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September 21, 2016

Media contacts at end of release

Student performance linked to poverty — irrespective of report card changes!

COLUMBUS — Three statewide education management organizations have continued their ongoing focus on report card data showing a strong link between socioeconomic status and student performance by commissioning a new report. The Ohio School Boards Association, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials commissioned the report through the Ohio Education Policy Institute (OEPI).

Dr. Howard Fleeter, OEPI consultant, conducted an analysis of the latest school district report card data as it relates to this persistent trend. See the attached report and graphs for his findings.

The three education organizations requesting the analysis said they recognize the changes in school district report cards for this year have resulted in frustration for their members. Since the release of this year's report cards, a lot of attention has been paid to the perceived decline in student performance and other report card measures for all types of Ohio districts, even though the organizations see the decline to be largely attributed to changes in the report card measures themselves, including changes in some tests.

However, the groups want to continue monitoring the link between poverty and student achievement even as the changes are implemented. The report indicates that the gap between low-income students and their wealthier counterparts continues, regardless of the more stringent measures on school district report cards.

“Our organizations want to work with our members to improve school district report cards and solve problems, but what we do not want to lose in the recent confusion over report card results is the continuing performance gap we see between students in low-wealth districts and those in higher-wealth districts”, said OSBA Director of Legislative Services Damon Asbury. “We hope the OEPI report will serve to inform and encourage lawmakers to take action.”

Spokespersons for the groups say the new report card data is just one more piece of evidence pointing to the need for innovative solutions that go beyond the classroom.

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