



TRANSFORMING OHIO FOR GROWTH

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Education & Workforce

OHIO'S 21st CENTURY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE PLAN: Raising Standards to Expand Opportunity

Job creation remains Ohio's top priority. Though Ohio's unemployment rate has dropped from 9.0 to 7.7 percent since January 2011, too many Ohioans are still unemployed. We're making progress but Ohio still has a lot of work to do. To further efforts to recreate a jobs-friendly climate in Ohio—efforts that started last year with his Jobs Budget and other policies—Gov. John Kasich initiated a comprehensive review of state government management, operations and policies in key areas.

Referring to this process as the Mid-Biennium Review (MBR), because it came half-way through Ohio's two-year budget cycle, Gov. Kasich worked with his cabinet and staff to develop new strategies that improve the management of Ohio's government agencies and health systems, improve Ohio's education and workforce development efforts, and improve Ohioans' access to low-cost, reliable energy.

In Ohio and around the world, education and workforce training are inextricably linked. The better that Ohio students are prepared for current and future workforce challenges, the more opportunities they have and the more attractive Ohio becomes to job creators. Unfortunately, Ohio suffers from a system that can't accurately tell us how well we're really doing. Ohio parents, educators, and policymakers must be able to accurately and honestly determine if they are doing a good job educating students. This kind of accurate information is essential if we want to be able to make sure students are on track to success and continually improving. Additionally, Ohio's workforce development system fails to efficiently and effectively serve its customers. With improved alignment and a more innovative approach, however, both job creators and Ohioans looking to improve their skills can get the help they need.

K-12 EDUCATION

- **The Third Grade Reading Guarantee:** A recent report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that if children cannot read well by the third grade then they are four times as likely to drop out of school. One of the main reasons that third grade is such an important reading milestone is that many other subjects begin to ramp up in the fourth grade. Under Ohio's standards, 43 percent of fourth graders are considered advanced in reading, but this number falls to just 9 percent under the recognized National Assessment of Educational Progress. Ohio parents deserve to know their child is prepared for learning. Ohio looks good using an easier measure of our own creation, but under the tougher national measures we don't stack up.
 - Gov. Kasich is strengthening the third grade reading guarantee in current law to require the development of a reading intervention and monitoring plan for students who are not proficient in reading in kindergarten through second grade. If a diagnostic assessment of a child does not show the child reading at grade level, an intervention plan is to be completed within 60 days of receiving the results.
 - Reforms also require retention for students that have participated in an intervention plan for two years if they are not proficient in reading at the end of the third grade. The state of Florida instituted a similar reform in 2002 and has since seen reading scores dramatically increase.
- **Career Connections—Refocusing on Career Paths:** Now more than ever, students need to be exposed to careers available in Ohio, and they need to see the value and direct link that exists between their school lessons

and the real world. By starting the process earlier, these students will be better prepared to select the courses and higher education they need that align with their career path.

- As the department of education develops model curriculum for students in all K-12 schools, teachers and administrators will be given tools to include career awareness and development in their lessons.
- **A New, More Realistic School Performance Measuring System:** Under outdated measures that only rate schools based on minimum competency, 58 percent of all school districts were identified as excellent or better this past year. Ohio parents deserve a more accurate readout of how their school is doing.
 - By integrating a new formula that assigns grades A-F to all public schools and school districts, we will be able to provide a better understanding for parents of how their child's school is performing and where it can improve its performance.
 - If approved by the U.S. Department of Education, Ohio schools will receive a waiver from the No Child Left Behind requirements that are set to label more than 90 percent of Ohio schools as "failing" in the coming school year.
 - By adjusting to an A-F system and with new, more challenging standards, fewer schools will be classified as failing under the federal standards. They will obtain a grade that more accurately reflects their student success.
 - Recognizing the vital role career technical schools play in ensuring Ohio has a seamless education and workforce system, a separate new A-F system will be developed for career technical schools, just as with all other public schools around the state. While the previous system excluded career technical schools from these measurements, the new system will now provide parents of career technical school students with reports on school performance.
- **Going Digital:** As our world transforms and technological innovations expand, it's essential to adapt the classroom experience for our students. Blended learning provides the opportunity to join the best aspects of both face-to-face and online instruction.
 - Gov. Kasich is encouraging the expansion of digital learning by defining its use and creating standards for blended learning environments. Ohio teachers require the cutting edge in education innovation, and Ohio should help enhance those opportunities.
- **More Flexibility for Teacher Evaluation:** As Ohio continues to implement teacher evaluations, school districts and teachers require and deserve flexibility while still maintaining the value that assessments bring to the education system.
 - Currently, law requires teachers to undergo two classroom observations per year. As an additional incentive, Gov. Kasich recommends teachers that obtain a top rating be given the option to submit a portfolio of accomplishment in lieu of another classroom observation.
 - Most school administrators don't have the time to conduct all teacher evaluations. By setting up a system that allows for credentialed third-party evaluators, school administrators will now have more time to manage their school effectively.
 - School teachers in traditional public schools that are determined to be ineffective under the new teacher evaluation standards will be subject to re-testing. Teachers may have multiple opportunities to pass the test, and schools districts are encouraged to develop professional development plans for teachers who continue to reach minimum testing standards or have the flexibility to terminate employment.
- **New Standards for Dropout Recovery Schools:** All too often, students who have dropped out of school believe it's impossible to rejoin the education system and obtain their degree. Dropout recovery schools help identify and

recruit students who have already dropped out of public schools and provide the services necessary for them to earn a high school diploma or complete an alternative path to college by demonstrating college readiness.

- In order to assure effectiveness, new standards requirements will center on student achievement and student growth. The report cards for these specialized schools will be produced to reflect the unique characteristics of their students, and these grades, in turn, will be used to rate schools and be the basis for closing failing schools.
- **Assessing All Early Childhood Programs:** Currently, early childhood programs can opt into quality reviews by the state. In compliance with Ohio's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, all publicly-funded early childhood programs will now be required to be assessed.

CLEVELAND MAYOR FRANK JACKSON'S EDUCATION REFORM PLAN

With 31,000 children in failing schools, the City of Cleveland is working to effect major change in an effort to provide their children with the education they deserve. At the request of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, Gov. Kasich is asking the General Assembly to adopt a school reform plan for Cleveland's schools that was developed by the mayor, the schools' leadership and Cleveland's business community. The Jackson Plan will enable Cleveland's schools to improve standards, reward, retain and recruit high-quality educators, and increase school autonomy and accountability.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Employment First—Creating Job Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities:** Forty percent of developmentally disabled individuals live below the poverty line compared with 14 percent of working-age adults. Ohio's Employment First initiative will create a task force to align state policies with the needs of individuals and businesses and take other important steps to promote meaningful employment opportunities in the community for people with developmental disabilities.
- **Revamping the Executive Workforce Board:** Ohio's workforce training programs suffer from a bureaucratic web of inefficiency. For years, the state has failed to make serious efforts to match up training needs with labor demands. In order to create a more effective and efficient workforce development program, the Governor's Executive Workforce Board will now have the power and authority to develop a unified budget and performance management metrics for the entire workforce development system. The goal is for these efforts to better align programs, and increase access for both employers and job seekers to obtain the training they need.
- **Learn to Earn—An Incentive for Learning:** Ohioans on unemployment want to get back to work, but oftentimes don't have the skills they need to get the job they seek. Additionally, taking advantage of on the job training opportunities will lead to individuals losing unemployment compensation, thereby creating a disincentive to enhance their skills and get a job. Ohio Learn to Earn will allow those currently collecting unemployment to train with an employer while still receiving unemployment, thereby enabling Ohioans looking for work to maintain their standard of living while obtaining the skills they need to succeed.
- **New Online Resources Linking Training with Demand:** As Ohio continues to maximize economic opportunities via the expansion of the natural gas industry, it's essential that we effectively link energy companies with trained workers, and provide information on industry-compatible curriculum and training. The newly-created Office of Workforce Transformation will develop a website for both employers and workers to find the opportunity that best suits their respective needs. Partnered with OhioMeansJobs.com, the website will serve all Ohioans looking to take advantage of a sector of Ohio's economy that is off to a fast and optimistic start.
- **Getting Veterans Back to Work:** As Ohio veterans continue their return home from deployment, they bring with them unique and special training that, when properly honed, can fit seamlessly into the civilian world. The Office of Workforce Transformation will work with veterans to match these skills to the most in demand jobs.

BOTTOM LINE: Ohioans deserve an education and training system that works for them. By increasing accountability and creating a more transparent education system, parents can feel more confident about the education their child is receiving.

Additionally, by matching employer demand with workforce training, both job creators and Ohioans looking for work will have the opportunities they need to thrive in Ohio's growing economy.

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