

Wapakoneta Middle School

400 W Harrison St
Wapakoneta, Ohio 45895
Phone: (419) 739-5100
Fax: (419) 739-5165
www.wapak.org



Mr. Will Snyder, Principal
Mrs. Misty Baker, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Kristi Fisher, Guidance Counselor
Mr. Mark Koch, Guidance Counselor

Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Miller and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of continued full funding for INFOhio.

My name is William Snyder and I'm the middle school principal for Wapakoneta City Schools. Our district's vision is that Wapakoneta City Schools will be the leader in providing excellent learning experiences for our students. As we prepare our students to enter high school, then college and careers after that, we are burdened with the responsibility of offering a wide variety of resources that can broaden their understanding of the standards and objectives set forth by the state of Ohio. One way in which we do this is by accessing as much information as possible to present to our students to ensure that they are better equipped to handle the content they are striving to learn. In my building alone, over 700 students have access to all the quality resources such as the online World Book Encyclopedia, the science videos and experiments from Science Online, and the magazine articles from the EBSCO databases provided by INFOhio.

Ohio is part of a national network of more than 1200 High Schools That Work sites and more than 100 Making Middle Grades Work sites. These sites work to accelerate student achievement through enhancing curriculum and instruction. Wapakoneta Middle School is a Making Middle Grades Work site and we pride ourselves on the fact that even though 40% of our students are on free or reduced lunch, they have equitable access to quality resources through INFOhio. If we were to provide access to these resources in school, it would cost over \$57,354.00 and students would not be able to access these resources at home.

We are able to provide excellent learning experiences, like career explorations with our 7th grade students. They access Ohio Means Jobs and the Occupational Outlook Handbook through the US Bureau of Labor Statistics through INFOhio's middle school curriculum toolkit where they can research their chosen careers using the iSearch option. Our students are able to create book trailer videos through Book Nook on the INFOhio website. They are virtually marketing the books they have read and can share them with other students in the state of Ohio via INFOhio.

In my building, there are multiple handicapped, autism, and emotionally disturbed units comprised of approximately 20 students. These students are often developmentally behind their peers and need resources that fit their learning level and capabilities. INFOhio provides resources such as BookFlix that are differentiated from preschool range and beyond. Our unit teachers can access these resources to provide quality learning experiences without trying to gather materials to meet a wide variety of grade levels, capabilities, and developmental stages. As we work to assist these students in transitioning to the regular classroom to work alongside their peers, how much more valuable to have resources that allow for constant differentiation and flexible learning platforms.

Our district could not afford the \$57,354.00 it would cost to provide the resources that INFOhio provides. Even then, our teachers would be taxed with vetting the resources and our students wouldn't have the 24/7/365 access to over 500,000 resources provided by INFOhio.

Please restore funding to INFOhio.

Again, thank you to Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Miller and members of the subcommittee, for the opportunity to share our story.

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My name is Dawn Rankin. As the Instructional Coach for Wapakoneta City Schools, I'd like to set the stage, giving several typical examples of a day in the life at Wapakoneta Middle School, a school with over 700 students learning to navigate their way to becoming successful citizens in an ever-changing world. WMS is part of Making Middle Grades Work, an Ohio Department of Education endeavor encouraging students to work toward grade-level standards in ways that enable them to see the usefulness of their studies, develop supportive relationships between students and adults, providing students with the extra help and support they need to meet challenging course standards and make successful transitions from elementary school to the middle grades and from the middle grades to high school. You will see how and why the INFOhio resources are heavily used.

Scene 1: Sixth grade students are learning the aspects of research and what better way than to use INFOhio's Go: Ask, Act, Achieve components to guide them through the basics of "How do I decide on a topic?", "How do I begin my research?", "How do I find valid info?", directing them to authentic sources in the online World Book Encyclopedias and the EBSCO databases, as opposed to information from the open internet (quite appropriate given the recent 'fake news' conundrum), "How do I organize my work?", and "How do I publish my work?" These are all important pieces of building a research project and will take them from middle school to high school and beyond. My college sophomore son, a Wapakoneta High School grad, still uses INFOhio all the time in addition to OhioLink (due to lessons learned in high school and with me as a district/building iCoach) and loves how he can access valid information, cite his sources, and create a publishable project, all while working in his dorm room on his laptop.

Scene 2: Fifth grade Science classes are reading articles about space that their teacher found on iSearch through INFOhio. The articles are differentiated by reading level and offer information about the Earth's rotation and revolution and the effect on seasons. The articles can also be read aloud to help struggling readers. These students would not have access to this information as their old textbooks are not aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards. The district cannot afford to purchase new textbooks that may or may not have all standards covered. They would also contain only a portion of the information available through INFOhio. (Side note: there are over 400 basic articles about the Earth's seasons available through iSearch via INFOhio.)

Scene 3: A seventh-grade Science teacher uses INFOhio's Digital Video Collection to access a short video that introduces the principles of weather dynamics as he facilitates his class learning about the special role of moisture in producing weather phenomena and the impact of hazardous weather. Students are directed to watch the video as much as they want at home and at school through the INFOhio portal. This is helpful for when students are absent and can be directed to watch the video to access the content. Students can also refer to expert diagrams on cloud formations from Science Online or follow up with the interactive experiment on wind dynamics also from Science Online.

Scene 4: Fifth grade students are exposed to the wealth of INFOhio resources via a scavenger hunt in their computer science class. Students have the opportunity to explore the Biography Reference Bank, Digital Video Collection, Explora, Science Online, and World Book Student. The scavenger hunt introduces students to resources they will need for research assignments and projects where they learn to analyze sources and cite evidence. The middle school library does house many biographies, but has 40 videos that are available only to teachers. The encyclopedia sets and other reference materials have not been updated as our students use INFOhio for all their reference resources. For our district to purchase the free materials to match INFOhio resources, it would cost \$57,354.00.

Closing act: INFOhio's resources are invaluable in regards to preparing our students to be college and career ready. The timeliness, diversity, and application of the resources are unmatched by the district's resources. It is imperative that our students have continued access to these resources in order to be successful students and eventually successful citizens of the state of Ohio. Please restore the funding to INFOhio so that no district has to close the curtain on these indispensable resources.

Thank you again, Chairman Cupp, Ranking Member Miller and members of the subcommittee, for the opportunity to testify in support of continued full funding for INFOhio.