

## Testimony on K-12 Education FY16-17 Biennial Budget Priorities

Ohio Senate, Finance Committee  
Senator Scott Oelslager, Chair  
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Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Coley, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding the education sections of the FY16-17 Biennial Budget. I am Dr. Richard Ross, Superintendent of Public Instruction and head of the Ohio Department of Education. I will focus my testimony today on the governor's as introduced budget bill.

Throughout Gov. Kasich's first term, he has been a strong advocate of K-12 education. The governor believes, and I believe, we need to take Ohio to the next level and create more pathways and more opportunities for Ohioans to succeed.

The governor's robust, cohesive budget seeks an additional 23 percent income tax reduction, makes college more affordable and creates a more coordinated approach to stabilizing families by addressing key issues that contribute to unemployment. The governor's budget recommends GRF and lottery appropriations for the department of education at their largest amounts ever: \$8.7 billion in FY16 and \$9.1 billion in FY17. This represents growth of \$401.1 million, or 4.9 percent, in FY16 and another \$345.8 million, or 4 percent in FY17. Early childhood, K-12 and higher education continue to be priorities for the governor, and his budget initiatives will give educators, parents and communities the resources they need to support Ohio's students.

Much work has already been accomplished thanks to the governor's leadership and our work with our partners in the General Assembly. We implemented an A-F report card to clearly communicate to moms and dads how their schools are performing. We strengthened our commitment to reading by implementing the Third Grade Reading Guarantee to ensure our boys and girls who are struggling are identified early and have the interventions necessary to get them reading at a third-grade level in the third grade. We also have implemented a teacher and principal evaluation system, a comprehensive review of teacher preparation programs and the launch of Teach for America. In addition, we are working to introduce students to the strong connections between learning and careers. We also are strengthening career-technical education through an appropriate accountability system that links students with real-life career experiences. All of these policies are driving needed improvements statewide to help students everywhere achieve more and more.

## **Department of Education Priorities**

My vision for K-12 education in Ohio is to ensure that every girl and boy receives a high-quality education, can read at grade level and graduates college or job ready. To achieve these goals, we must prioritize policies and initiatives that are best for students. The department oversees the state's primary and secondary education system comprised of 613 public school districts, 49 joint vocational school districts, 52 educational service centers and 381 community schools.

The department of education's priorities include:

- Providing the basic education funding necessary to support student success and achievement;
- Offering early learning programs to promote school readiness;
- Promoting and supporting quality school choice options for all students;
- Setting expectations for what all students should know and be able to do;
- Aligning student assessments with the state's academic content standards to determine that students are meeting expectations;
- Providing focused, high-quality professional development for educators;
- Holding districts, schools, educators and students accountable for student growth and performance; and
- Initiating school improvement programs aimed at improving school learning environments, engaging parents and supporting student intervention programs.

Gov. Kasich's budget builds on the department's priorities by creating policies that provide flexibility to schools, focus on student success and create quality choices for students and families.

## **PROVIDING FLEXIBILITY TO SCHOOLS**

### **Regulatory Relief**

Ohio has a strong history of local control. The governor's budget will empower local school boards and free school districts from some of the burdens state government places in the way of local innovation and flexibility. As a former superintendent of three school districts, I can attest to the need for deregulation and ability to make decisions at the local level. And, for districts that have the highest level of performance, we shouldn't make them jump through needless hoops when they have proven that they are excelling in certain areas.

The governor's budget builds on previous regulatory relief efforts by:

- Increasing the current competitive bidding threshold for schools from \$25,000 to \$50,000 to be consistent with other local government entities;
- Permitting schools to contract with a hospital or other licensed health care program to provide health care services to students;
- Eliminating district and school EMIS reporting, and the department's posting, of information related to extracurricular services offered to students;
- Eliminating the need for a concurrent educational service center resolution in cases where a local school board determines that transportation of certain students is impractical;
- Removing the requirement that our state's consistently high-performing teachers complete additional coursework for purposes of licensure renewal;

- Providing teachers rated “accomplished,” as part of Ohio’s Teacher Evaluation System, with true off years from the annual teacher evaluation requirements;
- Providing an option for local boards of education to exempt new teachers from the annual teacher evaluation requirements in the year the new teacher takes the Resident Educator Summative Assessment;
- Reducing Resident Educator program mentoring requirements and allowing districts to make local decisions regarding the professional development needs of Resident Educator program participants;
- Eliminating the current requirements that certain school districts establish a site-based management council to operate a poor-performing school building using state board rules;
- Expanding opportunities for districts to contract with providers of academic remediation and intervention services to serve all grades outside regular school hours without state board rules; and
- Modifying the duration for which a pupil-activity program permit is valid for licensed educators.

### **Regulatory Relief for High-Performing School Districts**

The budget proposes additional relief from state law and state board of education rules for our highest-performing school districts with proven track records of success in ensuring their students can read at grade level and graduate college and job ready. A school district will receive the designation of “high-performing” for purposes of determining additional regulatory relief if the district meets the following criteria for the two most recent school years:

- 1) Received a grade of A in overall Value-Added;
- 2) At least 95 percent of third grade students scored proficient or higher on the third grade reading assessment; and
- 3) Have a four-year cohort graduation rate of 93 percent or higher.

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, a fourth criterion will be considered in defining a “high-performing school district.” A school district will have to demonstrate that at least 75 percent of its students are remediation-free on a nationally standardized assessment that measures college and career readiness. Once designated high-performing, a school district will maintain this status for three years unless the school district fails to maintain at least 95 percent proficiency on the third grade reading assessment.

A high-performing school district may elect to be exempt from:

- Teacher credential qualification requirements for third grade students who require reading intervention and remediation under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee;
- Minimum or maximum class size requirements;
- Requirements to have a service agreement with an educational service center; and
- Requirements to consult with an educational service center to provide services to children with disabilities.

A high-performing school district also will be permitted to hire qualified nonlicensed staff to teach for up to 40 hours a week and will have the opportunity to request from me a waiver from additional statutory requirements, which I will approve or deny on a case-by-case basis.

### **Testing Reductions**

I have heard the concerns from teachers and families about the time our students spend testing. Tests are valuable and serve a purpose. However, they have to make sense as part of a well-balanced, comprehensive

education system. After surveying districts and talking to teachers, we found that the average student in the average school will spend approximately 19.8 hours on testing in a school year, starting in the 2015-2016 school year. This average varies by grade level. Kindergarten students spend the least amount of time testing (11.3 hours on average), while grade 10 students spend the most (28.4 hours on average). These findings are consistent with other research on testing times in Ohio.

As you know, I issued a testing report and recommendations to the governor and General Assembly on Jan. 15, 2015. The four testing reduction proposals contained in the budget reflect the legislative recommendations contained in my report and would lead to a reduction in the hours students spend testing by 18 percent. The first proposal limits the amount of time a student takes tests at the state and district levels to 2 percent of the school year and limits the amount of time students spend practicing for tests to 1 percent of the school year.

The second proposal shifts the fall administration of the third grade reading test to a summer administration of the test for students who need it. Students who do not reach the required promotion score on the spring test will have a second opportunity to take the test in the summer. Districts will continue to have the option of using a state-approved alternative test as a way for their students to show they are reading at grade level.

The third proposal would make optional the administration of the state's diagnostic tests in mathematics and writing for students in first through third grades. This gives districts local control to decide which diagnostic tests in writing and math are appropriate for their students in these grades.

The final proposal relates to teacher evaluation, which looks at two aspects of a teacher's quality: (1) teacher performance; and (2) student growth measures. If there is no growth data from state tests available to measure student growth, districts and schools evaluate student growth using local measures. Locally determined measures include: (1) locally created tests aligned to student learning objectives (or SLOs); and (2) shared attribution, defined as a student growth measure that can be attributed to a group. Approximately 66 percent of teachers were evaluated using these types of criteria during the 2013-2014 school year.

Generally, SLO tests are given twice a year; once at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year. Although there is variance, these tests are one of the largest drivers of testing time. Approximately 26 percent of total student test-taking time is spent taking SLO tests. We recommend eliminating the use of SLO tests as part of the teacher evaluation system for grades preK-3 and for teachers teaching in non-core subject areas in grades 4-12. Teachers teaching in these grades and subject areas will demonstrate student growth through the expanded use of differentiated shared attribution. We estimate that eliminating these SLOs would reduce the average amount of time students spend taking tests by 3.1 hours per grade level.

By capping overall testing time, easing the testing burden on our youngest students, restructuring teacher evaluation tests, and administering the third grade reading tests in the spring and summer, teachers will spend more time in the classroom teaching, and students will spend more time in the classroom learning.

### **Competency-Based Education Pilot Program**

Students need to be engaged by schools in a way that makes learning come alive. The governor is proposing a three-year competency-based pilot program that will provide 10 districts and schools the opportunity to develop and implement competency-based models of education that advance students as they master course content. Each pilot school will provide students with timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs and will incorporate partnerships with business, industry and institutions of higher education.

Under this proposal, the department will award each pilot school a grant of up to \$250,000 in each year of the biennium for planning in FY16 and implementation in FY17.

The competency-based education pilot program will incentivize innovation in instruction, encourage personalized learning that will meet the needs of all students, provide students with practical professional experiences, and allow them to achieve at their own pace rather than on seat time and Carnegie units. By focusing on these areas, the competency-based education pilot program will incentivize districts to explore new ways to make learning relevant and exciting.

### **Innovative School Waiver Pilot Program**

For several years, school districts have sought flexibility from state testing requirements to implement new, inventive education programs. In June 2014, the General Assembly passed a law that created an innovative school waiver pilot program. This pilot program gives up to 10 school districts, who are members of the Ohio Innovative Lab Network (ILN), and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) schools the chance to apply for a temporary exemption from state testing and other requirements so they can implement new programs and try alternative methods of assessing their students' learning. As part of the innovative school waiver pilot program, the department of education will collaborate with the pilot districts and schools to seek U.S. Department of Education approval for using alternative, state-approved assessment systems. The department will be granting waivers to up to 10 applicants this spring.

As a way to scale up this initiative and potentially expand the use of alternative assessment models statewide, Gov. Kasich's budget proposal extends the innovative school waiver pilot program to allow up to 10 additional school districts, STEM schools and community schools the opportunity to apply and be granted waivers in FY16 to develop new, innovative alternative assessment systems. All school districts and community schools will be eligible to apply for one of these additional innovative school waivers during the 2015-2016 school year.

### **Straight A Fund**

In his last budget, Gov. Kasich created the Straight A Fund to create sustainable programs that help improve student achievement, increase efficiency and drive more dollars to the classroom. Too often in education, we wait for prescriptions to come to us from Washington and Columbus. We should not prescribe our way to excellence. Excellence will percolate up from the people we have at the local level. Our educators have shown excitement for this program as evidenced by the hundreds of applications we received.

Ohio's Straight A Fund has connected business leaders with principals, buses with GPS systems and students to the latest robotics technology. Teachers in 27 districts across the state are working as part of an Appalachian Collaborative to offer high school courses that give college credit. The Appalachian Collaborative is providing 48,000 students access to 165 classes, and 6610 credits are expected to be offered over the five-year grant period.

The Straight A Fund is considered the largest education innovation fund in the nation and has helped our districts and schools implement their best reform ideas. It makes sense to continue the Straight A Fund and Gov. Kasich is doing just that by allocating \$200 million dollars in lottery proceeds over the biennium to support two more rounds of Straight A Fund grants.

### **Community Connectors**

The Community Connectors program brings businesses, faith- and value-based organizations, community nonprofits and school districts together to create mentor programs that build life skills and workforce

readiness. Community Connectors emphasizes goal setting, character, personal and career-oriented skills and helps students build the grit and resilience they'll need to be successful in school and life.

We know the power that lies in community partnerships like these and we have several successful examples across Ohio. The Cincinnati Youth Collaborative has been connecting Cincinnati area schools with business and community partners for 30 years. Collaborative volunteers mentor students who face challenges like poverty, homelessness, disciplinary problems and unstable homes. Yet, even with these risk factors, 96 percent of the seniors in the program in 2014 graduated from high school compared with just 74 percent graduating in Cincinnati Public Schools overall. Of the graduates, 88 percent went on to college, a career or enlisted in the military. Community Connectors builds on successful collaborative models like the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative and is worth our expanded investment.

The benefits of the program go beyond helping individual students. That's why the budget increases the program's support by appropriating \$30 million over the biennium and continues to match \$3 for every \$1 provided by local partners. Through these dynamic partnerships and social connectedness, Community Connectors strengthens communities and creates new pathways for civic engagement that will result in higher levels of wellbeing, health and workforce readiness for our state.

## **FOCUSING ON STUDENT SUCCESS**

### **Early Childhood Education**

Studies show that preschool has a significant impact on kindergarten readiness. In House Bill 59, the current operating budget, we doubled the number of opportunities for disadvantaged three- and four-year-old students who are in need of high-quality preschool programs. The administration is continuing this trend in this budget. The governor seeks to triple both funding and slots from the 2013 level by providing an additional \$40 million over the biennium to serve an additional 6,125 children.

In addition to the \$40 million new dollars to fund more seats for economically disadvantaged four year olds, the budget appropriates \$10 million to the Ohio Department of Mental Health to provide mental health counselors to work with educators to address behavioral problems that confront our youngest students and reduce the unacceptably high preschool expulsion rate.

What I am most excited about is the collaboration between the department of education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to align the state's early childhood programs and resources. In FY16, the departments will begin to align the copay requirements for each program. By FY17, the two agencies will develop and implement a single process for determining early childhood education program eligibility, processing applications for benefits and tracking attendance. Moms and dads don't care what government agency is responsible for allowing their youngsters to receive high-quality preschool instruction. This budget will make it easier for families to access a full day of childcare by pairing the Ohio Department of Education's early childhood education programs with Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' publicly funded childcare. Director Dungey and I are excited about working together to make this much needed improvement in service delivery for our youngest Ohioans.

### **Early Literacy Supports**

In looking back over the previous budget, the policy initiative I am personally most proud of is the success of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. The governor and I share the same goal: every boy and girl of Ohio can read at grade level by the end of the third grade. To assist elementary schools in providing reading supports

to students in grades K through 3, the budget provides up to \$2.5 million in each fiscal year to provide grants to be used for summer literacy camps.

In awarding these grants, priority will be given to school buildings with a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, buildings with low student achievement and school buildings making progress in improving students' literacy skills. The department also will be establishing regional professional development teams to provide communication, outreach and professional development opportunities targeted to K-3 language and literacy supports. I want to make sure our teachers are using best practices and models to successfully help students meet the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

### **School Counseling**

Our students need support in identifying the pathway to a career that will best match their God-given talents. Effective counseling is critical to making sure that this happens for every boy and girl in our state. That's why the governor's budget proposes the creation of standards for school counselors. The new standards will be aligned to the American School Counselors Association standards and will reflect knowledge of academic, personal and social counseling for students. The standards also will include Ohio-specific knowledge of career counseling for students.

In addition to the creation of the standards, the state board will develop and adopt a standards-based framework for the evaluation of school counselors. Each school district board of education will adopt a policy that conforms to the statewide framework and will implement the evaluation policy for the first time during the 2016-2017 school year.

The proposed budget also includes \$2 million over the biennium to support a statewide effort to improve access to school counseling services for all students. The Ohio Department of Education will work with the Board of Regents to provide professional development and outreach for school counselors and to post training and informational resources on the OhioMeansJobs K-12 website. There are school districts and career centers in Ohio that have done great work to get their students excited about learning and connecting their work in the classroom to work in the real world. This requires a commitment on the part of our school leaders. The governor and I want to identify these leaders and help replicate the work they are doing statewide so that all students are able to find meaningful pathways to careers.

### **Partnership with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities**

The department is excited to partner with Director Miller to provide \$5 million over the biennium to Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) to use as matching funds to draw down federal funding for vocational rehabilitation services. These funds will be used by OOD to hire dedicated vocational rehabilitation counselors who will work directly with school districts to provide transition services, such as person-centered career planning, summer work experiences and job placement for students with disabilities.

An additional \$5 million will be used by the department of education to build capacity to deliver a regional system of training, support, coordination and direct services for secondary transition services for students with disabilities beginning at age 14. Secondary transition services include such things as job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training and career counseling.

### **Credit Flexibility**

Under current law, students have the option of utilizing an instructional opportunity called "credit flexibility" to earn high school credit based on demonstration of subject area content. The goal of credit flexibility is to provide students with opportunities to earn credit outside of regular classroom seat time. The state board

adopted a statewide plan setting forth credit flexibility requirements for all public and chartered nonpublic schools, and each school is required to have a credit flexibility policy that complies with the statewide framework.

Unfortunately, credit flexibility is underutilized in our schools, and students have experienced barriers in using this educational option. In the budget, the governor extends credit flexibility to seventh and eighth grade students. Gov. Kasich also charges the state board and the department to update the statewide plan, rebrand credit flexibility and work with schools to reduce barriers to participation for students and businesses. As part of this rebranding, the department will implement a coordinated communications and outreach plan to inform schools of the updated statewide plan and guidelines.

In order to make credit flexibility a viable option for students, I will be partnering with the business community to connect businesses with schools to provide students with credit flexibility opportunities to increase student engagement and college and job readiness through activities such as internships, work study and site-based learning experiences.

### **Access to College-level Credit**

Previous budgets have focused on strengthening and streamlining opportunities for high school students to earn college credits. Not only does this help reduce costs for parents and students, but it helps get our youngsters motivated and focused on making good grades in high school, good grades in college, and heading toward a good job and a good career.

I want more of Ohio's high school teachers qualified to teach courses for college credit. To meet this end, the governor's budget provides \$18.5 million dollars over the biennium to get more teachers in disadvantaged high schools credentials to teach college-level courses while also rewarding school districts that have the highest student participation in college credit plus and advanced placement courses.

### **Career Tech Credentials**

In addition to preparing students for success in college, programs throughout the state are training students to enter in-demand careers. Career-technical centers offer courses that directly lead to a valuable industry credential, and with the credential, the student can get a good paying job. However, some students in these courses do not even attempt to earn the credential. Further, some of these credentials can cost hundreds of dollars. This means that students in poverty can't pay the credential exam fees.

No student should be denied access to a lucrative career path because they do not know a credential exists or cannot afford a credential exam. The governor's budget ensures that career-technical education providers will inform all students enrolled in career-technical education courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential about the opportunities to earn these credentials. In addition, career-technical education providers will be required to pay for the cost of credential exams for economically disadvantaged students. The providers may claim reimbursement for this expense. The budget allocates \$1 million each year to reimburse these providers for the cost of the credential exam in accordance with a schedule of reimbursement that will be developed jointly by the department of education, Ohio Board of Regents and governor's Office of Workforce Transformation.

### **Adult Diploma Program Extension**

There are nine million adults in Ohio. One million of these adults do not have a high school diploma. And until recently, there was no way for adults to earn a high school diploma. Last year, the governor's Mid-Biennium Review created the Adult Diploma Pilot Program. This program will allow adults to attend a community or

technical college to get a high school diploma. Once there, an adult will work toward a valuable industry credential or certificate. When the student completes the program and earns the credential or certificate, he or she also will receive a high school diploma and be connected to a job.

The department recently announced grant awards for five pilot sites throughout the state. These sites include consortia of colleges, technical centers, nonprofits and businesses working to develop the program to begin enrolling students this summer. Many more schools have expressed interest in joining the program, so the governor's budget expands this grant for up to five additional sites in the next fiscal year. The budget also proposes the payment structure for the existing sites and appropriates \$15 million over the biennium to fully fund students once they enter these programs.

## **QUALITY CHOICES FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

### **Community School Reforms**

Ohio has many quality community schools that any parent would be proud to send their children to. I support quality charters, vouchers and school choice, but we must get the bad actors out of our system. In this budget, Gov. Kasich endeavors to hold Ohio's community schools more accountable and puts teeth into the state's new community school sponsor evaluation system that took effect Jan. 1, 2015.

The budget proposes to require all community school sponsors to be subject to Ohio Department of Education approval. Every sponsor will be subject to a sponsorship agreement with the department that will govern each sponsor's scope and authority to sponsor community schools. A sponsor's scope and authority to sponsor schools will be tied to the rating received as part of the sponsor evaluation system. The budget creates a steeply sloped curve of incentives and consequences for sponsors based on quality.

There are four evaluation ratings: (1) exemplary; (2) effective; (3) ineffective; and (4) poor. A sponsor rated poor will have its authority to sponsor community schools revoked and the existing schools it sponsors will be required to find a new sponsor. A sponsor rated ineffective will be placed on a one year corrective action plan and will not be permitted to sponsor any additional community schools in that year. A sponsor rated effective will be considered in good standing. Finally, a sponsor rated exemplary will be rewarded with flexibility and access to additional opportunities. By creating incentives for sponsors rated exemplary and removing sponsors rated poor from the sponsoring business, we promote the creation and continuation of innovative, high-quality community schools.

The governor also proposes changes to current law that will strengthen a community school governing board's autonomy and create more transparency. For example, a sponsor will be prohibited from selling services to a community school it sponsors, and a current law that permits a community school operator from appealing a school's decision to terminate its contract to the school's sponsor will be repealed. Current law provides a way for an operator to replace the community school's governing board if it disagrees with the board's decision to terminate services with them. This is not good policy. The budget proposal also would require community school governing boards to hire fiscal officers and, if they so choose, attorneys, accountants and audit firms that are independent of a school's contracted operator.

The budget also would give the department's Office of School Sponsorship the ability to strengthen its own sponsor application process. Right now, a community school can apply to the department for sponsorship and has to meet a very low bar to be approved. The Ohio Department of Education is not interested in being a sponsor of last resort. A law requiring the department to sponsor a school that meets a low bar undermines the administration's entire effort to improve the charter sector and provide quality choice options for all

students. The budget proposal will provide the department the authority it needs to approve or deny sponsor applications based on quality criteria. All sponsors, including the department of education, should demand quality from all the community schools they sponsor.

### **Community School Access to Local Revenue, Facilities Grants and Early Childhood Education Funding**

As I previously mentioned, community school sponsors who are rated exemplary will be rewarded for their quality efforts and so will the schools they sponsor. Under the governor's proposal, community schools sponsored by exemplary sponsors will have the opportunity to receive locally generated revenue, if approved by local school boards and voters. Community schools are public schools serving students in communities around the state. These schools should be provided the opportunity to access local dollars if their communities choose to support them in this way.

Community schools sponsored by exemplary sponsors will have access to a new \$25 million community school facilities grant program to be administered by the Ohio School Facilities Commission in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education. For the first time, the state is investing dedicated facilities dollars for our quality community schools through the Ohio School Facilities Commission. Grants will be made to eligible community schools that demonstrate that the funds will be used to purchase or support classroom facilities construction or modifications that increase the supply of seats in effective schools, serve specific unmet student needs through community school education, and show innovation in design and potential as a successful, replicable school model.

Finally, community schools sponsored by exemplary sponsors will have the opportunity to offer general education preschool and be eligible to receive early childhood education funding.

### **Educational Choice Scholarship Program**

Ohio's scholarship programs have been helping students from underperforming public schools attend private schools for almost two decades. The budget proposes an increase in the amount of an EdChoice scholarship for eligible high school students. The maximum amount of a scholarship that may be awarded to a high school student is raised from \$5,000 to \$5,700. The budget also appropriates funding in both years of the biennium for the expansion of the EdChoice program to economically disadvantaged students in second and third grades. The administration's funding of the EdChoice Scholarship program provides more access to quality choice options by increasing the supply of quality seats for students.

In addition to the new policy initiatives, the budget provides a continuation of funding for the department to:

- Provide professional development and coordinate outreach related to the implementation of Ohio's academic standards;
- Administer state assessments;
- Maintain the state's accountability system and measure student success through the A-F report card;
- Offer assistance to districts in fiscal distress, including funding advances to school districts in fiscal emergency and grants to schools who suffer unforeseen catastrophic events;
- Support planning, coordination, funding simulation and fiscal analysis for all districts and schools;
- Oversee the issuance of educator permits and licenses and manage the educator licensure investigation and revocation process;
- Facilitate the administration of the performance-based teacher assessment for new teachers participating in the Resident Educator program;

- Support implementation of Ohio’s teacher and principal evaluation systems; and
- Provide support to school improvement activities focused on the state’s lowest-achieving schools.

As you can see, in the executive budget proposal, Gov. Kasich seeks to strengthen education across Ohio—because every child, in every classroom, in every school deserves a quality education. I’m happy that Gov. Kasich’s education proposals for the next biennium build on the progress we’ve made so far and encourage us to take things to the next level. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to discuss the executive budget’s K-12 policy initiatives. We at the department of education look forward to working with the members of the General Assembly on these proposals. My staff and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.