

December 3, 2012

Greetings:

As you are aware, last week, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) released new graduation rate data that, for the first time, use the same methodology for all states. Overall, Ohio's graduation rate for 2010-2011 was 80 percent, which is about in the middle of the pack nationally. However, our 59 percent graduation rate for African-American students and 53 percent rate for students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) were well below many other states. You can find the full report and spreadsheet [here](#) on the USDOE website.

The results show we are competitive with other states, but have opportunities for continuous improvement. While the results for African-American and LEP subgroups are unacceptable, they are not inevitable. We know that all kids can, and will, succeed when given adequate time, intervention and support. Time is the variable, but learning is the constant when we commit to believing that all students will achieve provided the necessary learning supports interventions and services.

The good news is that there are numerous schools in Ohio that, despite high poverty or challenging environments, are able to help students succeed.

Public Agenda's recently released [Failure is not an option](#) report, sponsored by Race to the Top (RttT), features nine schools that succeed despite high poverty. These schools have powerful and engaged leaders among their administrative and teaching staffs. They don't tolerate excuses or low expectations from any student or teacher. In these schools, lack of home support is not an acceptable explanation for poor performance. These are strong, disciplined environments focused on student achievement and progress. I encourage you all to review the report's findings and reflect on how they may fit with your own approach to student improvement. Please know that I readily recognize that there are numerous other exemplars of such schools in Ohio.

Additionally, Ohio's RttT initiative is helping lead the way toward closing the achievement gap with a variety of strategies. These include funding innovative programs like Avid and Early College High School, which are designed specifically to help at-risk students graduate.

On another note, as you know, beginning next school year, Value-Added scores based on student growth data will be used as a teacher evaluation measure. This makes it extremely important to ensure that teachers are matched to the correct student data. To make these student/teacher links, teachers will be asked to verify, and principals to sign off on, previous-year student rosters. Please review and mark calendars for the following Ohio Roster Verification timeframe for the 2012-2013 school year:

- **April 8 –23** – Schools receive raw student rosters produced by EMIS;
- **April 8–12 and April 15–19** – e Roster Verification trainings;
- **April 24 –May 14** – Teacher Roster Verification period;
- **May 15 – June 5** – Principal Roster-Verification review and approval.

Even though the official Roster Verification process does not begin until spring 2013, please give your principals a heads-up now and encourage them to begin talking about this process with teachers and provide the support they need to understand its purpose and processes. Numerous resources are available via ODE and Battelle for Kids.

Also, Battelle for Kids has developed the new *BFK Link* platform for schools to use to verify student

rosters. If your school/district is new to roster verification, or could use a refresher, use the resources available on the [Ohio Student Progress Portal](#) or view the [Why Link?](#) video series.

Thank you for your continued efforts to serve Ohio's children.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Sawyers

### **Approaching deadlines or important dates mentioned in previous editions of *EdConnection***

- 12/7** Civil Rights Data Collection submissions due [\(10/22/2012\)](#)
- 12/31** Early Literacy and Reading Readiness grant application deadline [\(11/05/2012\)](#)  
Current window for eTPES closes [\(11/26/2012\)](#)  
Web-Based Recruitment System user survey deadline [\(11/26/2012\)](#)

#### ***For School superintendents and treasurers***

##### ***ODE offers sample Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) online***

Sample Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are available on the ODE website by clicking [here](#). There are two types of samples available to help districts that intend to design their own SLOs – high-quality exemplars, and draft SLOs that ODE staff have annotated fully to indicate what would make them high-quality SLOs.

##### ***ODE conducting workshops on Student Growth Measures and SLOs***

ODE has begun training sessions is offering training sessions on establishing Student Growth Measures (SGMs) that will be part of the Ohio Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems. These sessions also include important instruction on how to write successful, local SLOs.

Several ODE-sponsored train-the-trainer sessions for district and educational service center leaders in December, January and February are already filled. But Craig Burford, head of the Ohio ESC Association, has committed to having local ESCs provide these trainings regionally. ESCs are well-positioned to deliver high quality training on these topics on behalf of ODE. If your LEA was not able to register for training through the ODE-sponsored sessions, rest assured that there will be more sessions available through the ESCs and or through other districts that attended ODE's trainings.

#### ***For curriculum directors, teachers and school counselors***

##### ***Public feedback sought for Operating Standards for Children with Disabilities***

ODE is currently inviting public comment and feedback on upcoming changes for its *Operating Standards for Ohio Educational Agencies Serving Children with Disabilities*. The standards are designed to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to and the opportunity for full participation in education, independent living and economic self-sufficiency.

Obtaining feedback from stakeholders within the disability community is an important part of this process. Feedback and comments may be entered on the first draft until Dec. 17, 2012. Stakeholders also will have additional opportunities to provide feedback throughout the next few months.

To view the draft changes and submit comments, click [here](#).

##### ***Nominations being sought for Military Child of the Year***

Operation Homefront, a non-profit organization assisting military families, is seeking nominations for the Military Child of the Year award to recognize outstanding military children who demonstrate resiliency, leadership and achievement. Recipients will represent each branch of the military and receive their award at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. in April 2013. Each recipient also will receive a laptop computer and a \$5,000 cash prize.

Anyone may nominate a child who:

- Is a legal military dependent. Status confirmed by Military ID or DEERS enrollment form;
- Between the ages of 8 and 18, at the time of nomination; and
- Is available, along with one adult guardian, to travel to Washington, D.C. area for the gala award presentation on April 11, 2013.

Online [nominations](#) must be received by **Dec. 15**.

*ODE is interested in your thoughts about how EdConnection fulfills your information needs. Please send any comments or suggestions to [Superintendent@education.ohio.gov](mailto:Superintendent@education.ohio.gov).*

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