



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

January 2017

New Albany-Plain Local teachers tap Twitter to share local stories

Students in a class at **New Albany-Plain Local's (Franklin)** New Albany Elementary School have grown accustomed to a phone camera's presence. The photos typically end up on the classroom's Twitter page, where parents, fellow educators and others can keep up with what students are doing. Nicknamed the Think Tank, the class is designed as an open concept with a garage-style partition that can be closed for test taking or opened into a lounge area for reading time or other activities. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU380> for more.

Ohio students learn science of soap box derby races

The All-American Soap Box Derby is expanding into schools and after-school clubs with a curriculum that teaches students to build and race cars in the Gravity Racing Challenge. Ohio districts such as **Tallmadge City, Woodridge Local (Summit), Coventry Local (Summit)** and **Akron City** have been using the curriculum, which covers science, math, reading and writing along with the history of the races. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU381> for more.

Patrons take notice of Polaris Career Center's esteemed culinary program

Culinary students at **Polaris Career Center** run a restaurant open to the public for two lunch sittings. The school offers chef- and pastry-training programs, and in May, five students nabbed a national title at the 2016 National ProStart Invitational Culinary Team Competition. Details are available at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU382>.

12 resources to help build relationships with students

Whether you're connecting with students individually or sharing personal anecdotes, teachers know that building relationships can lay the foundation to support academic development. A curated list of resources is featured on the ASCD myTeachSource website that support the development of student listening skills, empathy and inclusivity to help create classroom environments that feel welcoming to all students. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU383> to view the list.

8 teacher-loved edtech tools to try in 2017

Across the country, educators are using tech tools to drive innovation in their classrooms. Examples include the Google Knowledge Graph, which helps provide easier access to online materials for teachers, and Prezi, an alternative to Microsoft PowerPoint, writes **Scott Ragin** for eSchool News. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU384> to read his recommendations.

Student achievement in-depth

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

Report urges states to take action on computer science education

A new report out from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) recommends actions for states and schools to help more young people — especially girls, black and Hispanic students, and students from low-income families — learn computer science (CS) and explore and choose careers in computing fields, writes **Dian Schaffhauser** for Campus Technology.

SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with Southern states to improve public education at every level, from preschool to doctoral programs. However, the guidance in the report applies to every state.

Bridging the Computer Science Education Gap: Five Actions States Can Take, published by the board's Commission on Computer Science and Information Technology, offers five broad steps states can take to encourage all young people — not just those interested in STEM — to learn CS and computational thinking skills.

As summarized by Schaffhauser, the five steps are:

- Developing K-12 computer science standards which include bringing educators and other experts together to develop CS standards; requiring high schools to offer students access to “rigorous, standards-based computer science courses” and funding the expansion of CS learning in districts and schools. Currently, only six states in the country have such standards, according to the report.
- Laying the foundation for learning CS, including integrating lessons on literacy skills and math that will help students master grade-appropriate computer science standards; and providing “targeted interventions” and “readiness courses” for students who need extra help in mastering the fundamental skills needed for success in computing fields.
- Creating clear pathways to computing careers. This can be achieved by building blocks of courses for training in high-demand jobs in cybersecurity, informatics and related fields, and redesigning the high school senior year to allow college-ready students to earn credits that will give them a head start on their associate and bachelor's degrees.
- Recruiting and training great computer science teachers. This includes offering teaching endorsements to new computer science teachers who complete a multiweek summer institute to learn their curriculum by completing the same projects and assignments as their students; and leveraging various funds to support intensive, ongoing professional development in CS and intervention technology areas.
- Educating communities about CS opportunities. Such actions might include encouraging “employer partners” to invest in appropriate education initiatives and putting in place career advisement and exploration across K–12 to inform students, parents and others about career options.

The report profiles exemplars and offers information about free or low-cost CS courses for students in every grade level.

“Like reading, writing and math, knowledge of computer science can no longer be considered optional in our innovation-driven economy, where data and computer technology are central to our lives,” added SREB President **Dave Spence**.

To read Schaffhauser's summary and link to the full report, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU385>.

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Helping students realize the difference between fake and real news

Ohio and Florida require media literacy lessons in schools, while other states, such as Washington, are adopting guidelines to make media literacy a requirement. Meanwhile, some groups are working to support the effort with resources and frameworks about the topic. To view these resources, including five core concepts of media literacy to help students interrogate the information they find online, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU386>.

Bay Village City students learn from an augmented reality sandbox

Eighth-graders at **Bay Village City's** Bay Middle School are learning about topography through augmented reality. Educators at the school designed a digitally enhanced sandbox, which uses a computer, sensors and projector to add a new dimension to learning. For the full story, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU387>.

Project-based learning helps students explore carbon footprint

Fifth-grade students in Indiana have been studying how to reduce their school's carbon footprint, an example of the school's focus on project-based learning. Teacher **Erik Wolfe** said students have explored issues such as how to reduce water usage in restrooms, more efficient lighting and ways to get their parents to reduce car idling when dropping off and picking up students. Details are available at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU388>.

Why teachers should make the most of the first 5 minutes of class

Teachers should devote more attention to the first 5 minutes of class, writes **Curtis Chandler**, an education professor at Brigham Young University-Idaho for MiddleWeb. Chandler shares several resources to help capitalize on those first 5 minutes, including polling tools, challenging problems and even video clips to kick off class. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU389> to check out the resources.

K-12 experts predict 2017 educational technology trends

There are nine major education technology trends to watch in 2017, according to a panel of 16 education experts interviewed by THE Journal. While the use of gaming, flipped learning, banning cellphones and purchasing tablets appear to be waning, experts said the following are waxing: active learning, augmented reality, makerspaces, open educational resources, coding, student privacy, next generation science standards, robotics and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). For more information, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU390>.

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Exercise: an antidote for behavioral issues in students?

Children with serious behavioral disorders might fare better at school if they get some exercise during the day, according to an article by HealthDay reporter **Amy Norton**, citing the results of a new study.

In research published in *Pediatrics*, students were studied with conditions that included autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety and depression. Researchers looked at whether structured exercise during the school day on stationary cybercycles could lessen student behavioral problems in the classroom.

Norton writes that over seven weeks, the study found that kids were 33% to 50% less likely to act out in class, compared to a seven-week period when they took standard gym classes.

“On days that the students biked, they were less likely to be taken out of the classroom for unacceptable behavior,” said lead researcher **April Bowling**, who was a doctoral student at Harvard University at the time of the study. “That’s important for their learning and for their relationships with their teachers and other kids in class.”

The type of exercise was carefully selected for students with behavioral problems. These children often get less physical activity than their peers, and they can have difficulty following the rules of organized sports or with the physicality of some traditional gym activities, Bowling said. Bowling is now an assistant professor of health sciences at Merrimack College in North Andover, Mass.

During the study, students were provided with stationary bikes equipped with virtual reality “exergaming.” The exercise was simple and contained, and the video games offered a way to keep kids engaged and focused.

The study was conducted at a school that enrolls kids with behavioral health disorders, many of whom also have learning disabilities. Their typical gym classes focused mainly on skill building, with only short bursts of aerobic activity, according to the researchers. For seven weeks, 103 students used the stationary bikes during their usual gym class — twice a week for 30 to 40 minutes.

Overall, the study found students were better able to control their behavior in the classroom during the stationary bike trial, Norton writes. The benefits were most apparent on the days they exercised, Bowling said. Although, there were some carryover effects on other days.

To read the study summary article, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU391>.

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Literacy initiative gets Wickliffe City reading

Wickliffe City is developing a community of readers through a newly adopted One District, One Book program. All students in kindergarten through eighth grade are reading "The Lemonade War" by **Jacqueline Davies**. Students and families are asked to read a chapter for about 15 minutes a night. At school, students participate in various activities to discuss and explore the book. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU392> for more on the program.

Mansfield City special needs students run recycling program

Each week, **Connie Zhu** and students in her multiple disabilities program gather **Mansfield City's** Mansfield Senior High School's recyclables. "We thought this would be a good project for our program because it teaches responsibility, job skills, those kinds of things," Zhu said of the program that began three years ago. "The kids look forward to doing this job every week." And Zhu said one of the benefits of the program is that her class receives money for the paper donated to the local recycling center, which is used to pay for special events and trips. To read more, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU393>.

Ridgedale Local (Marion) intervention program focuses on job skills

Ridgedale Local (Marion) offers a career skills intervention program to students struggling academically or who come from low-income families. Students work around the school and learn lessons that include apartment hunting and paying taxes. "We want them to go out into the workforce with life skills," said teacher **Lori Martin**, who supervises the program. "All of those things that people think should be taught in school, but aren't in regular classes." More details are available at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU394>.

Can Snapchat serve as a learning tool?

The fact that students already use Snapchat to have conversations and tell stories offers an opportunity to tap into the technology's potential for learning, writes journalism educator and student media adviser **John Walter** for KQED Learning. Walter highlights ideas for getting started on Snapchat — now the most popular social media platform for American teenagers — at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU395>.

Google educates students about online safety

Google representatives say 93% of middle school students use the internet daily, so they are working with students in Florida to teach them how to stay safe online. Lessons include a focus on social media. To read more about what students are learning, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU396>.

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Study: Teacher satisfaction, collaboration are keys to student achievement

A new study looks at how teacher satisfaction affects student achievement — and how being a part of a professional learning community can make a major difference — according to an Education Week Teacher article by Assistant Editor **Madeline Will**.

The study, recently published in the American Journal of Education, was conducted by **Neena Banerjee**, an assistant professor of public administration at Valdosta State University, and three professors of sociology and public policy from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The study used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey, which followed a nationally representative sample of children from kindergarten in 1998 through middle school. That survey asked the children's teachers questions about their overall job satisfaction and the extent of their collaboration with other teachers.

The study's authors used data from the first four waves of data collection, up until fifth grade in 2004, writes Will. They ended up with data from 5,850 elementary students in public schools.

The authors found that students have higher reading achievement by fifth grade when they have teachers who enjoy teaching and think they are making a difference. The researchers did not find a significant relationship between students' math achievement and their teachers' job satisfaction.

However, the study found that when students have teachers who are dissatisfied with their jobs, children who are in schools with a strong professional community score significantly higher in math achievement by third and fifth grades. This also held true for reading achievement in third grade, but there was no difference in reading in fifth grade, according to Will.

"In other words, the presence of a strong professional community serves as a cushion that can mitigate some of the harmful effects on students when assigned to teachers with low levels of personal job satisfaction," the authors wrote.

Professional learning communities are when the school has a shared vision and culture where teachers are encouraged to collaborate with each other with the goal of improving student learning. Past research has found that teachers tend to have higher job satisfaction when there is a strong, collaborative school culture.

The study concluded that school culture is a critical factor that can shape the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and student achievement.

The authors recommend that policymakers find strategies to improve teacher job satisfaction. A 2012 MetLife survey found that only 44% of teachers are "very satisfied" with their jobs — the lowest it has been in more than two decades.

To read the article, which contains links to the study and MetLife survey, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU397>.

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Northwest Local math intervention program uses robots

Northwest Local (Hamilton) has introduced robots in several middle school classrooms to encourage students to apply and reinforce math concepts. Students who have interacted with the robots are posting higher math achievement scores in response to the curriculum. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU398> for more on the program.

Toledo City to pilot media literacy, politics class

An 18-month study released in November by the Stanford History Education Group at Stanford University found that more than 80% of middle schoolers confused a paid advertisement marked as “sponsored content” with a real news story. That’s why **Toledo City** Start High School social studies teacher **Kristin Schnerer** will pilot a media and politics class next school year aimed at fact-checking news. More than 60 students already plan to enroll. To read more, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU399>.

How personalizing homework can engage students

Research supports the importance of autonomy in learning, writes **Cathy Vatterott**, author and professor of education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Personalizing homework and allowing students to create assignments that excite them can help them take ownership of their education, she explains in an article written for ASCD. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU400> to read the full article.

Community walks create bonds of understanding

Some Oakland, Calif., students lead walks designed to show their communities to their teachers, author **Shane Safir** writes in Edutopia. These community walks can help teachers understand students’ social context and create powerful cultural exchanges that transform schools, according to Safir. Visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU401> for more on the walks and how they benefit the district.

New York district closes achievement gap

The achievement gap in graduation rates among white and black students closed last year in Syracuse, N.Y., where 64% of each student group graduated. Officials cite efforts such as a tracking system that alerts educators when students start to falter, an expansion in career-technical programs and an overhaul in student discipline strategies that cut the number of suspensions in half. For more on these initiatives, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU402>.

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Study: Are degrees needed for entry-level work?

Some 69% of employers say they require a college degree for entry-level jobs, but 43% say they're having trouble finding candidates, according to new research from The Rockefeller Foundation, a New York-based humanitarian group, and research firm Edelman Intelligence. Employers also are concerned with retaining talent.

"For a long time, a college degree has been a proxy for skills and capabilities," said **Abigail Carlton**, The Rockefeller Foundation managing director. "In reality, it is a pretty blunt proxy."

Job degrees are indications of a person's capabilities, but they're often not relevant for the entry-level jobs, reporter **Alessandra Malito** writes for MarketWatch. For example, 90% of the employed recent college graduates from The Rockefeller Foundation's survey said they were learning skills on the job, compared with 49% who said they aren't using the skills they learned in college.

The reason? According to Malito, the hiring process may focus too heavily on resumes and college degrees, missing an entire group of potential candidates, which the researchers called "opportunity youth." These youth are 18- to 24-year-olds who lack a college degree and face economic challenges, cutting them off from the same possibilities as those with college degrees. Malito writes, "A lot of smart people don't go to college, often times, because they simply can't afford it," and "they are often overlooked when it comes to looking for a job."

One out of six young adults is shut off from education and work, partly because of poverty, according to a 2012 White House Council for Community Solutions report on this group. And while 77% of the more than 600 young adults interviewed in that study said it's their responsibility to get a good job and education, they also said they needed help because there are no jobs available or because they simply didn't have enough experience or education to attract the employers they want.

A third of employers say the reason their open jobs weren't filled in the first quarter of this year was due to a lack of experience, according to a recent survey of almost 2,000 businesses by staffing firm Express Employment Professionals. Malito writes that it's becoming an increasingly larger problem for employers, up from 29% in the second quarter of 2016. The second reason positions weren't filled was from a lack of available applicants.

"More employers are starting to think about how to experiment with assessment practices and hiring practices to make sure they get workers who would be a good fit for the job and would stay at the job," Carlton said.

There is a high turnover in employment among young workers, with 25% of college-educated employees overqualified for their jobs in 2014, according to a recent study by the Washington, D.C.-based economic and social policy think tank Urban Institute.

To read Malito's full article, which contains links to both the White House Council for Community Solutions and Urban Institute's research, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU403>.

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Can grade-skipping close the STEM gender gap?

Allowing female students who are gifted to skip a grade could help bridge the gender gap in STEM, according to two researchers at Vanderbilt University. Their study found that students who skipped a grade were more than twice as likely to earn an advanced STEM degree. To read a summary of their study and related research written by **Tom Clynes** for The Atlantic magazine, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU404>.

Three reasons why tech can't wait for teacher buy-in

Waiting to get teacher buy-in on educational technology programs can paralyze innovation and stall initiatives, according to **Karen Beerer** of Discovery Education. She outlines three reasons not to wait for reluctant teachers to get on board, including that students are ready for a digital world even when their teachers are not at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU405>.

Creating a safe haven for students in uncertain times

New federal executive orders on immigration have many school boards taking steps to let families know that schools are "safe havens" and will serve all students equally, regardless of immigration status. At the same time, safe haven designation is not a guarantee against Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity. To help school leaders understand where the lines are drawn, the California School Boards Association published legal guidance and a sample resolution to aid school boards in drafting resolutions of their own. To access these resources, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU406>.

A conversation about college signing day

Through Reach Higher and Better Make Room — a peer-to-peer campaign that encourages Generation Z to take charge of its future by completing education beyond high school — more than 1,250 events in all 50 states were hosted last year. Schools and communities around the country began hosting college signing day rallies on or around May 1 to show the importance of celebrating and creating a college-going culture. To read more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU407>.

Free mobile app improves communication with parents

Karen Londgren, technology integration specialist with Marshall Public Schools in Minnesota, says her school district is using a free mobile app to help facilitate communication with parents. The app has replaced email and teacher websites as the primary school-home communication tool. Londgren shares several lessons learned from the app's adoption at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU408>.

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Study examines skills of incoming first-grade students

First-grade students' reading skills have improved over time, according to a study by researchers at Ohio State University (OSU). Data show improvements in reading skills between 2001 and 2013, but the analysis also reveals a gap among some student groups in advanced skill areas, writes **Sean Rossman** in a study summary article published in USA Today.

"Children are better prepared when they enter first grade than they used to be," said **Emily Rodgers**, a professor of teaching at OSU and the study's co-author. "Kindergarten is the new first grade when it comes to learning reading skills."

The study assessed hundreds of thousands of first-grade students from thousands of schools in 44 states, testing them on basic and advanced literacy skills.

Test scores increased in all six areas, with low-performing students improving in the four basic skills of letter identification, word recognition, identifying and using sounds and print awareness. However, the gap grew between low performers and other students when it came to advanced skills of writing vocabulary and text reading.

Co-author **Jerome D'Agostino** said the study is good news, but couldn't explain why low performers are falling further behind their classmates.

"There's a missing link between teaching low-achieving students basic literacy skills and having them actually put those skills to use in reading," he said. "They're doing better at learning sounds and letters, and now we have to do a better job of helping them put it all together and read text."

Rodgers suggested an adjustment could be made.

"We're probably spending too much time emphasizing basic skills for the low-achieving students," she said, "when we should be giving them more opportunities to actually read text."

The authors credit the improved reading of first-graders to a pair of reports during the 2000s advocating changes in reading instruction as well as former President **George W. Bush's** No Child Left Behind Act, a law that promoted skills tied to reading in preschool and elementary school.

To read the rest of the USA Today article, which contains links to the study results, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU409>.

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Parma City's Teaching Professions program hits the mark

At a time when the need for good teachers has never been greater, **Parma City Schools** created a program to develop seniors who want to become educators. Twenty students participated in the 3.5 hours a day program this year. "By the end of the year, they will have ... completed a portfolio which will give them college credit," said **Tami Wozniak-Smith**, who heads the Teaching Professions program. "They'll learn CPR, first aid and counseling." To read the full story, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU410>.

Fairfield City prepares to open three new schools

Fairfield City Superintendent **Billy Smith** says his district is preparing to open three new schools as part of a historic \$80 million building plan. The plan includes two new elementary schools and a freshman building that will open for the 2017-2018 school year. Smith said his role is to make the educational experience "the very best that it can be" by working with staff and the community. To read more about how Smith is moving the district forward, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU411>.

What schools can learn about customer service

Education, as a service industry, should take a cue from the private sector and invest in creating a positive customer experience and culture, said **Hilliard City** Superintendent Dr. **John Marschhausen**. In a commentary for District Administration magazine, Marschhausen offers ideas for getting started, including breaking stereotypes and committing to customer service and culture. Read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU412>.

Here's how to find open educational resources

Open educational resources (OER) are freely available online if you know where to look, writes consultant and former superintendent **Bethany Rayl** for Edutopia. She shares several tips for finding quality OER, explains why you should use it and why you should consider giving back by sharing your creations for free. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU413>.

How to include social and emotional learning in academic lessons

Social and emotional learning (SEL) are important components of college and career readiness, according to Dr. **Maurice Elias**, a professor at Rutgers Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab. He shares ideas for integrating SEL in academic lessons, including a unit on the scientific method. For details, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU414>.

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Studies find children must be taught to collaborate

The ability to collaborate with others has become one of the most sought-after skills in both education and the workplace, **Sarah D. Sparks**, an education research reporter, writes for Education Week. According to Sparks, a survey by the Association of American Colleges & Universities found that more than 80% of midsize or larger employers look for collaboration skills in new hires, but fewer than 40% of them considered new graduates prepared to work in teams.

The Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards both prioritize collaboration and problem-solving skills. A recent report from the nonprofit Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) and Pearson Education, an educational publishing company, assert that communication, conflict resolution and task management are key components of collaboration that should be taught to students.

Assessments also are changing to focus on skills needed for group work. Sparks writes that in 2015 the Program for International Student Assessment added interactive tasks that gauge how well students can develop shared understanding of a problem, take action together to solve it and maintain a team organization. The first test results are expected this fall.

“Without a task that requires multiple perspectives, students simply often divvy up different aspects of a task and then sort of smoosh it together at the end,” Dr. **Emily Lai**, director of formative assessment and feedback for Pearson Education, told Education Week. “That’s not really collaborating.”

Dr. **Emma Mercier**, an assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, and graduate researcher **Susan Kelly**, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, are finding similar results in a large, ongoing series of studies of middle school students working in groups.

In one study, researchers asked groups of students using electronic smart tables to answer questions on the nutrition and energy costs of different foods, using different data sources. In the 45 studied discussions, all students could identify and repeat data facts, but the groups that engaged in more data discussion were able to begin to synthesize different sources of information and how they were connected. But, none of these groups were able to synthesize data from several sources without help from the teacher.

In a separate study, Mercier found that regardless of whether middle school students collaborated using paper and pencil or smart tables to solve complex math-based “mystery” problems, the groups in which a student generated the first idea and students then responded to each other produced more ideas for solving problems than those in which the first idea came from a teacher, Sparks writes.

“The elephant in the room when you have students work in groups is, if you don’t explicitly teach them how to collaborate, they are not going to do it,” Kelly said. “If you just put them in groups and give them a task, that’s not enough.”

To read the Education Week article, which contains links to the other studies mentioned, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU415>.

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Miami East Local students take field trips to learn life skills

Miami East Local's (Miami) Miami East Junior High School teacher **Doedee Trostel-Patton** incorporates field trips into her life skills classes to take students out of their comfort zone and teach them independent living skills. Recent field trips have included going to a strawberry farm to pick berries and having students order and tally their own food at a restaurant. More information on the class is available at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU416>.

Ohio educators learn about Google tech tools

A Google summit brought virtual reality to teachers in Ohio and beyond at a conference at **Avon Lake City's** Avon Lake High School on June 13 and 14. Teachers on Google's EdTechTeam led the summit, which featured ideas for using Google tools in education. To find out more about the summit, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU417>.

The Bearded Math Man's videos help students, teachers and parents

Arizona math teacher **Philip Brown** has launched a YouTube channel that uses music, demonstrations and sound effects to teach high school math. While most math websites and videos focus on memorizing procedures, The Bearded Math Man channel stems from the idea that students need help understanding mathematical concepts. It also provides videos for parents and teachers. You can read more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU418>.

Website aims to help educators understand academic research

The Research Map website — launched by the nonprofit Digital Promise — aims to help developers, teachers and administrators find and understand academic research. The website boasts a new ask a researcher feature to connect users with experts at Harvard University. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU419> to learn more.

5 strategies to increase student motivation

It can be challenging for educators to motivate struggling students to do their best, writes education expert and author **Barbara Blackburn** for MiddleWeb. Blackburn outlines five strategies, including relationship-building and effective praise, to boost student motivation. To learn the five strategies, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU420>.

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Study indicates texting slang is creeping into students' schoolwork

Schoolchildren have become accustomed to digital communication but haven't necessarily learned to switch off the habits formed in casual communication when using digital media for academic purposes, Brigham Young University (BYU) Media Relations Manager **Andrea Christensen** writes in BYU News. Christensen's article summarizes the results of a study by a team of BYU researchers recently published in Computers and Composition.

"We need to help our students develop the ability to think and write formally in certain contexts," said **Royce Kimmons**, a BYU assistant professor of instructional psychology and technology.

In the study, Kimmons and co-authors had several hundred eighth-graders write two essays: one handwritten and the other typed on a computer. According to Christensen, although the computer essays did have higher rates of capitalization errors and text speak, they had fewer spelling errors and were generally written at a higher grade level than the handwritten essays.

"Some of the common mistakes (in the handwritten essays) we saw were capitalization errors, not capitalizing the beginning of sentences, not using punctuation and using run on sentences," Kimmons explained. "I think a lot of teachers experience this. As they have students write, they start to see things creep in that maybe they wouldn't have expected 20 years ago."

Previous research on the benefits and drawbacks of digital composition for school-age children is divided, Kimmons noted. Among the pros of using a computer are typing speed and the fact students are generally more willing to edit and revise their work.

One surprising finding of this study, according to Christensen, was that handwritten essays were generally longer than computer essays. And though they couldn't pinpoint an exact reason why, researchers said one possibility was that some students in this study may not have been familiar or comfortable with the computers.

Academically, Kimmons added, the expectations for formal writing are the same whether an essay is handwritten or composed on a computer. So giving students laptops and "expecting good writing to just happen isn't reasonable. The writing process is still an essential thing that needs to be taught."

Ultimately, educators who embrace the reality of the technology and tailor their teaching accordingly will be giving students their best shot, Kimmons said. "It's here, our kids are using it and now we just have to take what they're doing that's good and make it into something better."

The study wasn't all bad news. Kimmons said kids are writing more now than any other generation. Parents and teachers just need to let students know how to "code switch" what is appropriate for text and what is acceptable at school.

To read Christensen's research summary article, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU421>.

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Engineering camp teaches manufacturing processes

Eighth- and ninth-graders from seven Ohio schools in Fairfield County participated in an engineering technology summer camp where they visited factories and learned how to make plastics. The idea for the camp came from a field trip in October that sparked student interest in manufacturing. More information is available at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU422>.

Survey reveals social media platform with most incidents of cyberbullying

There may be more incidents of cyberbullying on Instagram than other social media platforms, according to a survey of more than 10,000 people. About 42% of Instagram users reported being bullied, compared to 37% on Facebook, 31% on Snapchat, 10% on YouTube and 9% on Twitter. To find out more, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU423>.

Three ways to improve decision-making, avoid fatigue

Educators who teach reading can experience fatigue from making so many decisions, authors **Gravity Goldberg** and **Renee Houser** write in Edutopia. They share three ways educators can improve decision-making, streamline teaching and avoid fatigue at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU424>.

Free open resource library available from Amazon

A free library of open-education resources — Amazon Inspire — is now available, but the company has postponed the launch of its controversial share feature due to copyright violations last year. The share feature, which will allow educators to exchange resources and lesson plans for free, is expected to launch within the next few weeks. To learn more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU425>.

Survey finds Gen Z prefers videos, not blogs

Both millennials and Generation Zers are spending more time viewing videos on social media, according to a recent poll of 1,173 internet users, ages 13 to 34. Data also show a decrease in the time that Gen Zers spend on text-based sites, including blogs. To read more on the poll results, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU426>.

Student achievement in-depth

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Top Online Learning Predictions for 2017-18

When it comes to online learning, every passing year brings new advancements in technology and pedagogy — often with successful student learning results. Since online learning is expected to increase in the foreseeable future, it's critical for faculty and higher education stakeholders to ponder new usability and functionality within this trendy mode of learning.

In recent research conducted by ProProfs, a professional learning management system provider, the company identified the top nine online learning predictions for the 2017-18 school year. Using an infographic, ProProfs helps guide online learning enthusiasts and teachers through the eLearning trends and predictions that their research reveals will play a key role in learning for the upcoming term. The information also aims to help learning and development specialists get a clearer picture of the global eLearning landscape, and in turn, make necessary changes in their existing strategies.

The nine online learning predictions for the 2017-18 school year are:

1. **Videos will dominate:** More instructional designers are leaning toward video-based training. By 2019, videos will drive 80% of internet traffic.
2. **A rise in intelligent data demand:** eLearning tools that can draw actionable insights and speed up data extraction will magnify in 2017.
3. **Gamification to excel:** Game-driven online learning tools will grow at a faster pace in late 2017. By 2020, the gamification market will reach \$11.1 billion.
4. **Continued focus on responsive online courses:** BYOD (bring your own device) will gain even more momentum, pushing the demand for response-focused online learning solutions.
5. **Wearable devices:** The use of wearables to boost performance will skyrocket. More than 400 million smart wearables worth \$34 billion are likely to be sold in 2020.
6. **Social learning for success:** Easy accessibility of social media tools will be encouraged as 43% of companies in the workplace now plan to use it for their own training purposes in 2017.
7. **Cloud computing to capture attention:** The demand for cloud-based learning tools will grow, since they're cost-efficient and reduce learning and development costs. The overall cloud market will be \$235.1 billion in 2017.
8. **Enhanced use of mobile learning:** Mobile learning tools were extensively used by higher education last year and this momentum will continue. The global app revenue is expected to be \$80.6 billion by 2020.
9. **Two-way conversations will grow:** To achieve collaborative learning environments, the two-way conversation will gain more relevance.

To view the infographic and read more, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU427>.

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Lancaster City culinary students sweep Burger Battle

Lancaster City's Lancaster High School culinary students recently competed in the ProStart Capital City Burger Battle at the Ohio State Fair. The winning entry was a version of a Hawaiian burger that was made with Spam and pineapple. Read more about how the students swept the competition at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU428>.

6 ways teachers can boost parent outreach

It is vital for teachers, parents and students to be on the same page, writes **Jeff Knutson** of Common Sense Education for Edutopia. He shares six ways educators can improve parent outreach using blogs and new social media apps. To read his recommendations, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU429>.

Dublin City principal shares prioritization tips

Are you a new administrator struggling with how to get everything done? **Dublin City** Principal **Jen Schwanke**, author of "You're the Principal! Now What? Strategies and Solutions for New School Leaders," shares three tips about prioritizing when you're the head of a school. The podcast can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU430>.

How reading on a screen affects comprehension

Reading on a digital device can affect comprehension of lengthier texts, according to an analysis of studies by educational psychologist **Patricia Alexander**, a literacy scholar at the University of Maryland, and doctoral student **Lauren Singer**. The two researchers found that comprehension can suffer after more than 500 words, yet students often believe their understanding improves when reading on a digital device. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU431>.

How four states support career-tech in rural areas

It can be difficult for rural areas to support robust career-technical education programs, according to a new brief that highlights some challenges. The brief from Advance CTE: State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work reveals how officials in Nebraska, South Dakota, Mississippi and Idaho are working to overcome these challenges. To read the Education Week brief summary, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU432>.

Student achievement in-depth

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Study: How students' school entry age affects achievement

Children who start school at an older age do better than their younger classmates and have better odds of attending college and graduating from an elite institution, writes correspondent **John Ydstie** for NPR News, citing the results of a new National Bureau of Economic Research study.

"Many parents already delay enrolling their children in school, believing they'll do better if they're a bit older," one of the study's authors, Northwestern University economist **David Figlio** told Ydstie. "It's sort of 'academic red-shirting,' using a term that originated in college athletics and refers to recruits who are held out of games for a year."

The study focused on differences between Florida children born just before and after the Sept. 1 cutoff date for starting kindergarten. According to Ydstie, that means the youngest children in any class were born in August and the oldest in September of the previous year. Figlio and his co-authors found that, on average, demographically similar September-born children performed better than their younger August-born classmates through their academic careers.

Ydstie writes previous studies also have concluded that older children do better in school, but there still were questions about whether the advantage continued beyond a few years. This new research found that the advantage extends through college. In the NPR interview, Figlio said that if you look at test scores, the achievement gap could be equivalent to about 40 points on the 1,600-point SAT.

The age a child starts school also could affect college attendance and graduation rates, writes Ydstie. Among families in the middle socioeconomic group, the older, September-born kids were 2.6% more likely to attend college and 2.6% more likely to graduate from an elite university. On the downside, August-born children were 1% more likely to be incarcerated for juvenile crime. Figlio said these are not "massive differences," but he says they are "meaningful."

Figlio told Ydstie the study's most surprising finding was that the gap between August- and September-born children occurs at all socioeconomic levels and is not easily closed, even in high-income families. The Florida birth and education data allowed the researchers to compare the performance of August- and September-born children in the same families. Even in high-income families, said Figlio, there was a gap in achievement between children who started school at a young age and siblings who started when they were older.

Figlio said that surprised him because he thought high-income families would have the resources needed to close the gap among siblings. Although he believes there's no clear remedy to the problem, Figlio said he believes educators and officials should look for solutions.

To read Ydstie's summary article, which contains a link to the study, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU433>.

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Marion City expands work-study program

Marion City's Harding High School educators have used state grant money to hire more job coaches and expand a work-study program to include 10 community organizations and businesses as job sites for students with disabilities. Students develop communications and work skills as they rotate through different sites every six weeks. Read the full story at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU434>.

How extracurriculars factor into college

High school students who are interested in applying to college should give thought to the types of after-school activities they participate in, according to **Ross Grippi**, director of undergraduate admission for Ohio Wesleyan University. In U.S. News & World Report, digital producer **Alexandra Pannoni** outlines Grippi's criteria that students could consider as they select extracurricular activities, including whether they help the community at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU435>.

Fairview Park City develops augmented-reality map

Students and staff at **Fairview Park City's** Innovation Center worked together to build an augmented-reality terrain map using repurposed and donated materials. The digital map will allow students to learn about the effects of rain on watersheds. To learn more about the map's creation process, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU436>.

Grant boosts college and career readiness in Cleveland

A program in the **Cleveland Municipal** School District that supports college and career planning for middle and high school students recently received a \$50,000 grant from the Coca-Cola Foundation. The College Now Greater Cleveland program employs advisers who work with students on the college application process, the ACT, financial aid and college and career readiness. For more on the program, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU437>.

How schools achieve digital equity

A free Digital Equity Action Toolkit, produced by the nonprofit Consortium for School Networking, showcases ways school leaders are effectively closing the digital divide. **Travis Brown**, director of technology in a Texas school district, says a virtualized desktop has helped level the playing field for students by giving them access to the district's network from anywhere — and on any device. To read more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU438>.

Student achievement in-depth

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Report: Most educators are aware of open educational resources, don't understand their licensing

Most school districts, 77%, have made at least one full-course curriculum adoption decision in the last three years, according to a new report from the Babson Survey Research Group. Teachers are most likely to have a role in those decisions, according to a study summary article published in THE Journal, with 93% of respondents saying they are decision-makers and another 6% saying they have a role in offering advice.

District-level administrators, by contrast, came in second, with 75% of respondents naming them decision-makers and 19% saying they have a role in offering advice about full-course curriculum decisions. Principals rounded out the top three, named decision-makers by 73% of respondents and advisers by 18%.

The survey of more than 500 district decision-makers was designed to shed light on how districts make full-course curriculum adoption decisions and to what degree respondents are aware of open educational resources (OER) and have adopted them. Nearly three-quarters of respondents said they are aware of OER, but when those same respondents were later asked if they also are aware of Creative Commons licensing, the number dropped to one-third.

Other key findings of the report include:

- 37% of respondents said they have considered adopting one or more OER curriculum;
- 16% of respondents have actually adopted an OER curriculum;
- larger districts, defined as those with more than 2,500 students, were most likely to have engaged in full-course curriculum decisions at a rate of 84%;
- mathematics was the most common subject of such decisions at 59%, followed by English language arts at 44%, science at 29% and history and social studies at 19%;
- selecting new material to meet changing standards was cited as the most common reason for change at 69%;
- the top three factors cited as “very important” or “critical” in an adoption decision were comprehensive content, the ability to work with existing technology and cost;
- In districts with high poverty ratios, cost was twice as likely, at 52%, to be cited as a critical consideration as in districts with low poverty rates, which cited cost only 26% of the time;
- most districts making full-course curriculum decisions are replacing materials that are 6 to 10 years old;
- 22% of districts with high child poverty rates reported having adopted OER curricula, while only 10% of districts with low child poverty rates said the same.

To read the study summary article, which contains a link to the full study results, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU439>.

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Mapleton Local (Ashland) students complete complex industrial tech projects

Some **Mapleton Local (Ashland)** Mapleton High School students are building a tool rack for the school's industrial technology workshop. The project, which is expected to take several weeks, is one of several that students will complete through the industrial technology career pathway program. Read more about the program and its benefits at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU440>.

Jefferson Area Local (Ashtabula) expands gifted program

Jefferson Area Local (Ashtabula) Schools will provide differentiated instruction for fourth- through sixth-grade gifted students after providing training and coaching to educators and administrators on gifted education. The "pushed-in" instruction is intended to keep students in the classroom and allow gifted education to expand across all subjects. The full story can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU441>.

Teachers use puzzles, escape-room exercises in class

Educators at an Indiana middle school are using puzzles and deciphering clues in escape-room scenarios to engage students with curriculum. English teacher **Christen Ellis** had students work through clues on literary elements of **Edgar Allan Poe's** "The Tell-Tale Heart" in an escape-room exercise. Learn more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU442>.

Study: How are teens influenced by social media?

Teen behavior can be influenced by the online behavior of their peers, according to a study by cognitive neuroscientists at Temple University in Philadelphia. The researchers found that teens were more likely to like a photo on Instagram if they were told more of their peers liked it as well. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU443> for more on the study.

3 tips for classroom device management

Mobile devices can be an asset in the classroom when managed properly, asserts **Charri Stratton**, director of instructional technology at **Putnam City Schools** in Oklahoma City. Stratton shares three tips to help make the most of these devices at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU444>.

Student achievement in-depth

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Study cites benefits of early literacy learning

Development of early literacy skills has benefits beyond academics, according to researchers at the University of Washington. They studied children for five years and found that students whose parents read to them at home improved both their progress in school and in life skills such as self-regulation and goal-setting.

The project followed children in grades one through five or three through seven. It looked at their reading and writing activities at home, school progress and skills according to their parents' reports and annual assessments, writes Dr. **Perri Klass** in a study summary article for The New York Times.

The study, published in May in the Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation by Dr. **Nicole Alston-Abel** and Dr. **Virginia W. Berninger**, asked parents to rate their children's ability to pay attention, set goals, control impulses and regulate their level of activity.

Berninger, professor emerita of educational psychology at the University of Washington, said, "It's not just the skills the parents teach at home, it's also how they help their children's self-regulation, sometimes called executive function."

Writing, Beringer said, was just as important as reading, and the children in the study tended to struggle harder with writing and to get more help with those assignments from their parents.

"When we talk about those early literacy skills, from vocabulary to book handling to dialogic reading, we are talking about critical brain development, about so much learning that can happen when all the pieces are in place before children get to school," said Klass. "A caring adult who is ... not too distracted ... a household sufficiently organized to allow for routines, a 'print-rich' environment in which there are appealing books available suited to the child's age, and a pattern established early of reading together for pleasure" are all beneficial ingredients which can set a child up for academic success, according to Klass.

"The love of reading *does* begin in the parents' arms, and it *is* a sign of love to read to your baby," Klass writes. "And, because it's a sign of love, because it links books and written language to the parental affection and attention that babies are built to crave, and to elicit, it does help children acquire a range of early literacy skills. And, continued attention by parents to reading and writing activities as children grow up and go to school seems to help them learn how to study and learn."

To read the summary article, which contains a link to the full study results, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU445>.

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Pickerington Local begins shift to flexible seating

Pickerington Local (Fairfield) Schools is making a shift to flexible seating in some classrooms. **Brian Seymour**, the district's director of instructional technology, said involving students is an important part of the process. He noted that one school held a classroom design competition styled after the TV show "Shark Tank." Read more, along with how a few other districts around the U.S. are implementing flexible seating, at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU446>.

Collaboration boosts graduation rates for rural Ohio schools

Some rural schools in Ohio have boosted graduation rates and the number of college-going graduates thanks, in part, to the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative. The collaborative, which launched with 21 school districts in 2010, allows for pooling of resources and better access to funding. Learn more at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU447>.

Educators: How to tap the potential of video

More educators are integrating video to support their professional development goals, said Kansas middle school science teacher **Andrea Friend**. She shares three ways educators can tap the potential of video, including videotaped lessons with a colleague, at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU448>.

How signal words can boost students' writing

Certain signal words, such as "but" and "however," are useful to readers and can be helpful to writers, Chicago eighth-grade history teacher **Lauren S. Brown** writes for MiddleWeb. Brown also shares how she teaches students to use appositives in their sentences, and how they have improved their writing about history. For details, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU449>.

Volunteers offer crisis intervention via text

The Crisis Text Line, which launched four years ago, offers free crisis intervention via text messages. Volunteers field texts about topics ranging from school stress to suicidal thoughts and work to get first responders on the scene when needed. Read more about the text line at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU450>.

Student achievement in-depth

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Survey considers social media habits

On average, young people are on 8.7 social media accounts, according to a survey of more than 89,029 web users between the ages of 16 and 64.

Through an online questionnaire, Global Web Index surveyed respondents from 40 countries about their digital lives, giving them 42 social media networks to choose from.

The survey found that Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp are popular ways to communicate, and millennials are on roughly 1 in 5 social media networks.

The study reports that across all age groups 98% of web users polled use at least one social network. On average, they have 7.6 active accounts and, unsurprisingly, young people (16-34 years old) tend to have more accounts (8.7 on average) than those over 55 (4.6). Although, older users are still highly active on social media.

Globally, the highest number of accounts per user can be found in Latin America (8.8) and Asia (8.1). According to the report, each web user spends an average of two hours and 15 minutes per day on social networks and online messaging platforms.

Web users are now using social networks to keep up with the news as well as staying in touch with friends. Plus, watching videos on social media remains a growing trend. In fact, 56% of Facebook users polled said they watched at least one video online in the last month, as did around four in 10 users of Instagram or Snapchat.

As for online purchases via social networks, despite many using the platforms to research products, just 13% of 16-24 year olds said that a “buy” button would encourage them to make purchases on social media — a figure that drops with age.

Finally, social media users’ level of engagement continues to grow, now reaching 90%. Engagement was reportedly highest in the Middle East and Africa (97%) and lowest in Europe (87%). While younger users again score highest (95%), engagement among users over 55 was 78%.

To read a survey summary article by GadgetsNow, which contains a link to the full study results, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU451>.

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