

Mike DeWine, Governor
Dr. Stephanie K. Siddens, Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dec. 3, 2021

Dear President Ballard:

Thank you for your recent submission of a proposed academic improvement plan and subsequent revisions pursuant to [Ohio Revised Code 3302.103](#). State law requires the state superintendent of public instruction to review the revised submission within 30 days of receiving it. The revisions I requested on Oct. 27, 2021, to the academic benchmarks and improvement strategies have been incorporated into the updated plan. Based on the revisions, the Lorain City School District academic improvement plan is approved.

The plan outlines the key strategies and related benchmarks to ensure the long-term success of students in your district. In my review of this plan, I focused on the proposed academic benchmarks to ensure they represent ambitious, achievable goals while also looking for evidence of stakeholder input and effective improvement strategies.

The Ohio Department of Education recognizes districts have had to work even harder to support students as a result of pandemic-related challenges. At the same time, it is important that we continue to have high expectations for student success. The benchmarks are designed to determine whether, after three years of implementation, the district is making sufficient progress on long-term goals to justify the continued implementation of the plan rather than reverting to the oversight of an Academic Distress Commission. The approved plan ensures that all summative three-year benchmarks are set no lower than pre-pandemic levels.

A few important notes:

- The current benchmark goals for several measures (#3-7, 14-21) are incomplete. It is expected the district will modify the improvement plan and set benchmarks after complete baseline-year data is available.
- **Graduation rate data:** Due to timing of graduation data collection, the class of 2025 graduation data may not be official by the 2025 deadline for this academic improvement plan. The Department will work with the district in the summer of 2025 as needed to calculate an unofficial graduation rate for the purposes of evaluation of this benchmark.
- **Modified graduation rate:** Due to timing of graduation data collection, the class of 2025 graduation data may not be official by the 2025 deadline for this academic improvement plan. The Department will work with the district in the summer of 2025 as needed to calculate an unofficial graduation rate for the purposes of evaluating this benchmark.

[State law](#) outlines the requirements moving forward as the district begins to implement the plan. The following table provides key dates and milestone activities for implementation and evaluation of the plan.

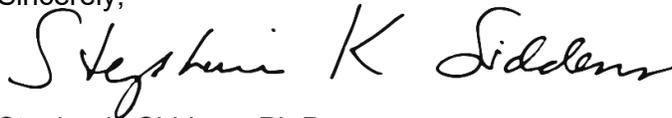
Key Milestones	Summary of Activity
<p>Preparation</p> <p>Dec. 3, 2021 - June 30, 2022</p>	District may begin preparing to implement plan.
<p>Implementation</p> <p>July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023</p>	Plan is in effect. At the end of the year, district provides an annual report to the State Board of Education.
<p>Implementation</p> <p>July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024</p>	Plan is in effect. At the end of the year, district provides an annual report to the State Board of Education.
<p>Implementation</p> <p>July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025</p>	Plan is in effect.
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>June 30, 2025</p>	District is evaluated by the State Board of Education to determine if the majority of academic improvement benchmarks were met.
<p>One Year Extension</p> <p>2025-2026 school year</p>	One School Year Extension Permitted: If the district improves but does not meet at least a majority of the academic improvement benchmarks, the district board of education may apply to the State Superintendent for an extension of one school year to continue implementing the plan.
<p>Extension Evaluation</p> <p>June 30, 2026</p>	First Year Extension Evaluation: After first year extension, district is evaluated by the State Board of Education to determine if the majority of academic improvement benchmarks are met.
<p>One Year Extension</p> <p>2026-2027 school year</p>	Second School Year Extension Permitted: If the district does not meet at least a majority of the established benchmarks at the end of the extension, the district again may apply to the State Superintendent for an extension of one school year to continue implementing the plan.
<p>Final Review</p> <p>June 30, 2027</p>	Final Review of Plan After Two Extensions: After last extension, State Superintendent determines if the majority of academic improvement benchmarks are met.

The Department will work with the leadership of the State Board of Education on expectations for the timing and format of the annual report, which will include a district presentation to the State Board. The Department will provide more information on the Board schedule as it becomes available. The academic improvement plan represents an important strategic commitment to the long-term success of students. In addition to the annual reporting requirements, I expect that district leadership will provide regular status updates to the district board of education, and that any such updates are shared with the State Board of Education.

As always, please continue to engage your state support team as you make adaptations to your plan and embark on implementation. Your state support team is available to assist your district leadership team using the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) to develop and align your improvement infrastructure (district leadership teams, building leadership teams and teacher-based teams). State support teams also have expertise in early literacy, early learning and school readiness, positive behavioral intervention and supports and special education. In addition, state support teams can assist with building capacity to support your plan goals.

The Department also stands ready to assist and provide additional information. Please contact Marva Kay Jones at marva.jones@education.ohio.gov to coordinate any follow-up requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie K Siddens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Siddens, Ph.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction

cc: CEO Jeffrey Graham, Lorain City School District