



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

June 2025

Ashtabula Area City Schools art classes partner with community businesses to benefit veterans

The **Ashtabula Area City Schools'** high school art classes and art club partnered with area businesses to benefit local veterans. Art students made and painted unique bowls as part of the Empty Bowls project. Displayed at the Ashtabula Arts Center for several weeks before the Empty Bowls event, bowls were sold for \$25 each which includes two bowls of soup provided by local restaurants. Proceeds from the Empty Bowls project is given to "Feed Our Vets" in Ashtabula. For more, go to <https://osba.link/0625SU1>.

Batavia Local (Clermont) writing center creates better writers

Batavia High School's Writing Center's mission is to create better writers, not just better writing. Students are supported in their development to become clear, concise and effective writers in their academic and professional careers. For more, visit <https://osba.link/0625SU2>.

What happens when we truly center student voice?

Take a step back, listen to students. What you hear can change everything about your school.. For more, visit <https://osba.link/0625SU3>.

District launches therapy dog program

A public school district in Colorado introduced therapy dogs at Stony Creek Elementary School to help students feel calmer and enhance learning. **Michelle Myers** and **Stephanie Jones**, social-emotional learning specialists, have noted that dogs like Duncan, Odin and Lily help reduce stress and improve emotional skills. For more, visit <https://osba.link/0625SU4>.

Minnesota students use hydroponics to supply school cafeteria

Students at Winona Senior High School in Minnesota are using a hydroponic flex farm to supply fresh greens for school lunches, growing more than 200 pounds of lettuce monthly, as well as basil and cherry tomatoes. Nutrition Director **Jennifer Walters** and Flex Farm Manager **Mariam Jackson** oversee the project, which was funded by an urban school grant, to teach students about agriculture and sustainability. For more, visit <https://osba.link/0625SU5>.

Eight ways to strengthen your principal pipelines

Superintendents should be thinking long-term when creating sustainable systems aimed at developing and supporting school leaders. A new report from Vanderbilt Peabody College and Policy Studies Associates, in partnership with the Principal Pipeline Learning Community, gives education leaders a framework that identifies four pillars of action to create systems that develop and support school leaders. For more, visit <https://osba.link/0625SU6>

Student achievement in-depth

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief or in-depth article to discuss with board members and administrators.

Study reveals writing improvements linked to ChatGPT

A recent study indicates that student writing quality has improved since the release of ChatGPT, with international students and those with weaker writing skills seeing the most significant gains. The study, led by **Renzhe Yu** of Teachers College, Columbia University, suggests that "linguistically disadvantaged" students have closed the gap with native English speakers, although the improvements are more pronounced among higher-income students.

Researchers accessed online discussion board comments submitted by college students at an unidentified large public university before and after ChatGPT to compare how student writing quality changed. Considered low-stakes homework assignments where a professor requests students post their thoughts on a reading assignment, the posts ranged from a sentence to a few paragraphs, but not full essays or papers. More than 1.1 million discussion-board submissions written by nearly 17,000 students between the fall term of 2021 and the winter term of 2024 were fed into seven computer models that analyze writing quality, from vocabulary to syntax to readability. Ultimately, they created a single composite index of writing quality in which all the submissions were ranked on this single yardstick.

Overall student writing quality improved. The improvement was slow during the early months of 2023, and then it improved substantially from October 2023 through March 2024. "I think we can infer this is due to the availability of AI because what other things would produce these significant changes?" asked Yu, an assistant professor of educational data mining. Students were not interviewed, and researchers cannot say for certain that the students were using ChatGPT or any of its competitors to help them with their assignments. Yu's paper has not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal, but a draft has been publicly posted on a Cornell University website that hosts pre-publication drafts of scholarly work.

Students who entered college with weak writing skills, a metric that the university tracks, saw outsized gains in their writing quality after ChatGPT. Meanwhile, stronger English speakers and those who entered college with stronger writing abilities saw smaller improvements in their writing quality. However, these gains in writing quality among the "linguistically disadvantaged" were concentrated among higher-income students. Researchers matched students' writing submissions with administrative data on students, including their family income. The writing of low-income students whose parents did not attend college didn't improve as much. By contrast, the writing of high-income international students with college-educated parents transformed markedly.

For more about this research and Yu's draft study, please visit <https://osba.link/0625SU7>.

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Success is published monthly as a member service by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481, (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. Editor; Mark E. Bobo, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.