

EachChild=OurFuture

A Strategic Plan for Education in Ohio: 2019-2024 (#EachChildOurFuture)

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PreK-12 Education Fuels Ohio's Future

Ohio's future is powered by its education system. Today, more than 240,000 educators work in 3,500 schools to serve more than 1.7 million **CHILDREN**—our most precious asset. Ohio benefits from a dedicated group of **CARING ADULTS** who inspire and guide children and prepare them for an exciting future.

All of this happens within a **STRONG SYSTEM** that merges policy and practice. Merging the two creates focused and enhanced opportunities for students.

The aim of this comprehensive strategic plan for education is to create the conditions for *EachChild* to reach success through the guidance and support of *caring adults* who are empowered by a system continually evolving to meet the needs of every student. It is a tool to help inform policy development at the Ohio Statehouse as well as education practice in Ohio schools. It builds on and strengthens current efforts that are making a difference in learning and life outcomes across the state.

PARTNERSHIPS make the state's education system strong. These begin with parents and caregivers, who have the greatest impact on child development. Next, a student's future is brightest with access to effective, challenging and relevant learning experiences within a seamless education system. Partners include business leaders and employers, who are the engine of Ohio's economy. They are social service and community organizations that support the health and social service needs of children. They are philanthropic leaders, who invest more than \$300 million annually to support high-quality education programs in their communities and across the state. These partnerships take on a variety of forms, from informal collaborations to formal structures—such as the *StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network*, *Appalachian Ohio P-20 Council*, *Learn to Earn Dayton*, *Stark Education Partnership* and others—that gather partners in regions across the state to help each child reach his or her full potential.

EachChild Can Change the World

Ohio has built an inspiring legacy in 215 years of statehood. This is best reflected by how the state has prospered from educating and inspiring its citizens and encouraging them to follow their dreams. Consider the incredible list of innovators and influencers who have emerged from the state's education system and gone on to change the world. Ohio's legacy is its ability to anticipate the future and transform itself to succeed. When Ohioans see problems, they solve them. When Ohioans see opportunities, they seize them.

Ohio has a proud history of inventing and influencing. Consider the following:

- Famed *inventors and engineers*: **Orville and Wilbur Wright** (Dayton), who built and flew the world's first successful airplane; **Charles Kettering** (Loudonville), who invented the electric self-starter for the automobile and founded the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company; and **Granville Woods** (Columbus), an African-American machine shop operator who held 35 patents.
- Notable *astronauts* who made the impossible world of space possible, including **John Glenn** (Cambridge), the first to orbit the earth; **Neil Armstrong** (Wapakoneta), the first to walk on the moon; and **Judith Resnik** (Akron), the second American woman in space, who gave her life in the Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster in 1986.
- Eight *U.S. Presidents*, such as **Ulysses S. Grant** (Point Pleasant) and **William Howard Taft** (Cincinnati), who served as both president and chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Renowned *artists* who have shaped American culture, from writers **Zane Grey** (Zanesville) and **Toni Morrison** (Lorain) to artist **George Bellows** (Columbus) and actress **Halle Berry** (Cleveland).
- Passionate *educators*, such as **Albert Belmont Graham** (Lena), founder of the 4-H Club and **William Holmes McGuffey** (Tuscarawas County), creator of the McGuffey Readers textbooks.

EachChild=OurFuture is anchored in the state’s legacy and builds on the assets that comprise the state’s preK-12 education system. It was crafted over the last six months with leadership from the State Board of Education of Ohio and direct participation of more than 150 preK-12 educators, higher education representatives, parents and caregivers, employers, business leaders, philanthropic organizations, community and association leaders and state legislators. It recognizes the impact that can be achieved when those partners work hand in hand to transform learning and improve opportunities for students. This plan puts Ohio on a path to prepare its next generation of innovators and influencers who will go on to change the world—just as those who built the state’s incomparable legacy.

Ohioans Solve Complex Problems

Looking forward, Ohio must channel its legacy of innovation and invention to meet key challenges. Today, the state faces the following interrelated challenges that will have a profound impact on its future.

READINESS IN AN UNKNOWN ERA:

Technological advances are rapidly changing the skills students need for the jobs of tomorrow. Forty-seven percent of today’s jobs could be phased out in the coming years due to technological advances, and 65 percent of secondary students are predicted to work in jobs that do not yet exist.¹ A recent KnowledgeWorks report notes that the rise of artificial intelligence and the emergence of the “gig” economy² will reshape the workplace, requiring learners to continually “reskill, upskill and know how to partner constructively with machines.”³

There are many problems, but I think there is a solution to all these problems: it’s just one and it’s education. You educate all the girls and boys. You give them the opportunity to learn.

- Malala Yousafzai, who, at age 17, became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

INEQUITIES IN OPPORTUNITY AND ACCOMPLISHMENT: Many students face learning inequities, often because of limited access to early learning, effective educators, safe and supportive learning environments, strong mentors, career exploration and other important opportunities. These limitations can contribute to the state’s achievement gap or the persistent disparity in measures of performance among student groups, especially as defined by socioeconomic status, intellectual disabilities, and race and ethnicity. Today, achievement gaps exist in every one of the state’s significant measures, including kindergarten readiness, third grade mathematics and reading proficiency, eighth grade math and reading proficiency, high school graduation rates, ACT/SAT scores and chronic absenteeism. The achievement gap has been identified since the state started disaggregating student data more than 15 years ago.

¹ Building Ohio’s Future Workforce: Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation, December 2016

² The gig economy refers to the increased tendency for business to hire independent contractors and short-term workers and the increased availability of workers for these short-term arrangements. Today, 34 percent of the national workforce consists of “gig” workers. It is expected to grow to 43 percent by 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/larryalton/2018/01/24/why-the-gig-economy-is-the-best-and-worst-development-for-workers-under-30/#3b670c436d76>

³ The Future of Learning: Redefining Readiness from the Inside Out; KnowledgeWorks Forecast 4.0

DEVELOPING EVERY CHILD AND THE WHOLE STUDENT: Students struggling in school often lack important social-emotional skills and are more likely to “act out, interact poorly with teachers and classmates, pay scattered attention in class and skip school.”⁴ In Ohio, this is exacerbated by the state’s opioid epidemic. Ohio leads the nation in heroin and synthetic drug overdoses, and the crisis is straining children’s services and education delivery systems.⁵

EachChild=OurFuture is Ohio’s guide for taking innovative approaches to meet the state’s major education challenges. The plan identifies a clear statewide vision and goal for preK-12 education, along with enabling strategies that seek to ensure success of the whole child.

Eight Guiding Principles for *EachChild=OurFuture*

Following are principles that were identified most frequently—and at times, most intensely, by the stakeholders and partners who worked to develop this plan. Organized by the **whole child**, supported by **caring adults** and nested within a **strong system**, *EachChild=OurFuture* adheres to each principle.

Whole Child:

1. **Students are the state’s hopes and dreams.** Meeting the needs of the whole child, including the development of social-emotional skills, is essential for preparing students for success in the classroom and to navigate the rapidly changing future of work. In addition to the academic knowledge and skills necessary to future success, students must be equipped to set goals, show empathy, maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. Ohio also must nurture and ignite student aspirations. Doing so will help students consider careers and other lifetime aspirations and understand the knowledge and skills they will need to reach those aspirations.
2. **Equity is the state’s top education imperative.** A student’s circumstances should never predetermine his or her success. Further, a student should never be denied an opportunity based on where his or her family lives or the socioeconomic makeup of his or her community. Equity, in its most basic form, is illustrated in Figure 1. The term *each* is intentionally used throughout this plan to emphasize the importance of equity.



Figure 1

Caring Adults:

3. **Parents, caregivers, teachers, school leaders and support personnel are at the heart of the state’s education system.** They care deeply about students and do whatever it takes to support student learning and success. They know that school climate and practices informed by a student’s circumstances make a big difference. They understand that a student’s growth is not only academic but also social and emotional. They leverage tools, such as curriculum,

⁴ Social and Emotional Development: The Next School Reform Frontier; The Brookings Institution, May 2015 <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Price-Education-42815.pdf>

⁵ Public Children Services Association of Ohio: PCSAO Factbook, 13th Edition 2017

instructional practices, technology and collaboration to enable student learning. They understand that more can be accomplished for *EachChild* by working collaboratively.

Strong System:

4. **A student’s learning experience—from preschool through postsecondary education—must be seamless** and engineered for preparing *each* student for future success.
5. **Business, foundation and community partners are essential to helping the state reach its goals.** The education system relies on community support, such as the meaningful participation of businesses, health care providers, social service organizations and others in the community.
6. **Schools are where it all happens—and a central focus of the work.** Ohio’s schools often serve as hubs and resources for their communities. A great school has great leadership; excellent educators who work as a team to meet each student’s needs; a focus on excellent, engaging, culturally-relevant instruction every day in every classroom; a school climate that supports academic, social-emotional competency; a commitment to continuous improvement through meaningful professional development, data analysis and evidence-based practices; and a disposition toward collaboration that creates partnerships that further support student success. A strong education system is comprised of excellent schools.
7. **There is no one-size-fits-all.** Regions and communities across Ohio face unique and nuanced challenges. Of the state’s 610 traditional school districts, 38 percent are in rural areas, 33 percent are in small towns, 20 percent are suburban and 9 percent are urban. But do not assume that schools within the same category experience the same challenges. For instance, the challenges in Columbus are not the same challenges in Cleveland. The problems in rural Southeastern Ohio are not the same problems in rural Northwestern Ohio. Proposed solutions must be flexible enough to recognize important distinctions.
8. **Evidence, data and clarity on desired outcomes are essential to the work, particularly when it comes to school improvement.** At the state level, Ohio is prioritizing the use of evidence as schools determine what strategies yield maximum results in student success. This is especially important as educators support more and more students with diverse needs. Evidence and data also provide critical feedback that can enable continuous improvement.

Thoughtful state-level **policy**, strong **practice** and meaningful **partnerships** provide the foundation for this important work. *EachChild=OurFuture* places a premium on practice—particularly coherent strategies and activities that improve schools and learning opportunities—and what a solid education can accomplish. It cherishes the reality that every school in every community can be different based on the context of that community, its students and its staff.

A Vision for *EachChild*

Imagine a day when *each* Ohio student is prepared for success beyond high school—and *each* student is poised to choose his or her own fulfilling and sustaining post-high-school pathway. Possible pathways include: pursuing career-technical training; participating in an apprenticeship program that leads to a certificate or credential of value in the workplace; enrolling in a two-year or four-year college; joining the military or armed

SHIFT #1: HONORING *EACH* STUDENT

Ohio recognizes the importance of preparing *EachChild* for success. This does not mean the state is backing away from rigorous expectations for all students. It means leaders understand that *each* student is unique. *Each* student can master the state’s standards for academic content and acquire professional skills that ensure a lifetime of learning and opportunity. It acknowledges that *each* student enters the classroom with varying levels of knowledge and skills and from different home environments. *Each* emphasizes **EQUITY** and the specific needs of that individual student.

forces; or starting a business as an entrepreneur. Regardless of the pathway, Ohio envisions that each of its high school graduates become productive, contributing members of society.

OHIO'S VISION

EachChild graduates from high school, and *each* graduate is prepared with the knowledge, skills and disposition to pursue his or her chosen post-high school path and become a lifelong learner who is an engaged, culturally aware and contributing member of society.

A Goal for *EachChild*

To achieve its state-level vision, Ohio's education community embraced an overarching goal focused on the result of the preK-12 system—what happens to students after high school.

OHIO'S OVERARCHING GOAL

Annually increase the percentage of Ohio's high school graduates who, within one year of graduation, are:

- Enrolled and succeeding in a post-high school learning experience, including an adult career-technical education program, an apprenticeship and/or a two-year or four-year college program (15 semester hours); or
- Serving in a military branch; or
- Earning a living wage.

Four Equally-Valued Domains of Learning

Stakeholders and partners who developed this plan identified four equally-valued domains of learning, represented in Figure 2. They acknowledged that critical reasoning and social emotional learning competencies are important, inseparable elements of learning. Together, the domains of learning support the development of the whole child.

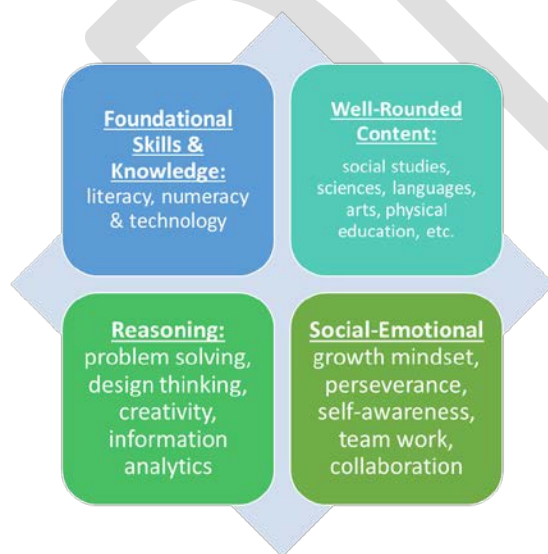


Figure 2

SHIFT #2: EMPHASIZING OPTIONS

Over the last decade, Ohio largely emphasized *college for all*. While college is a meaningful path for many students, some benefit from other pathways. For example, Ohio's employers are reporting they need more trained workers and believe that career-technical education is an underused pathway. The pathway offers students opportunities to earn credentials that lead to successful participation in the workforce and future learning opportunities. Ohio's goal recognizes that there are multiple pathways to a successful future in the state. One constant remains: regardless of the pathway selected, the more a student learns and adapts, the more successful he or she will be.

Foundational Knowledge and Skills: To be successful in Ohio’s ever-changing world, students must be equipped with the fundamental tools that support all learning. Each student must know how to critically read, write and leverage technology to maximize access to future learning experiences. With an increasing emphasis on measurement and data analysis in all professions, students must possess the knowledge of mathematics and quantitative reasoning that reflects, at a minimum, real-work problem-solving and use. Technology competency is essential as technology rapidly evolves and transforms everyday life.

Well-Rounded Content: Beyond the foundational knowledge and skills of literacy, numeracy and technology, students need exposure to a broader range of subjects and disciplines. These include social studies, science, languages, arts, physical education and technical education fields among others. The exploration of these disciplines helps students identify their passions and aspirations, as well as equips them to see connections and relationships among ideas and concepts. Stakeholders and partners who contributed to this plan recognized that use of integrated, multi-disciplinary approaches to learning well-rounded content often are the most powerful for students.

SHIFT #3: TECHNOLOGY IS FOUNDATIONAL

Ohio’s plan recognizes that technology is foundational and just as important as mathematics and English language arts, from which all other learning is built. Previously, many viewed technology as a tool to engage and differentiate the foundational skills of mathematics and English language arts. Learning is now digital and technology is no longer just a tool for teaching and learning. It will be essential for each student’s day-to-day success in life—from the use of computers for everyday tasks to coding to app development.

Reasoning Skills: The real world is seldom clear cut. Future success will require a set of knowledge and skills that allow an individual to draw on multiple disciplines and knowledge bases to synthesize and reach deeper understanding and new learning. These skills include problem-solving, design and computational thinking, information evaluation and data analytics. In the workplace or in the college classroom, the ability to engage in critical reasoning deepens the learning experience and forges new understandings and innovations.

SHIFT #4: CRITICAL REASONING AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In the past, our attention to the educational experience for our children has focused on academic content areas. Assessments and the state’s report card focus on English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Increasingly, however, we understand the tremendous importance of critical reasoning competencies and social-emotional skills and understanding. Regardless of a student’s future path—whether it be entering the workforce, going to college, enrolling in an apprenticeship program or joining the military—critical reasoning and social-emotional skills are instrumental to success. We must be more deliberate in supporting students’ acquisition of these competencies and skills.

Social-Emotional Learning: Life is a shared journey. Rarely does one work alone today, and success involves interactions with others. Understanding how to function in the context of social interactions is essential to lifelong success. This requires an awareness and understanding of the power of emotions and the contributions they make to such interactions. We must be more deliberate about facilitating social-emotional learning, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, collaboration and team work, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

The four domains reflect a mix of essential skills and flexible customization. While each student needs to meet high expectations for foundational skills, the specific mix of other knowledge and skills is more variable. For each of these four domains, Ohio needs to build on its current standards to identify the knowledge, skills and competencies that it believes students should acquire. It also will need to identify ways in which students demonstrate mastery of knowledge and skills and ways that gauge how successful the education system is in supporting students in each of the four domains. Each student likely will have a unique mix of abilities and competencies, but each is able to achieve at high levels. Ohio cannot compromise on its commitment to support each student.

SHIFT #5: EMPHASIZING SUPPORTS

EachChild calls for a shift in the state's role—from one of compliance to one of support. The goal of system improvement envisions collaboration, partnership and mutual support. By working together, we can accomplish much more than by working independently or against each other.

Strategies: Operationalizing the Four Learning Domains and Reaching the Goal

A strong system with caring adults who develop the whole child.

EachChild=OurFuture acknowledges that the most impactful public policies and practices are identified and developed when stakeholders of different sectors and diverse viewpoints, including practitioners, work in partnership. Over the last six months, the Ohio Department of Education convened more than 150 stakeholders and partners to help identify and shape the following strategies. **These strategies are designed to support the four domains of learning and enable the overarching goal.**

The stakeholders and partners worked as part of five Workgroups, which were led by expert, independent facilitators. The Workgroups surveyed Ohio's landscape, examined the research and identified high-impact strategies aimed at helping Ohio ensure success for *EachChild=OurFuture*, with support from caring adults who are empowered by a strong system.

Early Learning and Literacy Workgroup: A strong system includes caring adults who work across sectors, agencies, providers and systems to help develop the whole child.

Prenatal through third grade experiences profoundly shape the basic architecture of the brain. The implementation of skills-based programs that advance early literacy learning and language development make a big difference. Ohio must take a more coherent approach to ensure that *EachChild* has the foundation to succeed by age eight. To enable this, families need the knowledge and resources to support healthy development of the architecture of their child's brain; children need access to high-quality early learning and literacy experiences supported by evidence-based practices and skilled professionals; schools need to be ready to receive and educate all children and families; public and private stakeholders need to work together to advance a coherent early learning and literacy vision; and everyone needs to take collective responsibility for the health and education of all children.

The following are specific actions the Ohio Department of Education can take to further drive clarity, coherence and collaboration and advance early learning and literacy opportunities for *EachChild*. They are aligned to and build on the Early Childhood Success Framework and the Ohio Business Roundtable's report on the state of early learning.

STRATEGY 1: Organize around one clear message about the importance of early learning and literacy. In Ohio, six state agencies (the Ohio Departments of Education, Job and Family Services,

Medicaid, Developmental Disabilities, Health, and Mental Health & Addiction Services) serve young children and their families. Each embrace a similar goal: to improve outcomes for children from birth through third grade so they are on track for a life filled with learning. But the agencies use varying messages and approaches when serving Ohio's children and families. Both need to be clarified and implemented with fidelity so that families and caregivers have clarity and are enabled to provide the best care.

To ensure the most effective approach, the Ohio Department of Education should work with state agencies and other partners to lead the development of a clear, common, research-based and culturally-sensitive messages. These messages should communicate the importance of brain architecture, social-emotional learning, language development and foundational learning skills. All state agencies and their partners should be held mutually accountable for ensuring that this message has a positive impact on parents and caregivers.

To bolster the message and share relevant resources, the Ohio Department of Education also should create an easily accessible clearinghouse for early childhood research, resources, evidence-based strategies and data. This clearinghouse will catalogue and disseminate resources that are aligned to [Ohio's Birth through Kindergarten Early Learning and Development Standards](#), [Ohio's Learning Standards K-3](#), [Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts](#) and [Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#). The clearinghouse can support program and school-based teams (e.g., birth to third grade teachers, support specialists and administrators) to provide universal and targeted instruction and resources for educators and families based on effective early learning, language and literacy development practices.

STRATEGY 2: Improve state and local ability to support an effective kindergarten readiness assessment. The Ohio Department of Education should work toward a balanced kindergarten readiness assessment. It should adhere to the following principles:

1. A single assessment tool must be used for all students for equity, productivity and developmental reasons.
2. The assessment tool must be able to effectively inform policy and practice at the state and local levels.
3. Families, educators, policymakers and the public must be able to understand the value and use of the assessment tool.
4. The assessment tool must be designed to be sensitive to the time needed to administer it and the burden placed on teachers. Smart flexibility in administration should be supported.
5. The assessment tool should be supported with well-designed training to improve instructional practice and organizational responsiveness.

STRATEGY 3: Connect early literacy with middle and high school literacy skills. Building on Ohio's previous early literacy plan and the newly developed [Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#), Ohio must prioritize helping each student master fundamental literacy skills. To do this, the state must help build early educators' capacity to implement research-supported literacy and language development instructional practices. This can be done through targeted professional development opportunities and technical assistance. Other helpful steps include better integrating professional learning strategies for PreK through third grade educators tied to research-based literacy and language development instructional practices. In addition, partners should also map out how early literacy skills are and then sharing those with families, libraries, child care providers and other relevant community partners.

STRATEGY 4: Align early childhood education program requirements between the Ohio Departments of Education and Job and Family Services. The Departments of Education and Job and Family Services should fully align licensing, funding and policies across child care and early childhood education. This alignment will ensure that all early childhood programs, no matter the setting, provide safe, healthy and quality environments for the state’s youngest learners.

Standards, Assessment and Accountability Workgroup: A strong system includes clear standards, robust measures of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and accountability tools for feedback and continuous system improvement so that *each* Ohio student is wholly prepared for success.

Ohio has made progress in setting clear standards for what students should know and be able to do, implementing robust methods to demonstrate progress and let teachers know what help students need, and deploying tools that report performance and student growth. But more work remains to better serve *EachChild* and promote equity.

STRATEGY 5: Ensure state learning standards and other related competencies reflect all four learning domains. Ohio employs an effective process for reviewing and [revising Ohio’s Learning Standards](#) that engages a mix of Ohio-based educators and experts. However, to date, most of Ohio’s standards have been focused on the academic domains of Foundational Knowledge and Skills and Well-Rounded Content. Going forward, Ohio must work with educators, employers and experts to develop standards and/or competencies for what students should be able to demonstrate in the domains of Reasoning and Social-Emotional Learning. This work is about to receive a major boost as the Ohio Department of Education has commissioned a Social-Emotional Learning Standards Advisory Group to recommend social-emotional learning standards or competencies for K-12. The state currently has social-emotional learning standards for birth through grade 3. As the state moves forward with this work, it can leverage the [OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal](#) as a foundation for a more fully developed set of reasoning, and, in some cases, social-emotional learning competencies.

STRATEGY 6: Move toward a balanced system of assessments to appropriately gauge the four domains, and provide students with opportunities to demonstrate competency and mastery in ways beyond state standardized tests. Currently, Ohio’s assessment system (broadly defined as the state’s role in providing the best summative assessments that are aligned to the standards and in providing tools to districts to help determine the best formative ways to gauge mastery) is geared to measure students’ Foundational Skills and Knowledge and Well-Rounded Content. If Ohio values all four domains, the state must explore innovative approaches to summative assessments, while working to help school districts gauge learning in Reasoning and Social-Emotional Learning. The research is clear that the acquisition of social-emotional skills cannot necessarily be tested. But the skills, when demonstrated by students, can be observed by caring adults and mentors who are trained to do so.

Demonstration of competency and mastery are occurring but not in ways that balance the state’s assessment portfolio. A handful of schools have worked with community partners—including employers and business leaders—to develop rubrics that gauge mastery of concepts. For example, many STEM schools in Ohio apply locally developed rubrics to gauge student progress in a project-based or capstone project. The Ohio Department of Education is thinking through an adaptive comparative judgement model that might accelerate this approach.

In addition, schools working to implement the [OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal](#) are determining consistent and meaningful ways to observe student mastery of Reasoning and Social-Emotional skills. To receive the seal, students work closely with caring adults, or mentors, who support and coach them. Those mentors observe students' demonstration of identified professional skills that are included as part of the qualifications to earn a seal. The learnings garnered from implementing the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal can be used to inform how the state moves toward a balanced assessment system.

STRATEGY 7: Refine the state's accountability system to be fairer, more meaningful, asset based and to provide feedback in Reasoning and Social-Emotional Learning. The purpose of Ohio's accountability system is to gauge performance of state, district and school-level education systems and to identify areas that need improvement so that each student is on a path to success. Feedback from the education field suggests the system should be modified to include a more robust and balanced set of reporting measures.

As Ohio moves to operationalize the four learning domains, its system for providing districts and schools with feedback should shift to recognizing the domains of Reasoning and Social-Emotional Learning. This should be feedback only—and not a “graded” item on the state's report card. As noted in Strategy 6, research is clear that social-emotional learning cannot be tested. Similarly, the state should not “grade” how a school or district is preparing students with Reasoning and Social-Emotional skills. Those determinations are best done locally by caring adults who work directly with the student.

Student Supports, School Climate and Culture Workgroup: A strong system includes caring adults from a variety of sectors who help develop the whole child.

The physical, mental and behavioral health of students is important. So are healthy, safe and supportive learning environments that are essential for academic and career success. The following strategies seek to meet those ends.

STRATEGY 8: Provide tiered supports and disseminate resources to help schools cultivate the needs of the whole child, and understand the importance of school climate and culture.

The whole child model includes the following tenets:

- Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle;
- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe;
- Each student is engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community;
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults; and
- Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further studies and for employment and participation in a global economy.⁶

Ultimately, the caring adults who work with students, particularly educators, should be trained to enable the whole-child approach. Additionally, educators should be developed to understand and implement the latest techniques that foster social-emotional learning and speak to trauma informed practices. Training and development also must emphasize the importance of cultural competency and culturally sensitive approaches that have the greatest impact on students.

⁶ Whole Child Tenets, ASCD, <http://www.ascd.org/whole-child.aspx>

Creating conditions that recognize the whole-child approach means that *EachChild* feels the support of caring adults and empathetic peers. This means that caring adults respond quickly and consistently to bullying behavior. Parents, school staff and other adults in each community can help kids prevent bullying by talking about it, building a safe school environment and crafting a community-wide bullying prevention strategy.

STRATEGY 9: Increase unique and bold partnerships, as appropriate, that encompass education, community, social and health care (including behavioral health care) partners to support and care for in-need preK-12 students. Students have basic needs that must be met before they can be expected to master the four learning domains. A student’s physiological, safety, belonging, esteem and self-actualization must be in tact as a platform to support deeper learning.

Ohio has promising models that illustrate what is possible in this area. For example, Cincinnati Public’s Oyster School is a full “community learning center” that partners with families, community members and local agencies to foster academic excellence, build student confidence and create leadership opportunities. Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus has deployed *Care Connection*, a partnership between the hospital and area schools to improve access to primary care, behavioral health care and specialty care by providing on-site services in school buildings and via mobile clinics.

A new but promising model is that of [Bonds of Union](#). This transportable model pairs in-need students and families with family advocates to provide long-term, family-to-child mentoring; case managers to provide holistic support for each family’s head of household; and one-to-one tutors to ensure students accelerate academically. This is a fully integrated support system that is not tied to an individual school building.

While these models are inspiring and promising, they point to issues across systems that can create barriers to their spread and scale. State-level partners must be attentive to these challenges and work together to overcome them.

High School Success and Postsecondary Connections Workgroup: A strong system with caring adults who help prepare each high school student to succeed after high school—whether that be postsecondary learning or securing a living-wage job.

In some respects, Ohio’s high school model is outdated. Career-technical education continues to face a stigma, harming student opportunity. It is time for Ohio to redesign the high school experience so that employers are more directly engaged and students have early exposure to in-demand careers. Ohio’s graduation requirements should transform over time to match this redesign.

STRATEGY 10: Transform the high school experience so that students graduate with college credit, career-technical training, an industry-recognized credential or certificate or military training. Many communities across Ohio are taking steps to transform the high school experience, including Cleveland, Akron, Cincinnati, Marion and others. Marion Harding High School, for example, used the state’s Straight A Fund to help transform its high school model. To do this, the school worked with business and community leaders to conduct a regional economic study identifying driving industry clusters. Presidential Pathways was born out of this study. It serves students who graduate from Marion Harding High School but face obstacles once they enter college or start a job. It is a community collaborative and

includes partners from businesses, faith-based institutions, the Marion Crawford ADAMH Board and others who work to support the graduate.

Marion Harding is just one example. Ultimately, Ohio’s high school experience needs to be transformed to reflect the realities of tomorrow’s workplace. College Credit Plus is helping students earn college and high school credits at the same time. Career-technical education, STEM and other project-based, applied learning approaches are exposing students to careers and in-demand jobs early. In addition, SuccessBound and the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal are helping expose high school students to internships with businesses, apprenticeships in in-demand fields or trades or training in industry-recognized credential or certificate programs. These opportunities must become the new normal.

STRATEGY 11: Implement a “student success plan” approach for graduation with more, but still rigorous, options for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills to earn a high school diploma that adheres to the attributes of a high school graduate (refer to the attributes framework in Appendix). In the short-term, Ohio should hold steady to maintain the current slate of five graduation options (which consists of the original three pathways plus two additional options enacted in the most recent state budget) as follows:

1. State assessment-based pathway;
2. Credential-based pathway;
3. Nationally recognized college readiness pathway;
4. Alternative career-tech pathway; and
5. Alternative knowledge/skills demonstration pathway.

In the long-term, Ohio should use the attributes framework and the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal to design a “student success plan” that:

- Starts early to identify career and postsecondary aspirations and counsel students how best to stay on a path to excellence;
- Pushes and challenges students to reach rigorous levels of knowledge and skill acquisition;
- Identifies learning options—including career-technical experiences, work-based learning, project-based or case-based learning approaches and others—most appropriate for the student’s success;
- Validly, reliably and consistently measures how students demonstrate competency and mastery.
- Includes a robust portfolio of measure, including end-of-course, ACT/SAT and demonstration-based measures.
- Emphasizes equity and access;
- Uses rubrics to gauge student progress and assess performance; and
- Exposes students to relevant concepts and work-based, experiential learning.

Excellent Educators and Instructional Strategies Workgroup: A strong system has excellent educators who effectively instruct and help prepare the whole child.

Teachers and school leaders have the greatest impact on student success in school. And a successful school has a highly effective teacher in every classroom and a highly effective school leader in every office.

STRATEGY 12: Support districts to meet their own unique human capital needs.

The Ohio Department of Education should provide targeted supports that help districts successfully accomplish strategies focused on human capital continuum. Figure 3 demonstrates the human capital approach for schools and districts.



Figure 3

The Department also must examine its initiatives that focus on supporting educators in terms of their effect on student outcomes (and aligned to newly identified strategic plan strategies) and adjust or eliminate those strategies that are having little or no impact. Understanding that districts face enormous responsibilities with often limited capacity, this strategy also outlines how the Department should collect, analyze, and distribute human capital data based on district need.

STRATEGY 13: Increase the supply of highly effective teachers and leaders and ensure they are effective or highly effective from day one. Students need new teachers who can come into the classroom prepared to build meaningful relationships with and expect great things from them. And teachers need new leaders who understand the importance of creating and sustaining an environment where all students—and adults—can learn and grow. Ohio should improve preparation of aspiring teachers and leaders by focusing on individualized preservice supports. For teachers, this can be done by encouraging year-long clinical experiences that extend the amount of time pre-service teachers work with and learn from effective teachers. Districts can think differently about staffing models to extend the reach of their most effective teachers. With this approach, districts and schools have the flexibility to establish teacher leadership positions for highly effective teachers, including Senior and Lead Professional Educators, that allow these teachers to work both with students and with new teachers.

For leaders, it could mean incentivizing principal mentoring to ensure that aspiring principals learn from those school leaders with proven track records of success. Building communities of practice among principals, in which principals regularly collaborate and network, is another way to ensure new principals have the opportunity to learn from expert leaders.

Districts can also improve their first-year teacher preparation by building on the successes of alternative teacher preparation programs such as Teach For America. The organization uses a meticulous selection process and personalized pre-service training that continues once the teacher is assigned a classroom. The state’s Resident Educator program, recently revised to address burdensome aspects of the intensive experience, builds on these practices and continues to be a national model.

In addition to improving preparation for aspiring teachers and leaders, districts need effective strategies for attracting more people into the profession. Many regions across the state—particularly rural areas—have created and applied “grow your own” programs, which expose local candidates to the teaching profession at a young age and recruit them back to the community once they earn their degrees and licenses. This strategy can be particularly effective in recruiting individuals from under-represented groups, such as male teachers or Hispanic teachers.

STRATEGY 14: Support every principal to be a highly effective principal-especially those working in schools with students with the greatest needs. Successful school leaders create the conditions necessary for teachers to be effective. They provide direction, influence behaviors and inspire excellence. But identifying and developing effective leaders is no easy task. This strategy focuses on improving training for principals around providing high-quality, actionable and ongoing feedback to teachers, as well as a review of the amount of time principals provide for teachers to spend reflecting, adjusting lessons, and practicing new approaches. The state might also consider an assessment of principal management to ensure that principals are learning from exceptional leaders, have the time to grow and collaborate and have the opportunity to practice and model effective leadership strategies. Ohio's newly revised Standards for Principals help provide a roadmap for districts to improve leadership quality. The standards emphasize the primary role of the principal as establishing a collaborative learning culture for students and adults.

Leadership development can vary significantly from district to district. To improve it, Ohio can maximize the use of state or national certified principal mentors to support the development of more highly effective leaders. The state should also leverage the BRIGHT New Leaders for Ohio's Schools, which shows significant promise in quickly changing the culture of low-performing schools through effective demonstrations of leadership and instruction.

STRATEGY 15: Improve targeted supports for delivering excellent instruction. As Ohio works to emphasize the importance of all four learning domains, it will be critical that educators continuously sharpen their instructional approaches. These means that educators know how to deliver the best digital and personalized learning (building on the Future Ready State Framework), project- and case-based learning, STEM teaching and learning strategies, and other proven instructional techniques that challenge students to creatively solve problems through an integrated approach to learning. Delivering excellent instructional practices means that educators are masters at individualizing instruction to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities. This is a key driver for ensuring equity.

The state will have a responsibility to identify and showcase high-quality curriculum for local schools to consider. This strategy also focuses on incentivizing creative and new approaches to teacher development by piloting Teaching Labs to provide teachers with the opportunity to engage in content-specific inquiry cycles, collaboratively explore new ideas, and provide feedback to peers.

Measuring Progress and Refining the Goal over Time

The stakeholders and partners who developed this plan considered the goal in careful detail. They determined it would be premature to identify a specific percentage increase and period of time for the increase because the state lacks sufficient baseline data for what happens to a graduate one year after high school and what is a realistic pace of change. Ohio has data on the number of Ohio high school students who receive postsecondary education at Ohio-based public institutions of higher education. However, the state lacks comparable data for those graduates who go to private postsecondary institutions in Ohio, institutions of higher education outside of Ohio, the military or those who go straight into the workforce. The Ohio Department of Education is working closely with other state agencies and national data organizations to identify comparable data and connect it to establish a reliable and valid baseline. Within one year, baseline data will be available. Also within one year, evidence on expected pace of change will be analyzed and applied to Ohio's system and, with that information, targets can be set.

Ohio also will need to establish intermediate progress indicators that gauge the extent to which the education system and students are on track to meeting the goal. Ideally, Ohio would have interim measures at various points over the course of a student’s educational experience (e.g., preschool, elementary grades, middle grades, high school grades) that would show progress and accomplishment. In some cases, the state can rely on traditional measures of proficiency in certain content areas, but such measures are not always complete in terms of what this plan is capturing. At the same time, leaders recognize that it will take time to develop meaningful and appropriate measures more fully. Ohio is committed to this work.

What *EachChild=OurFuture* is...What it is not...

Educators, school leaders and partners have asked about the intent behind the strategic plan. The developers of the plan are explicit in stating that it is not meant to develop new state mandates or requirements that prescribe what districts and schools do. Rather, the plan is a way of focusing collective attention on key drivers of educational excellence and student success and recognizing the work that many educators already are doing around the state in the areas of critical thinking and social-emotional learning. This plan acknowledges the importance of those components and their relevance in schools. It is meant to encourage and support those innovative practices and move them into the mainstream in Ohio education. The areas and ideas discussed in the plan reflect a shared understanding of directions in which Ohio must go, but that may look different in each district and each school. However, all partners should be willing to engage in the work with positive intent and a belief in the state’s collective ability to succeed. Ohio will only reach its destination through a collective effort.

What Comes Next

This plan is not a prescription. It does not presume to say to any school or district, “Here’s what you need to do.” It is meant to inspire and provoke discussions about what is happening in schools each day and over time. It is meant to support action in the name of continuous improvement. Schools and districts should not think they can focus on everything all at once. They can choose to start with any number of elements of what excellence looks like.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have we thought about and developed our own continuous improvement action plan? Are we committed to, and working to, implement it?
- Have we addressed issues of teacher excellence including recruitment, professional development, retention, etc.?
- Have we addressed issues of academic rigor, quality instructional practices, excellent curriculum and the four domains?
- Have we addressed challenges we may face with school climate and culture?
- Have we developed effective partnerships that support student success?
- Do we have a clear understanding of what excellence looks like—and, if not, where can we go to see it?

What every school and district chooses to do will look different. The only choice that is not a valid one is the choice to do nothing.

APPENDIX

Framework to Consider Attributes of a High School Graduate

To help school districts across Ohio think through their own framework for determining what its successful high school graduates will look like, educators and employers who developed this plan consulted national research to come up with the following list. It is intended to both provoke and support local thinking and action.

- **Foundational knowledge and skills**—The graduate will have command of basic skills in *mathematics, English language arts* and *technology*—the building blocks that enable future learning. Specific to technology, the graduate will understand its global impact and use it to design solutions, communicate ideas and share information.
- **Well-rounded content**—The graduate will have exposure to social studies, sciences, languages, arts and physical education.
- **Critical-thinking and problem-solving skills**—The graduate will demonstrate strong decision-making skills, know how to analyze issues and approach complex challenges.
- **Resiliency, grit and work ethic**—The graduate will demonstrate follow-through and have the wherewithal to “stick to” challenging problems until a solution is identified.
- **Communication—oral and written**—The graduate will be an effective communicator who can clearly articulate his or her thoughts verbally and in writing.
- **Engaged citizens**—The graduate will productively contribute to society and engage in the democratic process (for example, vote on a regular basis).
- **Cultural awareness**—The graduate will hold a world perspective that values and respects diversity and the establishment of meaningful relationships.
- **Collaboration and teamwork**—The graduate will cultivate skills necessary to work with others and understand cooperation and compromise.
- **Adaptability and agility**—The graduate will exercise flexibility when necessary and seek to continuously learn and process new skills.
- **Social, emotional and interpersonal skills**—The graduate will express and manage his or her emotions and establish positive and rewarding relationships with others.
- **Curiosity, discovery and growth mindset**—The graduate will ask thoughtful questions, dig deeply into issues and understand that improvement results from his or her own learning.
- **Gathering information and discerning that information**—The graduate will be intentional about receiving information from multiple, reliable sources and making sense of that information.
- **Innovative and creative**—The graduate will think differently about problems—considering multiple angles of approach—and integrate skills and knowledge across disciplines to identify solutions.

In Ohio, the state determines standards (see [Ohio’s Learning Standards](#)) for what students should know and be able to do. The state also identifies minimum-level graduation requirements. Local schools lead in identifying the skills and knowledge—or attributes—that their graduates should possess, as influenced, in many cases, by their regional economies and workforce needs. The framework of attributes is a model designed to help schools think through their own locally developed lists of attributes.

This framework is closely aligned to the [OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal](#). The OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal is a formal designation students can earn on their high school diplomas that signifies their personal strengths, strong work ethic and professional experience. The framework of attributes includes the

professional skills contained in the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal, plus an emphasis on the academic skills required for future success.

Direction from the State Board of Education

In July 2017, the State Board of Education identified the following 12 priorities to guide development of the strategic plan. These priorities were shared with the stakeholders and partners who came together to develop the plan.

MEETING THE LEARNING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF ALL STUDENTS.

1. **Prioritizing equity.** The Strategic Plan must focus on strategies that meet the learning needs and aspirations of *all* students, especially students of poverty, students with disabilities, English language learners, and other students who face unique challenges. These tend to be students who, due to barriers beyond their control, have not reached their potential for learning. They require targeted supports to be successful and, like all students, benefit from strong teacher-student relationships, differentiated instruction, developmentally-appropriate methods, culturally-informed practices, and personalized-learning approaches.
2. **Ensuring students have foundational knowledge and skills.** The Strategic Plan must promote the importance of students acquiring essential knowledge and skills in mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social studies—all of which serve as cornerstones for life-long learning.
3. **Accommodating all students' learning and growth needs and aspirations.** Beyond foundational knowledge and skills, the Strategic Plan must address students' learning and growth needs through a well-rounded education. This includes, among other things, the development of social-emotional competency, learning and innovation skills, information and technology skills, and life and career skills. These skills will help students identify their passions and chart their futures.
4. **Celebrating learning.** The Strategic Plan must promote learning approaches that actively engage students through discovery, creativity, and exploration. This will capitalize on students' strengths, passions, and interests and fuel their curiosity and desire for more learning.

ENSURING EXCELLENT EDUCATORS (TEACHERS AND LEADERS) WHO KNOW HOW TO MEET THE LEARNING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF ALL STUDENTS.

5. **Supporting effective educators who achieve results.** The Strategic Plan must acknowledge the impact of excellent teachers and leaders, who research shows are the greatest contributors to student success in school. It must promote policies and practices that ensure an abundant supply of effective teachers and leaders (and other personnel – psychologists, counselors, support staff, etc.) who are collaborative, empowered, prepared and developed to nurture student growth and boost student accomplishment.

FOSTERING ENGAGING, SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS THAT MAXIMIZE STUDENT LEARNING.

6. **Fostering environments that maximize student learning.** The Strategic Plan must identify and promote strategies to help students overcome barriers to learning and build teacher and leader capacity to support those strategies. Strategies should include reducing stress, addressing experiences of trauma, implementing restorative discipline practices, and meeting physical, social, and emotional needs. Strategies promoted in the Strategic Plan should seek to assure that students are educated in safe, supportive, nurturing, challenging, emotionally-secure, and engaging environments.
7. **Advancing quality in- and out-of-school learning opportunities.** The Strategic Plan must identify ways to promote access to opportunities that enrich the student learning experience during the school day, after the school day, and beyond the traditional K-12 school experience (including, but

not limited to, opportunities for students to participate in community service, internships, mentoring, and after- and out-of-school experiences).

8. **Promoting evidence-based, innovative learning practices.** The Strategic Plan must support school districts in promoting and implementing innovative and evidence-based learning practices, including, but not limited to, the integrated use of technology and authentic real-world experiential learning and project-based learning.

MAINTAINING AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND FAMILIES.

9. **Prioritizing early learning.** The Strategic Plan must recognize the value and return on investment of early learning. It must identify strategies that advance high-quality, developmentally-appropriate, hands-on early childhood and preschool opportunities for students. It must promote collaborations with parents/caregivers and community partners that emphasize the importance of early learning.
10. **Striking partnerships to deploy integrated supports.** The Strategic Plan must promote and encourage schools to partner with parents/caregivers, community members, and organizations to help maximize learning and support student opportunities and accomplishments. These supports can address students' basic needs or more specialized conditions (e.g. nutrition, vision/hearing, health care, career exploration, workplace learning, etc.) that have an impact on learning and life.
11. **Emphasizing collective stakeholder impact.** At the state and local level, the Strategic Plan must recognize the power of collective impact and seek to leverage all elements of society—including critical partners such as parents/caregivers, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, state legislators, etc.—in a shared commitment to the continuous improvement of the education system and the lives of children.
12. **Measuring progress.** The Strategic Plan must commit to a robust set of reliable measures that provide students, parents/caregivers, educators, and communities with clear feedback and an understanding of important trends that can be used to continually enhance teaching and learning.

The Plan Development Process

Incorporate language that explains the Steering Committee, Plan Development Oversight Team, five Workgroups and regional stakeholder meetings.

Identify members of each.