

A Learning Partnership of  
the Ohio Business Roundtable

# How to Help Your Schools Succeed

*with Ohio's  
Academic  
Content  
Standards*

ADMINISTRATOR'S GUIDE

# *the role of* **academic content standards:** Clarify expectations. Provide focus.

As you know, schools in Ohio are experiencing many changes that directly impact curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability. At the heart of these changes are the state's new academic content standards for English language arts, math, science and social studies.

Clarifying expectations through academic content standards is the necessary first step to improving student performance and raising student achievement. Clear, coherent standards focus the attention of schools, teachers, parents and students squarely on what we expect children to know and be able to do in core subjects at every grade level. Standards also provide a clear basis for monitoring and measuring student progress.



# *the role of* **school leaders:**

**Support and challenge teachers.  
Engage parents and families.**

Instructional leadership starts with you. As a school leader, you have a unique opportunity to help shape the attitudes that the teachers, students and parents in your school or district adopt toward Ohio's new academic content standards.

In that regard, you help clarify expectations of a different kind. By voicing your personal commitment to the new standards, you send the clear message that your staff members also are expected to embrace the standards. By helping staff understand *what* the standards are and *how* they can be used to improve teaching and learning, you help to remove the natural skepticism and resistance people often feel in response to change. By explaining *why* the standards are important, you connect the standards to your school's or district's plan for improving student achievement.

You also can help take full advantage of the new standards in another way. By educating parents and families about the standards — by helping them understand more fully what will be expected of their children — you can help generate valuable support and reinforcement for the work your staff members are doing in their schools and classrooms.

# how **YOU** can help:

## **tips** for making the standards work in your school and district

- **Communicate actively — and regularly — with teachers and staff about the standards.** Initiate conversations with your teachers and staff early — and often — about the standards, their benefits for students and for teachers, and the importance of implementing the standards into daily classroom instruction and practice.
- **Help teachers understand that the standards will help them do their jobs.** Some teachers may be concerned that the standards will limit what they can teach or require them to change the way they teach. Emphasize that the standards help teachers know what to focus on in their teaching and clarify *what* knowledge and skills should be taught at each grade level. Explain *how* that content is taught is up to the teacher, the school and the local school district — that there is no “one size fits all” approach. Make sure teachers understand that the Ohio Proficiency Tests are being replaced by new achievement tests that are tied closely to the new standards, so students will be tested on the knowledge and skills that teachers are emphasizing in their instruction.
- **Be sure teachers and staff understand the district’s plan for implementing the standards.** It’s important for school leaders to be prepared to explain the district’s plan for implementing the standards and aligning curriculum. It may be helpful to organize your communication around categories such as (a) training and support for teachers and staff, (b) intervention and support for students, and (c) communication with parents and families.
- **Set a positive tone and example.** Change often is unsettling. Implementation of Ohio’s new academic standards may be a source of confusion and anxiety for your teachers and staff. You can help ensure that the standards work as they are intended by staying positive, being supportive and stressing the many benefits — for students and for teachers — of clearly defined expectations for what students should know and be able to do in core subjects at each grade level. By communicating your own strong support for the standards and your belief in their potential for raising student achievement, you will make it clear that you expect teachers and staff to take the standards seriously.

- **Be prepared to answer questions about the standards from teachers, staff and parents.**

The Battelle for Kids *How to Talk with Parents and Families* guide for teachers contains a list of commonly asked questions about the new standards and some suggestions for how to answer those questions. You may find it helpful to familiarize yourself with those questions and suggested answers.

- **Promote information-sharing among staff.** Provide opportunities for your teachers and staff to meet and talk with each other — and with their peers from other schools and districts — about how they are implementing the standards in their classrooms and about what's working and what's not working.

- **Provide resources with practical information about the standards and how to use them.** Distribute the Battelle for Kids *How to Talk with Parents and Families* guide for teachers. Direct teachers and staff to these Web sites: [www.BattelleforKids.com](http://www.BattelleforKids.com) and [www.OhioAcademicStandards.com](http://www.OhioAcademicStandards.com).

- **Connect teachers and staff to professional development training linked to the new standards.** Encourage teachers and staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities offered by organizations such as Battelle for Kids or professional educational organizations to increase their knowledge of the standards and how to integrate them into daily instruction.

- **Encourage teachers and staff to talk with parents and families about the new standards.** Show your commitment to communicating with parents and engaging them as partners by distributing the Battelle for Kids *How to Help Your Child Succeed in School* guides for parents and families.



# now **FREE** resources for working with the new standards available

Battelle for Kids has developed resources to help you help your teachers, support personnel, parents and students successfully meet the challenge of Ohio's new academic content standards.



## *How to Help Your Child Succeed in School.*

Each of these subject-area guides helps parents and families understand Ohio's new academic content standards. Each guide contains an overview of the new standards, as well as

suggested activities, tips, games and/or book

lists and more to make it easy for parents to reinforce at home what their children are learning in school. Guides for reading and writing (English language arts) and math are available beginning in September 2003. Two additional guides, for science and social studies, are planned for 2004.

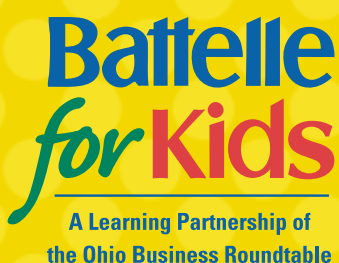


## *How to Talk with Parents and Families.*

This guide is designed to help teachers talk with parents and families about Ohio's new academic content standards. It's inevitable that parents are going to have many questions about the new standards. This guide contains suggestions for how to respond to the most likely questions teachers will hear, as well as practical tips for how to manage conversations with parents about the standards.

These guides are available **FREE** of charge for distribution to the teachers, staff, parents and families you serve. Order a set of the guides for yourself and take a close look — we're confident you'll find them to be useful tools for engaging parents and families as partners in the important work you do every day.

To obtain copies of the **Teacher's Guide** and the **Guides for Parents and Families**, call (800) 784-8704 or visit [www.BattelleforKids.com](http://www.BattelleforKids.com).



Supported by an initial grant from Battelle and established by the Ohio Business Roundtable in 2001, Battelle for Kids is a unique partnership initiative created to champion improved student achievement in Ohio by supporting, accelerating and sustaining standards-based education. Battelle for Kids works to strengthen support from the business community and the general public for an education system focused squarely on student achievement.

**For additional information, visit our Web site at  
[www.BattelleforKids.com](http://www.BattelleforKids.com).**

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