asthma, which can require multiple visits,” Crumpton said. “By providing treatment at the center, you are keeping parents at work, which is really critical because a lot of these families are in jobs where the benefits are very limited, and lost time can mean lost pay.”

Crumpton said school-based health centers in Ohio work with a medical partner — such as a health department, a community health center or hospital — as their sponsoring agent, which connects them with a larger system. Most of the centers bill for services, and because they tend to be located in schools where the poverty rates are the highest, Medicaid is the majority payer.

In Cincinnati schools, public-private partnerships have propelled the growth of school-based health centers, Crumpton said. A major funding partner was the Health Foundation (now called Interact for Health), which started working on planning and implementing school-based health centers in 1999. That effort was driven by the district’s move to transform schools into Community Learning Centers that would serve the needs of students, schools and community members by working with local partners.

Interest in putting student health services in the Community Learning Centers grew, and near the end of 2010, the Health Foundation and Growing Well had helped set up 10 health centers in Cincinnati schools.

Growing Well, of which Crumpton is a founding director, is a coalition of local providers and community organizations that coordinate health services in the district.



Many Ohio districts’ school-based health care centers provide dental care. Cincinnati City has two centers with comprehensive dental facilities and full-time dentists, with a third to open soon.

The partnership's work became more urgent when the city of Cincinnati announced in December 2010 it was eliminating its school nurse program. Since then, the district has added 11 health centers.


"Growing Well's slogan is, 'Optimal health for optimal learning,'" Crumpton said. "It's a collaborative that includes Interact for Health, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, the city of Cincinnati and the school district. The school board has always been at the table as well. It's really a community that came together to identify and address health inequities for kids.

"We all realized, based on the research, that school-based health centers really represented a way to improve academics for students by improving their health. Children in poverty are so impacted negatively by poor health outcomes because

they don't have access to appropriate health care."

According to the Ohio School-Based Health Alliance, national studies show absenteeism has dropped by half in schools with health centers, tardiness has decreased by 25%, GPAs have risen and chronic health conditions are better managed.

"If we're going to improve health outcomes in this country, we really have to understand the social determinants and what they are costing all of us," Crumpton said. "If you look at the opportunities in school-based health and being able to provide services in the school setting, there are a couple of things going on. One, that's where the kids are. But more importantly, there's the opportunity — because you're becoming part of the community — to understand some of the barriers to health care and work to overcome them." ■



Celebrate the stars in your district at the OSBA Student Achievement Fair

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2015 • 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. • Greater Columbus Convention Center

The OSBA Capital Conference Student Achievement Fair highlights outstanding student performance groups and fresh, innovative initiatives from school districts across the state. The fair will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2015, during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

Student Achievement Fair performing groups

OSBA will choose one school district performing group from each of the association's five regions to perform during the Student Achievement Fair. Each group will perform for 20 minutes. To nominate a performing group, submit a nomination at <http://conference.ohioschoolboards.org/2015/saf-nominations> and email an electronic video audition or YouTube link to **Cheryl W. Ryan**, deputy director of school board services, at cryan@ohioschoolboards.org. Only electronic recordings will be accepted.



Student Achievement Fair district programs

OSBA is accepting nominations for district programs that improve student achievement. For more ideas, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/60021> to view the list of 2014 Student Achievement Fair district programs.

One hundred programs highlighting student achievement will be selected. The online application is available at the link below.

The nomination deadline is Friday, June 26. Visit <http://conference.ohioschoolboards.org/2015/saf-nominations> to nominate a student performing group or district program today!

Playing for keeps



Despite its benefits, academic pressures are pushing recess aside

Heather Olsen and Nicholas J. Pace, University of Northern Iowa

It's always amusing when children respond to the age-old "What's your favorite class" question with, "Recess!" Many of us answered the question the same way as the youngsters do.

Recess, we know, is an essential component of the elementary school day. Research points to the importance of outdoor play and how essential it is to the well-being of students. A 2010 study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation revealed that 96% of principals surveyed believe that recess has a positive impact on social development. Nearly eight in 10 principals in the same study reported that recess has a positive impact on academic achievement. Despite this, many districts have

slashed recess in response to increasing pressures related to the No Child Left Behind Act and a drive to increase test scores.

School leaders may find it hard to achieve a balance. On one hand, pressure to avoid assorted watch lists continues to intensify, budgets are stressed and more instructional time must be found. On the other hand, schools seek to temper this high-stakes atmosphere by meeting students' affective, developmental and social needs. A growing number of schools have chosen to eliminate or reduce recess time in an effort to increase instructional time and test scores.

To further investigate current recess trends, we at the National

Program for Playground Safety, with the Educational Leadership program at the University of Northern Iowa, conducted a study of Iowa public school principals' perceptions of recess and district playground policies. A summary of the findings offers good news for schools caught between the rock and hard place of the value of recess versus achievement pressure. The findings yielded four recommendations that can easily be implemented with little to no expense.

Encourage 'I can't wait for recess!'

The first recommendation is for school boards and administrators to encourage principals and teachers to understand the body of research suggesting that recess supports learning. There is no known research suggesting that eliminating or reducing recess supports improved student learning or improves student behavior, according to the 2010 article, "The Crucial Role of Recess in Schools," published in the *Journal of School Health*.

In our study, 90% of responding principals believed that recess had a positive impact on achievement and 69% believed students listen better and concentrate more effectively after recess.

Despite the fact that common sense and research both point to the benefits recess offers students, many principals in our study reported consciously reducing recess time during the school day, often to squeeze in additional instructional time. Even though principals identified recess as important for a host of academic, social and developmental reasons, a full 82% reported denying students recess as a behavioral consequence. Nearly 33% reported reducing recess time in response to pressure to increase test scores.

Develop sound playground policies

The second recommendation is for school boards to develop and implement sound playground policies. No responsible board would leave building maintenance and safety to chance. Boards and administrators must not assume that playgrounds remain safe and effectively maintained on their own. Playgrounds, like employees and brick-and-mortar facilities, need supervision and regular oversight.

School leaders should be proactive in ensuring well-maintained, safe, age-appropriate outdoor environments, using guidelines from established authorities, such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Rather than reacting to injuries that can result in litigation, boards should ensure that administrators are implementing building-level playground policies designed to protect them.

Playground policies effectively create the blueprint to prevent injuries to students and limit district liability. Policies should include the number of recess periods per grade level, the amount of time for recess at each level, student-to-teacher

ratios, supervision expectations, maintenance plans and emergency protocols.

These plans help clarify goals and encourage collective ownership of the responsibilities and procedures at the building level. Finally, playground policies must be routinely evaluated to determine their effectiveness, adequacy and efficiency.

Pay attention to the nuts and bolts

The third recommendation is to prioritize playground maintenance inspections. Maintenance is important in the prevention of injury, yet our survey indicates that more than a quarter of schools do not routinely inspect the playground, and only half of schools use a playground maintenance checklist.

The lack of routine maintenance and documentation in a play area can void the manufacturer's warranty, put children in physical danger and waste dollars on unusable equipment, not to mention exposing the district to litigation related to student injury.

In addition, just as elementary students would not be expected to use desks and furniture from the high school, the playground should be suitable for the ages served. The outdoor environment should not be a one-size-fits-all proposition, but must accommodate different ages and developmental ability levels.

School districts should consider designating specific play areas for different grades. Our study found that 45% of schools allowed preschool children to use the same equipment as school-age children. While this arrangement may be convenient for the building schedule, it is not compliant with CPSC recommendations.

CPSC suggests playground equipment be separate for preschool and school-age children. Furthermore, if a preschool child suffered a severe injury resulting from using equipment designed for much larger, stronger, more developed children, the school is exposing itself to an unnecessary risk of litigation.

Playground staff

The fourth recommendation is to implement appropriate training for supervisors. School safety drills and training of all sorts are now as routine as paper and pencils, yet our study revealed that only 15% of the responding schools provide training for playground supervisors.

Not only does the playground itself need to be safe, but adults need to become active supervisors. The mere presence of an adult does not guarantee quality supervision, any more than the mere presence of a teacher ensures high-quality classroom instruction.

Those responsible for playground supervision need adequate,

appropriate training aimed at preventing injuries and maximizing the benefits of recess. Our study found teachers and teacher associates were responsible 90% of the time for supervision responsibilities yet, as noted above, very few districts provide training in this area.

While many board members and administrators can attest to the increasing mandates and regulations, surprisingly, no federal or state mandates relating to playground supervision ratios exist. This may explain why one school reported having only one playground supervisor for 121 students during recess. The most common supervisor-to-student ratio was 1-to-50.

Additionally, the assumption that the mere presence of a supervisor equates to effective supervision can lead to serious liability for schools. Therefore, effective training should include identifying appropriate ratios, establishing safe behavior expectations and recognizing procedures for reporting and addressing maintenance problems. The National Program for Playground Safety offers a wide selection of online training opportunities and resources for school districts.

Build favorite memories

We know that children learn through play. Unfortunately, recess is often an overlooked and misunderstood topic within school districts. Recess is not the enemy of student learning. Rather, it is an important source of support for learning, enjoyment and healthy development.

Districts that discount recess' impact and connection to student achievement do so at their own peril. Efforts to slash recess time in a well-intentioned effort to increase student achievement may actually be undercutting those efforts. Our study reveals a growing need for greater attention to playground issues.

In the current climate of increasing expectations and growing demands for using data in decision-making, school boards and administrators should leverage the existing research related to playgrounds in such a way that supports safe outdoor environments, effective supervision and maintenance procedures. They should resist ill-conceived plans to reduce, ignore or eliminate attention paid to a vital part of student learning and development. Wise boards and administrators see the connections among recess, student safety and student achievement. ■

Editor's note: Heather Olsen (heather.olsen@uni.edu) is the assistant director of the National Program for Playground Safety and an associate professor of the Leisure, Youth and Human Service Division at the University of Northern Iowa. Nicholas J. Pace (nick.pace@uni.edu) is an associate professor of educational leadership at the University of Northern Iowa.

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Find the best candidate

OSBA has exclusive rights to the Achiever, a candidate assessment tool used during the executive search process. The Achiever measures six cognitive learning skills with 10 personality dimensions to create a comprehensive candidate profile.

Coupled with OSBA's extensive experience in executive searches and track record for success, the Achiever can help you determine the right candidate for your district. OSBA's experienced consultants can help you through this process to ensure your executive search is very successful.

"As one component of the search package offered by OSBA, I appreciated the feedback from the Achiever report. By reflecting on the candidates' answers, we were able to get a read on personality, interests, strengths and weaknesses. When taken in context of the entire process, the Achiever report yielded meaningful information and guided us in choosing the preferred candidate for the position.

— Rebekah Wright Kulis, board member, Kent City

To learn how the Achiever assessment can help you hire the right candidate for your district, contact **Kathy LaSota** or **Cheryl W. Ryan** at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/administrative-searches to learn more.



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Spring conferences showcase achievement, talents

► Northwest Local's (Hamilton) Colerain High School Show Cards choir entertains attendees at the Southwest Region conference.

▼ Artwork created by Danbury Local (Ottawa), Fremont City, Oregon City and Sandusky City art students was on display at the Northwest Region conference. Visit OSBA's Flickr page at www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards to view more photos from the spring region conferences.



▲ Otterbein University Chief of Staff Kristine Robbins delivers the keynote address at the Central Region conference.

► Jacqueline A. "Mama" Collins, center, received the Northwest Region Excellence in Community Service Award for Outstanding Parent Volunteer. She was recognized by Sandusky City Superintendent Dr. Eugene T.W. Sanders, far right.





◀ Zanesville City board member Vicky French, left, and Superintendent Terry M. Martin enjoy the social period before the March 19 Southeast Region conference in Zanesville. A roundup article about the spring conferences was published in the April 13 OSBA Briefcase.



◀▼ OSBA President Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) and Tri-County Career Center, left, and Northeast Region President John W. Halkias, Plain Local (Stark), recognize Michelle Best, an Ohio Teacher of the Year nominee from Austintown Local (Mahoning), during the Northeast Region conference.

▼ Columbus City board member W. Shawna Gibbs listens to presentations during the Central Region conference.



▲ OSBA President Penrod, left, and Southwest Region Immediate Past President Rick Foster, Manchester Local (Adams), congratulate Linda A. Jordan, Northeastern Local (Clark) for earning Master Board Member status at the Southwest Region conference.

◀ Oak Hill Union Local's (Jackson) Oak Hill High School Marching Oaks perform during the March 17 Southeast Region conference in Piketon.



OSBA surveys inform data-driven decisions

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

Virtually everyone has been asked to complete a survey at some point. While some surveys are easier or more interesting to answer than others, providing feedback is always valuable to the disseminating group or individual.

OSBA now offers a service to help your district develop and implement strategic surveys to ensure you get the answers you need to make effective decisions. Additionally, this service is one way to create community engagement, allow for real feedback and learn more about your constituents — all at an affordable price.

OSBA understands surveys can be tedious, confusing and cumbersome. Considerable time and thought goes into producing and analyzing an effective survey, as well as to discussion and plans that follow the survey's results. Rest assured, we are here to help you with the entire process from conception through completion.

Why are surveys important?
Surveys are an important tool for

effective decision making. When done properly, a survey provides a reliable method to assess public opinion and build support for your school system. Staff and community feedback often drive the decisions that are made in your district.

When done properly, a survey provides a reliable method to assess public opinion and build support for your school district.

With the proper feedback, a survey's results enable district administrators to determine their next decision-making steps and plan successfully for the future. OSBA can ensure this process has a solid start and fruitful finish.

"Our district used OSBA's survey service with much success," said

Bucyrus City Superintendent Kevin D. Kimmel. "The data and information we have received from the surveys will guide us down the correct paths for improvement."

Benefits of surveys

OSBA's survey service offers school districts considerable benefits. Our consultants work with your district to create a questionnaire customized to your unique needs. Once the board or committee has approved the survey, it's launched online, giving responders confidentiality and convenience.

Survey benefits include:

- enhanced community engagement efforts;
- implementation and collection from OSBA, an objective and outside source from your respondents' perspective;
- the ability for survey takers to remain anonymous;
- customization of questions using best practices, research and knowing your district's unique needs;
- affordability, due to your OSBA membership;
- a relatively simple and short process that produces viable results;
- no software to download;
- employees spend less time compiling data;
- reduced mailing and printing costs, since the survey is created and primarily implemented online; however, districts still have the option of using hard copy surveys;
- a professional look and format;
- show staff and community members that the board of education is interested in greater interaction;



- receive recommendations that impact student achievement, while showing community members you value their input;
- an increase in viewers on your district website.

How OSBA can help

This service is offered at an affordable price through your OSBA membership. Additionally, our consultants have extensive experience in helping school boards and truly understand public education. Consultants are experienced in the proper means of communication, data collection and community engagement, as well as how to effectively write, edit and compile response data in a useful report.

When using OSBA’s survey service, your board may choose to offer the survey as a stand-alone project, or combine it with goal-setting or strategic-planning efforts. Our consultants will help you determine the

best path of success for your district.

How it works

The survey process includes:

- discovery and planning — OSBA consultants work with the board to determine needs, purpose, goals, target audience and data collection;
- drafting and refining — OSBA consultants draft questions, which the board reviews, edits and approves;
- informing and marketing — community and staff learn about the survey via multiple communication methods;
- implementation — the survey is disseminated via board-approved communication channels;
- data analysis — data is analyzed and a survey report is customized and delivered for future action.

Levels of service

OSBA offers two tiers of survey service.

The first tier includes all of the process steps previously mentioned, with the exception of data analysis. OSBA consultants will close the survey and send all data to the board for its own analysis and action.

The tier two survey service is more comprehensive. In addition to what’s offered with the tier one service, OSBA consultants analyze the survey results, then provide an in-person presentation of the analysis to the board for discussion. OSBA also will assist, if desired, in determining next steps.

Learn more

For further information about a survey for your district, contact OSBA’s Deputy Director of School Board Services **Cheryl W. Ryan** at (800) 589-OSBA, (614) 540-4000 or cryan@ohioschoolboards.org. The survey service is yet another way that OSBA is working for you. ■



Get on board with OSBA School Transportation CONSULTING

OSBA consultants can help districts assess their transportation needs and offer personal assistance with transportation rules interpretations, policy questions and technical advice. Consultants also provide the following services:

- transportation operation cost analysis and benchmarking studies;
- routing analysis;
- fleet management assistance;
- general operations evaluation;
- regional coordination studies;
- in-service presentations for drivers and administrators;
- evaluation of specific transportation services, including payment in lieu of transportation;
- bus purchasing and specification development;
- driver qualifications compliance review;
- transportation emergency plan development;
- development of local student transportation handbooks.

To learn more, contact **Pete Japikse** at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or schoolbus@ohioschoolboards.org.

Board president spends a day as a teacher



Kindergartners mob Port Clinton City Board of Education President David Belden with hugs at the close of Belden's one-day stint as a kindergarten teacher.

Experience broadens board veteran's perspective

David Belden, board president, and Jan Gluth, director of student, staff and community development, Port Clinton City

Have you ever spent a day of your adult life in a classroom? That is the question that landed **Port Clinton City Board of Education President David Belden** in a kindergarten classroom a few days before Christmas. Not as a spectator, but as a substitute teacher for the day.

Board members set policies and make important decisions for the school districts they serve; however, many have never been an educator. That changed for 20-year school board veteran Belden when Port Clinton Superintendent **Patrick D. Adkins** issued a challenge — teach a kindergarten class. Adkins' challenge was inspired by hearing 2014 OSBA Capital

Conference keynote speaker Dr. **Adam Sáenz**, an author and school psychologist, share his experience of being taken to task for having never spent a day in the classroom.

Belden was adamant that he did not want to be just a face in the corner, he wanted the “keys to the car” and to experience a day as a teacher. Prior to entering the classroom, he met with kindergarten teacher **Teresa Fillmore** to discuss lesson plans for the day.

In addition, he reviewed the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System pre-conference questions teachers complete prior to their formal

observations. While he wasn't expected to know all the answers, the questions gave him an understanding of what teachers are expected to accomplish each day. Belden said when he reviewed the three-page, 38-bullet point pre-conference document, he "immediately began sweating." He admitted that terms such as content standards, assessments and developmental gaps got his heart racing. Then the father of four calmed himself down by thinking, "They are just 5- and 6-year-olds; I can handle this."

Belden kept a journal of his day in the classroom. Following are some highlights in his own words.

8:35 a.m. — Students begin to arrive knowing exactly what to do. I begin to introduce myself to each of them and try to learn their names. I proudly send the absence and lunch note down to the office at 9 a.m., shortly after which the 20th student arrives. My first submission to the office; already it is wrong.

9:05 a.m. — Time for the Smart Board. Oh no, I can't get it to start, what do I do now? Magically, a little one comes up and gets the software to load. We are off.

9:20 a.m. — Santa and his elves appear. Thank goodness, I am exhausted after less than an hour. He takes lists of what each child wants for Christmas, reads a book and off he goes on his sleigh. If only I had dressed up like him, maybe I could keep their attention just like he did.

9:55 a.m. — Lead the students to music and drop them off.

10:25 a.m. — Bring them back to class and begin to get ready for lunch and recess. Zip up coats, tie lots of shoes, line them up, quiet them down. Everything is going OK. I can do this!

11:40 a.m. — I bring my students back from recess knowing full well the toughest part of the day now begins. Lesson plans await covering writing, language arts, art, math and social studies. How will I ever keep their attention for three-and-a-half straight hours?

Language arts called for three separate student groups, one at the reading table with me, one at the computers and one doing independent work at their desks. The groups were color coded by Mrs. Fillmore; everything looked good on paper. What ensued was an entirely different matter. Computers stopped working, I mixed up some of the children, other students came back from speech class wondering where they should go, discipline collapsed and I lost all control. Can I turn back in the keys to the car? Oh to just be a face in the corner. Fortunately, Mrs. Fillmore sensed I needed help and calmly entered the room, fixed the computers, restored order and saved the day.

Next, math, then social studies; the rest of the day was a blur. All that remained was getting everyone on the right bus. I could tell this part was very important and even though I was first in line, I knew by the number of staff who appeared that I

was not in charge.

3:30 p.m. — Success? Well I started with 20 students and ended with 20 students, so I was ready to call it a raving success, but I certainly knew that if Principal (**Kendra**) **Van Doren** had evaluated me with the pre-conference question sheet, it would likely have been a very difficult meeting.

In reflecting later that evening, my takeaways on the day were:

- Discipline is paramount in a classroom and Mrs. Fillmore was a master. In a moment, she could command their attention and their respect. I had much to learn.
- Engaging 20 diverse kindergartners to learn the lessons of the day takes special talent and patience, areas that I surely was lacking in. God bless kindergarten teachers!
- Energy is everywhere in kindergarten, and you better be ready, especially when you schedule class the week of Christmas.
- You tie a lot of shoes in kindergarten, zip a lot of coats, answer a thousand questions and a whole lot of other things as well.



Port Clinton City's board president gets down to kindergartners' level during a class discussion. He said his day of teaching broadened his perspective "beyond anything I could have expected."

I closed my adventure by writing the following note the next morning, after a much-needed night of sleep:

"I must be brief, but I cannot be more sincere. Yesterday was one of the highlights of my life. It should be a prerequisite to board service. If I was on a pay-for-performance plan as a substitute yesterday, I am certain I owe the district money, but I am richer in so many ways and my perspective has been broadened beyond anything I could have expected.

"I will elaborate more when time permits, but I want to thank each of you for giving me the keys to the car, yet standing quietly on the curb making sure you caught me each time before I crashed. Thank you for all the planning that went into this adventure and thank you for allowing me to be part of a team I treasure. God bless all of you in education, you are my heroes and heroines!" ■



OSBA offering resources for school board candidates

Cheryl W. Ryan, deputy director of school board services

School board elections are held in odd-numbered years, which means many people will be running for a board seat in 2015. To encourage citizen involvement in public schools, OSBA provides resources to help candidates understand board members' roles and run an election campaign. Those resources are discussed later in this article, but first, let's take a look at what it takes to be a successful board member.

Serving on a school board is one of the most important responsibilities a citizen can undertake. School board members provide a vital link between the community and its schools. In communities large and small, school board service is the epitome of democracy in action. Citizens interested in running for a seat on a school board have much to learn.

Ohio's school board members make up one of the largest groups of elected officials in the state and they are charged with a major responsibility — to govern their local school boards in a way that provides the best possible educational opportunities for each and every student in their districts.

Each board member brings his or her own leadership style to school board service. While there is no prescribed or ideal working style, there are certain basic characteristics that contribute to making a school board an effective team.

Successful school board members have a sincere interest in public education and are committed to making their school districts the best they can be. They are respected and involved in their communities, and bring with them a broad base of knowledge and experience. They also are willing to spend long hours working as a team with other board members to benefit the school district and the community. And, most importantly, they must be good listeners.

School board members are truly citizen-servants. This is a role that can be satisfying, but also demands commitment, energy and ability. The nearly 3,500 men and women who serve on Ohio's school boards dedicate their time and talents to oversee the education of 1.7 million young people. Those elected to school boards make decisions that significantly impact a community's quality of life and future.

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



School board members govern their local school boards in a way that ensures the best possible educational opportunities for each student in their districts.

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

To run for a school board seat in Ohio, candidates must be:

- a U.S. citizen;
- at least 18 years old;
- a resident of the school district for at least 30 days preceding the election;
- registered to vote in the school district for at least 30 days preceding the election.

The Ohio School Boards Association is making a concerted effort to encourage qualified and interested citizens to consider seeking seats on their local boards. Residents interested in running for school board this year must file petitions with their local boards of elections by 4 p.m., Aug. 5 for the Nov. 3 general election.

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

Individuals considering a run for the school board can attend a free Pre-Board Candidate Workshop at OSBA's offices in Columbus on Saturday, July 25, from 10 a.m. to noon. The session describes the roles and responsibilities of board service and requirements for running for a seat on a local board of education. This session is for people who are thinking about running for their school board and current board of education members appointed to office, who must now run for election. Space is limited, so contact OSBA soon to register for this free session.

For those who decide to run, Veteran OSBA staff will present five Board Candidate Workshops around the state designed specifically for those who have decided to seek a school board seat. The workshops are scheduled for Aug. 27, Sept. 1, Sept. 2, Sept. 10 and Sept. 12.

OSBA's Board Candidate Workshops will provide expert guidance on the nuts and bolts of being a board member, along with discussions on board member ethics and behavior. Topics include:

- roles and responsibilities;
- relationships with superintendent and staff;

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

Board Candidate Workshop tuition is \$95, which includes dinner. All of the sessions but the Sept. 12 workshop run from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Sept. 12 session runs from 8:30 a.m. to noon, and includes breakfast.

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

The Board Candidate Webinar is scheduled for Sept. 30. See the box below for details. OSBA also offers candidate resources at www.ohioschoolboards.org/board-candidate.

For more information about the Pre-Board Candidate Workshop, Board Candidate Workshops and Board Candidate Webinar, contact OSBA Senior Events Manager **Laurie Miller** at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org. Workshop agendas, locations and online registration forms are posted on OSBA's website, www.ohioschoolboards.org/workshops. ■

OSBA offers Board Candidate Webinar in addition to candidate workshops

On Wednesday, Sept. 30, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., OSBA will host an online version of a condensed board candidate workshop to provide information school board candidates need to run a successful campaign. The first half of the Board Candidate Webinar will focus on board roles and responsibilities and the second half will cover campaign finance and legal issues. The cost to attend the webinar is \$50.

Webinar participants also will receive the board candidate kit, including *Candidate: A practical guide to running for school board*; subscriptions to the *OSBA Journal* magazine and *Briefcase* newsletter; and other useful materials.

After Sept. 30, the webinar will be available for purchase to watch at your convenience.

State Legislative Conference focuses on state budget

► *Rep. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) discusses the current work of the House Finance and Appropriations Committee at the March 25 OSBA/BASA/OASBO State Legislative Conference. Smith chairs the committee.*

▼ *Hamilton County ESC Governing Board Members Barbara Parry, left, and Marilee Broscheid, center, greet Rep. Hearcel F. Craig (D-Columbus) during the State Legislative Conference. Broscheid also serves on the Great Oaks ITCD Board of Education.*



▲ *Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) answers questions after his presentation. An article covering the State Legislative Conference appears in the April 27 OSBA Briefcase.*

► *Rep. Bob D. Hackett (R-London), right, speaks with constituents during the lunch with legislators.*



◀ House Minority Leader Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton), left, discusses current legislation in the Ohio House of Representatives during a panel discussion with House Education Committee Chair Bill Hayes (R-Harrison Township).

◀▼ Kettering City board member George H. Bayless, left, greets Rep. Michael E. Henne (R-Clayton). Visit OSBA's Flickr page at www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards to view more photos from the conference.

▼ Rep. Marlene Anielski (R-Walton Hills), right, speaks with Brecksville-Broadview Heights City board member Debbie Bernauer.



▲ Chardon Local (Gauga) board member Madelon Horvath asks a question during the State Legislative Conference.

◀ Ashtabula County ESC Governing Board Member Gus Saikaly, left, talks with Rep. John Patterson (D-Jefferson) in the Statehouse Atrium.

Let's hear it for the board



Cleveland Heights-University Heights City board members, from left, Kal Zucker, Eric Coble, Nancy Pepler, Ron Register and Eric J. Silverman show off certificates they received in honor of School Board Recognition Month.

Districts thank board members in creative ways

Crystal Davis, editor

Mogadore Local (Summit) school board members recently came face-to-face with their look-a-likes as the district's gifted and talented students honored them during School Board Recognition Month.

Students played the part of board members and the superintendent as they acted out a historical play about the creation of the village of Mogadore. During the board's January meeting, students also presented board members

with personal letters detailing their positive impact on the schools, along with framed certificates and plaques from local legislators.

Each January, school districts like Mogadore recognize their board members in many unique ways. Initiated by the National School Boards Association in 1995, Ohio's annual celebration coincides with a national campaign highlighting the importance of board members to public education.

To support recognition activities across the state, OSBA provided members with a Web-based resource kit that included a proclamation from Gov. **John R. Kasich**; tips on ways to honor board members; sample news releases, editorials, newsletter articles, public service announcements and resolutions; and a poster with the 2015 theme. This year's theme — "School Boards Strengthen Public Education" — illustrates the significant impact that board members have on the future of Ohio's 1.7 million schoolchildren.

Nearly 3,500 board members across Ohio spend countless hours researching issues, studying reports and advocating for their schools. Board members are always "on call" wherever they go. They participate in scores of school and community events while balancing their own personal, professional and family obligations.

Board members' decisions can shape the future of local communities for generations, yet they generally receive little thanks for their important work.

That's why OSBA is committed to making it as easy as possible to help districts honor these hardworking public servants. 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.

School districts' celebrations are featured in the *Journal* as well as online at www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month. Districts submit information and photos and OSBA gathers information from stories written by local news media.

While most districts honored their members with a proclamation, OSBA certificates and small gifts, others like **Northmont City** came up with highly creative ways to say "great job."

Even though they had the day off of school on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, several Northwood Elementary School students volunteered in the community, then talked about their experiences at the district's January board of education meeting. Afterward, the students presented the board with a paperweight reading, "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."

A group of **Fort Recovery Local (Mercer)** high school art students thanked board members for helping make their "dreams come true" by presenting each of them with handmade dream catchers.

Canton Local's (Stark) Sounds of the South club from Canton South High School performed a song to the tune of **Taylor Swift's** "Shake It Off" to thank school board members for their service. Hear the audio from their performance

by visiting the School Board Recognition Month Page on OSBA's website.

Five high school seniors presented **Margaretta Local (Erie)** Board of Education members letters thanking them for helping make them better students.

Forest Hills Local (Hamilton) gave its board members OSBA appreciation certificates, along with matching shirts with the district logo. The shirts will be worn at community events to help identify board members and spread the district's brand. Board members also were recognized on Facebook, in the district's welcome reception area and in school newsletters.

Southern Ohio ESC went all out to honor its board members. In January, the center displayed OSBA's 2015 School Board Recognition Month poster signed by district employees, gave certificates of appreciation, shared a video tribute and served dinner to board members. Superintendent **Tony Long** also submitted a letter to the editor of the *Wilmington News Journal* encouraging the public to thank board members for their service.

Warren County Career Center board members enjoyed cupcakes prepared by district culinary students. They also were given certificates of appreciation.



Mogadore Local (Summit) students help celebrate School Board Recognition Month.



Indian Hill EV's Indian Hill High School Route 6 a capella group performs for school board members before a board of education meeting.

Mason City's board was treated to a performance by an ensemble of Mason High School orchestra students. Watch the group perform by going to the School Board Recognition Month page on OSBA's website.

"While our individual members have many different ideas, school board members work together in concert (like these outstanding musicians) when they get down to the business of leading our school district," Superintendent Dr. **Gail Kist-Kline** said. "Your concern and care for our students, staff and the community have helped make Mason City Schools consistently great."

Pickerington Local (Fairfield) board members were entertained by a video tribute featuring Violet Elementary School first-graders giving their answers to the question, "What do school board members do?" For a smile or two, you

can enjoy the video by visiting the School Board Recognition Month page on OSBA's website.

Westerville Mayor **Diane Fosselman** presented a proclamation of appreciation to **Westerville City** board members for their service.

"Our school board members unselfishly contribute their time and talents toward the advancement of public education," said Superintendent Dr. **John R. Kellogg**.

Green Local (Summit) featured profiles of each board member on *The Bulldog Buzz*, one of the district's website talk shows, and gave them certificates of appreciation. They also produced a special video highlighting appreciation for the board.

In addition, board President **Bob Campbell** was invited for an on-air interview with **Ray Horner** of WAKR-AM to talk about the high-achieving district.

"While they wear many hats in the workday world, our five school board members put on a collective hat when they get down to the business of leading our district," Superintendent Dr. **Jeffrey L. Miller** said. "The time spent in board meetings represents just a small fraction of the hours these five devote ... they are deeply involved in community activities, in the schools and at extracurricular events."

In **Piqua City**, third-grade students in **Pamala George's**



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music class twirled ribbons to symphonies by **Beethoven**, showing school board members what they have been learning in class. Superintendent **Richard A. Hanes** offered a huge thanks to board members for their dedication and service to the district.

The *Jackson County Times-Journal* reported that **Wellston City** Superintendent **Karen P. Boch** presented certificates of appreciation to board members while telling them, “Your jobs are not easy and I think a lot of times your roles are not easily understood by all. Especially with all of the changes to education, we are just being bombarded and you are doing a great job of trying to keep those things moving.”

Fairfield City Superintendent **Paul Otten** read a tribute about each board member and presented them with OSBA certificates of appreciation during their televised board meeting in January.

Strasburg-Franklin Local (Tuscarawas) Superintendent **Cindy Brown** presented certificates of recognition.

“Board members make personal sacrifices for the district and are the connection among the school, students and staff,” Brown said.

Board President **Robyn L. Burkett** and board member **Veronica Spidell** also received flower bouquets. Board members **Edward Yackey**, **Wesley Hostetler** and **Dan Donato** were presented with a bologna and cheese tray provided by **Buckeye Career Center** students.

Superintendent **Brian Gerber** honored **Western Buckeye ESC** board members with certificates for their service.

“Nobody is beating down the doors to run for the school board,” Gerber said. “So we appreciate our school boards.

“It takes teamwork and collaboration from all parties to make an educational agency successful.”

Western Brown Local (Brown) Assistant Superintendent **Jina Bohl** helped create books of thank-you letters, written by young students, for each of the district’s board members.

Bucyrus City board members were recognized prior to the start of the varsity boys basketball game and received certificates of commendation during a January board meeting.

“Our district is very fortunate to have a dedicated board of education that works closely with parents, education professionals and community members to create the educational vision we want for our students,” Superintendent **Kevin D. Kimmel** said.

The a cappella group Route 6 from Indian Hill High School

performed in honor of the **Indian Hill EV** board. District administrators paid tribute to board members in newspaper stories and letters to the editor.

Solon City Superintendent **Joseph Regano** told the *The Plain Dealer*, “Our board members are dedicated to continuing the success of our schools and all of our students. Their decision making is always guided by what is in the best interest of children.”



A Margaretta Local (Erie) high school senior presents school board member Elmer Lippert with a letter thanking him for helping make her a better student.

Xenia Community City Superintendent **Denny Morrison** gave a glowing endorsement of the district’s five board members to the *Xenia Daily Gazette*.

“They’ve got — like no other group I’ve worked with — a can-do attitude,” Morrison said. “They never rubber-stamp anything. This board likes to look in-depth at anything we’re discussing.”

Coshocton City Superintendent **Dave Hire** told the *Coshocton Tribune*, “Board members are tasked with making decisions in their school district related to education, a job amplified by the constant changes to state mandates and continuing financial pressures.”



Fairfield City school board members receive certificates honoring their important work. Board members are, from left, Thomas Heisler, Dan Hare, Balena Shorter, Jerome E. Kearns and Michael Berding.

Fairborn City Superintendent **Dave Scarberry** told the *Fairborn Daily Herald*, “These public servants ... unselfishly contribute their time and talents toward the advancement of public education. They represent a continuing commitment to local citizen control and decision making in education.”

Each board member received an appreciation certificate and tote bags from the district’s Student Ambassador program.

Pickaway County ESC Superintendent **Ty Ankrom** wrote an article featured in the *Circleville Herald* thanking the ESC’s board.

Huber Heights City Superintendent **Susan Gunnell** wrote about her appreciation for the board in an article published in the *Huber Heights Courier*.

“Board members work hard to build support and appreciation for our schools and public education,” Gunnell wrote. “They are a crucial link between our schools and our community.”

Some administrators chose to brag about their hardworking board members online.

Here’s an excerpt from what **Arcanum-Butler Local (Darke)** published on its website: “Too often we are quick to criticize school board members without really knowing all the details

that went into any given decision. Too often the efforts of school board members go unrecognized and unrewarded. We can begin to correct these oversights ... This is a time to show our appreciation and to begin to better understand how school board members work together to provide leadership for our schools.”

Four County Career Center; Middletown City; Perrysburg EV; Wayne Local (Warren); and Whitehall City posted photos and thank yous to board members on their districts’ websites.

Many other districts handed out certificates and/or plaques of appreciation to board members, including **Akron City; Cleveland Heights-University Heights City; Clinton-Massie Local (Clinton); Crestview Local (Van Wert); Franklin Local (Muskingum); Galion City; Lake Local (Stark); Madison Local (Richland); Miami East Local (Miami); Miamisburg City; Northern Local (Perry); Oak Hill Union Local (Jackson); Paulding EV; Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local (Brown); Talawanda City; Wilmington City; and Yellow Springs EV.**

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

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