



## Ohio Schools to Watch (OSTW) Application Procedure



*OSTW is a partnership of, Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Middle Level Association, Otterbein University and Ohio Federation of Teachers*

*Financial support has been provided by Ohio Learning First Alliance, the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform*

The Ohio Schools to Watch (OSTW) program seeks to recognize high-performing, growth-oriented, public middle grades schools to demonstrate what all middle grades schools are capable of achieving.

### **Ohio Schools to Watch demonstrate:**

- Academic Excellence
- Developmental Responsiveness
- Social Equity
- Organizational Structures and Processes in place which support the previous three categories

The OSTW program is implemented by the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Middle Level Association, Ohio Federation of Teachers and Otterbein University. OSTW is an affiliate of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform “Schools to Watch” Program.

### **Minimum Eligibility Requirements**

The OSTW program is seeking high-performing, public middle grades schools in Ohio that are “on the move” toward higher achievement for all students. Schools must satisfy the following minimum eligibility requirements to apply to be an OSTW:

## **Eligibility requirements**

The OSTW program seeks high-performing, public middle grades schools in Ohio that are constantly "on the move" toward higher achievement of all students. School must satisfy the following minimum eligibility requirements to apply to be an OSTW:

1. Contain at least one of the following grade levels within the school: grades 6, 7 or 8.
2. On the most recent building report card the school must earn a "C" or better on the Overall Value-Added or Progress Component. For applications submitted for the 2014-15 school year the Overall Progress Component letter grade from the 2013 building report card will be used to determine eligibility.

## **Application Writing Protocol**

The OSTW application process is designed to include the entire school community. Applications prepared by a few individuals, grant writers or paid consultants will not be accepted.

## **Application Deadline**

All application materials must be received by **October 16, at 5:00 p.m.**

## **Submitting Completed Application**

***Only electronic submissions of the Ohio Schools to Watch (OSTW) application will be accepted.*** Please save the blank application as a Word document, fill in the requested information, then submit the completed application as an attachment. Insert copies of your building Local Report Cards for the last three years along with your most recent Value-Added Report in the appropriate spot to be included as part of the electronic submission. Signatures of the superintendent and principal are to be scanned, then the images inserted into the appropriate places.

The application is to be submitted electronically to:

Dan Stacy, Ohio Department of Education – [dan.stacy@education.ohio.gov](mailto:dan.stacy@education.ohio.gov)

Direct questions to Dan at the above e-mail address or call him at **614-644-6325**.

## **How to Apply**

### **Step 1 – Review the Materials**

- Self-Study Tool and Self-Study Protocol
- Application Procedures and Application, and Application Scoring Rubric

**Step 2 – Complete the Self-Study by Appointment Online** (*All schools considering application must contact Ohio STW Director, Dan Stacy prior to beginning OSTW process.*)

Use a collaborative, school community-wide process to complete the Self-Study process. Assign a composite rating for your school on each element of the OSTW criteria:

- Academic Excellence
- Developmental Responsiveness
- Social Equity
- Organizational Structures and Processes

Cite specific evidence of the elements present in your school. The composite ratings and evidence are the basis for your application narrative. ***Use the rating scale listed at the bottom of each page of the Self-Study Tool.***

### **Step 3 – Document Your School’s Academic Performance**

- Include copies of your school’s State Report Card for the past three years and most recent Value-Added Report in your application package.

### **Step 4 – Complete the Actual Application (Sections I and II)**

Complete the application by saving a copy of the application file to your desktop. Type your responses, save, and electronically submit application as an attachment.

### **Step 5 – Complete the Application Narrative**

- Use bold letters to identify the narrative question about which you are writing and in Question 1, the specific criterion you are referencing (i.e., Academic Excellence).
- Include the school’s name in the header at the top of each page; at the bottom of each page, place a consecutive page number.
- Type the narrative using 12-point Times New Roman font, with left and right margins of at least 0.5”.
- Do not exceed page limitations; the total narrative should not exceed 12 pages.

For each of the four OSTW self-study criteria (Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, etc.), write a one to two-page narrative indicating and substantiating your school’s composite ratings for the elements of the Self-Study Tool.

*For example:*

#### **1. What makes your school a School to Watch? (4-8 pages)**

Academic Excellence- 3

Begin narrative here. Cite specific evidence from the self-study process. Why is your school a “3?”

Let the Self-Study Tool guide the sequence of your narrative for each criterion. Using the evidence cited during the self-study process, provide as much detail as possible within the space limitations.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

How have Ohio’s Academic Content Standards influenced or supported the practices at your school? Please describe how – providing specific evidence is key. Be sure to include your successes to date in providing a challenging curriculum to all students (including special education students) and supporting students’ transition to high school and students’ postsecondary success.

#### **2. What overall progress have you made in lifting student achievement scores over the past several years? (1-2 pages)**

Reference the data provided in Step 3 of “How to Apply.”

#### **3. What are your plans for the future? (1-2 pages)**

Address any specific areas of “weakness” identified through the Self-Study Tool. For example, if you are a “3” in Academic Excellence, what will you do to become a “4?” Be sure to reference the Self-Study Tool. How will your school become a high-performing, standards-aligned, state-of-the-art learning environment for all young adolescents?

### **Step 6 – Review your application package using the Application Review Rubric**

- Does your application package provide powerful examples and considerable detail to support your composite ratings resulting from the self-study process?
- Does your data thoroughly support your assertions?
- Is your case strong and convincing?

### **Step 7 – Submit your application**

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The application is to be submitted electronically to:

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Each application package must include these items in the following order:

- Application form
- Application narrative
- Achievement data used to complete the application

**Application packages must be received by October 16, at 5:00 p.m. Late submissions will not be accepted.**

### **Application Checklist**

Did you remember to:

- Check to ensure your school meets minimum eligibility requirements?
- Involve the entire school community in the Self-Study process?
- Complete the application narrative using the appropriate format?
- Include your school’s State Report Card for the last three years as well as most recent Value-Added Report?