



# Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

May 2021

**Washington State Community College and Washington County Career Center partner via robotics**

The **Washington County Career Center** is recruiting the first cohort of students to enroll in the Robotics Automation Engineering program. The program, a partnership between the career center and Washington State Community College, allows participating students to work toward an associate degree and prepare for careers. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU703>.

**Place-based learning engages students in science**

Teachers at Alcona Elementary School in Lincoln, Michigan, are using place-based learning to teach science. Educators at the school explain that the approach involves and benefits the community as students engage and reach their learning goals. One example includes first-graders who are recording data and graphing the growth of baby chickens as part of an embryology project being conducted online. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU704>.

**New study shows gifted programs add little to students' academic boost**

A study of 1,300 elementary students across the U.S. raises questions about whether gifted programs improve outcomes for students. The study, published in Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, finds small gains in reading, smaller gains in math, no improvement in motivation and no gains at all among Black students and children from families of low-income. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU705>.

**Students' social stamina becomes the focus of summer**

Rebuilding students' social stamina skills for in-person interactions and self-advocacy will take precedence over academics in summer school programs at Bloomington Public Schools District 87 in Illinois, said **Diane Wolf**, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. Wolf suggests celebrating students' gains in technology and self-reliance during the pandemic rather than adopting a learning loss view. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU706>.

**Charts offer snapshot of pandemic education**

The coronavirus pandemic altered education in the U.S. and highlighted inequities according to some data. A Politico article by **Annette Choi** uses four snapshots to show how the coronavirus pandemic altered education in the U.S. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU707>.

## Student achievement in-depth

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

### Access to after-school programs declines

The number of students with access to after-school programs has been cut in half since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a survey by Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit advocacy group. Data shows that students from families of low income are less likely to have access to in-person programs at a time when after-school programs face challenges.

When the pandemic hit, providing those supervised social experiences became impossible. After-school programs across the country faced the twin catastrophes of plummeting enrollment and the loss of their physical space. Many simply went out of business. Others, with the funding to do so, went online. Still, others were left with the overwhelming task of providing emergency child care that they were not set up to offer. And a year into the pandemic, federal financial support has only now begun to arrive in the form of public education dollars set aside for enrichment.

When the pandemic forced Austin, Texas-based Girlstart to go remote, the priority for Executive Director **Tamara Hudgins**, was finding a way to maintain hands-on experiences for the girls in her program. The majority of the girls came from low-income households and had few options for this kind of academic enrichment.

**Jodi Grant**, executive director of Afterschool Alliance said, "It costs a lot more to run a program now because you have to have all of the COVID interventions, the personal protective equipment and you need to have smaller groups of kids."

In a pre-pandemic Afterschool Alliance survey, almost 60% of parents reported that their children were receiving STEM instruction at least two days a week in an after-school program. An overwhelming majority of those surveyed said that after-school programs helped their children build social skills, gain confidence and make responsible decisions.

"One of our biggest fears is that it's not just the academics (affected by the pandemic)," Grant said. "We're seeing increased anxiety, increased mental illness, increased depression. It is absolutely clear to us that if kids can be with other kids and caring adults in person, that's huge."

The lack of systemic support at city and state levels has come at a great cost. Grant said, "I'm hopeful that we can start thinking about our whole community as an area of learning." To learn more and to find links to the surveys referenced, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU708>.

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