

JOURNAL

OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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New digital edition available!

You can access the *Journal's* new digital edition on the OSBA website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal.

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Mission Statement

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

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Correction

A photo caption on page 33 of the April *Journal* misspelled a Federal Relations Network member's last name. The caption should have identified her as **Donna J. Myers**. The *Journal* apologizes for the error.

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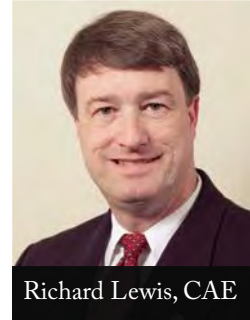
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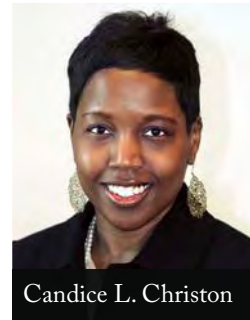
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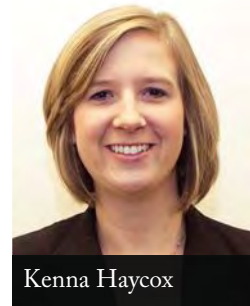
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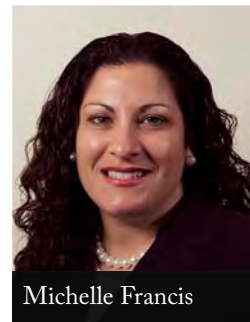
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The road to success

20/20 vision, now and into the future

Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director

Some lines are timeless. In **Lewis Carroll's** *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the Cheshire Cat declared, "If you don't know where you are going, then any road will do." In 2007, OSBA tackled this riddle as it embarked upon a journey that marked a milestone for the association. That year, a task force was formed to create a new OSBA strategic plan.

The task force was assigned to re-examine the OSBA mission statement; review the current strategic plan and process; assess the association's current and future needs; devise a system to keep the Board of Trustees up-to-date on planning and improvements; and include findings from the 2007 NSBA Operations Audit in discussions.

The result was Visionary Initiatives for Strategic Action, the strategic plan that now guides us. That plan is the product of thousands of hours of effort by association members and staff. The task force, which came to be known as the VISA team, collected information from a variety of sources via personal interviews, surveys, assessments and other research. It gathered input from OSBA members and staff and reached out to external stakeholders, including statewide education organizations, the governor's office, state legislators, the Ohio Department of Education, local government groups and organized labor. The research included comprehensive analyses of OSBA programs, products and services; a look at previous strategic plans; and an assessment of the association's infrastructure and capabilities.

What emerged was a portrait of OSBA's

past, present and future achievements and challenges. Affirming the team's work, the Board of Trustees adopted a mission that was straightforward and focused: "OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service and creative solutions."

The VISA team's efforts set the stage for OSBA staff to implement the plan. The declarations embedded in the 2007 plan have been our guiding compass for the past five years. Board-member driven, the plan remains a living document designed to guide OSBA now and into the future as it works to support Ohio's public school boards in the 21st century.

The VISA plan was launched with a series of 23 goals. A central tenet of the plan was that it should be dynamic, fluid and adaptable to the evolving needs and challenges of public education. To assure that flexibility, OSBA trustees and staff were charged with monitoring the plan to keep it aligned with the needs of association members as they strive to provide their students ever-expanding opportunities. Three dozen additional short- and long-term goals have been melded into the plan since its adoption.

The VISA team recognized that the plan would need to be revisited regularly to ensure its timeliness and relevance. It prescribed that the mission, vision, strategies and vision priorities be formally reviewed in 2012. Under the direction of President **Sharon E. Manson, Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center**, the next generation of "visionaries" has begun the work of how to better

position the association for the future.

Last month, a survey was provided to every board member in the state soliciting input on the challenges and opportunities facing public school boards and how OSBA could better serve them. We hope you took advantage of this opportunity to provide guidance to our team. If you have additional thoughts, please don't hesitate to contact me personally or send your comments via OSBA's online feedback form at www.ohioschoolboards.org/feedback.

Ohio's public school board members come from diverse cultural, ethnic, economic and racial backgrounds. They have different levels of experience and expertise. Board members represent communities that vary in socioeconomic makeup, funding levels, ethnicity, race, language, size and achievement. OSBA gladly accepts the charge of serving each and every member board with creative solutions that are flexible and adaptable to the changing world.

OSBA is a steward that holds the resources given to us in trust for our member school boards. Responsible stewardship requires continuously improving processes and products. It is our hope and expectation that as we refine our strategic plan, OSBA will continue to be the forward-looking voice of public education in supporting its mission of providing the best service possible for Ohio's public school boards, now and long into the future.

As for the observation of Carroll's famous cat? OSBA knows where it is going, we have our map and we're on our way. ■



Promoting safety

Students and hazing — what boards can do

Candice L. Christon, staff attorney

Growing up, I was heavily involved in sports. From the age of five until I graduated from high school, you could always find me on the basketball court or soccer field.

As a former high school athlete, I can relate to the difficulty of balancing schoolwork, sports and time with friends. Today, it seems as if high school students are facing more and more challenges, one of which is hazing.

Hazing is an issue that merits ongoing attention within high school athletics. Ohio Revised Code Section (RC) 2903.31 defines hazing as “doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any student or other organization that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm to any person.” For hazing to occur, the student must be initiated into a student organization or other organization within the school.

In *Duitch v. Canton City Schools* (2004), 157 Ohio App. 3d 80, the Fifth District Court of Appeals held that “initiation into an organization implies that membership in the organization is voluntary.” What does this mean for school districts? It means that the student voluntarily became a member of the organization and willingly participated in the activities. Furthermore, it is important to understand that RC 2903.31 (B) (2) states, “No administrator, employee or faculty member of any primary, secondary or postsecondary school or of any other educational institution, public or private, shall recklessly permit the hazing of any person.” As a result, the

criminal act of hazing is a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.

Liability

Both criminal and civil liability may result from hazing. RC 2307.44 allows victims of hazing to pursue civil actions for injuries or damages sustained as a result of hazing. Damages may include mental and physical pain and suffering. Under this law, any administrator, employee or faculty member of the school or educational institution who was aware of or reasonably should have known of the hazing and did not make reasonable attempts to prevent it can be sued civilly along with the school, if a student from a primary, secondary, postsecondary school or other educational institution was involved. Keep in mind that any school employing the administrator, employee or faculty member found liable in a civil action also may be held accountable. If hazing is happening in your district, immediately terminate the activity.

I recently spoke to a group of friends about hazing and how it affected them in high school. Out of this group, someone asked me if it would still be considered hazing if the victim voluntarily participated. The answer is yes, it is still considered hazing. Consent, negligence and assumption of the risk by the victim cannot be used as defenses in a civil action. However, any school or educational institution that was enforcing a hazing policy when the civil action surfaced does have an affirmative defense. For example, this means that a district providing continuous training to employees can argue that it is actively enforcing its hazing policy.

Remember, anyone can be a victim of hazing. It can occur at any school district or educational institution. Accordingly, a study conducted by Alfred University revealed that 48% of high school students reported being hazed. That same study reported that 24% of high school students reported being hazed when joining sports teams, and those were only the reported incidents. Many students feel ashamed and fail to inform a coach or administrator that they are being hazed. A majority of these incidents go unreported.

Prevention

Unfortunately, there are no clear-cut signs that magically appear to alert you that hazing is happening. Administrators, coaches and school employees will not be aware of every situation.

Nonetheless, there is one rule that school districts are required to follow. Each board of education must have a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying as stated in RC 3313.666 (B). Your district does not have to reinvent the wheel here, because many districts combine their anti-hazing policy with a harassment, intimidation or bullying policy.

With that in mind, make sure your district’s anti-hazing policy is current and in place. For example, OSBA’s policy JFCF, titled Hazing and Bullying, covers harassment, intimidation and dating violence. As part of this policy, “No administrator, teacher or other employee of the district shall encourage, permit, condone or tolerate any hazing and/or bullying activities. No students, including leaders of student

organizations, are permitted to plan, encourage or engage in any hazing and/or bullying.”

Communication is an important element in educating others about hazing. High school athletes should not give into peer pressure in order to fit in with teammates. Hazing is not “a normal part of growing up.” Some



A district providing continuous training to employees can argue that it is actively enforcing its hazing policy.

believe it is a harmless rite of passage, but from a school board or administrator perspective, it needs to be approached seriously. Prevention should be a priority among coaches, staff and administrators. Not only should districts communicate with staff, but they also should communicate with students’ parents.

It is normal to wonder how districts may prevent hazing. Districts should inform students of the consequences associated with it from a student discipline perspective. Ensure that students know it is OK to talk with school staff when something like this happens to them, and that they have no reason to be embarrassed.

Provide a way for students to report hazing and ensure staff members know what to do when receiving a report about hazing. Pay attention to what students are saying, because the information they are giving you can reveal things about the student culture and school climate in different buildings. Do not ignore allegations of hazing. Recognize when something is happening, investigate, respond appropriately and educate.

Want to learn more about hazing? Attend OSBA’s Sports Law Workshop June 22 at the Columbus Airport Marriott. To register, contact **Laurie Miller** at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org. ■

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

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Bid your grads farewell ... but not forever

Kenna Haycox, policy consultant

Graduation season is an exciting time. It signifies the end of one reality and the dawn of a new one.

As your students walk across the stage and receive their hard-earned diplomas, take time to consider the impact you've had on them. When members of the class of 2012 throw their caps in the air, does your connection with them completely end? If it does, should it?

Your students take pride (whether they like to admit it all the time) in being a “panther” or an “eagle” or a “wildcat.” The list of mascots goes on and on, as does the pride each student has in his or her alma mater. Tapping into this powerful pride — with both recent and long-time alumni — can bring many benefits to your district and your community.

There are a number of ways to engage your alumni. For recent graduates, work with those who have shown leadership and interest in maintaining connections with your school to start a young alumni group. See if there are more “seasoned” alumni who are active in the school who could advise more recent graduates in forming such a group. It may be as simple as providing students with some practical tips on staying connected. One example may be starting a young alumni group through Facebook.

When your students leave school and head into the next phase of their lives, they undoubtedly will be apprehensive about what the future holds. Students going away to college may find themselves in a completely new

environment and feel lost when they get there. A young alumni Facebook group could give them an opportunity to stay connected with former classmates who may be experiencing similar feelings. This connection may be just what students need to adjust to their new environment or help them find the support they need to stay in school and finish the path to their chosen career.

Think about how you can foster pride in both your young and seasoned alumni to enhance school and community culture, now and into the future.

If your district already has a strong alumni group, booster group or foundation, talk with them about engaging your young alumni to encourage them on to success. From among your young alumni could come the next innovator of a new product or process, the owner of a mechanic shop, a volunteer, a mom or dad, a nurse, a school board member, a teacher — the list is endless. Engaging your alumni early can help them maintain the pride they have for their school and, in turn, their community, and increase their desire to return to their hometown and contribute.

Strong community and business partnerships are critical for school

districts. Reaching out to the alumni in your community is a great way to build and further strengthen those partnerships. Think of how to engage or re-engage alumni in your school culture.

For instance, are your booster groups reaching out to alumni? Do you have alumni interested in starting a foundation or association? Listen to these ideas and see how you can support them to build pride in their district and harness this desire to remain connected to their school and community.

Engaged alumni can provide input on building or programming changes, or even levy campaigns. A community member who remains engaged in his or her school may be more likely to support a district decision to put a levy on a ballot and be one of your best advocates.

We often try to move past “the good old days” and encourage others to do the same. However, remembering those days and allowing opportunities for alumni to reflect on them may not be as bad as we thought. While your district has made leaps and bounds and will continue to progress, one thing should remain constant — alumni and community pride.

Hopefully, your alumni will forever be a “panther” or an “eagle” or a “wildcat” and want to share what that means with people around them and be a part of that community. Think about how you can foster this pride in both your young and seasoned alumni, and how that pride can enhance school and community culture, now and into the future. ■



Musical chairs at the Statehouse

Michelle Francis, deputy director of legislative services

Photo courtesy of the Ohio Statehouse Photo Archive.

The saga of the revolving door at the Statehouse has been unprecedented during the 129th General Assembly. Since the beginning of the session in 2011, 16 members in the House have been appointed to their seats while nine have been appointed in the Senate. This means almost 25% of the Republicans in the House and more than a third of the Republicans in the Senate did not run for the office they currently hold. Some at the Statehouse have even started to lose count of the official number, because two seats in the House were filled by temporary replacements earlier this year pending the outcome of the primary elections.

Two major factors have contributed to this phenomenon — term limits and turnover in the governor’s office. After Gov. **John Kasich** took office, he appointed numerous members of the House and Senate to his cabinet and other positions in his administration. In some cases, this caused a domino effect, as the Senate looked to the House to find replacements.

For example, when Kasich appointed Sen. **Karen Gillmor** (R-Tiffin) to the Ohio Industrial Commission, the Senate appointed Rep. **David Burke** (R-Marysville) to fill her seat. The House selected **Dorothy Pelanda** (R-Marysville) to replace Burke. The latest example of the domino effect occurred when the governor named Sen. **David Daniels** (R-Greenfield) state agriculture director. The Senate appointed Rep. **Bob Peterson** (R-Sabina) to fill Daniels’ seat and the House selected **Gary Scherer** (R-Circleville) to take Peterson’s seat.

Kasich tapped the following Republican

legislators for either positions in his administration or to fill judicial vacancies: former House members **Lynn Slaby, Todd McKenney, Todd Snitchler** and **Jim Zehringer**; and former Sens. **Jason Wilson, Karen Gillmor, Steve Buehrer, Dave Daniels, Gary Cates** and **Tim Grendell**.

Almost 25% of the Republicans in the House and more than a third of the Republicans in the Senate did not run for the office they currently hold.

However, not all of the vacancies at the Statehouse were created by Kasich’s appointments. Some legislators won election to other offices prior to the expiration of their Statehouse terms. Those lawmakers and the offices they now hold are: former Rep. **Tim DeGeeter** (D-Parma), mayor of Parma; former Sen. **Jon Husted** (R-Kettering), Ohio Secretary of State; former Sen. **Bob Gibbs** (R-Lakeville), U.S. House representative for Ohio’s 18th Congressional District.

Following are current members of the Ohio House and Senate who have been appointed to fill unexpired terms during the 129th General Assembly:

House

- **Nicholas Celebrezze** (D-Parma)

- **Kevin Boyce** (D-Columbus)
- **Louis Terhar** (R-Cincinnati)
- **Jim Butler** (R-Oakwood)
- **Marilyn Slaby** (R-Copley Township)
- **Anthony DeVitis** (R-Cuyahoga Falls)
- **Christina Hagan** (R-Uniontown)
- **Margaret Conditt** (R-Liberty Township)
- **Robert Sprague** (R-Findlay)
- **Jim Buchy** (R-Greenville)
- **Dorothy Pelanda** (R-Marysville)
- **Gary Scherer** (R-Circleville)
- **Ryan Smith** (R-Gallipolis)
- **Brian Hill** (R-Zanesville)
- **Jack Cera** (D-Bellaire)
- **Matt Lynch** (R-Bainbridge Township)

Senate

- **Cliff Hite** (R-Findlay)
- **Bill Coley** (R-Middletown)
- **Peggy Lehner** (R-Kettering)
- **Bob Peterson** (R-Sabina)
- **John Eklund** (R-Chardon)
- **Troy Balderson** (R-Zanesville)
- **Larry Obhof** (R-Montville Township)
- **David Burke** (R-Marysville)
- **Lou Gentile** (D-Steubenville)

These changes are another example of why it is extremely important for school board members and school administrators to develop relationships with their state representatives and senators. As new members of the General Assembly are appointed, they look to their local constituents for information on how legislation impacts their districts. For help in building relationships with your state legislators, contact the OSBA Division of Legislative Services. ■

Playing the numbers

How you stack up as a board

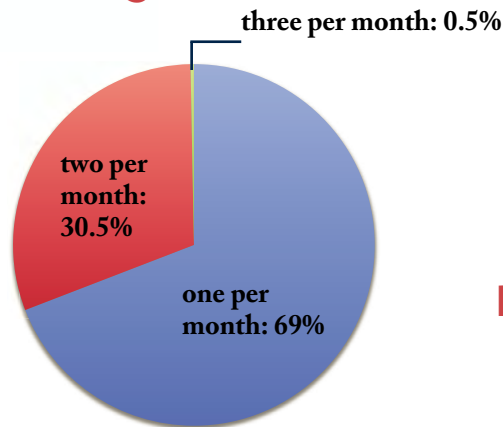
by Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

Every two years, OSBA conducts a survey of public school board members. The purpose of this survey is to get an accurate and timely demographic profile of Ohio's boards of education.

This year's survey was emailed to each district treasurer to complete and the responses were collected online. The results give important demographic information on the board members who serve Ohio school districts. More than 300 districts responded to the survey, creating one of the highest response rates ever recorded and helping ensure statistical validity.

What follows is a brief demographic synopsis of board members in Ohio based on biennial survey responses. Due to rounding, some survey categories do not total 100%. ■

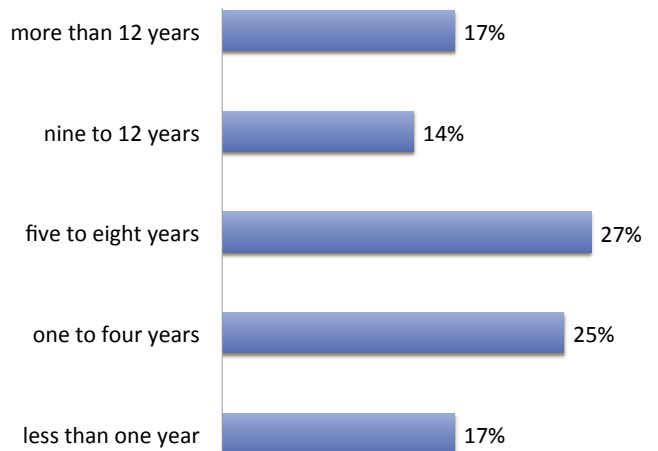
Number of regular or special meetings each month



77%

Of board members hold jobs in addition to their board duties

Board members' terms of service



52%

Have children in grades K-12

CONNECTICUT AVENUE

VERMONT AVENUE

CHANCE



ORIENTAL AVENUE

READ RAILROAD



game member

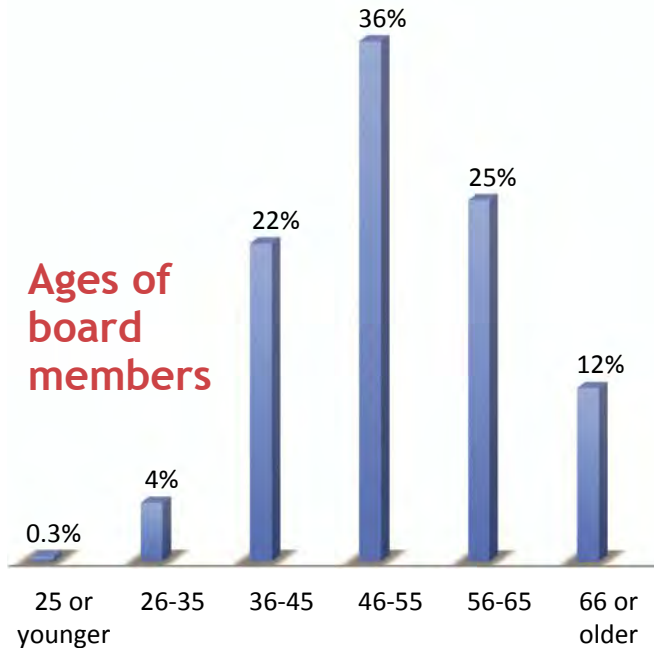
3,380

Total number of public school board members in Ohio (according to the OSBA database on May 3)

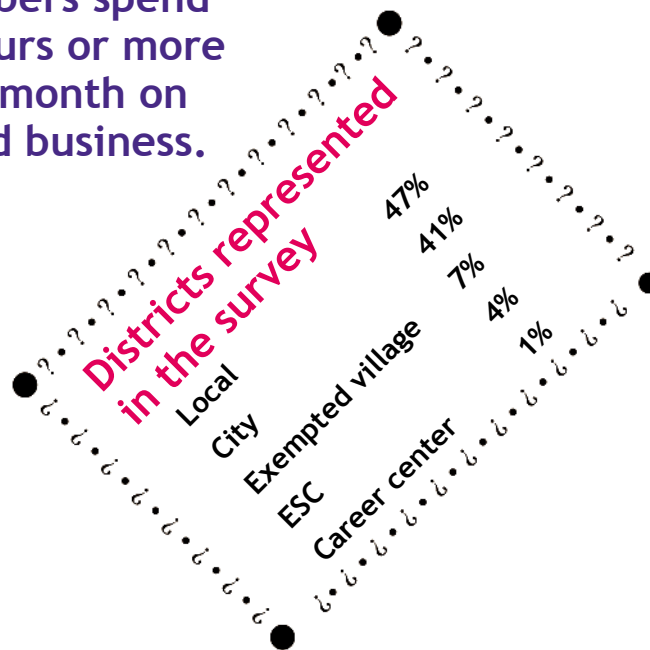
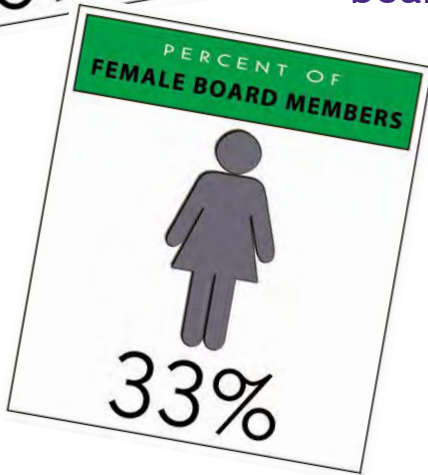
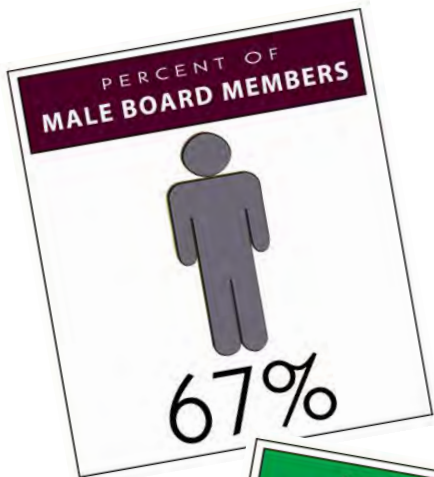
Diversity of board members

Caucasian	97%
African-American	2%
Asian-American	0.5%
Latin-American	.01%
Other	0.3%

Ages of board members



39% of board members spend 16 hours or more per month on board business.



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Infusing technology



Bridgetown Middle School students, from left, Logan Cox, Andy Busker and Tony Trame, work in eKIDS class, a course designed to support technology use in each school building.

Oak Hills Local embraces 21st century learning

Light is pouring in the long windows in **Kara Farquhar's** classroom and students are gathered in small groups around tables. The students are transfixed on the laptops and touch-screen devices they're using to simultaneously collaborate on Web-based projects. They speak quickly and excitedly to each other as they discuss what they're doing, how they're problem-solving.

They're completely immersed in their work.

Farquhar moves from group to group, helping students with questions and asking questions herself.

"I'm more of the facilitator than the teacher in this class," said Farquhar, a science teacher at Bridgetown Middle School in **Oak Hills Local (Hamilton)**. "They teach me more than I teach them."

The pilot class is part of an effort designed to get Oak Hills students in every building involved in the implementation and expansion of the district's technology initiatives. Seventh-grade student **Logan Cox** said he couldn't be happier in Farquhar's tech-centered class.

"I love technology — I feel like it makes it easier to learn in

in school

*Bryan Bullock,
communication coordinator*

class,” Logan said. “The stuff I am learning (about technology) I will take and use the rest of my life.”

Oak Hills has worked with its community to develop a long-term vision for the use of technology in the district and has spent years working to make 21st century learning tools a part of every grade, every class, every day.

The district has online classes, blended learning, wireless access in every building and a bring-your-own-device-to-school policy. Oak Hills, which recently was featured in *EdTech* magazine, has established itself as a leader in using education technology and is actively working to help other districts learn from its experience. Superintendent **Todd Yohey** said the Cincinnati district of 7,700 students gets visitors from other districts each month inquiring about high-tech initiatives.

“As soon as we start talking about what we’re doing, you often hear people say ‘Oh, our district can’t afford that,’” Yohey said. “My rule is that everything we do has to be cost neutral or save us money. That doesn’t mean the savings is immediate, but it has to generate savings over time.

“We’re not rolling in the money. We’re a very conservative district and we haven’t been on the ballot for 15 years.”

Yohey, a third-year superintendent at Oak Hills, said the excellent-rated district has had to come up with creative ways to pay for technology initiatives and overcome natural barriers to change.

Creating a vision for technology

“A lot of our initiatives begin with community engagement,” Yohey said. “We start with parents, students, community members, and local business and higher education representatives, then we build a framework.”

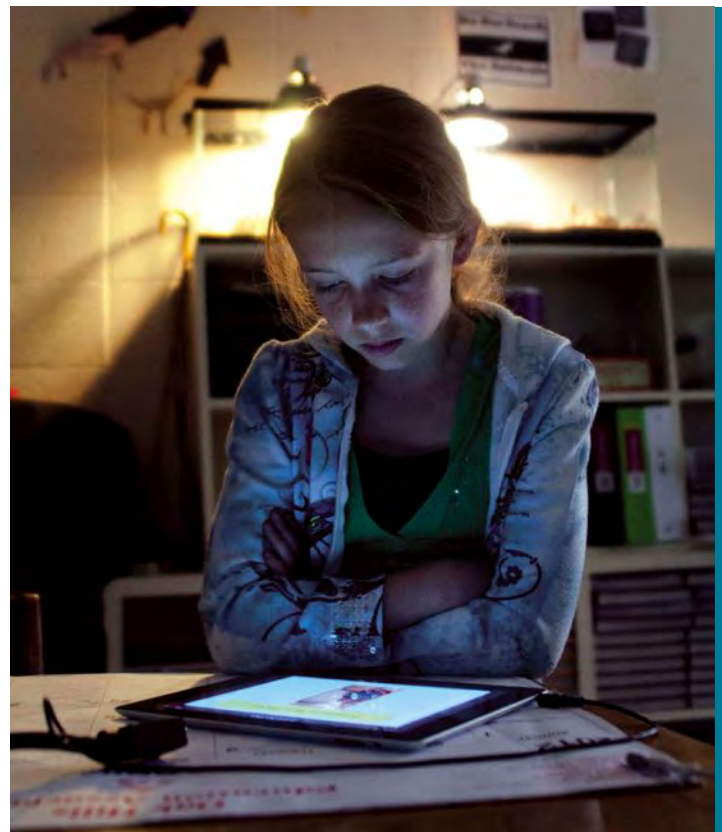
Every three years, Oak Hills brings its stakeholders together and outlines its goals for the next three years in its “Vision for technology and eLearning.” The document provides a broad outline of topics ranging from electronic communication with the community to the availability of Web-based resources in classes. It is available online at <http://ohlsd.us/elearning>.

Oak Hills Local Board of Education President **Janice Hunter** said the vision is vital in guiding the district’s use of technology.

“It’s about being proactive and having a plan for the future, not just reacting to what you’ve done in the past,” Hunter said.

Hunter, who has served on the board 11 years, said Oak Hills’ previous superintendent, **Patricia Brenneman**, was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the district’s technology use today. Brenneman led Oak Hills for 18 years and passed the reins to Yohey when she retired.

Hunter said the district has increased its focus on technology in recent years to keep up with a rapidly changing, interconnected world.



Delshire Elementary School student Tala Temple delivers a presentation that she created on an iPad.



A student connects iPod touches into a cart so they can be charged and synched with new apps.

“Educational systems have to find ways to keep up with the changes in technology or they can’t fully educate their students,” she said.

Tracy Cole, Oak Hills director of technology and eLearning, said it takes a large team of administrators, teachers and students to translate the district’s vision for technology into reality.

“It used to be that computers were taught in labs independent of other classes,” Cole said. “We have worked to make technology a part of us, not apart from us. We now try to incorporate technology into everything we do.”

To do that, Oak Hills has a core team of administrative staff in the district that gathers regularly to discuss technology. The team meets monthly with assistant principals from each building who are in charge of eLearning and technology, among other duties.

“We also have eLearning consultants (eLcs), teachers in each building who provide a voice in that building, help with professional development and provide ongoing support,” Cole said.

The district uses email and other forms of electronic communication to share new apps, ideas and tech trends internally, and staff use social media to broadcast efforts to the outside world.

Technology in the classroom

Oak Hills students play an important role in helping teachers and schools take full advantage of the technology at their disposal. Cole helped create a pilot program last school year called eKIDs (eLearning Kids in Demand) to turn small groups of students at each of the district’s three middle schools into “eLearning consultants.”

The program was expanded to other Oak Hills buildings this school year and, due to its popularity, may be expanded further next fall. Students receive credit for the class and follow a

curriculum designed to teach them about technology, as well as presentation skills and leadership qualities. Students in the eKIDs program become experts on the devices, software and Web-based applications the district uses.

“Every semester they do a community event,” Cole said. “In the fall, they do the TedxYouthDay event and they participate in live streams across the country. In the spring, they plan, organize and put on a large-scale community professional development for parents with students in grades K-12.”

Students in the eKIDs program use their knowledge to provide tech support and expertise in their school building. Teachers can fill out a request online for an eKIDs student to help them fix a computer problem or provide one-on-one training about a topic.

“The kids learn how to use programs, they create tutorials for the teachers and they actually go into the classroom to teach programs to other students,” said Farquhar, an eKIDs instructor.

She said eKIDs students are piloting the use of new devices, creating apps and discovering new programs to use in class. The students, Farquhar said, are excited and eager to develop their expertise.

“I like being a leader and having people ask me questions,” said **Allison Schaefer**, a seventh-grade student in Farquhar’s class.

The computers and devices available throughout Oak Hills



Oak Hills High School students Tanner Howell, left, and Ryan March work on a song in Music Tech class.

vary by building. Select elementary schools are piloting the use of iPads and middle schools are using laptop carts and, in some cases, iPod touches. The district has adopted an “anywhere, anytime, any device” philosophy on education technology. It launched a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) initiative at the high school three years ago, which allowed students to bring in smart phones, tablet computers or whatever device they own.

“We were looking at a 1:1 program at the high school, but we realized there was no way we could afford it,” Yohey said. “We decided it would be significantly cheaper to just let them bring in their own devices and fill in the gaps.”

Oak Hills High School uses laptop carts to get technology into the hands of students who need it. It also partnered with a Cincinnati company, Datacom Specialists, to provide refurbished laptops and service plans to students for heavily reduced prices through a program called Computers for Kids (<http://datacom.myshopify.com>).

Yohey said students, no surprise, love being able to use their smart phones and personal devices in school. They utilize them in class to use educational apps, conduct research and access class-specific resources, among other purposes. It is up to the teacher’s discretion when and how students can use their devices. The school’s wireless network restricts access to inappropriate websites and an acceptable use policy instructs how devices are to be used. Websites such as Twitter and YouTube are not only allowed, but also used in class.

“We’ve experienced very little misuse,” Yohey said. “Our old policy was no cell phones, and now that they can have them in school they really miss them if you take them away.”

Oak Hills plans to expand its BYOD policy to its elementary and middle schools.

The district is using technology to make its classes more relevant, applicable and engaging to students. The district created a Music Tech class at its high school last year. Students use electronic keyboards and professional recording software to learn about song composition, music theory and sound production. The class was so popular, the school added additional courses this year and created a Music Tech II class. The new courses have helped drive total enrollment in all

music classes — both traditional and high-tech — up 75% in two years.

“The kids love the class,” said Music Tech teacher **Grant Anderson**. “They’re learning to make genres of music they like to play and listen to — whether that’s rock, hip-hop, dubstep or chiptunes — and have some fun doing it.”

Anderson showcased the innovative class at the 2011 OSBA Student Achievement Fair at the Capital Conference in



Delshire Elementary School teacher Jill Wolfe and students Kayla Korn, left, and Michele McNulty work with an iPad after class.

Columbus. Anderson, an eLearning consultant at the high school, is part of the team working to infuse technology in every Oak Hills class.

“One of the things we’re trying to do is give students an edge with the 21st century job market so they can have the tech skills they need to succeed,” he said.

The digital learning revolution

eLearning — in some form — is a part of nearly every class in Oak Hills.

“Most people hear eLearning and think it is synonymous with online learning, but it’s broader than that,” Yohey said. “eLearning is a metaphor for everything that we’re doing involving technology, student learning and teacher instruction.”

All Oak Hills teachers in grades six-12 offer companion websites for their classes. The sites, which are securely accessible by students, have minimum requirements, including



Students answer questions in Delshire Elementary School teacher Renee Stickley's class.

a syllabus, class handouts, important class links and forums for questions and discussions, among other features. Some teachers choose to include more resources. By the end of next year, all K-12 teachers in the district will offer companion websites for their classes.

Zach Vanderveen, Oak Hills eLearning coach and course developer, said the companion websites have helped encourage student learning to continue outside school walls.

“It’s wonderful not to have to stop the learning at the end of the school day,” Vanderveen said. “We see discussion and engagement go on after school as students continue to learn online.”

Oak Hills teachers use Moodle, a free, Web-based learning

management system, to create their companion websites. Students can use the same resource to submit assignments online.

Starting in November, the district began using Google Apps for Education in place of Microsoft Excel, Office and PowerPoint. Cole said the Web-based Google Apps — which are free — will save the district more than \$80,000 annually and offer a number of advantages for schools. Because Google Apps hosts documents via cloud storage, it means they can be accessed online and securely anywhere. Also, students are able to work collaboratively online on the same document and teachers can view what they’re doing in real time.

Cole said it was a somewhat challenging transition for teachers and students due to the learning curve that comes with anything new. Oak Hills gave teachers a year to get used to Google Apps before making the transition and provided technical support to facilitate the move.

“It’s like taking a new drive to work,” Cole said. “You have to think about it rather than being on autopilot, but after you do it a few times, you get used to it.”

Oak Hills students are also being exposed to new methods of instruction. The district currently offers three classes that are entirely online — Spanish, Mandarin and health — and plans to offer three additional classes next school year.

Yohey said the online health class was created after three Oak Hills health teachers retired at the same time.

“It started as an idea to reduce costs on staff,” he said. “Beginning with this year’s eighth-grade class, the only option for their health credit is online. Students have five years to complete it, including summers.”

Yohey said the district has been able to further reduce personnel costs and expand 21st century learning opportunities for students by offering “hybrid” classes, also known as blended learning. Hybrid courses have students learn in class two days a week, learn online two days a week and participate in study hall one day a week, when the teacher is available via office hours.

Oak Hills High School currently offers five hybrid classes, including engineering, sociology and world history, and has plans to offer additional courses next school year.

Learning from and helping other schools

Oak Hills has received state and national attention for its technology initiatives over the years. This winter, Yohey was one of 10 administrators nationwide to be named a Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award winner by *eSchools News*. He was the only award recipient from Ohio.

“That was really an Oak Hills award; it wasn’t about me,”

Orange City honored for tech know-how

Orange City was named one of the most tech-savvy school districts in the nation in April.

The district was ranked in the top 10 list of the 2012 Digital School Districts Survey in the category for schools with an enrollment of 3,000 students or less. The list recognizes exemplary school boards’ and districts’ use of technology to govern a district; communicate with students, parents and the community; and to improve district operations.

The eighth annual survey was conducted by e.Republic’s Center for Digital Education, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and convergemag.com.

Orange City was selected by NSBA for a Technology Leadership Network Site Visit in 2006. More than 70 educators from around the nation attended the three-day event, which featured extensive classroom tours, breakout sessions, in-depth discussions, videoconferencing and an evening at Cleveland’s Idea Center, a regional focal point for the arts, technology, education and ideas.

OSBA chronicled the event in its August 2006 *Journal* issue.

Yohey said. "It is really our staff, teachers and students who are doing the things we talk about and plan with technology in mind."

"We have very innovative minds throughout the district. People who are not afraid to take risks and think of creative ways to address issues, provide instruction and collaborate with colleagues."

Cole said Yohey has challenged staff to learn how other districts are using technology and share what Oak Hills is doing. She referred to Oak Hills as "an open-source school district."

"Every time we have an initiative, we're trying to document the process to have a framework we can hand to another district so they can learn from our successes and mistakes," Cole said.

Oak Hills has created a "portfolio" of its technology initiatives and made them publicly available online at <http://ohlsd.org/portfolio>. The website includes the district's acceptable use policy for technology and information about its BYOD initiative.

The district is in the early stages of an initiative with Datacom Specialists to provide services to other districts, including hosting, support and professional development for schools interested in using Moodle.

Cole said Oak Hills has a variety of new technology initiatives



Oak Hills High School teacher Grant Anderson, in front, works with student Brandon Middleton in Music Tech class.

in the pipeline.

"We are working to create all our online tools in a mobile format, and we're just getting ready to push 3-D virtual world professional development opportunities for our teachers," she said.

"We have a lot on the horizon." ■

Editor's note: Visit [facebook.com/OHSchoolBoards](https://www.facebook.com/OHSchoolBoards) to view more photos from OSBA's visit to Oak Hills.

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From Androids to WLANs — a tech term primer

Jeff Chambers, director of communication services

Technology can be intimidating and confusing. It is constantly changing. Four years ago, there were no iPads. Now, some schools are using them instead of textbooks.

This rapid change makes it hard to stay current on the products and terminology being used in education. Here is a simple list of some terms and products that might be discussed in your district. There are many websites that can provide information and definitions, including Wikipedia, Webopedia and **Dictionary.com**. A good starting point in any search is Google.

Android — An operating system for mobile devices such as smart phones and tablet computers. It is developed by the Open Handset Alliance, led by Google.

Assistive technology — Any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities.

Asynchronous learning — A learning method that uses online resources to facilitate information-sharing outside the constraints of time and place. This method combines self-study with interactions to promote learning and can be used in traditional on-campus education, distance education and continuing education.

Bandwidth — Capacity of a network or other data connection for carrying data, audio and video. The higher the frequency, the higher the bandwidth. In digital transmission, bandwidth is usually measured in bits per second (bps) or megabits per second (Mbps).

Blog (web log) — A Web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal for an individual. Typically updated daily, blogs often reflect the personality of the author.

Bluetooth — A wireless network used to connect mobile

phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), tablets and computers. The network is a short-range wireless connection with a range of about 32 feet. The speed on the network connection is less than a Wi-Fi network, usually around 3 Mbps.

Broadband — A type of data transmission in which a single medium (wire) can carry several channels at once. Cable TV, for example, uses broadband transmission. Broadband technology can transmit data, audio and video all at once over long distances.

Here is a simple list of some terms and products that might be discussed in your district.

Data projector — A device for taking the information that you would normally see on a computer monitor and projecting it onto to a larger screen.

Distance learning — A method of delivering instruction in which the teacher and students are not in the same location. The source of information and the learners can be separated by time and distance. The term distance learning refers to more of a delivery method than a philosophical approach.

Distributed learning — Deals with a wide range of activity in a continuum. At one end it is a supplement to face-to-face teaching and at the other end it is fully off-campus, becoming defined more as distance learning.

E-learning (electronic learning) — Term covering a wide set of applications and processes, such as Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via the Internet, audiotape and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, CD-ROM and more.

Electronic Whiteboard — A writeable presentation display

system that can be used in a classroom or videoconference. Whiteboards generally fall into one of three categories: stand-alone copy boards, where the content of the Whiteboard can be scanned and printed; peripheral boards, which transfer information in the form of digital files to an attached computer; and interactive boards.

Interactive Whiteboard — A Whiteboard that acts like a large touch-screen monitor when synchronized to a computer. Users can interact with the Whiteboard, visit websites and access software directly from the board. This type of Whiteboard is used most often in a classroom.

iOS — An operating system developed by Apple for its handheld devices, such as the iPhone and iPad.

Learning management system (LMS) — Software that connects users with resources, and may offer a number of features such as chat facilities, testing, course notes, quizzes and student tracking. WebCT and Blackboard are examples of popular learning management systems.

Social media — Web-based and mobile-based technologies that turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities and individuals. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, wikis and blogs.

Synchronous learning — Real-time, instructor-led learning in which all students are in the classroom or logged on at the same time and communicate directly with each other. In this virtual classroom setting, the instructor maintains control of the class, with the ability to call on participants. In most platforms, students and teachers can use a Whiteboard to see work in progress and share knowledge.

Tablet — A wireless, portable, personal computer with a touch-screen interface. Tablets typically are smaller than a notebook computer, but larger than a smart phone. Examples of this include the iPad and Galaxy.

Teleconferencing — Two-way electronic communication between two or more groups in separate locations via audio, video and/or computer systems.

Videoconferencing — A point-to-point conference using video and audio signals to link participants at different and remote locations. Videoconferencing is commonly used in distance learning applications. Desktop videoconferencing can be done over the Internet, but requires high

bandwidth for even minimum resolution.

Virtual classroom — The online learning space where students and instructors interact.

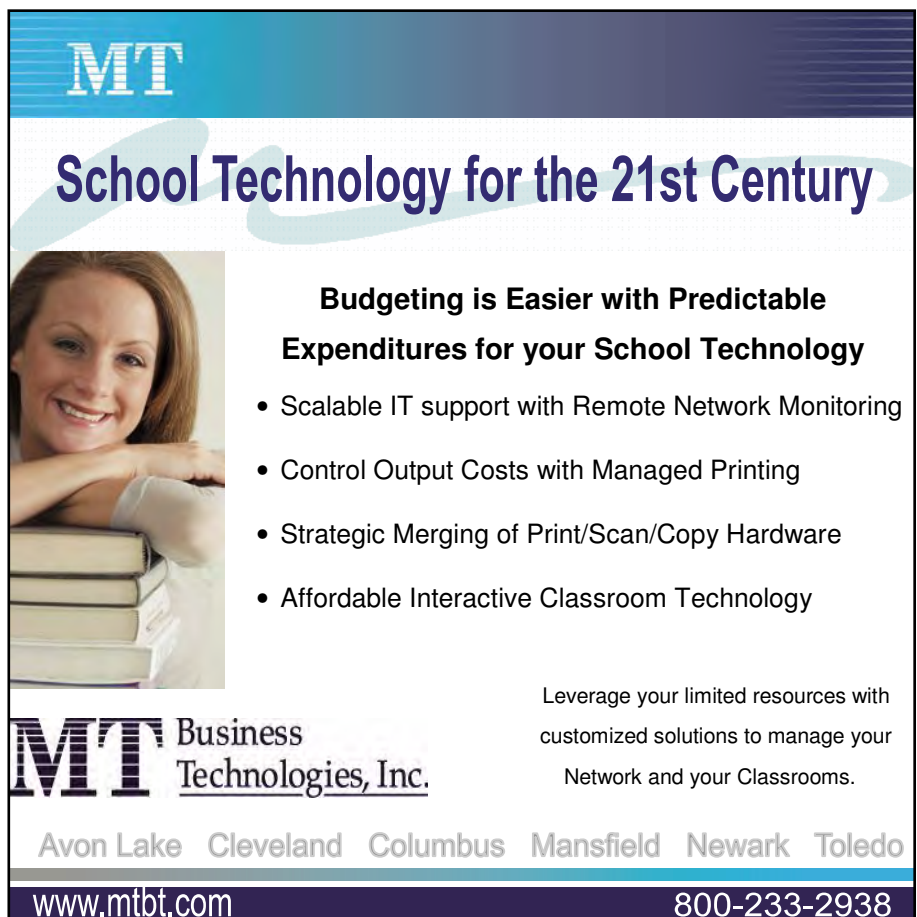
Web conference — A meeting of participants from different physical or geographic locations held in a synchronous environment over the Internet, including any combination of text, audio and video.

Webinar — A synchronous online learning event (Web seminar) broadcast over the Internet. Webinars may or may not use two-way online communication.

Wi-Fi — A protocol that uses radio waves to create a network (WLAN; see below) allowing electronic devices such as computers, tablets and smart phones to exchange data wirelessly, including high-speed Internet connections.

Wiki — A website on which multiple people can collaboratively add, modify or delete content via a Web browser.

WLAN — A wireless local area network that uses high-frequency radio waves rather than wires to communicate between devices. ■



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Keys to starting a successful blended learning program

Dr. Alex Stone, founder, VLN Partners; co-founder, Blended Learning Research Consortium

The age of blended learning is upon us. Regardless of how you choose to define the use of digital lessons, teacher support in the delivery environment and Internet-based communication technologies to learn and teach, the fact remains that nearly every public school district in America is using some form of instructional technology in ways that were impossible 10 years ago.

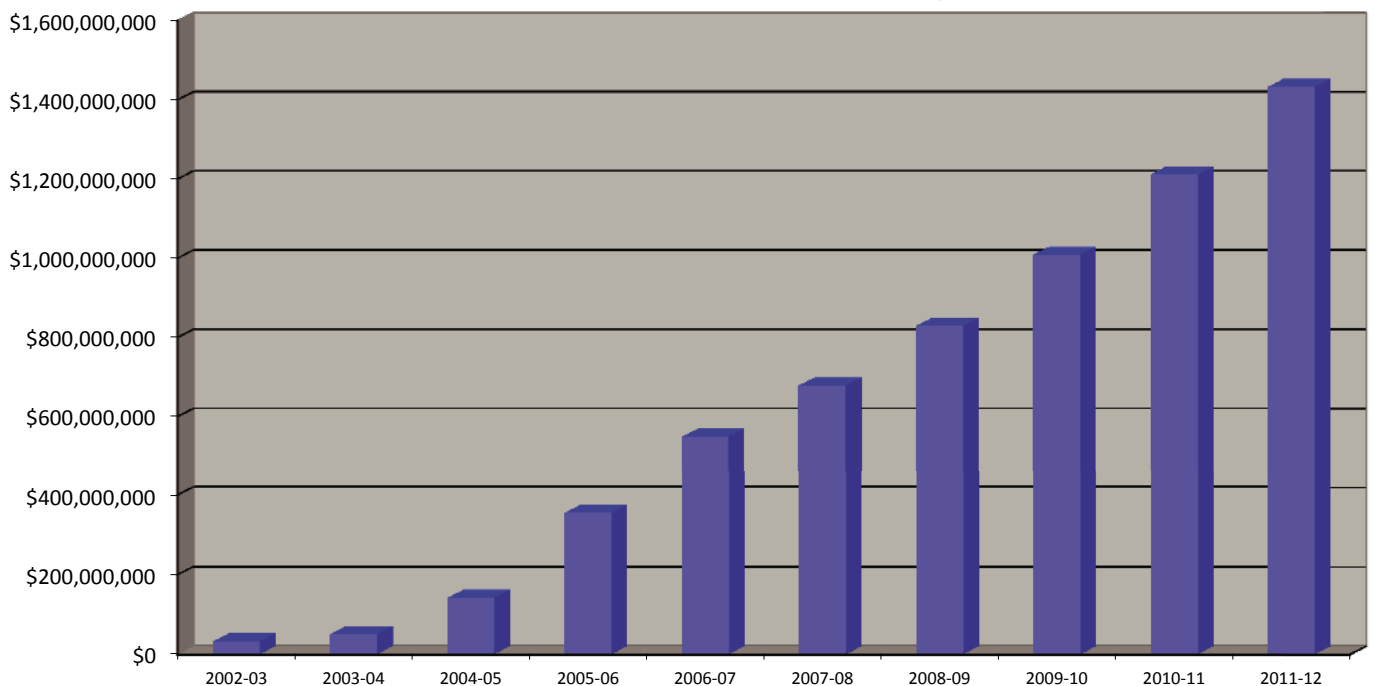
The rapid and accelerating march into the world of blended learning is a phenomenon that caught America's public schools off guard. Very few district administrators and board members understand the field of instructional technology. In addition, new federal policies have created a competitive environment where technically savvy and well-financed cybercharter schools (also known as e-community

schools) and digital curriculum providers can offer attractive alternatives to traditional public schools that more and more families are choosing.

What makes matters even worse for public schools is that they, in effect, must finance a large part of this movement from their own budgets. The chart below shows how the amount of tax dollars that public schools have lost to e-community schools has dramatically increased since the 2002-2003 school year.

Perhaps the best example of the competition between online schools and public school districts in America is the e-community school movement. Since their introduction to Ohio in 2002-03, e-community schools have posed

Public school dollars lost to e-community schools



Source: Ohio Department of Education community school payment reports (<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/41831>)

a serious challenge to public school districts statewide. Available enrollment and expense data through the 2011-12 school year shows that districts across Ohio have already lost more than *\$1.43 billion* to full-time online learning programs and the losses are steadily increasing.

What can Ohio’s public school districts do?

Put simply, you must compete.

At first glance, this seems an impossible task. Many e-community schools and digital publishing companies associated with cybercharter schools in other states are well-funded business machines specifically designed to target students from your district and lure them into an environment where learning is effortless, fun, easy and flexible. They are funded by both private investors and taxpayer dollars, have powerful lobbyists and have done their homework.

Public schools are simply not set up to perform and operate like businesses, and competition is not part of their DNA. As you consider the demise of public schools and the catastrophic impact that would have on the very fabric of American society and the nation’s future, have faith — this is not the end. Ohio is not the only state to encounter cybercharter schools and there are valuable lessons to learn from others’ experience.

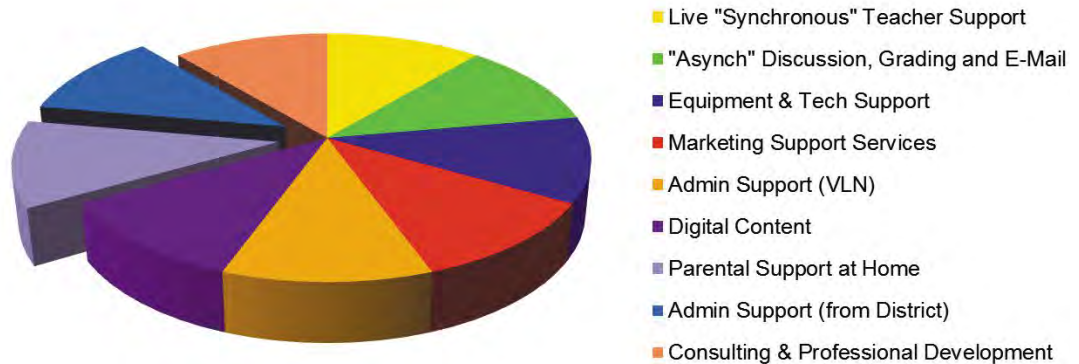
As cybercharter schools have exploded in other states where they pose a direct threat to districts (Pennsylvania and Colorado mostly), district-based alternatives have emerged that hold enormous promise. Those alternatives are promising, not only in the short-term conflict with e-community schools, but also in the inevitable evolutionary shift to districtwide blended learning programs that actually work. In fact, many school districts in these states have learned to leverage core strengths like their curriculum, their diploma, their teachers and their physical resources to provide a district-based alternative that is superior to what cybercharter schools offer. Those strengths also have profoundly positive effects on the way students learn in the classroom and in auxiliary programs.

As you consider blended learning options for your district, a word of warning is appropriate. There are many approaches to district-based blended learning and not all are beneficial

for districts and students. In fact, not all approaches work. If experience in other states has demonstrated anything, it underscores the fact that ill-conceived, unsupported and incomplete attempts to provide a district-based alternative to e-community schools can do more harm than good. What’s even worse is that in poorly conceived programs, students who trust their district to offer quality programs are slipping through the cracks. Nuclear energy is valuable and it is an important part of the worldwide energy grid today, but it is important to learn from the Chernobyls.

The fascinating thing about K-12 online learning and the competitive environment in states like Ohio, Pennsylvania and Colorado is that some failed, deficient or underserved district-based options benefit cybercharter schools greatly. Districts purchase an incomplete set of products and

Essential ingredients in a successful blended learning program



Source: Alex Stone — VLN Partners

services in an attempt to “fight fire with fire” and they wind up offering an inferior educational program that ultimately speeds the growth of cybercharter schools and/or dropouts. So be careful, some vendors are closely affiliated with cybercharter schools that reap enormous profits from the failure of the same products they are selling your district.

Essential ingredients in a successful blended learning program

One very important lesson we’ve learned from cybercharter schools in other states is that for a K-12 online learning program to function properly, it must provide a *holistic* solution. Starting a district-based virtual academy is a lot like baking a cake. There are several essential ingredients that must be in place — in the right measure — for your program to work. Omitting or skimping on any one of these essential ingredients harms students, costs districts money and ultimately threatens to negate the positive advances made in the field of instructional technology over the past several years.

So, the answer your district seeks lies in the proper



combination of technology solutions and consulting services. If you closely examine successful blended learning programs in states like Pennsylvania, you'll see that many districts have learned to harness the energy of blended learning to build programs that have a profoundly positive impact on learning and teaching across their district. In every case, there are essential common ingredients that *must* be part of a district-based program if it is to compete with e-community schools.

As stewards of the American public school system whose collective decisions affect the lives of so many students, your task is to clearly and objectively discern and evaluate all of the options available in today's K-12 blended learning environment. To help you navigate this maze of options, incomplete solutions and technical jargon, please see the simple checklist of questions below.

It's an exciting and transformative time for America's public schools. School board members, administrators and teachers who are willing to embrace new ways of thinking will be the ones who usher in a new age of learning and teaching that will ultimately benefit students, as well as the nation as a whole. ■

About the author: Stone is the founder, president and chief executive officer of VLN Partners, a K-12 instructional technology consulting firm (www.vlnpartners.com). VLN Partners' mission is to form working partnerships with public schools to help them establish and maintain their own virtual academy programs so they can compete with cybercharter schools and other external education providers. He also is a co-founder of the Blended Learning Research Consortium, a think tank devoted to studying blended learning and how it affects America's public schools.

Important questions to ask when evaluating blended learning options

General

- What are your motives for starting a blended learning program? Are you doing this to expand student options, save money or both?
- Do you have qualified and trustworthy people available who can help you evaluate your options?
- Are you committed to creating a program that is better than e-community schools?
- Can the proposed solution provide a workable alternative to e-community schools *and* universal access to digital lessons (blended learning) for all students in your district?

Target audience and implementation strategy

- Who is the initial target audience and can the program expand?
- Are you willing to offer this learning opportunity to all of your students, even those who have demonstrated difficulties with standardized tests?

Technical considerations

- Who will provide equipment and technical support for your full-time, home-based students?
- Is a help desk available for students?
- What learning management system (LMS) will you use?
- What digital curriculum products (instructional content) will you use?
- Are you sure you understand the difference between LMS and digital curriculum, and why this question is important?

Teacher support

- Will your district's teachers approve?
- Who will grade your students' essays, portfolio work and homework?

- Will students receive live (synchronous) instruction from a certified teacher every day?
- What about online discussion boards?
- Is professional development available to train your teachers how to provide grading support, synchronous instruction and asynchronous instruction?
- Do you expect your teachers to create engaging digital content?

Instructional content

- What digital curriculum products will your students use?
- Do the online lessons match the scope and sequence of the instruction presented in your traditional classrooms? If not, are you still willing to issue your diploma for someone else's curriculum?
- Can the digital resources used in your blended program be used to augment traditional classroom instruction in the traditional classroom setting?
- If you do decide to customize the lessons presented online, who will build them?

Administrative support

- Is your district's administration team prepared to provide the necessary interventions for full-time and part-time students who struggle with the program?
- Are you willing and able to withdraw students who are truant or failing?
- Who will market your full-time cyberschool program to district students and their parents?

Expense and return on investment

- What will the program cost?
- Is it guaranteed to save your district money compared to your current expense on e-community schools?

Ohio's unique system of technology support

Andrew Tompkins, enterprise program manager, MC•OECN

When it comes to support for the technology needs of K-12 education, Ohio has a special asset that is unique among the states.

Educational technology support typically falls into three types — top-down state-controlled systems, a few large regional centers or individual schools fending for themselves. Ohio's system is a hybrid: locally governed data centers connected through a strong statewide support organization.

This tandem is composed of the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network (MC•OECN) and 23 regional Information Technology Centers (ITCs). Even more unusual is the fact that each ITC is owned and governed by the districts receiving services. MC•OECN, in turn, is owned by the member ITCs, creating a system serving a collective of more than 900 participating school entities. This combination of MC•OECN and ITCs provides an economically efficient technology support system geared to the specific needs of Ohio's schools and students.

Each ITC is part of the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN), which is the network of 23 regional information technology centers. ITCs provide vital statewide information technology services and support instructional and administrative technology for more than 900 school districts, ESCs and community schools, serving nearly 1.4 million students across Ohio. MC•OECN is an organization of ITCs created to provide leadership, promote accountability, support statewide initiatives, coordinate purchasing and legislatively support ITCs.

History

In existence for more than 30 years, OECN was created by action of the Ohio General Assembly in 1979. Originally there were 27 data centers created to provide financial accounting support to school districts. Over time the owner-members of a few data centers voluntarily merged to create greater financial and operational efficiencies.

MC•OECN was initially created in the mid-1980s to

provide a common legislative voice for ITCs. Over time, MC•OECN has been expanded to operate statewide programs in software and hardware acquisition, INFOhio library automation, the DASL student software package, disaster recovery services, Internet bandwidth aggregation, technology asset disposal and leadership for many other key statewide initiatives.

Services

Today the combined efforts of MC•OECN and ITCs provide efficient and economical support of schools' information and technology needs by hosting a vast menu of services. These include: accounting, payroll, library automation, education management information system, network management, student information systems, video, remote distance learning, electronic resources, computerized grade book, parental access, Web conferencing, Internet access, Web and email filtering, firewall and Web security, telephony, Web and server hosting and data-driven decision support.

In addition, OECN ITCs support physical network connectivity to more than 3,500 K-12 school buildings across the state and provide over 10 gigabits of Internet access per month. ■

Did you know?

- OECN ITCs support network connectivity to more than 3,500 K-12 school buildings across the state.
- OECN ITCs provide over 10Gb of Internet access – the equivalent of 63 billion pages – per month.
- The net cost to schools for this network is 10 cents per student per day.
- OECN ITCs host more than 1.2 million parent access portal accounts.
- OECN ITCs respond to more than 1.5 million support request per year.

Learn more at www.mcoecn.org.

Leaping into social media

Social media is a fundamental change in how people communicate. It's not a fad. It's not going away. It's here to stay, and if you want to be an effective communicator, you better start using it.

— **Shane Haggerty**, Great Heights Integrated Marketing and Communication

Those are the words **Erika Daggett**, chief information officer at **Sycamore Community City Schools**, heard during an Ohio School Public Relations Association conference in the spring of 2011. Those were the words that gave her a message to take back to her administration: “we not only can use social media, we *must* use social media.”

Daggett and her superintendent, **Dr. Adrienne C. James**, had been discussing social media integration in the district's communication plan since 2010. However, there were many concerns and misunderstandings throughout the district that

stalled progress, such as “how do we protect our students?” and “we may not reach our audience because social media is mostly used among teens.”

But, with communication being a district priority, Daggett and James were determined.

“We knew we had to find a way to start utilizing the power of social media,” Daggett said. “We knew that, if nothing else, eventually Sycamore would be a part of social media through other people's conversations. We wanted to ensure the district was a part of those conversations. So, we knew we needed to look at it more closely.”

That closer look started with a survey conducted by the district's Planning Commission on other school districts' social media use. The survey showed more and more schools across the nation were using different forms of social media, whether it was Twitter, Facebook, blogs or other platforms. That was a turning point for the district.

Following that survey, James charged Daggett with identifying new and additional ways to communicate with a variety of stakeholders. Daggett then teamed up with Haggerty, the speaker she heard at the conference, and got to work.

The first step was conducting a communitywide survey to obtain specific information on how residents used various social media platforms and to gauge what their feelings were toward the district using social media.

Nearly 700 people responded to the survey. Seventy-one percent stated that they had a personal Facebook page and 68% said they wanted the district to use social media for district communication. Forty percent also said they watched YouTube videos several times per month.

The district then conducted a focus group with parents, students and staff members to further explore community members' social media habits.

“The focus group was incredibly valuable, as it gave us more than statistical information,” Daggett said. “It showed us behaviors and areas we needed to address. For example, the focus group showed us that adults were nervous about the



A Sycamore High School student holds a postcard filled with “29 reasons to like us on Facebook on February 29.” The cards were distributed as part of Sycamore Community City's social media marketing campaign.

district being involved in social media. We saw the need to help staff and parents understand how to control their privacy and feel more comfortable with these communication tools so that we could effectively use them. The project was going to be much more than simply creating a Facebook page or a Twitter feed; it included an educational component, a safety component and much more.”

So, with Haggerty’s help, Daggett designed an internal and external launch plan for the district’s Facebook page to ensure proper usage, create an understanding of why the district was using social media and promote the new source for district information.

The first two items were addressed through presentations for school board members, administrators, parents, staff members and students. Presenters shared why the district needed to use social media and how it would be used, all while keeping student safety and the district’s reputation in mind. The workshops also included the rollout of the district’s social media guidelines and sessions on how individuals could activate Facebook privacy controls to protect themselves and their students.

Promoting these presentations allowed Sycamore to communicate that a district Facebook page, as well as a YouTube channel and Flickr account, was coming and that social media was being integrated in a safe and thoughtful way. The workshops also provided a venue to distribute marketing materials, such as “29 reasons you should ‘like’ us on Facebook on February 29” and “This Leap Year, we are leaping into social media.” Postcards also were handed out to students during lunch and distributed to community members at local businesses and events.

Media representatives were invited, and attended, social media trainings, which were strategically held on Feb. 28 and 29 so that community members who saw the news stories would be able to immediately access the Facebook page, YouTube channel and Flickr account. Not only was the district leaping into social media, but it also received positive press coverage in Cincinnati during the launch.

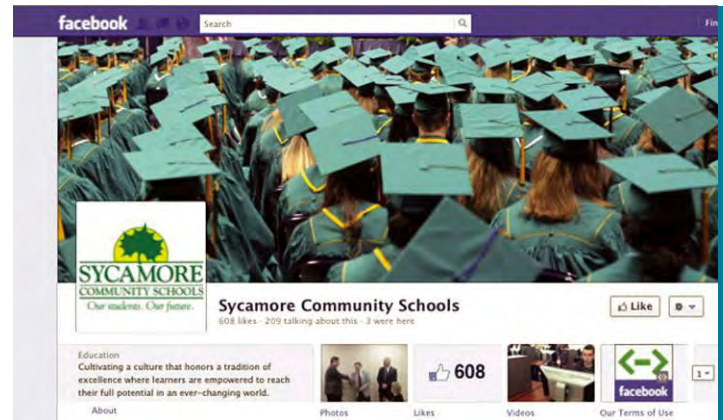
And then, on Feb. 29, Sycamore Community Schools “leapt” into social media.

“It was an incredibly exciting day,” Daggett said. “When I started the project, I knew we had to do it, but I was aware of the possibility of unintended consequences. But we did everything we could to prevent those things from occurring. We researched social media policies from colleges, the Ohio Department of Education and government entities. We looked at what other districts were doing. We activated and embellished security filters and created a terms of use agreement. We created guidelines and trained staff on those guidelines. We met with parents and showed them how to protect their children.

“So, on launch day, I was excited and I spent a good amount of the day celebrating every ‘like’ we got on Facebook.”

Those initial “likes” have added up to nearly 600 in less than three months. In April, an average of 3,126 people saw stories about Sycamore on Facebook each week and nearly 100 different people engaged and interacted on the page weekly.

And while Daggett still celebrates every “like,” she feels Sycamore’s social media integration was successful for other reasons.



Sycamore Community City’s Facebook page

“I feel we were able to launch social media in a way that made all members of the Sycamore community — from parents to students to teachers to residents to business leaders — feel included, comfortable and excited about the project,” she said. “Our Facebook page provided more than another avenue for communication. It has allowed people to have a ‘behind-the-scenes’ look at the district and has connected people in new ways.”

Those new ways have given parents, community members, students and alumni the ability to “like,” comment and share the exclusive content the district posts, as well as reminisce, ask questions, respond to surveys and be engaged with Sycamore schools.

“It was very exciting to work with Sycamore Community schools on this project,” Haggerty said. “The district took a very thoughtful approach before they launched into any specific social platform, and that foresight and planning is crucial for school districts when it comes to social media integration. It cannot happen successfully without strategic planning.”

For more information, contact Daggett at daggette@sycamoreschools.org or Haggerty at shane@greatheightspr.com.

Visit Sycamore’s social media channels at:

- www.facebook.com/sycamoreschools
- www.flickr.com/sycamorecommunityschools
- www.youtube.com/scstv2012 ■



Gamification — not just fun and games

Adam Heckler, technology integration coach, VARtek Services Inc.

One of the hottest trends in technology right now is called “gamification.” Essentially, gamification is using techniques to encourage user participation in activities not traditionally seen as games. The most notable aspect of gamification is it can be used to make people excited about doing things they would ordinarily consider boring.

Here’s an example of gamification you’ve no doubt heard of: frequent flyer miles. By flying with the same airline multiple times you can accumulate miles or points. Once you reach a certain number, you can redeem them for rewards, like an upgrade to a first-class seat or a free flight.

This is gamification at its finest. Basically, the airline wants you to behave in a certain way — it wants you to buy tickets from them rather than their competitors — so it rewards you every time you perform the “correct” action. It’s a very simple idea.

Gamification can be used to great benefit in K-12 education, as well. Students used to have just one carrot to entice them to do their homework: an “A” on an assignment. Now they have dozens and dozens of carrots. And what’s more, they often can share their progress with their friends on Facebook or other social networking sites, which by itself is a tremendously strong



Gamification techniques encourage students to participate in activities through feedback and rewards.

motivating force.

The Khan Academy website is one of the better examples. While on the site, students are asked to solve a series of math problems. Every so often, the website will reward the student with a “badge” for completing a certain goal (for example, correctly solving 15 problems in a row). And to keep the student going, there are a surprisingly large amount of badges available to be earned.

Suddenly, an activity nobody would do for fun has become something participants can’t get enough of! The simple feedback loop of action-prize-action-prize keeps people coming back to the site again and again for one simple reason: they want to earn as many rewards as possible, even if those rewards have little or no “real-world” value.

There are quite a few new education technology companies incorporating gamification concepts into instructional programs. One firm, iCivics, provides online games that let students have fun, but also teaches them how real-life civics organizations work — everything from running a presidential campaign to overseeing a municipal budget to managing a constitutional law firm. Certain accomplishments earn the players badges, rewarding them for behaviors that are useful in the real world, such as cooperating with others and listening to different points of view.

Another example is Grockit, one of the more prominent companies offering gamification products. The firm sells test preparation materials for college and graduate school entrance exams. Grockit has introduced gamification techniques into its products such as rewards, feedback and interaction with others using the program. The goal is to make studying for tests easier and more exciting.

Gamification isn’t just for learning either. The StudentPositive website offers teachers gamification techniques to reinforce positive behavior in their students. The program enables teachers to set performance expectations for students and assign rewards or consequences based on whether the expectations were met. The program also provides reports that track behavioral trends, which allows teachers, parents and students to monitor student progress.

It’s important to remember though, that a rise in the gamification of education doesn’t mean that kids will soon be learning entirely via video games or the Internet. In fact, teachers have been using “offline” gamification techniques for years.

When I was in school, my teachers would split the class into teams, award them points for various achievements and record the points on a classroom chart. Of course the

teams with fewer points felt the pressure to do better, and the teams with more points didn’t want to slack off and lose the end-of-the-year prize: a pizza party.

This is another core tenet of gamification: results posted on a leaderboard. The theory is that letting teams or individuals see whether they are leading or lagging encourages the positive behavior that will earn them more points.

In short, while the word gamification might be a mouthful, the techniques it teaches us about how to encourage and discourage certain behaviors are pivotal to many aspects of education. It’s our bet that these techniques will be here for a long time to come. ■



Running a district is hard

Lighten your load with an updated policy manual

You need an up-to-date policy manual to run your district effectively. OSBA can help. Our policy consultants will assist in updating your manual, ensuring your district’s policies are current and up-to-date with the Ohio Revised and Administrative codes.

Call Jeannette Radcliff, OSBA administrative assistant of management services, at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA, to begin updating your manual today.



Capital Conference 2012: Key into public education

Bryan Bullock, communication coordinator

Summer is nearly here and that means the weather is getting warmer, the school year is coming to a close and OSBA is in full swing preparing for its upcoming Capital Conference and Trade Show.

The nation's second largest education convention runs Nov. 11-14 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The event is once again expected to draw more than 10,000 school board members, administrators, staff, students and guests from all corners of the public education world.

The theme of the 57th annual state conference is "Key into public education." Attendees will learn about the latest issues in public education from internationally acclaimed keynote speakers, education experts presenting nearly 150 seminars and discussion sessions, and networking opportunities with colleagues and peers.

They also will be treated to the 14th annual Student Achievement Fair, featuring 100 of Ohio's most innovative school district programs. Attendees can meet with students and teachers at their booths to learn more about how

districts around the state are boosting student achievement. The fair also includes five student entertainment groups — one from each of OSBA's five regions — and a student art exhibit.

The Trade Show, the largest exhibition of school equipment, supplies and services in the U.S., will host nearly 700 vendor booths. Drawings will be held throughout the show to give attendees chances to win valuable prizes for their districts.

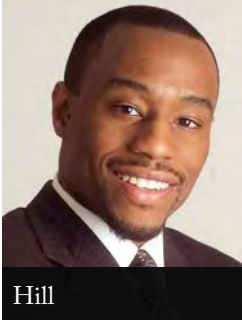
More than 100 breakout sessions in 15 learning tracks will provide a comprehensive look at the latest developments in school district governance and management. A series of informational sessions will share details on how OSBA endorsed programs can save districts money and increase efficiency.

The Capital Conference has earned a strong reputation for bringing stellar keynote speakers to Columbus, and that tradition continues in 2012. Headlining the General Sessions will be:

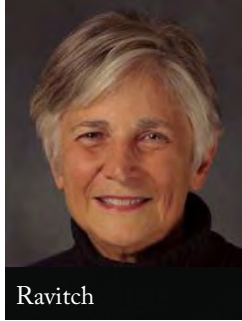
- Nov. 12: **Dr. Marc Lamont Hill**, an activist, social critic and one of the nation's most notable African-American leaders. Adding a depth of understanding to the country's changing paradigms on diversity, hip-hop culture, youth, politics and more, Hill is known for his thoughtful perspectives on everything from sexuality to education to religion. His commentary has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *Essence* and *The New York Times*, as well as on NPR and Fox News.
- Nov. 13: **Diane Ravitch**, an author, professor and an education historian. Ravitch is a research professor of education at New York University and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. A former U.S. assistant secretary of education, Ravitch blogs for *Education Week*, *Politico* and The Huffington Post. She also is the author of numerous articles and books, including *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*.
- Nov. 14: The Capitol Steps, a Washington-based comedy



The Student Achievement Fair showcases innovative student programs presented by district administrators, staff and students.



Hill

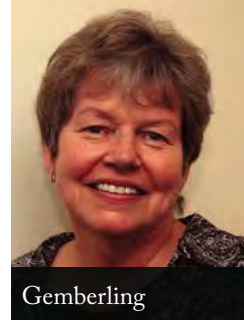


Ravitch

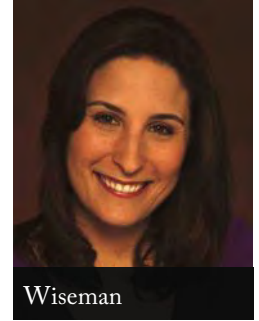


photo credit: Richard Termine

Capitol Steps



Gemberling



Wiseman

troupe inspired by the motto, “We put the ‘mock’ in democracy.” Always in top form during presidential election years, members of the group draw on experience working on Capitol Hill to craft side-splitting satire. The troupe has recorded dozens of albums and appeared on “Good Morning America,” the “Today Show” and “Nightline,” among other TV programs.

The Early Bird Workshop speaker on Nov. 11 will be **Katheryn Gemberling**, an independent educational consultant who works with schools across the country on topics related to improving student achievement and making data-driven decisions. A former deputy superintendent for Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, Gemberling gained national recognition for her pioneering implementation of “Success for Every Student,” a strategic plan that significantly improved student achievement in the district of more than 130,000 students. Districts are encouraged to bring their curriculum directors and building principals to this informative session.

The Conference Luncheon speaker on Nov. 12 will be **Rosalind Wiseman**, a best-selling author and internationally recognized expert on bullying, parenting and leadership. She is the author of *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends and the New Realities of Girl World*, which was the basis for the movie “Mean Girls.” Her follow-up book, *Queen Bee Moms and Kingpin Dads*, addresses the social hierarchies and conflicts among parents, and is now being made into a major motion picture.

Wiseman spoke at the White House Summit on Bullying and is a frequent guest on the “Today Show” and “Anderson Cooper 360.” She has been profiled in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *People* magazine, among other publications.

The Nov. 13 Conference Luncheon speaker will be announced once confirmed.

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

As part of OSBA’s outreach to higher education, the association has once again scheduled a special session designed for high school counselors. The in-depth workshop will focus on providing counselors with the latest tools and skills to help them better inform schools, students and parents about postsecondary opportunities and challenges.

Also returning this year is University Square, where school guidance counselors and others can meet with representatives from higher education institutions. Those representatives will provide public school educators information on how to better advise high school students on planning their postsecondary education. OSBA urges board members and administrators to register their guidance counselors and other advisers to accompany them to the conference. University Square will again be located at the rear of the Trade Show exhibit hall.



Spotlight sessions offer in-depth studies of timely topics, including connecting K-12 schools and higher education, and diversity and inclusion.

OSBA is again offering a special group registration rate to member school districts that, in effect, reduces the per-person cost once seven or more individuals are registered. Six people can attend the conference for \$1,500; there is no charge beyond that for an unlimited number of additional registrants. That means that the more a district registers, the more it saves. Single registration is \$250. Details will be included in registration packets to be mailed in mid-July.

For more information about the Capital Conference, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/2012-capital-conference or call OSBA. ■

Business Honor Roll marks another successful year



photo credit: Dan Donovan

Upper Arlington City Board of Education President Robin Comfort, right, presents a framed OSBA Business Honor Roll certificate to Glenda Huffman and her son Ryan, in recognition of Huffman's Market, a family-owned and operated grocery store. Glenda's husband Tim, not shown, "has been the real inspiration for the market's support of the district," said Dan Donovan, Upper Arlington City director of communication.

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

With its second year complete, the OSBA Business Honor Roll program continued with much success. More than 40 districts participated in the program, recognizing over 100 firms for providing invaluable support to their schools and students.

Districts value the opportunity to recognize local businesses for their support, especially as schools face increasing budget uncertainty. The Business Honor Roll helps districts say "thank you" for their vital contributions.

Businesses large and small, corporate-owned or family-run, play a key role in supporting the community and local schools. From helping schools with in-kind or financial contributions, donating to scholarship programs and supporting extracurriculars to offering internship opportunities,

volunteering in the schools and sponsoring field trips, businesses contribute to their schools in many ways.

OSBA mailed personalized recognition certificates and letters of congratulations for each business to district superintendents in time for boards to present to them at the boards' May meetings. A full list of honored businesses can be found on OSBA's website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/business-honor-roll.

Although OSBA cannot list the name of every honored firm in the *Journal* due to space limitations, a sampling of districts' comments about their selections follow.

Coshocton County Career Center

The career center selected many businesses that supported

various initiatives throughout the district. Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and **Brad Perkins** support the district's curriculum and instruction programs.

Centre Kid's Campus, Precious Treasures Learning and Daycare Center and The Learning Garden all contributed to the district's Early Childhood Education Program by providing students with on-site lab experience.

Coshocton Memorial Hospital and Lafayette Meadows support the Career Skills Investigation program for high school students with special learning needs by providing shadowing and work experience.

Smart Styles and Walmart support the career center through donations and services.

Goshen Local (Clermont)

Goshen Local's special project support selection recognizes businesses that contributed to the district's O'Bannon Creek Nature Trail project. The Clermont County General Health District, Community Green, the local Boy Scouts troop, John Moore Excavating and the Goshen Township Police Department all contributed to this walking trail. Located behind the district's schools, the nature trail provides handicap access and is used by the community and the district's science department.

Northeastern Local (Clark)

Several businesses support this district. Forest Glenn Health Campus partnered with Kenton Ridge High School to provide students with the opportunity to interact with residents and staff. The Woeber Mustard Co. provides scholarships for high school seniors. The Northridge Lions' Club volunteers, raises money and encourages student interactions through the Leo Club.

The district's special project, KIDS HOPE USA, was supported by several local churches. Plattsburg Church of Christ, The Vineyard Church of Northridge, First Christian Church, Pleasant Community Church of God, Catawba United Methodist Church and United Church of South Vienna have served as mentors for the district's elementary students.

North Point ESC

Kalahari Resorts greatly assisted with the Region 6 Winter STEM Challenge program. The resort hosted and set up a two-day learning event for more than 450 eighth-graders that focused on sparking interest in STEM (science, technology, engineer and mathematics) careers. In

addition, Kalahari Resorts served lunch to more than 500 people and provided resort personnel to ensure the event was a success — all for no charge to the district.

Olmsted Falls City

Angelina's Pizza and Shaker's IGA have been long-time supporters of the district. Both provide in-kind donations to support the students and district programs. Angelina's Pizza has provided pizza lunches and donated countless pizzas to the district for athletic teams and support organizations.

Shaker's IGA assists with the district's communication efforts by running messages on its checkout register screens. The store's owner also has donated his time by speaking to students about business ownership.

Tolles Career & Technical Center

Barcelona Restaurant, Columbus Culinary Institute at Bradford School, Gem City Dog Club, Madison County Senior Living Center and the Rusty Bucket Restaurant have provided great support to the career center.

Each business has spent countless hours helping students prepare for competitions, teaching new skill sets and providing curriculum ideas to enhance the career-tech learning experience. Students' opportunities are expanded by these businesses providing internships, mentorships, jobs, partnerships and valuable experience.

Upper Arlington City

Huffman's Market, a family-owned and operated grocery store, has provided this district with a variety of support, including monetary donations, in-kind gifts, student fundraising and advertising support in district publications. The store has allowed students to raise funds outside the grocery's front door, as well as inside the establishment. ■

Administrative salary analysis

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

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

For more information, contact Van D. Keating, director of management services, at (614) 540-4000, ext. 241; or (800) 589-OSBA, ext. 241; or vkeating@ohioschoolboards.org.

Board members learn, network at 2012 BLI

► *Diana Gadus, Oregon City, browses at the Board Leadership Institute bookstore.*

▼ *OSBA Senior School Board Services Consultant Dr. Richard J. Caster discusses board self-evaluation.*

Visit OSBA's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/OHSchoolBoards to view more BLI photos. A list of BLI graduates is posted at www.ohioschoolboards.org/2012BLIgraduates.



▲ *Benjamin Pintabona, Scaparotti Construction Group operations manager and a former West Geauga Local (Gauga) board member, discusses changes in Ohio law impacting school construction.*

► *OSU-Mansfield Dean and Director Dr. Stephen M. Gavazzi signs copies of his book following his presentation at the Opening General Session.*





◀ *Dr. Paul R. Lockwood II, North Point ESC & EHOVE Career Center, left, and Mike Steiner, Wooster City, attend a breakout session. The two men went to college together and saw each other at BLI for the first time since their college days.*

◀▼ *OSBA Director of Communication Services Jeff Chambers, right, works with Robert L. Faulkner Sr., Warren City & Trumbull Career & Technical Center.*

▼ *Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction Stan W. Heffner speaks during the Closing Luncheon.*



▲ *Board members listen attentively during a breakout session.*

◀ *The Greenfield EV Board of Education was one of only two boards to send five board members to BLI. Shown clockwise from top left: Greg Barr, Douglas A. Mustard, Jason Allison, Danny Long and Sandy Free.*

IB program unites school in common purpose



From left, Indian Trail Elementary School fourth-grade teacher Nancy Marquette, first-grade teacher Niki Piland and International Baccalaureate Coordinator Julie Miller collaborate on an upcoming science unit.

Julie Miller, International Baccalaureate coordinator, and Jacquie Mazziotta, communications director, Stow-Munroe Falls City

In the complex world in which students are growing up today, educators ask: *What is the goal of education in the 21st century and how do we prepare our young students?*

The school community at **Stow-Munroe Falls City's** Indian Trail Elementary School addressed those questions by implementing the International Baccalaureate program (IB). The educational framework is the first of its kind to be offered in the district.

One major component of the program, and perhaps the most easily visible, is learning to communicate in more than one language. Kindergarten through fourth-grade students are

learning Spanish as a second language; however, the core of what makes IB different is the focus on critical thinking.

The framework of instruction is based on the Ohio Common Core Standards and Model Curriculum, but the teaching approach is what drives IB lessons. Based on a set of ideals designed to inspire, motivate and focus the work of teachers, the IB learner profile unites the school in a common purpose.

Collaboration among teachers is an essential part of student success. Teachers plan units together and reflect as a team during and after each unit. Instructional teams evaluate themselves on how they can improve their assessment tasks.

They also consider what learning experiences enabled students to develop skills that were planned for. They determine which questions prompted deeper inquiry and understanding of concepts. No unit is ever “complete,” and there is always room for improvement in instruction.

The goal is for all learners — teachers *and* students — to take action and demonstrate the ideals of the learner profile. IB learners strive to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.

If students are expected to be productive, responsible citizens in an ever-changing world, we must provide learning experiences that foster critical thinking skills and student action that goes beyond the classroom.

“The International Baccalaureate program represents an educational philosophy that has been in existence for over 40 years and represents the best instructional practices from countries around the world,” said Superintendent Dr. **Russell Jones**. “American students tend to struggle to compete with students from other countries. The problem is not that our students are incapable, the real issue is what we expect of them when they are in our classrooms. Our instructional practices need to raise the bar of expected student performance. IB does just that.”

Teachers have seen the impact of their lessons through their students’ work.

In a unit that centers on the importance of making choices that promote a healthy lifestyle, students voiced their opinions about school lunch offerings and wanted to make some changes. They were encouraged to write to the school principal and share their thoughts. A group of third-graders did this and requested different menu choices. The students’ efforts successfully prompted some changes and led to a soup option



Indian Trail Elementary School third-grader James Werts shares a letter he wrote to his principal with the Stow-Munroe Falls City school board. Looking on is International Baccalaureate Coordinator Julie Miller.

being added to the menu.

“My students were able to experience the process of how to make a change,” teacher **Dana Barna** said. “But they also realized the idea of compromise and the fact that they can’t always get everything they want.”

In addition to students’ work at school, parent involvement also is encouraged. The Indian Trail *IB Newsletter* is distributed quarterly, and students are recognized for actions demonstrating the learner profile and attitudes. Staff members also are recognized for the innovative and inspiring techniques they use with their students. The newsletter highlights each grade level, includes information about what themes are being covered and provides summaries of each unit. ■

Get what you want, when you want it!

OSBA’s customized workshops allow your school district to schedule and tailor workshops designed to meet your specific needs. OSBA’s highly experienced staff is here to serve you at your convenience. Customized workshops include: team-building exercises, goal-setting or strategic-planning activities, conflict-resolution sessions or other topics customized to fit your needs.

To schedule a customized workshop or for further information, please contact Kathy LaSota at kLasota@ohioschoolboards.org or (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.



Proud Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools

Public Schools Make a
Difference



by Crystal Davis Hutchins, editor, and
Bryan Bullock, communication coordinator

Ohio's public schools are making a huge difference in students' lives every day. Ohio Department of Education (ODE) statistics show the state's public school districts clearly outperform most charter schools and are more uniformly successful than charter schools. The numbers also show public schools manage their money better than their charter school counterparts. In the process, Ohio's public schools are producing many exceptional graduates who have gone on to make a real difference in the world.

For the second year, OSBA is featuring "Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools" in this special section of the *Journal*. As part of OSBA's "Public Schools Make a Difference" campaign, we're presenting living examples that prove beyond a doubt that our schools are going above and beyond to prepare Ohio schoolchildren for bright futures. "Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools" highlights graduates who have achieved great success in their chosen fields — people like ESPN analyst and former head football coach **Lou Holtz**; NASA spacewalk trainer **Allison Bolinger**; Geauga County Sheriff **Daniel C. McClelland**, who earned praise for his handling of the aftermath of the **Chardon Local (Geauga)** school shootings; **Stefanie Brown**, national African-American vote director for the Obama for America campaign; New York Giants football player **James Cordle**; and Supreme Court of Ohio Justice **Yvette McGee Brown**, the first African-American woman to serve on Ohio's top court. More "Proud Products" are posted on OSBA's website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/proudproducts.

From "Proud Products" to solid statistics, no matter how you slice it, Ohio's public schools have much to brag about:

- More than 93% of Ohio's public schools rate effective or better on the state report card, an improvement over the 88% that rated that well last school year. These improvements occurred during a period of strengthened accountability standards. Fewer than a quarter of all charter schools — 23.6% — met the effective or better benchmark.
- Report card ratings also show that graduation is more likely if a student is enrolled in a public school district. Barely one-third of charter schools graduate students at a higher rate than the lowest traditional school's rate.
- For the 2010-11 school year, traditional public schools spent \$1,228 per student on administrative costs. Charter schools spent \$2,234.

So, as you can see, public schools are cost-effective and *do* make a difference. The "Proud Products" profiled here and tens of thousands of others around the world have proven that. Without question, supporting public education pays priceless dividends for our communities, state and nation.



Lou Holtz

Sportscaster and retired football coach

From East Liverpool to extraordinary coach to ESPN analyst

Although he now works as an ESPN football analyst, **Lou Holtz** is best known as a legendary college football coach. Inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2008, he is the only coach in the history of college football to take six different teams to a bowl game; win five bowl games with different teams; and have four college teams ranked in the final Top 20 poll.

“Attending (**East Liverpool City’s**) East Liverpool High School was a blessing,” Holtz said. “I had some excellent teachers, great friends, winning athletic teams and attractive girls that wouldn’t date me.”

Holtz went earned a bachelor’s degree in history from Kent State University and a master’s degree in arts and education from the University of Iowa. He played linebacker at Kent State before an injury ended his career.

As head coach at the University of South Carolina, Holtz led the Gamecocks to back-to-back bowl game wins for the first time in school history. As head coach at the University of Notre Dame, he helped the Fighting Irish win the consensus national championship. After leaving Notre Dame, Holtz worked as a sports analyst for CBS Sports for two years.

He also was head football coach at the University of Minnesota, University of Arkansas, North Carolina State University, College of William & Mary, and for the NFL’s New York Jets. Before becoming a head coach, Holtz served as an assistant coach at several colleges, including Ohio State University. The Walter Camp Football Foundation named him 1998’s Man of the Year, and he was named 1977 Coach of the Year.

Holtz and his wife **Beth** are the parents of four children and live in Florida. He has authored three *New York Times* best-selling books and is a highly sought-after motivational speaker.

Education inspiration

“**Glenda Dunlop**, my sophomore English teacher stands out,” Holtz said. “Meanest person, pound-for-pound, I have ever met, but a great teacher. She didn’t care if you liked her or not, she cared about you learning English ... I was able to graduate from college because of her standards.

“(Another outstanding) teacher was my football coach, **Wade Watts**. During my junior year, Mr. Watts told my parents I should go to college and be a coach. My parents said I would go, I said I wouldn’t, so we compromised and I went to college. I had worked since age 9, and saved my money to buy a 1949 Chevrolet. (Instead) I used this money to go to college and my mother went to work at the hospital from 11 p.m.-7 a.m. as a nurse’s aide to help me get through college.”

Giving back

“Because my wife and I are from the upper Ohio Valley, we have provided two scholarships a year to the 17 high schools in the valley (for students) to attend trade schools,” Holtz said. “We have done this the past 14 years. We still speak to various high schools, but we can never repay the people in the Ohio Valley that had such a positive influence on me and Beth.” ■

“Public schools and teachers can give you a chance to learn and grow but, in reality, it is your choice. Life is nothing more than making good choices. If you choose to goof off, ridicule people that want to learn, drop out of school, do drugs, join a gang, have multiple children out of wedlock, you are choosing to end up in prison or in poverty. I thank the public schools for emphasizing how to make good choices.”



Allison (Bahnsen) Bolinger

*Extravehicular activities trainer and flight controller,
NASA Johnson Space Center, Houston*

Spacewalk supervisor

When NASA astronauts learn to perform spacewalks, they learn from **Lancaster City** graduate **Allison (Bahnsen) Bolinger**. She was the 1999 valedictorian of her graduating class at Lancaster High School.

“When thinking back to my school experience in Lancaster, I remember very dedicated teachers who always strived to challenge me and to keep me interested in math, science and pursuing my dreams of working at NASA,” Bolinger said. “Once I decided early in elementary school that NASA was my ultimate goal, I never

encountered a teacher who did not fully believe in and support my lofty ambitions, which worked wonders in helping these dreams become a reality.”

Bolinger initially began her career at NASA in 2001 as a cooperative education student during her sophomore year at Purdue University. After graduating from Purdue in 2004 with a bachelor’s degree in aerospace engineering, she began her full-time career at NASA in the extravehicular activities (EVA) group. The EVA group focuses on training astronauts in all aspects of conducting spacewalks, including spacesuit operations, tool usage and task training in the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, which contains the world’s largest indoor swimming pool complete with life-size mock-ups of the International Space Station. The EVA group also works as flight controllers in the Mission Control Center, providing support for the astronauts while they are on spacewalks.

“Most recently, I had the honor of planning, training the astronauts and ultimately leading from Mission Control the four spacewalks performed on the STS-134 mission in May 2011, the final flight of the Space Shuttle Endeavour,” Bolinger said.

Education inspiration

“There are two teachers from my high school career that I partly attribute my success to,” Bolinger said. “**Nancy Gruezke**, my AP (advanced placement) chemistry and AP physics teacher, who helped foster my love of science and taught me it was cool to be a female in a technical field. She had a great sense of humor and always kept things interesting. **Rod Ishida**, my AP calculus teacher, helped me build the mathematic foundation that served me well at Purdue in my engineering degree and, eventually, in my career.”

Giving back

“I’ve given presentations on NASA, the International Space Station and my job to help inspire Lancaster’s elementary and junior high students,” Bolinger said. “And, I’ve answered students’ NASA questions via email for projects. I’ve also given NASA presentations to the Lancaster Rotary and Kiwanis clubs.” ■

“One of my favorite quotes is ‘Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you’ll be among the stars.’”

“I am a proud product of Ohio’s public school system. It was a public school that taught me the importance of being a lifelong learner, and that helped me become a successful family man and member of our community. The future of our community is in good hands because public schools make a difference.”

Daniel C. McClelland

Geauga County Sheriff

Chardon’s hometown hero

As Chardon Local recovers following the Feb. 27 school shooting that left three students dead and two wounded, a local leader is in the national spotlight. District officials say school violence preparedness training with law enforcement helped ward off an even greater tragedy. They are calling the man who played a role in that training, Chardon High School graduate and Geauga County Sheriff **Daniel C. McClelland**, their hometown hero.

“He handled the tragedy and the town with dignity, honor and compassion,” said **West Geauga Local** Director of Academic Services **Brenda Armstrong**, who nominated McClelland as a “Proud Product of Ohio Public Schools.” “(Chardon) Superintendent **Joseph Bergant II** and Dan were a true team and remain so as the town heals.”

“Law enforcement was quickly placed inside the school upon arrival and we believe that helped to lessen the tragedy that occurred,” McClelland said. “Unfortunately, much had occurred prior to law enforcement’s arrival.”

McClelland is humble about his contributions in the wake of the shooting. He says it just feels good to be able to give back to the school that means so much to him.

“I came to Chardon High as a transfer student,” McClelland said. “I had to learn to meet and interact with people because I didn’t know anyone. The students and faculty that reached out to me made me feel welcome and made a lifelong impression. It was at this time that I learned that I wanted to work with people, to make a positive difference in their lives, just as others did for me.”

Education inspiration

“While many teachers greatly influenced my life, it was my mom, **Millicent**, who stands out,” McClelland said. “Mom had gone back to school, and when I was a sophomore, she was hired as a first-grade teacher. It was Mom’s drive, juggling raising a family and putting herself through school that I remember. I saw how she demonstrated a passion for her job and a real caring for the children. It is not everyone who can say their mom was their best teacher.”

Giving back

“Whether it be serving as a guest instructor on topics of law enforcement and citizenship, or performing a law enforcement function that serves to keep our schools and children safe, I have been fortunate to have many opportunities to give back,” McClelland said. “My biggest joy is when I can go back to the school, talk to students and promote the importance of personal integrity and education.” ■



“Quote I live by: ‘Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime.’ – W.E.B. DuBois.”

Stefanie Brown

National African-American vote director, Obama for America

Bedford grad knows how to get out the vote

When the president of the United States selects you for an important job, you know you’ve hit the big time. It happened to **Bedford City** graduate **Stefanie Brown**, who is currently serving as the national African-American vote director for the Obama for America campaign.

Brown previously worked as the national field director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Baltimore. Under her leadership, NAACP’s national civic engagement campaigns registered more than 200,000 people to vote in the 2008 and 2010 election cycles. Concurrently, Brown served as the national director of the NAACP Youth & College Division, representing 23,000 people under the age of 25 around the country.

A native of Bedford Heights, 31-year-old Brown was recently inducted into the Bedford High School Alumni Hall of Fame.

“I can definitely say that my education and extracurricular activities at Bedford High School (BHS) taught me how to multitask and strive for a successful work-life balance!” Brown said. “Always one to serve in capacities that will help others, BHS enabled me to grow as a leader and a scholar. I will forever be grateful for the wonderful support of teachers and counselors ... for helping to make me the woman I am today.”

A graduate of Howard University, Brown has been recognized as one of **Essence.com**’s “Top 10 Emerging Political Leaders of 2010” and *Ebony* magazine’s 2007 “Top 30 Young Leaders under the Age of 30.” In 2011, Brown launched the Brown Girls Lead Academy, an engaging leadership development program for black collegiate women on the campus of Howard University.

Education inspiration

“**Yvonne Sims**, my high school guidance counselor, was always the person I could turn to for constant support and encouragement,” Brown said. “Every day I was in her office to laugh, cry, strategize about life and just shoot the breeze. To this day, she continues to be like a mother to me and I will forever be grateful for her love.”

Giving back

“I’ve always stayed close to Bedford Heights by participating in local activities and representing my home community as often as possible,” Brown said. “In 2006, I established the Harvey and Delores Brown Scholarship Fund, named in honor of my parents, at my alma mater to provide scholarship support for graduating seniors who enrolled in a historically black college or university.” ■



James Cordle

Professional football player, New York Giants

Cordle cares about public education

Although he now wears a Super Bowl ring he earned with the NFL's New York Giants, **James "Jim" Cordle's** football success began at **Lancaster City's** Lancaster High School (LHS). A 2005 graduate, Cordle was a two-time first team All-Ohio award winner at LHS.

"My mother, who is a public school teacher, always told me my education needed to be my first priority," Cordle said. "I loved athletics, but my first two years of high school were not great, academically. My mom's message sunk in my junior year and I excelled in both academics and athletics."

Cordle went on to become a three-year starter at The Ohio State University. He started at four different positions on the offensive line and helped the Buckeyes go to a Bowl Championship Series game every year, including two National Championship games and a Rose Bowl victory.

Cordle has five Big Ten Championship rings along with five pairs of Gold Pants, an award given to Buckeyes following a victory over the University of Michigan. He won the Jim Parker Award (given to the top offensive lineman) in 2009 and the Jim Marshall Warrior Award in 2007, which is given to the toughest player. In 2010, Cordle was named the Rex Kern College Athlete of the Year. During college, Cordle also organized a highly successful Special Olympics fundraiser called "Bowling with Buckeyes," which earned him several awards.

At Ohio State, Cordle excelled in academics as well. He was named to the Academic All-Big Ten for four consecutive years and graduated with a 3.27 grade point average from the prestigious Fisher College of Business.

Cordle was signed as a free agent by the New York Giants in 2010 and spent that fall on the practice squad. In 2011, he was signed to the active roster and played in nine games in various roles as the Giants went on to win Super Bowl XLVI.

Education inspiration

"While (my parents) are special education teachers and never had the opportunity to teach me in a classroom, they taught me as well as any parent has at home," Cordle said. "I feel I had great teachers all along and I want to recognize one. **Cyndi Lavere** was the advisor for Teen Institute at LHS and she made a big impact on my life and many others. Teen Institute served as a leadership group that had an anti-drug and alcohol policy and volunteered at the school and in the community.

"Under Mrs. Lavere's leadership, we rallied through town with signs asking citizens to 'pass the levy.' That effort, like anything Mrs. Lavere sets out to do, was successful. Mrs. Lavere's passion for improving students' well-being and education experiences continues to make a big impact during their high school years. The successful start to my foundation is in large credit to Mrs. Lavere. Local businesses just cannot turn down her positive attitude and cheerful laugh when she inquires for donations."

Giving back

"Over the years, I have given back to public schools primarily as a guest speaker," Cordle said. "My success at Ohio State and in the NFL has made schools eager to have my message heard by their pupils. I have visited schools throughout Ohio and in New Jersey stressing education, physical activity and an anti-bullying message. This summer, the Cordle Cares Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that I founded, will be hosting a Youth Football Camp at Lancaster High School for Fairfield County children in grades three to six." ■

"I am honored to be selected as a Proud Product of Ohio Public Schools! Public schools hold the future to our nation's success."



Yvette McGee Brown

Justice, Supreme Court of Ohio

Ohio's first female African-American Supreme Court justice

Yvette McGee Brown serves as a justice on the highest court in Ohio. The first African-American woman to sit on the Supreme Court of Ohio says her life's upward trajectory began as a student in **Columbus City**.

"I recall our teachers being very invested in our success," McGee Brown said. "The reason I went to college is because of my high school guidance counselor saying to me one day, 'You're too smart not to go to college.'"

McGee Brown graduated from Mifflin High School in 1978 and went on to Ohio University, earning a degree in journalism and public relations, then The Ohio State University, where she earned a law degree.

She was elected to the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations and Juvenile division in 1992. As a judge, she led the creation of the Family Drug Court and the SMART Program, a truancy and educational neglect intervention program. McGee Brown served on the common pleas court until 2002, when she retired from the bench to create the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children's Hospital. The Columbus center is a multidisciplinary child abuse and family violence program that centralizes services for those experiencing abuse. She served as founding president until early 2010, when she became a candidate for Ohio lieutenant governor.



In 2011, McGee Brown became the 153rd justice to join the Supreme Court of Ohio. She is the eighth female justice in the court's history.

Among her many honors are induction into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame and receiving the Champion of Children Award, YWCA Woman of Achievement Award and several honors from Ohio University and The Ohio State University.

She is married to **Tony Brown**, who has been a high school teacher for 35 years. They have three children and one grandchild.

Education inspiration

"I remember my (high school) government teacher challenging us to think about the world differently and how we planned to make a difference," McGee Brown said. "**Dwight Groce**, who I still run into from time to time, really ignited in me and others a passion for public service. He pushed us academically and treated us like young adults. But I guess what I remember most of all is the sense that our teachers cared about us and wanted us to have a bright future."

Giving back

"I try to speak at public schools when I travel and talk with young people about who they can be and to encourage them to focus on the future," McGee Brown said. "It's all about preparing your brain to move on to the next phase. I think it's important to let young people know you have been where they are and you understand the challenges of high school. Life is so much more challenging for kids today than when I was in school." ■

"People often ask me why I spend so much time working on behalf of young people. The answer is simple: Ohio has given me a great education and great opportunity. My education in Columbus City Schools provided me with a love of learning, a curious mind and a belief that I was smart and capable. I would not be in this place but for the teachers at Mifflin High School who saw something in me before I could see it in myself. They changed the trajectory of my life."



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'Crash' tests emergency services students



Paramedic students and ProMedica Air emergency personnel get a mock victim ready to transport by air ambulance.

Janet Knierim, public relations coordinator, Four County Career Center

Students at **Four County Career Center** and Northwest State Community College put their skills to the test in a realistic emergency drill this spring.

The two northwestern Ohio educational facilities partnered to participate in a mock car crash in the career center parking lot. Following the “crash,” the simulated emergency then proceeded to “Northwest Hospital” at Northwest State Community College. Both schools are near Archbold in Henry County.

Adult Workforce Education Basic 911 Dispatch students started the simulation by sending two Law Enforcement and Security Tactics students to the two-vehicle accident at the career center. As the first responders to the accident, they checked on the “victims,” portrayed by career center students, then remained for crowd control.

Career center paramedic students arrived on the scene and

pulled four victims from the wrecked cars and loaded them into ambulances and the ProMedica Air helicopter from Defiance. Two emergency personnel with ProMedica Air worked with the paramedic students to load one accident victim into the helicopter. The Ridgeville Fire and EMS departments from Ridgeville Corners set up the landing zone and remained on-site throughout the entire simulation.

The victims were transported to “Northwest Hospital” and nursing students from Northwest State swung into action. Two of the victims served as standardized patients and remained in character as injured motorists.

The other two victims were replaced by computerized mannequins programmed with injuries requiring specific care, including premature labor, a fractured leg and other medical situations. As an added element of realism, nurses had to balance their time between caring for the accident victims and

four other patients already in the lab.

After the simulation was over, participants held a debriefing at Northwest State. This gave everyone a chance to watch their performances and hear critiques from **Dan Frederick**, public safety coordinator; **B.J. Hancock**, assistant public safety coordinator; paramedic instructors; **Bette Hughes**, nursing lab coordinator; and nursing instructors.

What was the benefit of this accident simulation for students? It gave everyone the chance to deal with an intense emergency situation and experience inter-professional collaboration. It gave them an opportunity to think on their feet without risk to real patients.

This was the second accident simulation the two schools have orchestrated for students. **Doug Beck**, director of Four County's Adult Workforce Education program, said they are hoping to have one each semester.

"I think it went well," Beck said. "The students put their education to practice. Four County Career Center, Northwest State Community College, Ridgeville Fire and EMS Departments, and ProMedica Air ... we have great relationships and we will continue to create these partnerships in this department and other venues. We work very closely to



Paramedic students and ProMedica Air emergency personnel assess a "victim's" injuries.

create economic development and provide training for jobs that are needed in the community. It's just a win-win for all of us." ■

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New program streamlines purchasing process

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

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OSBA endorses several technology-based vendors that can revolutionize the way your district does business. Such programs include an eGovernance solution, emergency notification program, online payment program, online safety compliance program and most recently, an online purchasing cooperative.

In late 2011, OSBA began endorsing BuyBoard, an online purchasing cooperative designed to streamline the purchasing process and help its members make confident buying decisions.

What is BuyBoard?

The National School Boards Association collaborated with the Rhode Island Association of School Committees and the Maryland Association of Boards of Education to create the National Purchasing Cooperative's BuyBoard program.

Currently endorsed by seven state school boards associations and administered by the Texas Association of School Boards, the program's purpose is to obtain reduced prices for its members through the benefits and efficiencies of a purchasing cooperative.

OSBA membership entitles your district to become a BuyBoard member *for free*. Once you sign up for BuyBoard, your district has the ability to make purchases from an approved list of vendors that have gone through a competitive bidding process.

Benefits

A major benefit of this program is the opportunity to combine the cooperative's ability to get volume discounts with the ease of online shopping and ordering. Other benefits include:

- Power in numbers — By combining the purchasing power of cooperative members, BuyBoard participants are able to leverage better pricing from vendors they may already use. The program also helps reduce administrative and resource time.
- Purchase with confidence —

BuyBoard features many well-known vendors on its product list. The cooperative analyzes and makes award recommendations for products and services that have been submitted for competitive procurement. All awarded products and services are posted on BuyBoard's secure website.

- Save time — Contracts on BuyBoard have already undergone a competitive procurement process, which saves your district time and the cost of bid preparation. A unique feature of BuyBoard is the Request for Quote (RFQ) function, an electronic request that permits your district to select numerous vendors when submitting requests. The RFQ can be finalized in three to five days, much less time than a typical formal bid.

Another time-saving feature is the ability to shop and order online. Your district can place orders online or fax purchase orders for same-day processing. Searches by vendor and product type can also be done on the website.

How to join

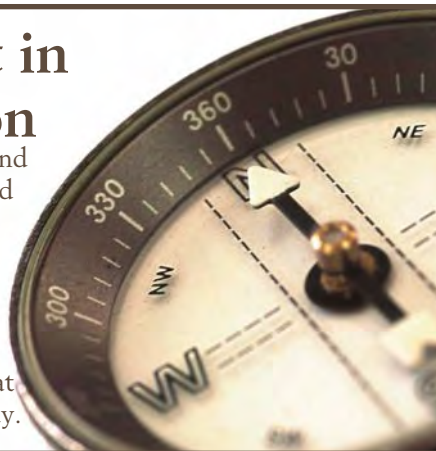
To sign up for BuyBoard, visit www.buyboard.com and click on the "Entity registration" tab found at the top of the page. Next, click on the "How to join" link found next to the "other states" headline. You then will find six steps to fully complete your program registration. A board resolution or board meeting minutes must be provided to join the program.

For questions please contact the article's author at (800) 589-OSBA; (614) 540-4000; or afinney@ohioschoolboards.org. ■

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