



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

June 2019

Building bridges for refugee students

The U.S. admits approximately 50,000 refugees per year, about a third of whom are children. Three of the biggest challenges these families face in getting their children ready for school are technology, language and culture. This article describes how schools and districts might reach out to these at-risk students and their families.

For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU555>.

Fashion students showcase more than 100 outfits

Fashion students at a Pennsylvania high school will showcase more than 100 outfits during the 11th annual Quincy High School Fashion Show. "This is when the craziness and the chaos of the entire year truly come together and the students get to show off all the hard work they've done," **Robin Kaplan**, Quincy High fashion technology teacher, said. The fashion design track is part of the school's vocational education program. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU556>.

10 ways to give students more control of their education

Allowing students to be involved and take control of their education gives them the tools to be successful because it gives them ownership in their learning. Relinquishing control in some areas of the classroom makes students more receptive to instruction, keeps them engaged in what they're learning and makes them more willing to take on challenges. So, how do you give students control without it turning into total chaos? For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU557>.

Students gain hands-on agricultural experience

An Illinois high school opened a state-of-the-art building for its comprehensive agriculture program. Students enrolled in the program gained hands-on experience in the field, including using ultrasound technology on cows to determine what grade of beef they could produce. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU558>.

Combating middle school reading failure

Despite generations of interventions, two-thirds of middle school students in the United States are not proficient in reading. Educators must be equipped to triage these students so they can accurately and efficiently identify their specific skill deficits and implement effective and differentiated intervention without delay.

For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU559>.

Student achievement in-depth

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

Criminalizing disability: Special needs kids who don't get help in school are winding up in jail

A lack of school-based special education services and a tendency for some districts to refer behavioral problems to law enforcement mean that many children with special needs end up in prison. An American Bar Association study, Task Force on Reversing the School to Prison Pipeline, reports that 65% of juvenile inmates nationwide have some form of disability, and the rate is higher in communities with widespread trauma and poverty.

A shy teenager with light brown hair and big green eyes, **Sebastian Montano** was well known to staff and students at Alamogordo High. He had a long and messy school history, including 16 documented run-ins with school police officers — all in relation to behaviors associated with his disabilities: autism spectrum disorder, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, PTSD, epilepsy and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

But he also was a boy who showed great promise. He tested in the superior range in math and was considered something of a genius when it came to electronics. He understood the internal circuitry of complex gadgets with casual ease; his classmates often would hand him their broken smartphones to fix. When he was in seventh grade, he disassembled his mother's laptop and melded it with an Xbox gaming console, creating his own portable gaming system.

With the right support, he might have been on his way to a career as an electrician or even an engineer. Instead, he was now another special needs student swept up in the school-to-prison pipeline. There are countless Sebastians across the U.S. — students with disability-related behavior problems who do not receive adequate special education services in school, and instead are repeatedly referred to law enforcement and end up in prison.

Cases like these aren't supposed to happen. At the state and federal levels, laws and procedures are in place to identify kids like Sebastian, provide them with specialized learning programs and set them on a path to success. Those procedures, however, are frequently flouted. School personnel instead referred Sebastian to law enforcement time and again — even summoning the police when his behavior clearly called for intervention from a mental health professional. When he threatened to kill himself, the middle school counselor called police. When he cut himself intentionally, the assistant principal called police.

"We see this kind of thing all the time — a lot of kids who need behavioral intervention plans (BIP) don't have one," said **Jason Gordon**, a litigation manager with Disability Rights New Mexico. "If there was a BIP like there should have been, we wouldn't be talking about criminal behavior."

To read the article, which contains a link to the findings published in the American Bar Association report, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU560>.

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