



John R. Kasich, *Governor*
Debe Terhar, *President*, State Board of Education
Dr. Richard A. Ross, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

Board to Board, February 2014

Board to Board is an outreach effort, intended to keep local school board members apprised of important education-related issues, as well as the work of the State Board of Education.

During our February State Board of Education Meeting, Superintendent of Public Instruction Richard A. Ross announced that the Ohio Department of Education is expanding the testing window for the Ohio Achievement Assessments.

Due to the inclement weather, district and school leaders have faced unprecedented challenges as they have made student safety their top priority. As districts have expressed concern about missed instructional time and the need to prepare students for upcoming assessments, we feel it is important to provide educational leaders with flexibility regarding the assessments. As a result, we are extending by one week the spring testing window for Ohio schools. This is a reasonable step we can take that will benefit students and teachers.

The extension covers the Ohio Achievement Assessments for grades 3-8. It does not include the Ohio Graduation Test. The scoring and reporting of the Third Grade Reading OAA will be made a priority to fulfill the Third Grade Reading Guarantee requirements.

The modified testing window will be April 21 through May 16. The first three weeks will serve as the actual testing weeks, and the fourth week will be the make-up week for students who were absent for testing.

Second Round for Straight A Fund

Ohio's Straight A Fund is gearing up for the second round, and we want to give you information on dates and materials that can help if your district plans to apply for a grant.

Gov. John R. Kasich created the \$250 million fund last summer to promote new teaching and learning innovation in Ohio schools. The grants provide funding for ideas that raise student achievement, reduce spending and target more resources to the classroom.

In the first round, we distributed \$88.6 million through 24 grants that affected more than 150 school districts and partnering organizations. Now, on the Ohio Department of Education [website](#), you can find information on the second round of funding that includes a Tentative Timeline, Straight A Fund Application, Financial Impact Table and updated Grant Agreement.

If your district plans to apply for a Straight A Fund grant, I strongly urge you to also indicate your [intent to apply](#). You can do so now through March 7. The Ohio Department of Education will accept Straight A Fund applications from March 20 until 4 p.m. on April 3. Districts that received funds in the first round are welcome to apply again.

Resolution In Support of Cursive Writing

Studies and research show instruction in cursive writing develops fine motor skills and improves literacy. As a result, the State Board of Education wishes to emphasize that instruction in cursive writing is important and beneficial for children.

As a way to support local boards of education who continue to teach cursive writing as part of their English language arts curriculum, in February, the State Board of Education adopted a resolution in support of instruction in cursive writing. We encourage continued instruction in this skill in the classroom and of the continued development of instructional resources and supports for cursive writing.

Ohio's New Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a new kindergarten readiness assessment will replace the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRA-L). The new assessment includes ways for teachers to measure a child's school readiness. Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards (birth to kindergarten entry) are the basis for the new assessment. It has six components: language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, social skills (including social and emotional development, and approaches toward learning) and physical well-being and motor development.

The period for the new kindergarten readiness assessment in school year 2014-2015 is the first day of school through Nov. 1. All kindergarten children will take the assessment. The results of the assessment provide a starting point for each child and do not prohibit any child from entering kindergarten.

Also in the 2014-2015 school year, the language and literacy portion of the new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will meet the reading diagnostic assessment requirement of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. To meet the diagnostic requirement, teachers must complete at least the language and literacy portion no later than Sept. 30. Teachers can conduct the other portions of the assessment any time during the assessment period. Additional information is available [here](#).

Value-Added Video Presentation Still Available

In case you have not seen it yet, a recording of a value-added presentation given during the State Board of Education's January meeting by Jamie Meade, managing director of strategic measures of Battelle for Kids, is available [here](#). The presentation details the purpose, uses and significance of value-added measures, and provides a general description of how they are calculated.

In addition, the presentation illustrates how value-added data differs from achievement test scores and how it is used to determine how much a student has grown academically during the previous school year. Finally, the presentation explores how value-added information can be used with other data to provide a more complete picture of student progress.

On behalf of the entire State Board of Education, thank you for all you do on behalf of Ohio's schoolchildren.

All the best,



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The State Board of Education has set education policy and directed the planning and evaluative functions of Ohio's public schools, as well as appointed and evaluated the superintendent of public instruction since 1956. The vision of the State Board is for all students to graduate well prepared for success. The State Board is made up of 19 members, including 11 elected and eight appointed members. The chairs of the education committees of the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate serve as ex-officio members.