

**Joint Committee on Report Cards**

**Presented by Darold Johnson**

**Ohio Federation of Teachers Director of Legislation,**

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Co-Chair Blessing, and Co-Chair Jones, and members of the Report Card Committee, my name is Darold Johnson, Legislative Director of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). OFT represents teachers, paraprofessionals, school nurses, higher education staff and faculty, and public employees. We appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on the Ohio report card.

One of Stephen Covey's principles for success, and one shared by teachers developing lesson plans, is the principle of starting with the end in mind. Having conversations with our members and reviewing the landscape of other states, the end we have in mind is a report card focused on critical targeted areas. Our end in mind is a report card that informs district decisions and allows parents to have a better understanding of the academics, the quality of the teaching staff, and the programs offered at their local schools. The report card, along with a dashboard, should mirror the State Strategic Plan.

Parents and communities have lost faith in the current report card. The terminology used as part of the report card may make sense to the well informed but leaves many parents and community organizations uncertain about how the categories of "Graduation" and "Prepared for Success" relate to each other or how well a district's graduates are doing. How does "Achievement," "Progress," and "Gap Closing" relate to each other, if they relate at all. Teachers are also confused and don't have enough information to answer parents’ questions.

First, we need to see a report card that helps parents, teachers, students and community organizations have a complete understanding of what is happening in their local schools and school districts. School and district report cards should support a more comprehensive approach using an array of data and public reporting tools, ensuring that each metric strengthens the picture of a student, school, and district performance. We must move beyond testing as the principal measure of grading school districts. Second, teachers and staff want their work recognized and have that work reflected in more than just a test score.

**Fundamental concepts to be considered with the revised report cards:**

1. Involvement – parents, teachers, and other stakeholders need to be involved in the development of the look and data reported.

2. Transparency - make the value-added formula more transparent (the current process raises lots of questions).

3. Re-evaluate all data points to see if the data is being processed effectively, because we have recently seen data reworked and hard to explain grades for different components of the report card.

4. Allow school districts control over how report card information is shared with the community because schools are mostly doing this now.

5. Phase-in implementation of a new report card giving parents and districts time to recommend adjustments.

6. End the A-F grading system- look at a dashboard or using graphics that provide longitudinal information.

7. Focus on equity and improvement, not just test scores.

8. Provide information on the supportive services - nurses, counselors, social workers, art programs, music programs, P.E. teachers and wraparound services.

9. Change prepared for success category to allow for multiple options and to be reflective of Ohio's wide range of economic opportunities beyond college including obtaining career licenses and entering the military.

10. Develop a report card that moves towards improvement. Establish data points such as cut scores that are not changed every year.

**Base New Report Card on Ohio Department of Education’s Strategic plan**

We should target the report card and create a dashboard around Ohio Department of Education’s Strategic plan by asking the question, "How does the report card reflect the core principles of the Strategic Plan?"

**Equity** - Understanding of the history of discrimination and bias and how it has come to impact current society. What is the state doing to ensure equity?

**Partnerships** - Everyone, not just those in schools, shares the responsibility of preparing children for successful futures — partnership examples: school-based health, wraparound services, trauma-informed instruction, and career exploration programs.

**Quality schools** - Factors come together in a variety of resources to serve the student, including school leaders, teachers, curriculum, instruction, student supports, data analysis and more.

How will the report card and a dashboard address the equity issues? How are partnerships included in the report card and how are school leaders and teacher quality reflected on the report card. How do we document the whole child principles: healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged experience on the report card?

**MEETING THE LEARNING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF ALL STUDENTS. (source: Ohio Department of Education’s Strategic Plan)**

 **Prioritizing equity.** The report card should document teachers' experience in the building and strategies to help students of low wage families, students with disabilities, English learners, and other students who face unique challenges to reach their full potential.

 **Ensuring students have foundational knowledge and skills.** Measurements for state tests for mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social studies are essential, but the report card should take into account equity when developing reporting mechanisms for these test results.

**Accommodating all students' learning and growth needs and aspirations.** The report card should include the development of social-emotional competence, learning and innovation skills, information and technology skills, and life and career skills. These skills will help parents identify building skills that best fit their student's needs.

**Celebrating learning.** The report card should document the experience and background for the teachers and leaders. Ensuring excellent educators (teachers and leaders) are in a building that knows how to meet the learning needs and aspirations of all students are essential. Document other awards school buildings and districts have received.

**Supporting effective educators who achieve results.** Report cards or a dashboard must document the supply of effective teachers and leaders (and other personnel – psychologists, counselors, support staff, etc.) who are collaborative, empowered, prepared and developed to nurture student growth and boost student accomplishment.

**Fostering environments that maximize student learning.**The dashboard must identify and promote strategies to help students overcome barriers to learning and build teacher and leader capacity to support those strategies. A dashboard should include activities addressing reducing trauma, implementing restorative practices, and meeting physical, social, and emotional needs.

**Advancing quality in- and out-of-school learning opportunities.**A dashboard must identify ways to promote access to opportunities that enrich the student learning experience during the school day, after the school day, and beyond the traditional K-12 school experience (including, but not limited to, opportunities for students to participate in community service, internships, mentoring, and after- and out-of-school experiences).

**Promoting evidence-based, innovative learning practices.**A dashboard must support school districts in developing and implementing innovative and evidence-based learning practices, including, but not limited to, the integrated use of technology and authentic, real-world, experiential learning and project-based learning.

**MAINTAINING AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND FAMILIES.**

**Prioritizing early learning.**A dashboard must recognize the value and return on investment of early learning. It must document strategies that advance high-quality, developmentally appropriate, hands-on early childhood and preschool opportunities for students. It should document collaborations with parents, caregivers, and community partners that emphasize the importance of early learning.

**Striking partnerships to deploy integrated supports.**The report card and a dashboard should document schools to partner with parents, caregivers, community members, and organizations to help maximize learning and support student opportunities and accomplishments. These supports can address students' basic needs or more specific conditions (e.g., nutrition, vision/hearing, health care, career exploration, workplace learning, etc.) that have an impact on learning and life.

**Emphasizing collective stakeholder impact.**At the state and local levels, the report card and dashboard must recognize the power of collective impact and seek to leverage all elements of society— including critical partners such as parents, caregivers, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, state legislators, etc.—in a shared commitment to the continuous improvement of the education system and the lives of children.

**Measuring progress.**A dashboard must document strategies that help students overcome barriers to learning and build teacher and leader capacity to support those strategies. A dashboard should include reducing stress, addressing experiences of trauma, implementing restorative practices, and meeting physical, social, and emotional needs.

You will hear recommendations about specific proposals that we could support within our framework. We think at the end of the day, we will always have districts that are in the bottom ten percent but focusing just on punitive measures that have not proven more effective does not help the students who remain in these schools. Using data that does not reflect what is happening in a school building to make changes in a building status is not a sound education policy. Ohio needs a new framework, and Ohio Department of Education’s Strategic Plan offers an alternative. Thank you for allowing us this opportunity, and I welcome any questions you may have.