



Department
of Education

Ted Strickland, Governor
Deborah S. Delisle, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**TESTIMONY TO THE
HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
ON THE
EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL
REPRESENTATIVE VERNON SYKES, CHAIR
February 11, 2009**

Chairman Sykes, Ranking Minority Leader Amstutz, and members of the House Finance Committee, good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the 2010-2011 Executive Budget proposal. It is a privilege for me to be with you today.

My name is Deborah Delisle, and it is an honor for me to serve as the 35th State Superintendent of Public Instruction. This is a position I assumed on December 1st - a little over two months ago. Given the winter holiday break, I have had about seven weeks to become familiar with the organizational structure, policies and programs of the Ohio Department of Education while simultaneously catching up on the various segments of work associated with the Governor's Education Reform and Funding Plan, I have been electrified by the generosity of so many people who have welcomed me heartily into their folds, and I am deeply appreciative of new colleagues and the State Board of Education who continue to amaze me daily with their laser-like focus on the attainment of excellence for all of Ohio's children.

Today is my first opportunity to appear directly before members of the General Assembly, and I am looking forward to working with you to propel Ohio's students into a 21st century learning environment. Until December, I was Superintendent of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District where we served the needs of some 7,000 students. Leading the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District was definitely a highlight of my professional career. Watching those students grow, mature, succeed, discover and their talents, go on to college or the workplace and begin to renew their community through their generosity of spirit were feats that we should all have first-hand.

At the Heights, we had a simple motto – one that I hope we keep in mind as we begin this work around the Governor's plan. The motto was simply:

**Every Student, Every Day, Some Success, Some Way.
College Ready, Life Prepared.**

As we discuss the Governor's plan and the supporting budgetary components, I will share with you the perspective I have as the State Superintendent, but I will also look at these issues through the lens of a district superintendent as well as from the perspective of a person who has been a parent, a classroom teacher, building principal and college instructor.

This is my 34th year in education, and I cannot remember a time that held more promise for Ohio's students than this point in our history. We now have an opportunity to rethink education and determine what we want to offer all of our students. In essence, we have an opportunity to redesign Ohio's education system and create a system of schools to which we would send our own children. What we offer to our children tells them what we value. What we offer to our children tells them what we believe about their future, what we believe about them as individuals and what we believe about the future of this state.

When I was first introduced to Governor Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan, I was struck by the placement of the child being central to its premise and at the core of designing a 21st century educational system. I believe that this focus on children is the right path for Ohio and the right road for our children to travel.

Before I discuss several elements of the proposal before you, let me highlight a sense of the overall complexity of Ohio's K-12 educational system:

- Ohio funds 613 school districts, 49 joint vocational school districts, 58 educational service centers (ESCs), 328 community schools, 67 MR/DD boards, and 867 chartered nonpublic schools.
- The Ohio Department of Education is governed by a 19-member State Board of Education. Eleven of the Board members are elected by the citizens and eight Board members are appointed by the Governor. The chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees also serve as ex officio members of the Board.
- The Department currently has 619 full-time employees- down 48 from a year ago and 92 under the OBM established ceiling.
- The day-to-day administration of the Department is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Public instruction, who is hired by the State Board of Education.

In January 2009, Ohio's primary and secondary education system was ranked 6th in the nation by *Education Week*. This ranking was achieved through the hard work of our teachers, administrators, parents, community partners and others, but most of all, our students. This accomplishment is to be applauded, and we should be thankful for the work that was done under the leadership of Dr. Susan Zelman. The past decade has yielded significant growth in the Department and has created a solid base from which to grow. While Ohio's high ranking shows that our state is on the right trajectory, much work still remains to be done to cement these gains and ensure that our students are prepared for an increasingly interconnected global economy.

As you are aware, Ohio's communities are very diverse from one corner of the state to the other. From rural communities to urban centers to suburban areas, our students also live in vastly different socioeconomic conditions. They are gifted students, they are students with disabilities, they are highly mobile, they have not ventured far from their birth place, and they are students for whom English is a new language. These wide variances deepen the complexity of meeting their needs.

Similar to most states across our country, Ohio continues to have a persistent achievement gap between our highest and lowest achieving students, and this issue is further exacerbated when data is disaggregated along racial, gender and socioeconomic categories. School districts are challenged to meet the needs of our special education, gifted and limited English speaking students. However, these

challenges must not deter all of us from a commitment to creating a system that prepares all of Ohio's students for the 21st century.

As I said earlier, I think we should focus our work to ensure **“Every Student, Every Day, Some Success, Some Way. College Ready, Life Prepared.”** The Governor's Education Reform and Funding Plan provides a structure to achieve this goal across the state. The initiative has six key components:

1. 21st Century Learning Environments
2. Expanded Learning Opportunities
3. High Quality Educators
4. Measuring Ohio's Students Against the World
5. School District Accountability
6. Effective Funding for a 21st Century Learning Environment

I would like to take a bit of time to discuss each of these components. Before I do that, please note that most of the specific details and timelines associated with each proposal have yet to be worked out. I expect to come back to you by the end of this calendar year with a 10-year strategic plan that looks not only at “the what” but “the how.”

The good news for me and my staff is that much work has already been done or has poised the Department to move forward with the proposed work. For examples, three years ago, the State Board of Education commissioned a report on the state of education in Ohio. *The Achieve Report* outlined many steps Ohio should take to improve education.

During the past 18 months, the State Board of Education developed an insightful series of steps in a report issued by the Education in the Global Economy (EDGE) Subcommittee, *Educating Ohio's Students for Success in the Global Economy*. The EDGE Subcommittee was created to engage business and industry in identifying skills, attitudes and behaviors students would need to have as they exit high school and continue traveling life's road in an increasingly complex world.

Based on *The Achieve Report* and the work of the EDGE Subcommittee, the State Board of Education crafted a vision document entitled, *Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century: A vision for transforming PK-12 education in Ohio*. The clear vision is *to graduate all students well prepared for success*. To accomplish this vision, the State Board is focusing on three objectives:

- Teaching 21st century knowledge and skills for real-world success;
- Effectively delivering support for a high quality education; and
- Providing sufficient resources which are effectively managed.

The work of the State Board of Education and the conclusions of *The Achieve Report* are incorporated in or closely aligned with the Governor's Education Reform and Funding Plan. The work is so closely aligned that just yesterday, the State Board passed a resolution commending the Governor for his Education Reform and Funding Plan and committing to work with the Governor, the Ohio General Assembly and education stakeholders to develop and advance the Governor's recommendations for improving education in Ohio. I will highlight this alignment throughout my testimony.

What I would like to do now is to provide some insights and details about the six various categories of the Education Reform and Funding Plan as they relate to the work of the State Board of Education, the Ohio Department of Education, and the proposed Executive Budget.

Effective Funding and Sufficient Resources

We all know that Ohio’s school funding system has a Rubik’s Cube-like complexity to it. The Governor’s budget seeks to simplify the school funding system and reduce the frequency of local levies.

The Governor has devised a funding model built upon an evidence-based approach. The proposed Evidence-Based Model funds schools based on the specific needs of students and the resources that school districts need to serve their students. This approach links educational research on academic achievement with funding components to achieve results. The new model begins with our goal of giving each student a high-quality education, then identifies the resources needed. It accounts for socioeconomic and learning differences, even within districts.

The State Board of Education recommends a funding system that is predictable in its growth and stable over time, accommodating the differing resource levels to educate students with differing needs and ensuring that the funding follows students based on those needs.

While moving from today’s funding model to the new Evidence-Based Model may seem complicated, when the new model is fully phased in, taxpayers will be able to see clearly where the money comes from, where it goes and what it accomplishes.

In order to better understand the proposed funding formula, it is almost necessary to remove any knowledge of the current funding formula from one’s mind. No longer will the funding provided to districts be defined as a per pupil cost. Rather, it will be defined by the resources provided to educate students in a 21st century learning environment. The Evidence-Based Model defines the number of teachers, support staff, administrators, specialist teachers, librarians and special education teachers and aides needed in every organizational unit in the state.

The model allocates costs by the needs of students and by grouping students in certain grade bands into organizational units, which are based upon an “ideal” researched building size. For example, the optimal number of students in an elementary unit is 418. So an actual K-5 school building with 836 students would be equivalent to two organizational units in the proposed Evidence-Based Model.

The model is driven by the core ingredient needed for effective learning – quality teachers. The model includes the Ohio Instructional Quality Index to account for differences that exist in school districts in terms of community wealth, ability to recruit and hire teachers and the socioeconomic characteristics of the students. The index is then applied to the statewide average teacher salary. This index drives funding to those districts with the most difficulty attracting and retaining necessary teachers. Tutors, summer school and family liaisons are funded for students in poverty.

The Evidence-Based Model phases in funding for textbooks, instructional materials, student enrichment, media services, technology equipment, district level administration and operations and maintenance at 25% for this biennium. The model is proposed to be fully phased in over an eight-year period.

The Executive Budget proposal includes numerous recommendations that have been supported by the State Board of Education including:

- *Funding students where they are educated.* The proposed system provides transparency by funding community schools directly rather than as a deduction from the resident districts. This will save districts money since they no longer have to track a large number of students they do not educate.
- *Using a prior year Average Daily Membership (ADM) count of students for funding unless a two percent increase in ADM is realized.* This will provide stability and predictability of funding for schools. Allowing most districts to know their level of funding prior to the beginning of a fiscal year will allow them to better plan, staff, and budget.
- *Funding districts for pupil transportation based on the proposed formula recommended by the State Board in June 2006.* This recommendation was developed with the input of many education stakeholders. The Governor's proposal supports funding this new formula that better aligns transportation funding to actual service levels and motivates more efficient transportation operations.
- *Measuring the level of poverty in districts based on an economically disadvantaged count that uses free and reduced lunch eligibility.* This count is a much more accurate reflection of poverty in districts than the current measure derived from Ohio Works First participation.
- *Incorporating special education weights into the current funding model utilizing the updated weights recommended in 2006 by the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.* These weights will be funded at 90% to meet the educational needs of these students.
- *Providing resources for all limited English proficient (LEP) students in all districts.* The number of LEP students has doubled in Ohio over the last 10 years. We have 35,000 LEP students. Current state funding for these students is only provided to 10 districts. The proposal would fund one LEP teacher for every 100 LEP students.
- *Funding of universal all-day kindergarten (ADK), which is a critical component of an educational system.* I appreciate the Governor giving districts the time and the funding to logistically prepare for providing this service. Funding for ADK will begin for all districts starting in FY 2010 but will allow time for districts to prepare for this transition. For funding purposes, kindergarten students will count as one full-time student. In FY 2011, districts without ADK must assess their ability to offer the service. If a district presents the State Superintendent with an equivalent kindergarten service or a valid reason that services cannot be provided in FY 2011, the State Superintendent may grant the district a waiver valid for one year.

As you heard yesterday from the Director of the Office of Budget and Management, Pari Sabety, the Executive Budget incorporates an important change that should reduce the number of times districts have to go to the ballot for levy approvals. Reducing the charge-off from 23 to 20 mills and allowing districts the option to seek a conversion levy, will allow these districts to focus more of their time and energy on their core mission, rather than running levy campaigns.

A separate Evidence-Based Model has been developed for community schools. Total funding for the Evidence-Based Model for school districts and community schools total \$6.797 billion in FY 2010 (an increase of 3.9%) and \$7.074 billion in FY 2011 (an increase of 4.1%).

Joint vocational schools will receive a 1.9% overall increase in each year and funding for ESCs will be provided at the FY 2009 level with \$4.7 million of it going toward performance audits. Over the next

biennium, the performance audits conducted for ESCs and joint vocational school districts will help inform recommendations of the development of Evidence-Based Models for these entities.

For the first time, the proposed funding model directly aligns funding to reform efforts. This linkage will provide Ohio with a comprehensive system of education reform that will continue to move Ohio ahead nationally, as well as internationally.

Yesterday Director Sabety described the new funding model in detail so I will not be repeating her comments. Rather, I would like to talk about the really exciting piece of the Governor's plan, his child-centered approach to educating Ohio's students for the 21st century. As I mentioned previously, these components align very well with the work and focus of the State Board of Education.

21st Century Learning Environments

There is an urgency in the design of 21st Century Learning Environments especially as we see Ohio's economy shift to one based on innovative new products in sectors that were not even imagined a decade ago. By "environments," I don't just mean bricks-and-mortar, but, rather, the entire eco-system that supports student learning.

It is critical to our society and our economic competitiveness that our students gain stronger content knowledge in history, math, science, language arts and master at least one foreign language. One of the essential components of the reform work will be the definitive inclusion of skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and meaningful technology integration. Being able to work co-operatively and across cultures is important as our students are further enmeshed into an interconnected world.

The role of our Department must be to help districts design systems that foster innovative language study, team-building, critical thinking, and other skills into their curriculum and then assess student readiness.

The model for a 21st Century Learning Environment places the student at the center and wraps essential supports and resources around the child. The resources include clear expectations and standards, effective educators, nurturing learning environments, and appropriate accountability.

Both the State Board of Education and the Governor's Education Reform and Funding Plan call for a review and revision to the academic content standards and benchmark them to international standards based on the emerging needs for human talent for sustained economic growth in Ohio. These standards will be identified by their rigor and deepened by the addition of essential 21st century learning skills.

International education is vital to Ohio's economy. Students with international perspectives will play key roles in health care, politics, national security, and environmental preservation. In all likelihood, they will be working or collaborating with people from other countries no matter what their occupation or role in society. Students must be prepared to succeed within this international context with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to participate in global systems.

The State Board of Education recommends that Ohio review and revise the PK-12 academic content standards and benchmark them to international best-in-class based on the emerging needs for human talent for sustained economic growth in Ohio.

The State Board also recommends that Ohio's education system provide greater access to programs that give students preparation for and experience in post-secondary content and settings.

In 2006, ODE received a grant from the Longview Foundation to create an International Education Advisory Committee (IEAC). The IEAC consists of educators, businesses, foundations, policymakers and community organizations who believe that Ohio must plan strategically and take action to prepare students to succeed in the world of the 21st century. Their work is to create a vision for an educational response to globalization and technological progress.

Additionally, the plans of the State Board and that of the Governor incorporate activities that provide greater access to programs that prepare students for and offer experiences in post-secondary content and settings. In this matter, I am pleased to be working closely with Chancellor Eric Fingerhut to develop a P-16 pipeline that prepares our students for college, helps them succeed in college or the workforce, and encourages them to work in Ohio. College readiness will ensure that our students have an opportunity to make thoughtful decisions about the paths they choose to take in their lives.

Career technology courses are already incorporating many 21st century skills and should be viewed as models. For example, many of our pre-engineering programs are delivered in an inquiry-based curriculum that begins with posing a real work problem that challenges students to seek content information and encourages them to develop innovative solutions.

The Governor's Education Reform and Funding Plan supports the establishment of safe, healthy and vibrant learning environments that foster creativity, innovation and learning. It creates the Ohio Academic Olympics, a statewide competition at the local, regional and state levels to recognize and celebrate the academic successes of Ohio's students.

A Center for Creativity and Innovation will be established at ODE to monitor, capture, develop and disseminate research on the most creative and innovative education practices across the state, nation and world. The Center will serve as the research and development hub for the state's education system. The proposal supports the creation of creative conversion community schools to expand the state's knowledge of how to create 21st century learning environments and instructional practices that foster and nurture creativity, innovation and global competence.

The Governor's Executive Budget proposal will include funding targeted to spur student enrichment activities for gifted students, field trips and experiential learning opportunities.

Early Childhood Education

Four years ago, the State Board of Education asked the School Readiness Solutions Group to craft a set of detailed recommendations concerning the care and education of our youngest children. This group of fifty individuals met for two years. Part of their implementation plan was that all early childhood development services be coordinated under one agency.

The Executive Budget proposes to move all state efforts geared toward children ages birth through five under ODE. These services include early care and education, mental health and nutrition, special needs and early intervention, and family support. The responsibility for implementing and coordinating state-funded and administered programs will be transferred from the Departments of Health, Jobs and Family Services and Mental Health to the Ohio Department of Education. Planning for the move will take place in FY 2010, and implementation of the plan will begin in FY 2011.

The Executive Budget maintains funding for public preschool and preschool special education students. A single set of standards and guidelines for programs serving young children will be developed. Licensing standards will be increased, and a system of professional development will be created.

The core services of Help Me Grow will be analyzed and possibly redefined while early childhood mental health services will be maintained. An Early Childhood Financing Workgroup will be charged with developing a single financing system for early care and education as well as a streamlined payment process.

Eligibility will remain at 200 percent of the federal poverty level for all state-supported early care and education programs.

Statewide Use of Technology

The State Board of Education's vision document, their work on their EDGE subcommittee, as well as the Executive Budget proposal, recognize the critical need to engage students in relevant learning experiences that incorporate technology seamlessly into their experiences.

In my previous role, we worked very hard to incorporate technology into students' lives in a meaningful manner. For instance, a one-to-one laptop program ensures each child has access to the Internet and the wonders of technology, regardless of family circumstances. Even our instructors and administrators used Personal Digital Assistants, or PDAs, to monitor and inform instruction. Under this budget, Chancellor Fingerhut and I will be charged with developing a P-16 statewide technology plan.

Family and Community Engagement

I mentioned earlier that this is my 34th year as an educator. My experiences affirm that there is no substitute for deep, active and committed engagement by families and communities in our students' learning. I am not talking here about bake sales and pizza parties but, rather, about taking a personal stake in enriching the learning lives of children and removing those non-academic issues that become barriers to learning for many children.

The Executive Budget establishes family and community engagement teams in each school district comprised of educators, support staff, parents, business representatives and community members. We

The State Board of Education recommends that Ohio bring together community, social and law enforcement services to meet student needs.

The Board also calls for the development and use of tools to analyze school culture and family involvement and provide technical assistance to support improvements.

expect these teams to work first-hand with community members to design plans that create meaningful roles for the community in our children's learning. Far too often, children have obstacles, such as poverty, mobility, and a lack of environmental stimulation, that impairs their ability to focus in school or to learn at high levels. Many times, these students are already at a deficit when they step foot into school on their first day. The school-based learning teams will work to be strong advocates for these students and help families to access community resources to meet the many challenges they face. The proposed budget dedicates resources to establish family and community engagement coordinators in districts so that these coordinators can become a vital, functioning link between educators and students, their families and the community.

Over the past two years, former State Senator C.J. Prentiss has done an outstanding job of conceiving and directing the Closing the Achievement Gap program, which provides resources to our urban districts that will improve graduation rates. Under the Governor's budget proposal, that program will be

expanded so that all districts that have a high school with a graduation rate of 70 percent or less will participate in the initiative. These districts will utilize the family and community engagement resources to establish a linkage coordinator in each of the districts' organizational units. The coordinators will serve as the primary mentor, coach and motivator for students identified as potential non-graduates and will coordinate student participation in academic programs, social service programs, and out-of-school cultural and work-related experiences. Districts will be expected to demonstrate that these resources are helping to close achievement gaps and increase graduation rates.

Additionally, the Executive Budget establishes within ODE, the Office of Urban and Rural Student Success to assist urban and rural districts with improving the academic success of students who face constraints and barriers caused by poverty.

The Cleveland Municipal School District Early Adopter Initiative will fully fund the Cleveland Municipal School District in the school funding reform model. It will require the district's CEO to create a five-year strategic plan to meet the needs of students, outline the district's mission and issue annual progress reports. Resources will be provided to conduct a curriculum audit and business and operations management study. Consequences for not making sufficient progress toward meeting the recommendations of the curriculum audit will be established.

The Executive Budget provides resources to address the health and wellness needs of Ohio's students. Each district will be provided resources to hire a licensed practical nurse (LPN) to serve as a nurse wellness coordinator and each district will be provided resources for a registered nurse to supervise the LPNs hired by the district. The budget proposes the establishment of a School Health and Wellness Advisory Council within the Ohio Department of Health.

Teacher Quality

It is well documented through research that the most important factor impacting student achievement is the relationship between the teacher and student within the context of content. Given this vital factor, the Executive Budget proposal incorporates several pieces that will impact the quality of teachers who interact with our students on a daily basis.

We will launch Ohio Teach, an initiative that recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining individuals in the teaching profession. The initiative has three key features:

- A program to allow high school students opportunities to explore teaching as a future profession;
- The Ohio Teaching Fellows Scholarship, which is designed to recruit excellent undergraduate students into the profession and provides for a four-year forgivable loan if the candidate teaches in a hard-to-staff school; and
- The development of a career ladder to honor various professional attainment levels of educators.

The State Board of Education recommends that Ohio create multiple pathways for career advancement for PK-12 educators and raise the standards for entering the teaching profession in Ohio.

The State Board also recommends that Ohio develop policies to ensure that PK-12 educators are provided professional development opportunities aligned with state educator standards and tied to individual needs.

Student teaching experiences, generally held within one semester, are a wonderful tool to assist in the preparation of teachers. I think back fondly on my days as a student teacher. They were wonderful, challenging, a bit frightening, and they lit the fires of a lifelong commitment for me. However, those student teaching days left me under-prepared to managing my own classroom. Today's student teaching

programs are somewhat better, but it is unrealistic to expect this limited internship experience to equip new teachers with all of the skills needed to be successful in meeting the many challenges of today's learners.

The proposed Teacher Residency Program holds great potential. Designed on the medical residency framework, this program will provide teachers with mentors in a four-year experience that provides the type of coaching and guidance critical for a successful educational career. This program will give young educators the skills they need to be successful in the real world of teaching, and it will help identify people for whom classroom teaching is not a good career.

The former Entry Year Teacher program will be part of the responsibilities of the lead teachers, funded in the proposed budget, in each school. Successful completion of this residency program will be required to receive a professional educator license.

The budget changes the structure of the educator licensing system in an effort to cultivate and reward the skills of quality teachers. In order to provide opportunities for advancement within the profession, the budget provides for a career ladder approach to licensing, which will create four distinct licenses:

- Resident educator license
- Professional educator license
- Senior professional educator
- Lead professional educator

The criteria to advance to a higher step on the ladder will incorporate data derived from student performance, peer-to-peer observations, and educator standards. Teachers will be eligible for tenure after nine years, following completion of the residency program and after serving as a professional educator for an additional five years.

The Executive Budget proposal calls for additional time for teacher collaboration, mentoring and professional development. I can tell you from my personal experience how valuable these connections are in developing the types of professional learning communities where colleagues value, guide and support one another.

While the Executive Budget sets its sights on improving teacher quality, it also recommends a new standard for the dismissal of teachers. The current standard for dismissal of a teacher is far more difficult than the process for any other public employee. This budget recommends a standard for dismissal of teachers equal to that of other public employees. Under this proposal, a district will be permitted to dismiss a teacher for good cause.

As a state, we must do more to ensure that we have an ever-increasing pool of qualified teachers. To attain this goal, we must rely on our institutions of higher education to produce teachers who have the content knowledge, pedagogy and personal traits to be successful. As such, the Executive Budget recommends, and I support, moving oversight of teacher preparation programs at the university level from the Department of Education to the Board of Regents. Chancellor Fingerhut and I will work together to ensure this transition occurs smoothly.

Educators from Ohio school districts, state-level organizations and higher education faculty are working together through the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council to create a comprehensive leadership framework for Ohio’s teachers, principals and superintendents. The intent is that leaders emerge from all levels of the system, not just from the top down. Anchored in teaching, learning, and effective uses of data, this system focuses on ensuring success for all children. When we create professional learning communities at the state, district, school and classroom levels, shared leadership can result in sustained change in and out of schools.

Quality instruction is the engine that drives the education system. This budget does not just give the engine a tune-up; it rebuilds the engine.

Measure Students Against the World

The Executive Budget replaces the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) with a four-part assessment to measure college and life readiness. The four-part assessment will be used to determine whether a student is qualified to graduate with a high school diploma.

The four assessments are:

- The ACT to measure student competencies in writing, science, math, and social studies, as well as college readiness;
- End-of-course exams in the areas of science, mathematics, language arts and social studies (and eventually to incorporate other courses and areas of academic endeavor);
- A service learning project developed in accordance with the service learning plan established in ORC 3313.605 that will demonstrate a student’s ability to apply 21st century skills; and
- A senior capstone project that will incorporate essential 21st century skills as well as the potential inclusion of research-based internships and external learning experiences.

The State Board of Education recommends developing a new system of student assessments that employs multiple measures and includes more than traditional paper and pencil assessments, accompanied by appropriate revisions to Ohio’s accountability system.

A current Department initiative, the Ohio Performance Assessment Pilot Project, is designed to support the initial research, development and pilot testing of a standards-based, balanced assessment approach. Performance assessments allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through various real-world tasks and activities, the building of portfolios and other exercises. The pilot program utilizes this multiple-measures approach to evaluating students. By monitoring each school’s program and receiving feedback from teachers and administrators, Ohio will begin to develop measures that offer a more comprehensive assessment of academic progress.

In addition, the budget proposal replaces the reading and writing assessments with an English language arts assessment that incorporates writing into research-based practices. Additionally, all assessments will be realigned to the revised standards and curricula.

The proposed budget acknowledges that some students may need additional time and support to achieve at higher levels. By providing opportunities to expand the school day, some students will have opportunities to engage in tutoring or enrichment.

Recognizing that learning and time are interwoven, the Governor’s plan calls for extending the school year by 20 days, but not all at once. We will phase in the requirement at the rate of four more days per biennium. At the end of 10 years, Ohio students will be getting 200 learning days per year. The budget formula includes resources for additional learning time before or after school to give students time for

tutoring or enrichment. And, as I mentioned earlier, the plan requires all-day kindergarten for all districts.

Accountability

The Executive Budget includes an emphasis on accountability for school districts. While academic accountability has been reported to taxpayers through the Local Report Card, financial accountability has been limited to a review of five-year forecasts. Ohio’s citizens deserve transparency in their education system and should know that resources are allocated in a manner that is both effective and efficient.

Districts and community schools will be required to submit an annual spending plan to be approved by ODE. These spending plans will include clear indications of how funds are being used to meet the resource structure of the new funding model.

The State Board of Education recommends implementing a new PK-12 fiscal management system to ensure that all resources are carefully and consciously allocated and that all funds are used to achieve the very best results for our children.

At the end of each year, districts and community schools will submit a compliance report, which will detail the district’s actual expenditures against the spending plan initially submitted. The Governor’s proposed budget includes a new educational performance audit program, which will combine fiscal and academic accountability standards. Audits will be conducted on each school district and community school at least once every five years. District business advisory councils will assist local educators in implementing any educational performance audit recommendations.

The State Board of Education will be required to adopt new operating standards upon which districts will be measured and sanctions will be imposed for failure to meet the performance audit recommendations. The Executive Budget recommends a graduated system of sanctions for districts that fail to comply with the educational performance audit recommendations. In the first year of non-compliance, districts will be required to prepare and submit a three-year improvement plan to ODE. In the second year, ODE will convene an intervention team whose responsibility will be to recommend specific courses of action. In the third year of non-compliance, the State Superintendent may either appoint a commission to oversee the operations of the district or appoint a trustee for the district. In the fourth year of non-compliance, the State Board of Education will be required by statute to revoke the district’s charter.

We hope that few, if any, districts ever reach years three and four. With an improvement plan and intervention at the first signs of distress, we are confident that those Ohio schools that need help will be able to get back on track.

The budget proposal also includes spending plans and expenditure reports for school buildings. A pilot project over the biennium will be conducted to explore the feasibility of conducting individual school site visits.

Community schools will be held to the same educational performance audit standards as traditional public schools. In addition, the proposed budget grants ODE oversight of all community school sponsors, the authority to place sponsors on probation, impose penalties on sponsors for non-compliance and require community school operators to have at least one Ohio school in Continuous Improvement status to meet the Quality Operator provision necessary for opening a new school. These are all State Board recommendations.

Summary

The Executive Budget I have just reviewed places all of us as guardians of our children's futures. Almost everything is new: a new funding mechanism, a new school day, a new teacher licensure system, new community involvement strategies, new assessments, new accountability measures, and enhanced expectations for all students. Some might suggest that the Governor's proposal is bold and transformational.

As a Department we are charged with many new responsibilities and challenges. There is a tremendous amount of work ahead of us in developing the right protocols and in retooling our educational system. But it is the right work to do. ODE supports the restructuring and the rethinking of the way we educate our children. We are committed to helping each and every Ohio school district build the capacity to execute this plan and meet the goal of *graduating all students well prepared for success*.

We are living in uncertain times. Ohio's education system will help shape the future of Ohio. It is a great time for us to stand tall and become engaged in creating a better tomorrow today. All of our children deserve nothing less than relevant and rigorous curriculum, dedicated professionals, enriching opportunities and safe, resource-rich, nurturing environments. The Governor's plan places students at the center of the system while providing our communities and education professionals with the resources and tools needed to make this vision a reality.

As we engage in conversations about education reform, let us always keep kids central to our mission. They deserve nothing less than our best thinking and a strong commitment to their future.

Chairman Sykes, Ranking Minority Leader Amstutz, and members of the Committee, thank you very much for your time and attention. I will be happy to answer any questions you have.