



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

January 2013

---

## **Toledo City adopts new curriculum model**

Officials at Toledo City Schools say implementing common core state standards is bringing more rigorous instruction and a greater focus on college- and career-readiness. The process of aligning instruction in kindergarten through second grade with the common core is also requiring additional professional development for teachers. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU93>.

---

## **Ohio schools to be trained on dealing with shooters**

Teachers and other staff in Ohio's schools will be offered the same type of training as emergency personnel to help them better prepare for incidents at school, announced state Attorney General Mike DeWine. Beginning next year, teachers and staff will be able to take the course, which includes lessons on how to deal with someone who is armed. Other options under consideration are to arm school staff, a decision DeWine said should be up to local districts. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU94> to learn more.

---

## **Game-like educational approach is raising math scores at Winton Woods**

At Winton Woods City's Winton Woods High School ninth- and 10th-graders who need additional help in math can enroll in "math lab" as an elective. The program, which uses Khan Academy resources, has proven especially popular among students because it uses a gaming format. "Just like in a video game, if you step off the path, you have to go back to the beginning," said intervention specialist Amy Uecker. "And because they're used to video games, the students don't get frustrated." The rest of the story is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU95>.

---

## **Five ways to connect with hard-to-reach students**

Some students are hard-to-reach and difficult to connect with, writes Richard Curwin, director of the graduate program in behavior disorder at David Yellin College. Curwin suggests that teachers stop using rewards, encourage effort more than achievement, give students multiple chances and increase opportunities for them to learn. Read his article at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU96>.

---

## **Are students logging too much screen time?**

Teachers should work together to ensure their lessons do not rely too heavily on digital media, suggests Maurice Elias, a professor at Rutgers University. Elias says research shows that students are spending too much time in front of screens — a trend that can affect their social and emotional learning, as well as their health and sleeping habits. View the full story at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU97>.

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

## Once off-track, ACT report says students are much harder to get back on

A new study from American Collegiate Testing, commonly known as ACT, focuses on the extent to which students who are academically far-off-track for college can catch up within four years.

Researchers examined multiple cohorts of eighth-grade students whose EXPLORE (a test administered by ACT) scores were more than one standard deviation below benchmark scores associated with being on-track. Ten percent or fewer students who were far-off-track in the eighth grade attained ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by 12th grade.

A separate analysis using state test scores for students in grade four and their EXPLORE scores in grade eight obtained similar results. For both fourth and eighth grade cohorts, the overall percentage of students catching up was lower in high-poverty schools. Even at more successful high-poverty high schools, fewer than 20 percent of far-off-track eighth graders attained College Readiness Benchmarks by 12th grade.

The report says these results are consistent with the general view that catching students up from far behind is difficult and time-consuming, and underscores the importance of an early start and an emphasis on prevention over remediation. The report states that educators and policymakers should consider the following as they take a long-term approach to preparing students:

1. Efforts to close academic preparation gaps should begin as early as possible, be more intensive, and take as long as necessary. Even if starting earlier does not reduce the amount of time it takes to catch students up, starting earlier gives students more time to do so. Thus, early monitoring of student progress is essential to ensure that needed interventions begin soon enough.
2. School systems should emphasize approaches likely to have a broad positive effect on the entire student population when sustained over multiple years. For example, educators can give all students a content- and vocabulary-rich curriculum beginning in the early years. Such a curriculum is the basis for preparing students long-term for college and careers. Educators can also use a comprehensive framework of best practices, such as the Core Practice Framework, to ensure that such a curriculum is effectively taught.
3. School systems should evaluate programs for middle and high school students based on the programs' effectiveness with students with different initial levels of academic preparation. A program that works well with far-off-track students may be less effective with on-track students, and vice versa. When a new policy or program is proposed, educators and policymakers should inquire about the assumptions made about the academic readiness of students enrolling in the program.
4. In general, policy and practice should be informed by data on the success of real students in actual schools. This applies especially to the requirements that local, state, and federal accountability systems place on schools. For example, reasonable growth goals might be set based on student performance in more successful schools, and goals for percentages of students reaching college and career readiness should take into account the students' starting points and the number of years the school has available to catch them up.

To read the full report, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU98>.

### *Success*

*January 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis Hutchins, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

February 2013

---

## **Princeton City shifts to a comprehensive education-technology model**

Educators and officials in the Princeton City School District are taking full advantage of technology in the classroom and in communication with parents and the community. Besides investing in classroom technology, the district has sought to adopt more “comprehensive technology,” in which students and teachers have access to iPads, iPod Touches and AppleTV, among other devices. The district is also integrating technology into instruction, homework and other aspects of school. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU99>.

---

## **How to use QR codes as teaching tools**

There are many ways that quick-response codes can be used in classroom lessons, offers educator and blogger **Monica Burns**. She writes that QR codes can make it easier for students to access certain websites and help students avoid search engines that can bring them to the wrong website. QR codes also are easy to make and time-savers in the classroom, while allowing deviation from routine to keep lessons fresh and engaging for students. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU100> to learn more.

---

## **Third-grade reading guarantee pressures students, teachers**

Officials in Ohio elementary schools have hired reading specialists, engaged classroom teachers as one-on-one tutors and recruited high-school volunteers to respond to a law requiring all third-graders to read at grade level by the end of the year or face retention. Ohio, where 30% of its 40,000 third-graders don't read at grade-level, is among 14 states that have passed such retention policies. The rest of the story is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU101>.

---

## **Tips for teaching language arts under the Common Core**

Educators and experts share their suggestions for preparing students for the Common Core State Standards in language arts, in an *Education Week* blog. **Amy Benjamin**, a teacher and national consultant, writes that language arts classes are “command central” for the essential skills of the Common Core. View the blog post at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU102>.

---

## **Schools seek to curb spread of rumors online**

Educators in Minnesota say minor incidents increasingly are being blown out of proportion online, and rumors are spreading at a faster rate than ever before with the help of social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Now, educators say they are seeking to harness social media in a positive way and communicate true information about schools just as quickly. Find out how at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU103>.

## Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

### New tool to assess parental engagement available from Harvard University and SurveyMonkey

A new survey tool to measure the quality of parent-school relationships has been created by the Harvard Graduate School of Education and released by SurveyMonkey for use by schools, districts and parent groups.

The 71-item “question bank” covers seven areas of family engagement — from how much help students receive at home to how confident parents are in supporting their child’s schooling. Districts can adapt the survey to suit their individual needs, and parents responding to it can do so online or on paper.

Harvard graduate students developed and field-tested the survey that schools can access through the [surveymonkey.com](http://surveymonkey.com) website. The survey can be offered to an entire school community or schools can select relevant questions and add their own.

Schools and parent-teacher organizations can use the results from the survey to direct their parent-engagement efforts. It will give parents and schools more decision-making power about how to more effectively help their kids excel.

SurveyMonkey reached out to Harvard to identify which questions would produce accurate information that districts could rely on as meaningful for their assessment and decision-making about parent involvement.

The seven constructs measured are:

- Parental support: How much help are students getting at home?
- Child behaviors: What habits have students developed that shape their success?
- Parent engagement: How engaged are parents in their child’s schooling, and what potential barriers exist?
- Parent self-efficacy: How confident are parents in supporting their child’s schooling?
- School climate: How do parents view their schools’ academic and social standards?
- School program fit: How well do a school’s academic program, social climate and organizational structure meet a student’s needs?
- Parent roles and responsibilities: How do parents view their roles, as well as teachers’ roles, in different aspects of their child’s education?

The survey results may help educators get a baseline measure of how parents perceive the school climate, determine what kind of learning-related behaviors students are engaged in at home, and identify where the strengths and weaknesses are in a school’s relationship with parents.

For more information about the survey, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU104>.

#### *Success*

*February 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

March 2013

---

## **Online finance sessions teach students where their money goes**

Oregon City's Fassett Middle School students are learning about budgeting, salary, taxes and other financial lessons through the online personal finance course Banzai. As part of the lesson, students are given mock paychecks and shown the amount taken out for taxes and how much money must be set aside to pay for expenses, such as food and rent. Students also are taught about the risks of online scams and the safe use of social networking websites. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU110>.

---

## **Ohio schools are urged to share technology resources**

A proposed agreement between Monroe Local (Butler) Schools, the Butler County Educational Service Center, and the city of Monroe would allow the three to share a team of five tech experts. State leaders are urging educators and government officials to explore similar partnerships to save tax dollars. Such efforts could save as much as \$1 billion annually statewide, one group estimates. To learn more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU105>.

---

## **Delaware City plans assistive-technology library**

Delaware City is creating a program that allows educators to test assistive technology before buying it. The equipment planned for the central lending library could include tablets, colored overlay sheets for reading and visual signaling devices. The rest of the story is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU106>.

---

## **The future requires 'quantum leap' in digital leadership**

More administrators say they are leading by example by encouraging educators to use additional digital technology in the classroom. They say this type of leadership will become increasingly important as districts work to implement the Common Core State Standards. "Modeling is crucial. If you want your kids and teachers to be users of 21st-century tools, ... you have to show that you can do it too," said Spike Cook, principal of an elementary school in Millville, N.J. View the story at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU107>.

---

## **Ways to help struggling readers understand more complex material**

Having a strong reader read aloud with a student who struggles with reading can help the latter reader access higher-level materials, says literacy coach Marisa Kaplan. "Raising our expectations is a good thing, and being in tune to what students need can help us pinpoint exactly where our expectations should be," writes Kaplan, who offers additional tips and online resources to help teachers give struggling readers access to works required by the Common Core State Standards. Her article can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU108>.

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

## A new way to gauge socioeconomic status to measure its effect on academic achievement

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is building a comprehensive new way to gauge socioeconomic status to measure how it affects academic achievement, reports **Sarah Sparks** in *Education Week*. The new measure is intended to look beyond a traditional measure of family income to a child's family, community and school supports for learning.

For decades, the proxy for socioeconomic status for most federal education and child-health programs has been eligibility for subsidized meals under the National School Lunch Program. Yet food aid eligibility gives an incomplete picture of students in poverty, gives no information about students who don't qualify and notoriously underrepresents students as they get older and more self-conscious about applying for free-or-reduced-price lunch.

The updated measure will assess broader resources and learning supports, such as:

- family income,
- parental educational attainment,
- parental employment.

This year's NAEP asked new background questions, such as how long a child has lived in the United States, how many family members live with a child and how many adults in the home have a job. The student survey will still include questions about home possessions related to student achievement, such as access to the Internet and the number of books in the home.

The National Assessment Governing Board commissioned eight researchers in education, economics, statistics, human development and sociology. Together, they have been working on the new indicators since 2010. The board has tried in the past to fill in the gaps using the background questionnaire students complete, but some of those questions have become outdated or have not been found to be relevant to a child's real socioeconomic status.

The board also is considering measuring other indicators that could highlight differences among students living at the same income level in different areas. Indicators of school and neighborhood supports also may be pulled from administrative data and the U.S. Census Bureau, such as the neighborhood degree of concentrated poverty or linguistic isolation, average educational attainment and employment levels.

For more information about the survey, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU109>.

*Success*

*March 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

April 2013

---

## Using interactive games to teach students about money

Games can be used to improve students' understanding of money, writes Andrew Miller, an educational consultant and online educator. April is Financial Literacy Month, so Miller shares a list of games, compiled by Reading Community City Teacher Brian Page. In one game, students — or players — manage a “day club” for vampires, while another game, Financial Football, allows students to score points by correctly answering financial questions. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU112>.

---

## Three ideas for a successful class blog

Classroom blogs are a great project to motivate students to write, but they can be a lot of work for teachers, says National Board Certified Teacher Bill Ferriter. A sixth-grade language arts teacher, Ferriter shares three tips he has learned while developing blog projects for his class, such as training students to work as editors to assign, edit and post student articles. To learn more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU113>.

---

## Modern literacies fit with the Common Core

The Common Core State Standards and the integration of technology into education are issues that go beyond college and career readiness and reach into the quality of life for students, according to William Kist, an associate professor at Kent State University. Kist suggests some strategies to boost new literacies, such as giving students the chance to read screen-based texts including video to meet close-reading requirements and experimenting with digital writing and collaborative writing. The rest of the story is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU111>.

---

## Students can go to Washington, D.C., in a 3-D game

A new 3-D multiplayer game, “Government in Action,” is intended to help students who take American government courses experience life as a U.S. representative. The game, launched by McGraw-Hill Education, was developed in collaboration with Muzzy Lane Software and Rep. John Tierney (D-Massachusetts). “The ability to interact rather than just reading a text in this technology-driven age will probably drive more interest,” Tierney said. View the story at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU114>.

---

## Help gauge students' understanding with online quizzes

Online quizzes are effective ways to assess students' understanding while not overwhelming them, says Michael Adams, who works for the website [quizpoo.com](http://quizpoo.com). He suggests quizzing students on what happened during certain time periods, well known quotes and town history, as well as helping students remember plot, characters and other details from literature lessons. The article can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU115>.

## Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

As part of its 12th Brown Center Report on American Education, the Brookings Institution has released a report that finds a resurgence of ability grouping in elementary schools (fourth grade), and the persistent popularity of tracking in eighth-grade mathematics. The study uses the most recent National Center for Educational Statistics (NAEP) data.

Ability grouping and tracking are often confused. Both attempt to match students with curriculum based on students' ability or prior performance, but the two practices differ in several respects. Tracking takes place between classes and ability grouping is within classes. Tracking primarily occurs in high school and sometimes in middle school. In tracked academic subjects, students are assigned to different classrooms, receive instruction from different teachers and study a different curriculum. The names of high school courses signal curricular differences. Advanced math students in 10th grade, for example, may take algebra II while others take geometry, algebra I, or pre-algebra. Some middle and high schools do not track at all, creating instead classes that are heterogeneous in ability.

Whereas student tracking occurs between classes with different teachers and curricula and is most common in high school, ability-grouping occurs within classes and predominates in elementary school.

Grouping students by ability, no matter how it's done, inevitably separates students by characteristics correlated statistically with measures of ability, including race, ethnicity, native language and class. For this reason, the practice fell into disfavor in the 1990s. Yet NAEP indicates the practice has "skyrocketed" in the fourth grade for reading instruction, from 28% in 1998 to 71% in 2009.

Does this trend matter? Some studies find mild beneficial effects for ability grouping, while others suggest lower-grouped students learn substantially less. Now, given both accountability systems and the rise of technology-driven "differentiated instruction," a resurgence is underway, with a likelihood that Common Core standards will exacerbate grouping tendencies.

Although the report does not delve into the ability-grouping debate — it is interested in what schools are doing, not why or whether they should do it — discussion is offered at the end of the article on the implications of the findings related to the controversy surrounding the topic.

Click on <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU116> to read the full report.

*Success*

*April 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.





# Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

May 2013

---

## **Lakota Local students learn to think, act like engineers**

Some Lakota Local (Butler) students are learning to think like engineers and solve real-world problems through the Engineering is Elementary program. "They are utilizing science concepts they're learning about, but also building 21st-century skills: thinking critically, problem solving, communication and collaboration," said Curriculum Specialist Faye Harp. View the story at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU117>.

---

## **Newark City connects instruction to real world under Common Core**

Newark City is preparing for a shift that will bring deeper and tougher curriculum to schools. Administrators have been preparing since 2010 and some staff members are already transitioning into the new Common Core Standards. Ohio is expected to be teaching them at the start of the 2014-15 school year. **Maura Horgan**, director of secondary curriculum at Newark City, says she hopes Ohio's shift to the Common Core Standards will help students see the real-life connection to what they are learning in the classroom. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU118>.

---

## **Northwest Local launches new middle school course to get students to write**

Northwest Local (Hamilton) is making big changes in its middle schools to get students researching and writing papers before they get to high school. A course called the Fifth Core will have students writing papers daily by adding 30 minutes onto existing English classes. The course is one of the byproducts of the national move toward Common Core Standards. Learn more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU119>.

---

## **10 tips for encouraging student collaboration**

Students need to be taught how to learn and work collaboratively to be prepared for the work world, writes psychologist **Thom Markham**. He offers 10 suggestions for teachers on creating high-performance teams among their students, including having them define each participant's role and creating a contract, at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU120>.

---

## **U.S. students are more competitive in science than many people think**

A recent survey shows American adults mistakenly believe U.S. students rank poorly on international science tests, despite evidence to the contrary. A Pew Research Center for the People & the Press poll found that 44% of those surveyed said teens in the U.S. ranked near the bottom in international comparisons. However, results of the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment show 12 countries had higher scores than U.S. students, nine had lower scores and 12 countries posted similar scores. Find the full story at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU121>.

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

## Getting low-income, high-ability students to succeed in school

Every school district is constantly working to improve student outcomes and narrow the achievement gap. The components of Ohio's new local report cards will put a greater emphasis on individual students and their socioeconomic, racial, ethnic or disability status. This new reporting system will have districts devote more time and effort in raising outcomes. But, according to a 2012 report, as districts work to raise student achievement, they sometimes fall short in working with students to reach advanced levels.

The report, released by The National Association for Gifted Children, notes that as districts work to raise all students to a minimum level, they are not developing the students capable of higher achievement.

"Unlocking Emergent Talent: Supporting High Achievement of Low-Income, High-Ability Students" takes a look at one segment of the student population and what schools can do to help them reach their potential. The report is the result of a National Summit of Low-Income, High-Ability Learners and lists some barriers to student success, identifies and recommends best practices and establishes a research agenda for the future.

The report, authored by Paula Olszewski-Kubilius and Jane Clarenbach, notes that the proportion of low-income students performing at advanced levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress exams remains "shamefully low," with only 1.7% of students eligible for free-or reduced-price meals scoring at the advanced level on the eighth grade math exam between 1998 and 2007. Meanwhile, 6% to 10% of students from higher-income families scored at that level. In addition, since 1998, 1% or fewer low-income fourth, eighth and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders scored at the advanced level on the civics exam, compared to at least 5% of their higher-income counterparts. The report also notes that many low-income, yet high-achieving students do not complete postsecondary schools.

Also, the authors noted that these students don't always perform well on typical measures of achievement and need to be recognized and nurtured based on their potential and not necessarily their test scores. The report also provides some detail about the psychological and emotional support talented students from minority and low-income families may need.

But with reduced funding, many districts are faced with cutting programs, including advanced options. With that in mind, the report looks at successful programs, services and supportive school cultures and lists the common factors found in them, many of which can be implemented without a lot of additional funding.

You can download a copy of the report at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/96153>.

*Success*

May 2013

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

June 2013

---

## **How Dublin City uses blended learning to teach Chinese**

Dublin City is using a blended learning approach to bring Chinese language learning to more students amid a tightening budget. One teacher leads three classes on different campuses at the same time by using videoconferencing and online exercises. “They tend to be more on task and respectful — they don’t see me every day, but every time I see them they are eager to work with me,” Language Teacher **Dun Zhang** said. For the rest of the article, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU125>.

---

## **Trip to sister school in China is enriching for Highland Local educators**

Some **Highland Local (Medina)** Highland High School educators traveled to China to visit their sister school in Guangzhou. They learned that teachers work in classes of 50 to 55 students during a school day that lasts from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with two-hour lunch breaks and 10-minute breaks between classes. More on their trip is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU123>.

---

## **Common Core connects teaching with the real world in Newark City**

Newark City educators are working to make sure the shift to Common Core standards will help students see the real-life connection to what they are learning in the classroom. For example — teaching students to count using money, instead of just teaching them to count blocks or shapes. “It’s not about are you correct,” said Director of Elementary Curriculum **Melinda Vaughn**. “It’s about the process they go through. How did you get it and can you explain it?” Learn more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU124>.

---

## **Cuyahoga Falls City connects students’ career aspirations to learning goals**

Cuyahoga Falls City plans to retrain teachers to educate students based on their career path interests and not just earning diplomas. In 2014, ninth- and 10th-graders will identify an area of study from a list of categories such as business, health, art and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Students would then take the usual dose of classes “but through the lens of their interests,” Superintendent **Todd Nichols** said. “Much of what is happening in our world right now is because too many students are not prepared.” Click on <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU126> for more.

---

## **Number of high schoolers taking free college courses skyrockets**

A surging number of Ohio high school students are taking college courses for free before they graduate, as colleges use the classes to draw students in, according to the Ohio Board of Regents. “We hope that kids will like what they see so much that they’ll come to Stark State College when they graduate,” said Stark State Outreach Director **Dennis Trenger**. Find the full story at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU127>.

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

## Student literacy: the critical link between motivation and achievement

Within each of our school buildings, countless hours are dedicated to building literacy plans for each student, plans are then matched with teacher training, resources, assessment and accountability benchmarks. The links between literacy and learning are well documented, and the ability of students to not simply sustain but to build upon literacy levels throughout high school and beyond can only improve their levels of success.

Sustaining high levels of literacy, however, requires motivation on the part of students. Teachers, administrators, friends, family and even community members play a key part in providing rich literacy opportunities. However, the motivation to embrace literacy across all platforms (paper books, electronic books, the Internet, audio and video streaming, etc.) and in an ongoing way is incumbent on the individual student. New research is digging deeper into how educators can assist students in “maximizing motivation.”

In their book, *Taking Action on Student Literacy*, Authors **Judith L. Irvin, Julie Meltzer and Melinda S. Dukes** describe a series of circles within circles with the innermost circle representing “student motivation, engagement and achievement.” The innermost circle is surrounded by another ring that includes the development of the literacy plan, resources and teacher support. Beyond that circle is one including the integration of literacy with learning — across content areas and including any necessary interventions. The outermost circle is the most critical as it involves sustained literacy development, and includes the mentoring of and influences on the student from parents, friends and the community.

According to the authors, “to achieve competence in literacy, students must be motivated to engage with literacy tasks and to improve their proficiency as readers and writers. Instruction and practice then provide the coaching and feedback necessary to gain competence. Increased competence inspires continued motivation to engage.”

The authors maintain the generalized notion that “students just don’t read or write anymore” is a fallacy. They may not be excited to read traditional textbooks or write traditional research papers, but they text, instant message, email and journal extensively. They also read video reviews, music reviews and gaming instructions with considerable expertise. And so, the authors say, students *are motivated*. They are just not motivated *in school*. Instruction must be geared toward working with students in ways they find meaningful. To do so, three questions should be considered:

1. What evidence do we have of students’ out-of-school literacy skills that we can build upon to encourage them to complete reading and writing assignments in school?
2. What motivates and engages students to read and write, and how can we include these types of opportunities throughout the school day and across content areas?
3. What kinds of coaching, instruction and practice develop proficiency in reading and writing, and how can leaders support teachers to provide these?

To learn more about how the authors suggest we answer these questions, and to help motivate our students and assist them in motivating *themselves*, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU122>.

*Success*

June 2013

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

July 2013

---

## **Cincinnati summer camp taps student interest in app development**

Instead of playing sports or going fishing, 45 children in Montgomery, Ohio, took advantage of a unique week-long camp aimed at letting them explore their interests in technology. The Mobile Application Development Camp offers insight into mobile app and video game development with an emphasis on piquing campers' interests. For the rest of the article, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU129>.

---

## **Washington Court House City educators, students collaborate on interactive historical map**

An effort to bring more social studies into a district's third-grade curriculum has produced an interactive map highlighting local landmarks and historical events. Susie Bailey, director of curriculum data and assessment for Washington Court House City Schools, worked with Washington High School history teacher Paul LaRue, whose students used mapping software and developed lessons for the third-graders. More on their mapping adventure is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU128>.

---

## **How teachers use education, entrepreneurial trends in the classroom**

Education Consultant Andrea Saveri writes that there are five emerging trends in education — among them are personalization strategies, diversification of school formats, changing certification methods and changes to urban learning landscapes. She also suggests educators take advantage of the spread of an entrepreneurial mindset by encouraging students to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Read her blog at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU130>.

---

## **Green Local (Summit) teachers say high value-added scores resulted from focus on students**

Two fifth-grade math teachers who recently received high marks under the state's value-added teacher evaluation model attribute their success to various factors. The Green Local (Summit) educators credit setting high standards for all students, making lessons fun and focusing on helping and motivating students to learn, rather than on test scores. Click on <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU131> for the full story.

---

## **What should high school teachers expect from the massive open online courses trend?**

Reporter Ben Herold shares the views of Lehigh University education professor Scott Garrigan, who has embraced massive open online courses, such as the Khan Academy. Garrigan offers advice for high school teachers, suggesting they "get ready to do the same." Garrigan also suggests teachers prepare for "interest-driven learning" and focus on new data that will help them better meet students' needs and provide a greater emphasis on data-driven work. Learn more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU132>.

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators. This month's brief is written by OSBA's **Damon Asbury**, director of legislative services.

## Challenges to the Common Core

In June 2010, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics as part of a multi-state effort to create more rigorous standards based on those established in top-performing nations. The State Board also adopted new and more rigorous versions of Ohio's academic content standards in science and social studies. It is intended that all four sets of standards will guide teaching in Ohio classrooms by 2014-2015. Schools have been encouraged to begin using the standards now so students are prepared for more rigorous assessments scheduled to begin in 2014-2015. Many Ohio school districts are well on their way to implementing the new standards.

However, the Common Core State Standards have recently sparked debate and legislative battles in a number of states. Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee are among states that have found it necessary to deal with growing political opposition to the Common Core. Conservative talk-show hosts and organizations have backed bills opposing the standards, but groups skeptical about the heavy emphasis on standardized tests and the growing influence of the private sector in education also have made inroads among progressives. Groups such as Ohioans Against Common Core and Education Freedom Ohio have held public meetings to denounce the standards and stepped up pressure on state lawmakers to force Ohio to drop them.

Critics advance several arguments against the Common Core. Some say the standards are being crammed into classrooms by the federal government in a power grab of questionable legality. Others say that the Common Core is really a national curriculum in disguise, and believe that the claims about its professed rigor are exaggerated or that it sets unrealistic expectations. Other questions focus on the testing load required by the standards, the aggressive timetable for implementation and the hurried pace of necessary professional development for teachers and the community.

The Ohio House Education Committee and the State Board of Education have held hearings to invite comment and answer questions about the standards. Some local boards of education in Ohio also have faced criticism and questions about their role in supporting the Common Core.

Boards of education and other local education leaders should be prepared to address these questions and criticisms. It will be important to engage and educate the full community about the new higher standards and what the district is doing to prepare students to meet the challenge. Though the standards were adopted by the State Board, local board members remain in control of the curriculum, instruction and materials that will be used in their districts. Much of the criticism is based on misunderstanding and misinformation. Local boards can provide factual information and help answer questions from the community.

For more information, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU133>.

*Success*

*July 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

August 2013

---

## **Youngstown City to have only new lab program in the nation**

Students in the Youngstown City School District will have access next year to a one-of-a-kind learning space. The Innovation Creation Space — provided by the Discovery Learning Program and located on an elementary school campus — will foster students' creativity by using 3-D printers, holographic screens and workstations that allow students to transfer academic lessons into real-world situations. Doug Hiscox, the district's deputy superintendent for academic affairs, said the lab will help support the district's overall goal of expanding learning in science, technology, engineering and math. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU134>.

---

## **West Geauga Local's iPad Camp incorporates fun with learning**

Some West Geauga Local (Gauga) teachers are convinced of the importance of technology in education that they're volunteering their time and expertise to conduct a student summer camp focusing on iPads. Some of the activities the elementary-school children have engaged in are compiling their own books using the Book Creator app, making music with GarageBand and sharpening their fine motor skills through a colorful, challenging game named Dexteria. More on the summer camp is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU135>.

---

## **Summer spotlight on reading in central Ohio schools**

Schools are rethinking summer school this year in response to the state's new third-grade reading guarantee. In a revamped summer school in Worthington City, students will spend six weeks taking reading lessons in the classroom, plus three weeks of homework. A similar class in Dublin City spans nearly the entire summer break. For the rest of the story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU136>.

---

## **Social media is part of teacher's strategy for student engagement**

Christopher Kauter, a high-school social studies teacher in Deer Park, N.Y., was accepted into the Google Teacher Academy — in part, for his work in creating a mobile Web application that connects students to Twitter and organizes a calendar of assignments, class notes, grades and other information. Click on <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU137> for the full story.

---

## **Fifty-five words that make or break student understanding**

In her book, *Teaching the Critical Vocabulary of the Common Core: 55 Words That Make or Break Student Understanding*, Marilee Sprenger identifies the critical words that students must know to be successful with the Common Core State Standards. Learn more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU138>.

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

## Understanding the extent of ‘summer melt’ among college-intending, low-income high school graduates

A new paper from the Harvard Graduate School of Education describes a phenomenon it calls “summer melt.” The phenomenon refers to the 20% of low-income students who, at high school graduation, say they’re continuing on to college but encounter obstacles and don’t attend college in the fall, reports **Shankar Vedantam** of NPR.

Previous research indicates a sizeable share of low-income students who paid college deposits reconsidered where, and even whether, to enroll in the months following graduation. Authors **Lindsay Page** and **Ben Castleman** write that summer is a particularly tumultuous time for kids from low-income backgrounds.

Page and Castleman, using data from a national survey and a smaller study focusing on Boston, found summer melt was much more likely with students headed for community college versus other institutions — closer to 40%.

The researchers identified a number of complicating factors. These kids often lack role models and resources. They may be the first in their families to attend college and have peers who are not going. Summer melt also is more likely among students with weaker grades.

Low-income students also seem to have difficulty navigating the considerable paperwork required for financial aid and matriculation. The authors recommend that districts retain guidance counselors for a full 12 months to help low-income students clear these final hurdles.

Page and Castleman theorize that high schools no longer see these students as being their responsibility and the colleges don’t see them yet as being their responsibility yet. In fairness, Vedantam reports, both of these institutions are trying to bridge the gap, and in Fulton County, Ga., researchers actually ran an experiment one summer. High school counselors typically work a nine- or 10-month schedule. These schools brought the counselors back over the summer to reach out to the students heading to college. They found that students from low-income families took up the offer in droves, and it drove down the rate of summer melt by 8%.

Castleman also said that in the students’ 12 years of public schooling, taxpayers have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars preparing them for college. Now taxpayers are going to have to decide whether it’s worth spending several hundred more dollars to bridge that last mile.

Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU139> to listen to the NPR audio recording or read the interview transcript. To read the full report, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU140>.

### *Success*

*August 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.





# Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

September 2013

---

## **Hudson City teacher learns to use primary-source documents in the classroom**

Jennifer Lawler, a teacher at Hudson City's Hudson Middle School, recently participated in the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Summer Teacher Institute at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The training focused on educational uses of primary-source documents, such as the 13th Amendment, which Lawler said still had a crease in it from after it was signed. Lawler, who called the experience "game-changing cool," will teach her students lessons she created while in D.C. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU141>.

---

## **Ohio educators may write new chapter for cursive**

Some Ohio educators say cursive handwriting, waning against the presence of technology, is taking a back seat as more states implement the Common Core State Standards. Debe Terhar, State Board of Education President, is among those questioning whether more should be done to preserve cursive writing, saying a lack of knowledge about it could restrict students later in life and limit their ability to read documents like the Declaration of Independence. More on the debate is at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU142>.

---

## **Kennedy: Human rights curriculum helped curb bullying in Bucyrus City**

Speak Truth To Power, a human-rights education curriculum offered by the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, has helped change the culture in Bucyrus City schools, asserts Kerry Kennedy, president of the center. According to a forthcoming independent study, Bucyrus students reported a change in awareness of bullying as an issue and administrators have also seen an increase in reports of bullying. For the rest of the story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU143>.

---

## **Ohio to pay for sophomores to take PSAT starting in 2014**

Starting in fall 2014, Ohio will pay for high school sophomores to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). The price tag will be \$1.5 million a year. Nine other states already give the PSAT to sophomores and some states foot the bill. Officials say the initiative will ensure students get an early indicator of whether they're on track to be ready for college and jobs that require higher-level skills. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU144> for more on this important change.

---

## **How will college readiness be defined on the nation's report card?**

The National Assessment Governing Board has agreed on a new definition for "college prepared," which will be used to guide the National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as "the nation's report card." The definition will be used with the scores of next year's 12th-grade test in reading and math. The details can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU145>.

## Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

### Are states ready for the Common Core State Standards?

Most states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in math and English language arts (ELA) are already teaching to the standards, according to two new reports by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) at The George Washington University.

The report also finds these states are preparing teachers and principals to implement the standards. State education agencies, however, are struggling to secure adequate state staffing and resources to implement the standards and ensure all math and ELA teachers receive training in the Common Core.

Both reports are based on a survey of state deputy superintendents or their designees in 40 of the 46 states that have adopted CCSS in one or both subjects. The survey was conducted this spring.

In 30 of the responding states, curricula aligned to the Common Core in math and ELA are being taught in at least some grades and school districts, according to the first report, which gives an overview of state implementation of CCSS. Some of these states are phasing in CCSS-aligned curriculum by grade span, school district or both. Several states (nine in math and 10 in ELA) will begin implementing aligned curriculum in the 2013-14 school year.

All 40 states surveyed are providing some type of professional development in CCSS to teachers, and 39 are doing the same for principals, according to the second report, which focuses on professional development. In 22 of the survey states, more than half of the math and ELA teachers had received professional development in the 2012-13 school year. But only 10 states estimate that more than three-fourths of their teachers of these two subjects have received CCSS-related training.

All of the responding states agree that CCSS are more rigorous than their previous standards and will improve student skills in these subjects. "It is pretty clear that most state leaders believe the Common Core represents a significant shift toward more rigorous academic standards in math and English language arts and that students will benefit from that increased rigor," said CEP Executive Director **Maria Ferguson**. "It is equally clear that states are facing significant challenges in preparing and supporting teachers and school leaders as they implement the standards across grades."

States are taking various actions to help teachers master the new standards and use them to guide instruction. For example, 37 of the surveyed states have begun to produce and disseminate professional development materials and guides aligned to CCSS, while 34 states have conducted briefings for faculty in postsecondary schools of education.

States also are working with districts and schools on CCSS implementation. All 40 states surveyed have conducted informal meetings with district officials about CCSS, while 39 states are providing technical assistance. And, 30 states have mounted initiatives to help low-performing schools make the transition to the Common Core. In addition, state-level activities related to the Common Core are under way. Specifically, 39 states have developed and disseminated state CCSS implementation plans, 38 states have analyzed similarities and differences between the state's previous standards and CCSS, and 29 have revised curriculum aligned to CCSS. To read the latest report, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU146>.

#### *Success*

*September 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

October 2013

---

## **Hilliard City opens center to give students after-school help**

Hilliard City is keeping a resource center open on weekends and as late as 9 p.m. during the week to allow students to use computers, get help from teachers and talk to counselors after regular school hours. The McVey Innovative Learning Center also offers 3-D printers, meeting rooms for students to work together and a cafe as part of its extended-day services. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU147>.

---

## **Columbus City to relax Internet filter for teachers, students**

Beginning this month, Columbus City will relax its Internet filters to allow teachers and students easier access to educational material. This is a change from the district's past practice, which took a hard line against sites with potentially objectionable content, including YouTube, anatomy diagrams and retail sites. Under the new practice, high school students also will, for the first time, have access to social media, but their activities will be monitored. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU148> to learn more.

---

## **Xenia Community City schools takes teacher training online with videos**

Xenia Community City Schools has added a system designed to enhance teachers' professional development. The online library of 1,500 educational videos, known as PD 360, was purchased for the district using Race To The Top funding. According to reports, PD 360 has increased student achievement across North America by improving classroom teachers. For the rest of the story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU149>.

---

## **Two ways to integrate QR codes in instruction**

QR codes can help meet the needs of various students, educator Monica Burns writes. Burns points out how QR codes can assist in the differentiated classroom. In one model, teachers can use QR codes to allow all students to access the same website, but provide them with different questions. In another model, students could be issued different QR codes to create multiple learning stations. Log on to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU150> for more on this useful tool.

---

## **Is there a downside to posting students' grades online?**

As more schools install programs that give parents instant, around-the-clock access to students' grades online, some educators and psychologists say the added scrutiny can have a negative effect on students. Teachers say it is important for parents to have such information and be involved, but at the same time, the online grading systems can lead some parents to become overly involved, increasing pressure on students and potentially stifling their independence. More details can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU151>.

## Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

### Has increased time in front of electronic devices decreased student achievement?

When personal computers were first introduced in the 1980's, many experts believed they were going to change everything. Life and work was going to be a lot easier. Free time would increase.

Productivity did increase. However, you ended up doing more. Computers allowed one person to do the work of many. Multitasking became the buzzword. In most cases, free time did not increase.

With the Internet becoming mainstream in the mid-1990's, we heard the same things. Life was going to change again, and in many it has. The Internet is woven into our lives. The way we bank, interact, shop and entertain ourselves has changed. Don't believe me, try going without opening a Web browser for one day.

Whether a laptop, tablet, MP3 player or smartphone, adults and children are constantly using electronic media. Time spent on these devices continues to increase with adolescents. A 2010 study indicated an increase of 20% over 10 years in the use of electronic media (<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/11659>).

Electronic devices and the Internet also have impacted how students learn. Who would disagree that it is easier to complete a 20-page report on a computer compared to a typewriter? The Internet also has opened a new world in research and interaction. From having a conversation with an astronaut on the space station to completing research in an hour with a computer instead of spending an entire day at the library, the Internet has changed how students are taught.

But the Internet also has made it easier to falsify work. The temptation to cheat has increased. A recent study by Harvard University found that 42% of its incoming class admits to doing homework dishonestly (<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/49103>). Studies also have shown that cheating is increasing with all students (<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/10742>).

With this in mind, is technology use harming our students? If more students are cheating, are they really learning?

A 2013 study, "Does recreational computer use affect high school achievement?," indicates that using computers for fun increased reading and math achievement (<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/33056>). While more studies are needed, researchers indicated that, "using computers for fun may be an attractive avenue to help increase student achievement in high school, especially for boys." Even video games, when used moderately, have increased student achievement.

Some studies also are showing that cheating may help students develop mastery goals, which improves competence (<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/61260>). This can lead to greater learning and an increased willingness to tackle hard problems.

We know that technology has changed our lives and researchers are finding that it is also changing how today's students learn.

*Success*

*October 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

November 2013

---

## **Anna Local teachers create app to track students' Common Core progress**

Two Anna Local (Shelby) fourth-grade teachers have developed a tablet app that can track students' progress on the Common Core State Standards. The app — expected to be released by December — will include a version that allows parents to view student progress and send notes to teachers. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU152>.

---

## **Akron City Schools focus on students at risk of dropping out**

Akron City Schools' Closing the Achievement Gap program identifies students in eighth grade as at risk by low test scores or behavioral issues. The 225 freshmen in the program are selected from four high schools with lower-than-average graduation rates. Program participants are paired with mentors — employed by the school — with a goal to curtail dropouts and advance each student to 10th grade. Character building also is part of the process. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU153> to learn more.

---

## **Columbus libraries tapped to help students with homework**

Columbus City Schools are working with public libraries to provide after-school homework help for students. Library staff and volunteers are learning about the state's math and reading standards and literacy requirements. Students can be held back in third grade if they do not meet reading proficiency standards starting this year. For the rest of the story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU154>.

---

## **How blended learning models vary across the country**

Educators nationwide are implementing blended learning, but observers have found that the model varies, with the common thread being the use of technology. This article highlights six common blended learning formats, including one in which online learning supplements face-to-face instruction. Other models include rotation, which follows a fixed schedule; online lab, in which students visit an in-person site; and online driver, in which work is mostly done remotely. Log on to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU155> for the details.

---

## **Using pumpkins as teaching aids**

Several Illinois school districts are incorporating pumpkins into lesson plans. For example, fourth-grade students recently were asked to calculate the circumferences of pumpkins and estimate how many seeds each one had. Activities involving pumpkins and other fall produce can help build social-emotional and observational skills, teachers say. More information can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU156>.

## Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

### Researcher urges new approach for writing instruction he says is currently 'abysmal'

A new research study developed by Michigan State University education professor Gary Troia, claims that while progress is being made through the new Common Core State Standards, a great deal more must be done to address writing instruction. The research suggests wide gaps exist for both students and teachers, and a new approach to professional development for classroom teachers is needed. Fresh ideas in writing instruction would better meet and exceed new writing standards, Troia wrote.

His research, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences and released in October, was published in *School Psychology Review*. Troia believes current practices in professional development are not comprehensive enough and gaps addressing sustainability and new classroom technology and instruction are growing wider.

Troia claims that certain areas of writing instruction are largely ignored by the Common Core standards. Mathematics and English language arts standards in the Common Core do address some writing standards, but Troia provides a few examples to demonstrate key missing areas. For instance, spelling and handwriting are largely absent in the standards for early grades, and keyboarding is not addressed until grade three. As many children use or play with smartphones, smart toys or tablet devices at much earlier ages, the standards fall short, Troia argues. Additionally, computer input is now a requirement for many educational assessments. Students unable to accurately and efficiently keyboard may not succeed in demonstrating the full measure of their learning.

Troia said research shows only 25% of American students show proficiency by writing at grade level. "Federal efforts and research dollars tend to focus on reading, math and science, while writing is often left out in the cold," Troia said. "We're trying to point out that (it's) really important. We should focus so it's no longer the neglected 'R.'"

Troia's research and comments refer to a landmark 2003 report supported by the National Commission on Writing. It found that writing instruction from kindergarten through college was deeply lacking, and Troia said the past 10 years since that study haven't shown much change.

"When you look at writing instruction in the K-12 classroom, it's still pretty abysmal," he said. "Teachers are generally not adapting instruction for struggling writers."

Troia said he believes national test scores show this to be true. Potential ideas to help classroom teachers who aren't writing instruction experts include using district personnel who are well trained, such as school psychologists and speech language pathologists. Troia said these staff members can be valuable resources in this area.

For more on this topic, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU157>.

#### **Success**

**November 2013**

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.



# Success

---

Timely tips to improve student achievement

December 2013

---

## **Game seeks to enhance lessons on ethics, empathy**

MIT's Education Arcade and the Learning Games Network have released a free online game, Quandry, that aims to teach empathy. The game targets students in grades three-eight and has them solve problems on a fictional planet. Students earn points by interviewing characters and accurately predicting their responses, and by how well they resolve and defend their solutions. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU158>.

---

## **"Hive" design classroom creates an innovative buzz**

Texas educator Emily E. Smith named her classroom "The Hive Society" after she transformed it into a "vessel for innovation to bloom." Inspired by photos of technology start-ups, Smith redesigned her room to inspire creativity — developing spaces where students could work together, spread out and collaborate. "It's time for the world of education to not only redefine the curriculum placed in the hands of America's teachers, but also to redefine the classrooms in which we breed young scholars," she writes. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU159> to learn more.

---

## **Restructuring schools for student success**

Stanford University educator and author Denise Pope offers ideas for restructuring schools for student success. She calls for more cognitive engagement by using assignments that are meaningful to students. Other recommendations include more emphasis on project-based learning, less emphasis on grades and fewer transitions during the school day. For the rest of the story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU160>.

---

## **New Pinterest board provides valuable resources for elementary teachers**

ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) and Massachusetts teacher Suzy Brooks have developed a Pinterest board that highlights classroom resources for elementary teachers. This board is an exciting way to connect educators with topics of interest. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU161> to learn more.

---

## **Ohio districts proactively block social media site**

Perrysburg EV and Eastwood Local (Wood) have blocked the social media website ask.fm, which allows users to make anonymous posts, saying that the site could lead to online bullying. While the districts have not had specific incidents tied to the site, there have been reports of bullying elsewhere, prompting schools to issue warnings to parents. More information can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU162>.

# Student achievement research brief

Each month, *Success* brings you a research brief to discuss with board members and administrators.

## Teacher Effectiveness: Keys to Success

Effective teaching requires the special ability to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each individual child in a teacher's classroom and "why" and "when" to apply the appropriate strategy or resources for certain students. This advice comes from Elizabeth Crawford-Brooke, the vice president of education and research at Lexia Learning. According to Crawford-Brooke, too much professional development focuses on curriculum to provide teachers with information about the "what" of their responsibilities — the scope and sequence of the selected curriculum and related instructional materials.

Today's teachers are faced with a veritable deluge of data about students and face the complex challenge of connecting that data to the appropriate instructional strategies and resources for every student. Providing staff with understanding and support to respond to the following four questions will help drive the development of teacher effectiveness in your district:

1. Do teachers understand the pedagogy and how to effectively use the instructional materials?  
According to the National Council on Teacher Quality 2013 *Teacher Prep Review*, teachers' level of expertise can vary significantly, depending on the quality of their university teacher preparation program.
2. Which assessments will clearly define the profile of student ability and learning trajectory? According to the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, an accurate profile of student learning in a response to intervention model includes several factors:
  - Level of performance — What is the grade level of material on which the student is working?
  - Rate of learning — How quickly is the student making progress toward grade-level standards? Is the student trending in the right direction and quickly enough to meet expectations?
  - Academic goals — Educators need to establish goals and expectations for each student's learning and manage to those goals. Based on these factors, teachers can adjust the instructional intensity necessary in order to meet the academic goals.
3. Data analysis — What is the assessment data telling you?
4. Are the appropriate instructional materials selected for each student's individual needs?

Empowering teachers through a shared and clear understanding of available instructional materials can create higher levels of teacher effectiveness by leveraging the variety of assessment data to build concise student profiles and following research-based methods for intervention. The fifth key factor is to avoid the all-too-frequent changes that occur when the district or school decides to adopt the latest instructional program or methodology, only to have it replaced over time. Consistency in approach is critical.

For more on this topic, download the white paper titled "Empowering Teacher Effectiveness: Five Key Factors for Success" at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU163>.

### *Success*

*December 2013*

*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. Crystal Davis, deputy director of communication services, editor; Jeff Chambers, director of communication services, assistant editor. To download a PDF of this eNewsletter, go to <http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/Success>.