



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

December 2022

<p>Ohio students get head start on manufacturing careers</p>	<p>A new manufacturing center in Ohio is part factory, part museum and part classroom. Students who learn in the new Manufacturing Innovation, Technology and Job Center are getting a leg up on preparing for in-demand careers in manufacturing fields. For more, go to http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU825.</p>
<p>Test-optional admissions has staying power</p>	<p>Test-optional and test-free college admissions, which took hold during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be made permanent at 1,450 colleges, according to data from FairTest. For fall 2023, the organization reports that 1,835 four-year colleges are not requiring students to submit SAT or ACT scores to be considered for admission. For more, go to http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU826.</p>
<p>Want resilient and well-adjusted children? Let them play.</p>	<p>Humans have an innate need to engage in playful activities as a part of healthy development, and it helps children build new neural networks that can positively impact academic performance and social-emotional growth, says Dr. Doris Bergen, a professor at Miami University's Department of Educational Psychology. For more, visit http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU827.</p>
<p>Iowa students learn 'What's in Your Watershed'</p>	<p>A learning initiative in an Iowa high school is teaching students about water, watersheds and landscapes through experiential learning. Launched by earth and space science teachers Collin Reichert and Kean Roberts, the unit includes student research projects that will culminate in presentations and student fieldwork involving water testing and site surveys. For more, visit http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU828.</p>
<p>Several ways to nurture student well-being</p>	<p>Schools can implement simple strategies to bring positivity to their buildings and nurture student well-being, Paige Tutt writes. Tutt lists six ideas, including setting up a communal puzzle for students to work on throughout the day and hanging large sheets of paper in the hallway for students to create an impromptu mural or graffiti wall. For more, visit http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU829.</p>
<p>Report offers strategies for educators of middle school students</p>	<p>Middle school students need specialized academic and social and emotional support to help them succeed in high school and beyond, according to a report from Chiefs for Change. The report offers suggestions to increase such support for students. For more, visit http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU830.</p>

Student achievement in-depth

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

School closures not key driver of learning loss

Based on discussions before the results of the latest national analysis of how the pandemic affected math and reading achievement, one was led to believe that the only thing driving achievement losses across the nation was remote learning. According to Dr. **Thomas Kane**, a Harvard professor of education and economics who co-led this latest research, that does not seem to be the case.

The new analysis looked at how the pandemic affected math and reading achievement using test data for 29 states, spanning nearly 4,000 school districts that serve approximately 12 million students in third to eighth grades – about half of the U.S. student population for those age groups.

That test data was then combined with the test scores released this month from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which allowed a comparison of student performance in spring 2019 and spring 2022. Results indicated that this year's students in the median school district had learned about half a grade level less in math and about a quarter of a grade level less in reading, compared with their pre-pandemic peers.

Another interesting finding was that districts that stayed remote during the 2020-21 school year saw bigger declines in elementary and middle school math, and to some degree in reading, than other districts in their state. However, those losses varied widely, and many districts that went back in person had bigger losses than districts that stayed remote. The pattern is inconsistent enough that school closures, it seems, were not the primary driver of those drops in achievement.

Kane cautioned that this research cannot disentangle the effects of remote learning from other factors as it is possible the districts that stayed remote longer differed in other meaningful ways from districts that reopened quickly.

The team plans to look at how COVID-19 death rates, internet access and parent job losses may have contributed to score declines. According to co-leader of the research, Dr. **Sean F. Reardon**, director of the Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University, all of these variables affected a child's ability to learn.

Kane said he hoped their data would urge school districts to beef up their academic recovery plans this spring and summer with strategies like tutoring and extra instruction during vacations — while schools still have time to spend their COVID-19 relief dollars. Too many districts have put smaller efforts in place, he said, that won't be sufficient to tackle the losses his team found. For links to Kane's previous study, this analysis and the full article, please visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU831>.

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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>.