



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

November 2019

Marietta City emphasizes positive interactions

Students and teachers in **Marietta City's** Marietta Middle School are starting the school year on a positive note by participating in Sandy Hook Promise's Start with Hello Week initiative. Each day, the school focused on a different positive theme, including a "no one eats alone" lunch period, and the writing and display of notes of encouragement to students. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU587>.

Aviation program launches at Butler Tech

Butler Tech's new Aviation Exploration Program for high school juniors and seniors was launched this week at the Middletown Regional/Hook Field. Thirty students will attend classes in aircraft avionics and electronics and receive training to attain an FAA drone pilot's license. Classrooms are housed in an education hangar built last year by the airport with funds received from a state capital improvement grant. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU588>.

High school vape culture can be as hard to shake as addiction, teens say

One in four high school seniors say they have vaped in the past month. And for heavy users, scary headlines about serious illness and death are no match for nicotine addiction and peer pressure. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU589>.

Two Texas laundromats tackle the digital divide

Two laundromats in San Antonio, Texas, have added tablets, laptops and Wi-Fi as part of a program called the Wash and Learn Initiative. One goal of the program is to close the digital divide in a city where a quarter of households lack home internet access. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU590>.

How lessons in entrepreneurship change lives

Entrepreneurial education teaches valuable life lessons, including how to recognize opportunity, work toward a goal and develop networks of support, writes **Steve Mariotti**, entrepreneur, former special-education teacher and founder of the nonprofit Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. Mariotti shares how entrepreneurial education can be life-changing for students and offers several ways to introduce such lessons in the classroom. Go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU591> to read the full story.

Student achievement in-depth

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

Nonacademic factors fuel achievement gap

Even though disadvantaged students in poorer school districts might earn lower test scores than those in wealthier districts, students in both settings are learning just as much, according to a new study from researchers at Ohio State University.

The research challenges the traditional notions that performance gaps between such districts are a product of the schools themselves, researchers said. “What our results suggest is that that story is probably not accurate,” said Dr. **Doug Downey**, a sociology professor at Ohio State University and lead author of the study. Discrepancies in test scores between wealthy or poor districts speak more to what happens outside the classroom, he said.

“It’s probably more accurate to say, there are large gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged kids at the start of kindergarten, but once they get to school, those gaps largely stop growing,” Downey said.

The study used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, pulling from a subsample of about 3,000 students from around the country. Children in the cohort examined by researchers took reading tests at the beginning and end of kindergarten and near the end of first and second grade. Researchers calculated how much children learned during the three periods of school and compared that to what happened during summer breaks.

The results showed that children in schools that serve disadvantaged students on average saw their reading scores rise about as much during the school year as the scores in more advantaged schools.

Downey hopes the research can be helpful for policymakers thinking about how to evaluate schools, and determine whether schools labeled as failing truly are. “If we’re interested in reducing achievement gaps among advantaged and disadvantaged kids, we’re going to need to think bigger than school reform,” he said.

Those conclusions are in line with the work of the nonprofit group Communities in Schools, said **Amy Gordon**, its executive director and CEO. The group provides services in more than two dozen central Ohio schools to address barriers outside of the classroom that can impact learning, such as hunger, unstable housing, lack of basic resources, and prevalence of violence.

“The issue is not at all the students or the schools’ capacity to teach or to learn,” she said. “There is no doubt about the fact that ability and capacity is there. It really does come down to the impact of the nonacademic barriers that kids are facing.”

To read the full article visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU593>. For more about the study, its social and educational implications and the full report, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU592>.

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