



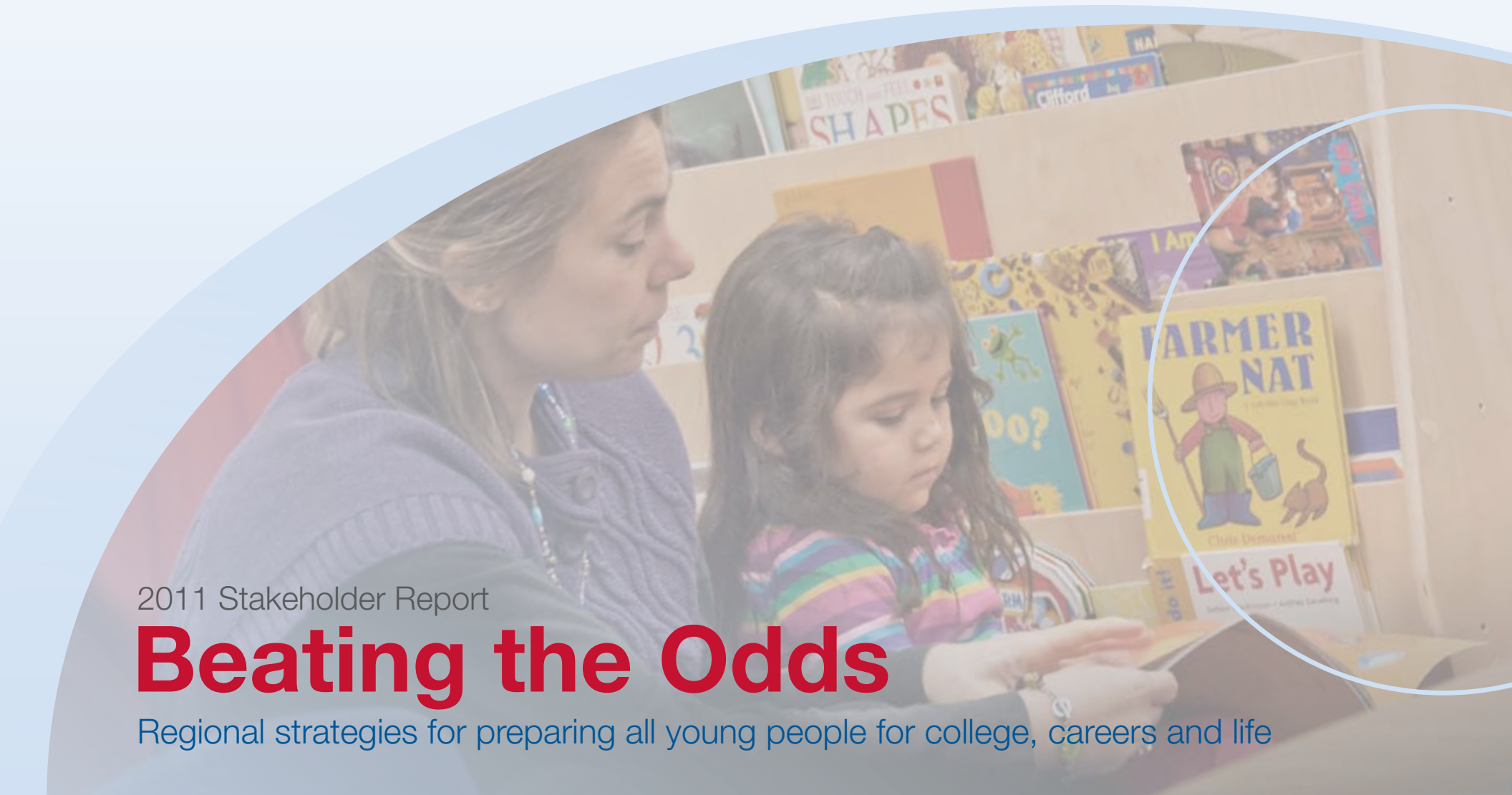
educational service center  
*of Central Ohio*



2011 Stakeholder Report

# Beating the Odds

Regional strategies for preparing all young people for college, careers and life



## About the ESC of Central Ohio

Ohio's first accredited educational service center, the ESC of Central Ohio leverages resources and coordinates programs to help districts and schools meet the needs of their students – and to help those young learners achieve more.

The agency accelerates the missions of school districts in Delaware, Franklin and Union counties, serving more than 200,000 children in 25 school districts. Through direct instruction, technical support, an extensive network of shared services and quality professional development, the agency partners with districts to improve education for all students, particularly those with special needs.

The agency is funded through \$3.7 million in annual state support, \$54 million in district-selected services, and competitive grants totaling \$17 million. Therefore, each \$1 of state subsidy yields another \$19 in needs-based regional services and competitive grants.

### Member Districts

#### Delaware County

Big Walnut Local School District  
 Buckeye Valley Local School District  
 Delaware City School District  
 Delaware Area Career Center  
 Olentangy Local School District

#### Franklin County

Bexley City School District  
 Canal Winchester Local School District  
 Columbus City School District  
 Dublin City School District  
 Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools  
 Gahanna-Jefferson Public School District  
 Grandview Heights City School District  
 Groveport Madison Local School District  
 Hamilton Local School District  
 Hilliard City School District  
 New Albany•Plain Local School District  
 Reynoldsburg City School District  
 South-Western City School District  
 Upper Arlington City School District  
 Whitehall City School District  
 Westerville City School District  
 Worthington City School District

#### Union County

Fairbanks Local School District  
 Marysville Exempted Village School District  
 Tolles Career & Technical Center

### Partners

Action for Children  
 Columbus Catholic Diocese  
 Cisco Learning Institute  
 Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence  
 Delaware-Morrow Mental Health  
 and Recovery Services Board  
 Delaware County Family and  
 Children First Council  
 Educational Council  
 eTech Ohio Commission  
 Franklin County Children Services  
 Franklin County Department of Jobs  
 and Family Services  
 Franklin County Family and Children  
 First Council  
 Help Me Grow  
 Ohio Center for Essential School Reform  
 Ohio Department of Education  
 Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services  
 Ohio Historical Society  
 Ohio State Research Foundation  
 Ohio State School for the Blind  
 The Ohio State University  
 Rehabilitation Services Administration  
 School Redesign Network  
 Stanford University  
 U.S. Department of Education

### Agency Priorities

The ESC of Central Ohio is committed to offering personalized, accessible and – most importantly – relevant programs that help schools and students achieve more. And we do this all at the lowest cost possible for our districts, schools and other partners.

The ESC of Central Ohio exists to improve students' academic learning and performance, and to support their healthy development. As districts and schools face growing levels of accountability, we're holding ourselves accountable, too.

Our 2011 priorities are:

- Support Ohio's efforts to implement Common Standards Assessments;
- Expand early learning services for infants, preschool and school-age children, and adults with autism spectrum disorders and low-incidence disabilities, including hearing and visual impairments, multiple disabilities and other health impairments;
- Improve districts' high school graduation rates and close persistent achievement gaps;
- Support efforts to implement Ohio's Race to the Top plan;
- Improve students' college preparedness and promote higher levels of college completion;
- Improve the academic and financial performance of public charter schools;
- Promote districts' and schools' efforts to produce better results with federal education dollars;
- Support efforts to turn around Ohio's lowest performing schools and rebuild Ohio's school funding system; and
- Monitor the performance of Ohio's School Facilities Commission and support efforts to redesign schools as community centers.

## Our Mission

The ESC of Central Ohio accelerates the missions of our member school districts and helps students achieve more, through career- and college-ready research-based programs and services.

## Our Vision

An innovative educational solutions agency that is the provider of choice; customizing services and leveraging resources to maximize each student's potential.

Dear Friends:

In his 2011 Inaugural Address, Governor John Kasich said, **“You deny kids an education ... you’re killing their future.”** He encouraged all Ohioans to allow nothing to stand in our way of making Ohio a national leader in education and of competing with the best education systems in the world.

At the ESC of Central Ohio, we agree. We recognize that education is more important than ever before for students’ success and Ohio’s future growth and prosperity. At the same time, we understand that schools and districts are facing unprecedented challenges – including not enough money or skilled professionals – as they search for ways to ensure that all of their students graduate ready for success in college, careers and life.

This understanding defines, in part, our mission – to accelerate the missions of our member school districts and to help students achieve more through career- and college-ready research-based programs and services.

In last year’s Stakeholder Report, we pointed to our member schools’ need for dramatic, penetrating changes in teaching and learning – and in the way schools are operated. That has not changed. So the ESC of Central Ohio is continuing to build new school and district capabilities in a birth-to-career framework. We are ratcheting up our efforts in the areas of shared

services, technical assistance and professional development. And we have launched several new programs, some of which are featured in this year’s report.

In this report, you will read about the timely assistance, supports and resources we provide districts and schools as they struggle to meet the learning and developmental needs of students in special education, including students with a range of physical limitations, students whose first language is not English, and students who have dropped out and now seek to get back on track. You will learn more about what the ESC is doing to improve the quality of instruction and to support students’ learning and academic achievement, sometimes using the power of 21st century technology. You will discover how regional strategies are helping districts and schools cut their administrative overhead costs. And you will be introduced to a new network that connects our high schools with area colleges and gives students opportunities to better prepare themselves for success at the next level of learning.

This report to our stakeholders in Delaware, Franklin and Union counties documents the difference our center is making in the districts and schools we serve – and in the lives of children and young people as they seek to overcome what are often imposing odds.

Joyce Galbraith  
Governing Board President

## ESC of Central Ohio By The Numbers

**25**

School districts served

**420**

Public school buildings served

**200,000**

Students served

**1,151**

ESC full-time employees\*

**\$91 million**

ESC of Central Ohio budget

**\$17 million**

Competitive grant funding

**3,223**

Help Me Grow children served

**924**

Students earning dual high school-college credit hours

**6,018**

Total college credit hours earned through ESC Dual-Credit programs

**52 schools**

Performance-based assessments conducted

**1,125**

Special education students served directly

**5,400**

Students served by Related Services therapists and specialists

**1,018**

Participants from 88 districts in ODE-sponsored Race to the Top training sessions

**1,079**

Truancy interventions

*\*figure includes ESC Council of Governments*



## Wasting Talent is a Two-Edged Sword

Popular writer and educational thought leader Peter Smith, author of the critically acclaimed *Harnessing America's Wasted Talent: A New Ecology of Learning*, has achieved some notoriety for his "Law of Thirds." According to Smith, by the time young adults in the United States reach the workforce, about one-third of them have left the educational system without graduating from high school, another one-third have graduated but not gone on to college, and the final one-third have succeeded in going on to college, with just about 60 percent of that group earning at least an associate's degree.

In a world where learning success is inextricably linked with economic health, Smith argues, we simply cannot afford to allow two-thirds or more of our young people to enter the workforce lacking the 21st century knowledge and skills they need to compete successfully in a global, innovation-driven economy.

Those certainly are imposing odds. The challenge is all the more daunting when you consider the gravity of what's at stake – economically, socially and civically.

The ESC of Central Ohio knows a lot about beating tough odds – lessons learned from assisting districts and schools in delivering more rigorous and expansive learning experiences to their students, and from helping those young learners leave high school prepared for success in college, careers and life. Often, these districts and schools have been facing enormous financial constraints, and many of their students have been dealing with serious learning and developmental

needs – or have dropped out and are now seeking to get back on track.

However great the odds may be, our goal – as a nation, as a state, as a regional educational services leader – must be the same: Education must meet the needs of all children.

That means raising the bar for expectations, for educators and students alike, and improving teaching and learning. It means providing a robust array of learning supports. It means developing multiple pathways to postsecondary learning. But that's not enough. Given the limited public resources available, more than ever before it also means working more innovatively, more efficiently and more collaboratively.

That's the heart of what we do at the ESC of Central Ohio. We help districts and schools redefine educational support strategies, practices, networks and solutions on a regional scale. We help districts build their capacity to help schools and students achieve more.

The ESC of Central Ohio develops and delivers innovative services that overcome jurisdictional and programmatic fragmentation – often increasing operational efficiency and lowering costs for districts. We promote birth-to-career learning. And we are at the frontier of helping principals and superintendents build the skills and abilities needed to effectively manage their schools and districts in the toughest of times.

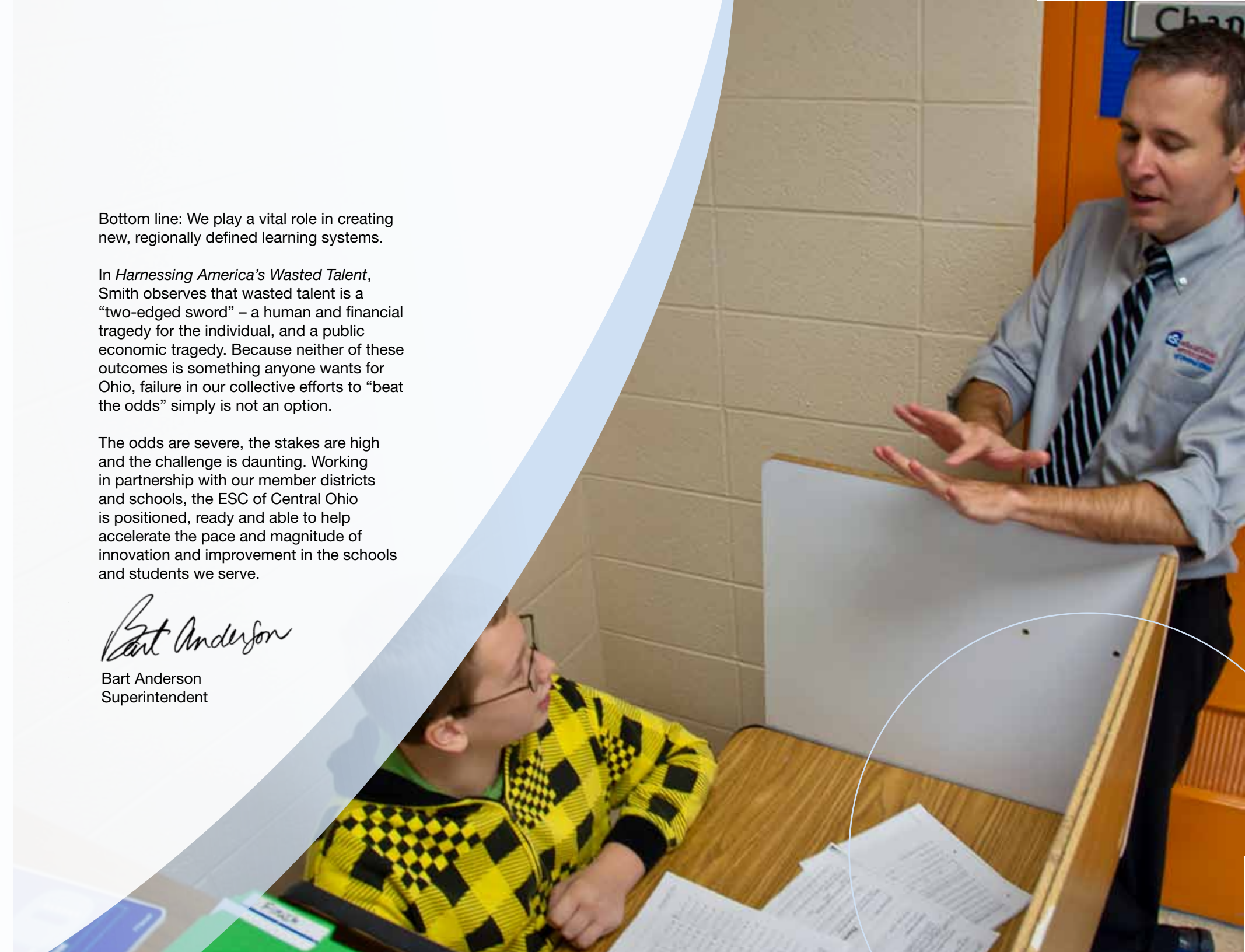
Bottom line: We play a vital role in creating new, regionally defined learning systems.

In *Harnessing America's Wasted Talent*, Smith observes that wasted talent is a "two-edged sword" – a human and financial tragedy for the individual, and a public economic tragedy. Because neither of these outcomes is something anyone wants for Ohio, failure in our collective efforts to "beat the odds" simply is not an option.

The odds are severe, the stakes are high and the challenge is daunting. Working in partnership with our member districts and schools, the ESC of Central Ohio is positioned, ready and able to help accelerate the pace and magnitude of innovation and improvement in the schools and students we serve.



Bart Anderson  
Superintendent





## Starting Early... and Following Through

Research and experience confirm early childhood education can yield impressive results for children, families and communities. The first years of life are crucial to brain development and function, and early experiences can affect learning and the social and emotional development for future success.

Starting behind is damaging for children and families – and it can be expensive for society. Research shows quality home visiting programs can create a foundation leading to improved cognitive and vocabulary scores, reduced child abuse and neglect, and higher grade point averages and achievement test scores.

This is true for all children, yet the benefits of early learning are even more pronounced for children with disabilities. Through high-quality early learning experiences in inclusive settings, these children can be spared the effects of separate, segregated education, including the negative effects of labeling. Students with special needs can be served by models that allow them to learn new adaptive skills or to learn when and how to use their existing skills through imitation. They also can have experiences that prepare them for life in the community.

At the ESC of Central Ohio, this is the basis for a range of personalized services that support the

unique needs of children with moderate to intense disabilities or severe emotional and behavioral challenges. ESC programs make learning relevant to every child's experiences and aspirations, and provide skills leading to adult independence through enriched, student-centered learning.

The agency's **Early Learning Special Education Program** is offered through contracts with Central Ohio school districts. This half-day, center-based program provides enriched learning activities that are age appropriate and aligned with the Ohio Department of Education's Early Learning Content Standards.

The ESC's early learning programs are supported by a team of highly qualified and licensed/certified professionals, which may include a teacher, paraprofessional, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, physical therapist and adapted physical education teacher as deemed appropriate by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team. The ESC also offers itinerant preschool special education services to help children directly in their homes.

A second early learning program for children with special needs is **Help Me Grow (HMG)**. With state and federal support, this voluntary home visiting program serves families with

infants and toddlers to age three who have or are at risk for developmental delays or disabilities. HMG offers newborn and prenatal home visits to parents to assess the health of both the child and mother – and educate parents on such topics as infant feeding, newborn care and immunizations.

The ESC of Central Ohio partners with Franklin County Family and Children First Council to implement the HMG program in 10 Central Ohio school districts, conducting all home visits and developmental screenings in Franklin County. As part of this effort, the agency works collaboratively with participating districts to provide early identification and family-centered services to ensure children receive identified services and access to community resources.

Presently, the agency is serving 710 preschool children with 39 teachers. Related services are provided in many areas, including speech and language; adaptive physical education; vision, orientation and mobility; occupational therapy; physical therapy; behavior; school psychology services; and itinerant services. Services are delivered in locations including classrooms in elementary buildings, community child-care facilities and children's homes.

When physical, emotional and cognitive development is at risk, children are at risk. That means their chances for future academic, social and economic success are limited. Yet, we have proven tools – home visiting and pre-kindergarten – that can be used to improve our children's odds in the classroom, in careers and in life.

## Timing is especially important for children with special needs

### The Importance of Follow-through

Committed to a birth-to-career approach to learning – and to Alternative Education programs that offer structured opportunities for students who are unable to learn in traditional environments – the ESC of Central Ohio offers the following services:

- **GOAL (Graduation Options for Adolescent Learners)** provides comprehensive services for students needing a nontraditional learning environment. This year, GOAL served 90 high school students, 80 of whom earned enough credits to graduate with their class. GOAL allows students to recoup credits from a previously failed semester, earn new credits toward a high school diploma or receive instruction to prepare them to complete the GED.
- **Delaware Arts Academy** provides comprehensive services for high school students who typically have medical or behavioral issues and/or have a history of family/personal problems or suspension/ expulsion. With a strong focus on core academics, as well as the arts and humanities, the Academy's courses promote inclusion opportunities and small group instruction that supports credit recovery in a nontraditional learning environment.
- **Ventures Academy** serves youth in grades 1-12 who are in need of social and behavioral intervention. Through a combination of academic instruction and mental health treatment, students benefit

from an individualized curriculum that is tailored to meet the unique needs and abilities of a child with severe emotional and behavioral challenges. Students enrolled in this program generally exhibit psychiatric symptoms, chemical dependency, behavioral problems and developmental delays of significant or profound impairment.

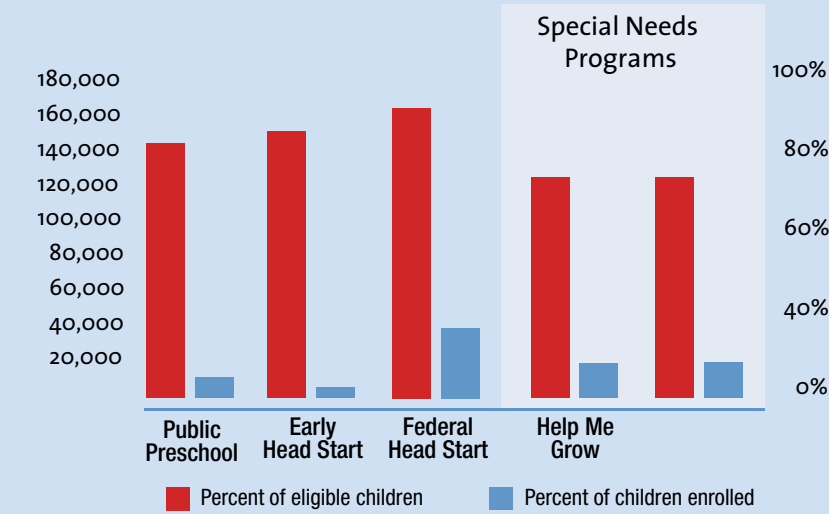
- In partnership with several state agencies, the ESC's Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) serves as a clearinghouse for information, resources, professional development and technical assistance, and supports multiple systems as they help Ohioans with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other developmental disabilities. To build the state's capacity to better serve these individuals, OCALI has provided resources, such as a Parent's Guide to ASD, to more than 25,000 Ohioans. To date, more than 57,000 people have participated in OCALI's Autism Internet Modules, and more than 90,000 have visited its website. OCALI has provided training to more than 35,000 professionals and families, and to 50 groups with a parent focus. It has worked with more than 100 universities to improve the pre-service training of highly qualified special education teachers.
- A collaborative effort between Buckeye Ranch and the ESC, the **Cross Creek Day Treatment Program** serves approximately 35 middle- and high-

school students with severe emotional and behavioral challenges. The program's interdisciplinary approach to learning provides a team of professionals who work with the student and his or her family on building effective academic, social and behavioral strategies to be successful in the student's educational and community setting and, ultimately, transition back to the home school district with support services.

- The **Project SEARCH** is a unique, business-led, one-year school-to-work program for students with disabilities that takes place entirely at the workplace. The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help youths with disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life.
- Designed for youth 17 and older, **ASCEND (Assist and Strengthen Corporations to Employ and eNable People with Disabilities)** is a partnership among the Columbus City Schools, South-Western City Schools and the ESC of Central Ohio, with funding from the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. An innovative, redesigned approach to job development, the program shifts the focus to the creation of corporate cultures at the business level that advance the employment, retention and promotion of individuals with significant disabilities – on a long-term and career-enhancing basis.

## Special Education

## In Ohio, fewer than one in every six eligible children are enrolled in one of the state's early learning programs.



We have a moral imperative to ensure that our most disadvantaged young people are given every opportunity to succeed. Failure to do so can have debilitating consequences: Human potential goes unfilled, adult independence is restricted, and what we accomplish as a society is diminished. Yet, fewer than one of every six eligible children are enrolled in one of Ohio's early learning programs. With a gap of this magnitude, school districts increasingly seek expert third party assistance in meeting the needs of these children. And increasingly, they find it at the ESC of Central Ohio.

For more information about any of the initiatives referenced in this section, contact Rhonda Dickson at [Rhonda.Dickson@escoco.org](mailto:Rhonda.Dickson@escoco.org).

SOURCE: Eligible children is based on Age Cohort Populations and Ohio Child Population by Family Income. Eligible population requiring special needs is 27% of the population, within each age group per the Children's Issues Policy Analyst, Ohio Developmental Disability Council, March 2010



## Improving Services... and Getting Better Results

For more than 20 years, Ohio educators and policy leaders have been joined in a common effort to improve student, school and system performance. Substantial progress has been made, but even bolder action is needed to ensure that all students have access to high-quality learning experiences.

Traditional, industrial models of teaching and learning need to be replaced by innovative approaches that keep pace with the demands of the

21st century, where jobs, careers and workplaces are learning intensive and where people often have many jobs and careers over their lifetimes. Transformative learning technologies must be employed to customize and personalize instruction, narrow achievement gaps, engage students and improve school efficiency.

These imperatives are embedded in many ESC of Central Ohio programs. For example, the agency

is deeply involved in Ohio's Race to the Top implementation plan. When Ohio began to develop a new generation of student assessments, it asked the ESC to help. Through the **Ohio Performance Assessment Pilot Project**, the agency is training more than 120 teachers statewide to pilot new, more rigorous assessments in 11th- and 12th-grade English-language arts, mathematics and science. The project is a cooperation with the ESC, Ohio Department of Education and Stanford University School Redesign Network.

The ESC of Central Ohio has taken on an unprecedented challenge that will give Ohio students a chance to use a video game-like program to explore the world of science. The agency is one of eight partners nationally – and the only educational service agency in the Midwest – associated with Harvard University's **Virtual Performance Assessment (VPA)**. The ESC is serving as the primary connection between the Harvard Graduate School of Education and participating Ohio schools.

Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, the Harvard project is designed to develop and study the feasibility of using VPA technology as a platform for assessing middle school students' curiosity toward and proficiency in science.

More and more we hear that kids literally have to “power down” when they come to school because they just aren't engaged. With VPA's gaming technology, students hopefully will discover that science is interesting and that assessments don't have to be a bore. And if the pilot is successful, they just may improve their understanding of the scientific process.

According to Jody Clarke-Midura, who leads the Harvard program, the Virtual Performance Assessment could act as a supplement to eighth-grade state science assessments, which typically are paper-and-pencil tests. “We assess knowledge of the scientific method in the form of a multiple choice test,” Clarke-Midura said. “Students may not understand what that means. In the real world, you don't have four choices to solve a problem. We put the kids in a real situation and look at how they solve the problem.”

The Virtual Performance Assessment allows students to manipulate an avatar, or a video game character, to explore a three-dimensional world, where they can collect data, simulate tests and draw conclusions – all in the name of science.

The VPA pilot is an opportunity for Ohio teachers to dip their toes into the water – to get a feel for what online assessment models may be like in the future, and to be research participants with an internationally esteemed university. Presently, more than 14 seventh-, eighth- and ninth-grade teachers in nine schools and their 604 students are participating in this innovative instructional and assessment practice.

### Getting Better Results

For the ESC of Central Ohio, nothing is more important than improving the performance of students and schools, which is confirmed by the agency's action agenda. In this regard, one ESC project stands out.

- Some of the agency's most innovative work is reflected in the **Columbus Coaching Project**, which offers classroom-level instructional coaching, data analysis and teacher team facilitation in 36 Columbus elementary, middle and high schools. The project's purpose is to provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development, technical assistance and support to teachers in low-performing schools. Launched in 2007, this evidence-based initiative is predicated on the fact that the application of skills is much higher when professional development includes theory, demonstration, practice with feedback, and peer coaching with follow-up.

Presently, the project's 50-plus instructional coaches are working with teachers in more than 70 schools, providing more than 84,000 hours of direct instructional coaching over three years. Instructional coaches, all of whom are experienced teachers and administrators, help teachers with

classroom instruction aligned to district improvement plans. They analyze data from short-cycle diagnostic assessments and value-added tests and improve teachers' ability to design differentiated instructional strategies that are matched to individual students' strengths and weaknesses.

Districts and schools cannot meet the expectations of the communities they serve without effective leaders – professionals with strong management skills and the abilities instructional leaders in their own organizations. For this reason, much of the ESC's agenda includes several leadership development initiatives. Of the several leadership development innovations currently being offered by the ESC, four are especially relevant to the work of improving the performance of schools and districts and yielding better outcomes.

- The **Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC)** has identified standards for teacher leaders, principals and superintendents. As an extension of this process, the ESC worked with the Ohio Department of Education, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio School Boards Association to develop a standards-based evaluation system for district superintendents.

- The ESC's **Center for Achievement and Leadership Services** offers comprehensive professional development in curriculum, assessment and instruction that effectively supports the development of classroom teachers, instructional coaches, coordinators and administrators.

- The ESC's **Professional Learning Leaders Network** provides updated information on local, state and federal topics and mandates, as well as a monthly opportunity for curriculum and instruction professionals to network with colleagues. Interest and participation have grown because the network provides an opportunity for members to share ideas and action research regarding improved instructional practices.

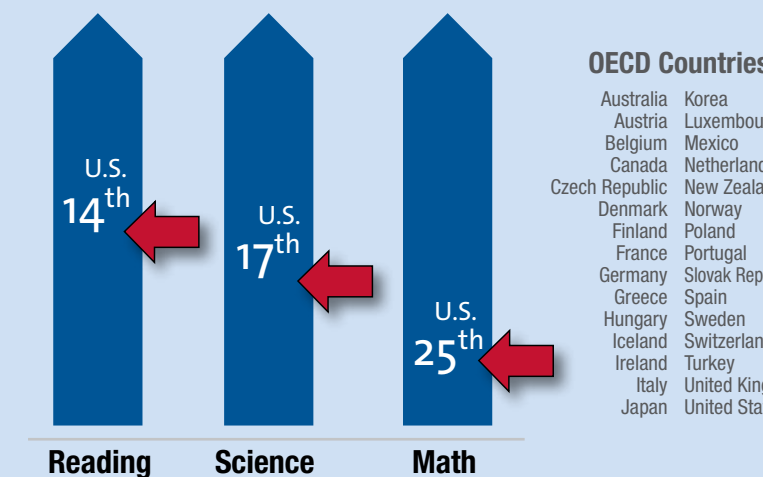
- The **New and Aspiring Leaders Academy** offers presentations and dialogue about leadership theories and practical issues to be considered by aspiring leaders (i.e., teachers with potential and first-year principals).

## Improving Services

## Students using gaming technology to explore science

For more information about any of the initiatives referenced in this section, contact Tom Reed at [Tom.Reed@escoco.org](mailto:Tom.Reed@escoco.org).

## U.S. students score below average in international math assessments, just average in science and reading literacy.



The evidence from the most recent PISA international assessment of learning outcomes could hardly be clearer – and the potential impact on the ability of our state and nation to compete globally could hardly be more profound. High-quality instructional programs that equip our young people with high-level knowledge and skills are essential keys to economic opportunity and leadership. Can anyone believe that “average” or “below average” performance will be good enough to survive, let alone thrive? That's why the ESC of Central Ohio is working to improve the quality of education in area districts and schools.

SOURCE: PISA 2009 Results, OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)



## Helping Districts Stretch School Dollars

School district and schools are increasingly challenged to operate more efficiently. The pressure points are many and well-known: tighter state budgets, surging enrollments in some districts and programs, costly state mandates and court rulings, and local pressures for more and better services. The imperative to make better use of scarce resources – to reduce costs while still improving the quality of the services districts and schools provide – requires creativity and collaboration.

Districts and schools are looking for efficiencies in non-instructional services to generate needed cost savings. In most states, transportation, human resources, food service, information technology, maintenance, administration and other back-office functions account for more than 40 cents of every

dollar spent on education. Increasingly, they are discovering the benefits of shared services models.

Shared services that consolidate certain functions across several districts and schools, allowing for more effective and efficient operations, have been a core component of the ESC of Central Ohio's agenda since its earliest days. Today, the agency offers a broad array of shared services in three general areas: (1) student-focused shared services, (2) educator-focused shared services, and (3) district and agency operations-focused shared services.

- Much of the agency's identity and many of its core functions are rooted firmly in services to students with special needs who are scattered across multiple districts and schools.

### Lawmakers Signal Support for Shared Services Arrangements

Ohio districts have barely scratched the surface of tapping into shared services' potential cost savings and other benefits. With the passage of the state's FY 2012-13 budget, that is likely to change.

The legislation requires the director of the Governor's Office of 21st Century Education to make recommendations for the integration of regional support services into a shared services model, with emphasis on general instruction, special education, gifted education, academic leadership, technology, fiscal management, transportation, food services, human resources, pooled purchasing and more. The ESC of Central Ohio sees value in a shared services approach. It is encouraged by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Stan Heffner's report to the State Board that his agency will rely on its regional partners, including ESCs, to implement shared services and other important policy initiatives.

- The agency's educator-focus shared services include leadership development initiatives designed to ensure that superintendents and principals have the skills and abilities needed to effectively manage their districts and schools.

nonprofits to benefit communities and families. Examples include truancy prevention, school improvement coaching and support for children and families in foster care.

#### Two Promising Initiatives

The ESC of Central Ohio has its fingers on the pulse of rapid, dramatic changes, especially the growing fiscal and human resource challenges facing districts and schools. The agency is committed to pioneering new organizational configurations that allow a greater share of public education dollars to reach children and classrooms. The agency's *substitute teacher pool* and *inter-district transportation* pilot are among the most promising of these new efforts.

- Operational shared services are more diverse, including back-office business services, printing and publication support, professional employment services, substitute staffing and transportation services. In addition, the ESC has entered into partnerships that enhance education beyond the borders of its 25 school districts in Delaware, Franklin and Union counties. In all, the ESC boasts nearly 50 grants and contracts worth more than \$17 million a year, leveraging resources for school districts and other mission-aligned

**Substitute Teacher Pool.** The ESC of Central Ohio recruits, trains, processes and coordinates the placement of substitute staff for 11 districts: Big Walnut Local, Buckeye Valley Local, Canal Winchester Local, Delaware City, Fairbanks Local, Gahanna-Jefferson City, Groveport Madison Local, Hamilton Local, New Albany•Plain Local, Olentangy Local and Upper Arlington City. A 12th district, Worthington City, will join the pool during the 2011-2012 school year. In addition, the agency hires substitute teachers, teacher assistants and sign language interpreters for its own special education classrooms.

- The ESC utilizes the Automated Educational Substitute Operating (AESOP) system, an online absence management and substitute placement system that automates the process of calling and finding qualified substitutes.

- All substitutes in the pool participate in an ESC-developed and delivered orientation. These sessions review requirements, outline professional best practices in substitute employment (including helpful suggestions to achieve success in a substitute assignment) and train substitutes on the AESOP system.

- Districts benefit from a larger pool of substitutes (about 90 during the past school year) who are also better trained. And because substitute teachers cost districts less than full-time teachers asked to do extra duty, participating districts found the ESC reduced their substitute costs by 14 percent.

**Transportation Services.** With several area partners, including the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and The Ohio State University, the ESC of Central Ohio examined the level of redundancy when districts transport students to schools outside their borders. When the study was done, there were 85 non-public, charter, special needs or alternative schools serving more than 20,000 students in Franklin County. At least one-third of these students were brought to school through inter-district transportation.

The ESC and its research partners discovered that the cost of state-mandated, out-of-district transportation is four times higher than in-district transportation. So in January 2010, driven by a belief that millions of dollars could be saved by finding and using the right shared routes, the agency launched its inter-district transportation initiative, with funding from the Columbus Foundation.

- The initiative's immediate goal is to pilot, test and evaluate inter-district routes during the 2011-2012 school year. The number of "out-of-district" schools in Franklin County has jumped to 168. In the longer term, the ESC is committed to reducing overall spending across and within districts, while maintaining the integrity of each district's service commitment to its students.

- Districts that have shown interest in the initiative include Canal Winchester Local, Columbus City, Dublin City, Hamilton Local, Olentangy Local, Reynoldsburg

## Shared Services

City, Upper Arlington City, Westerville City and Worthington City.

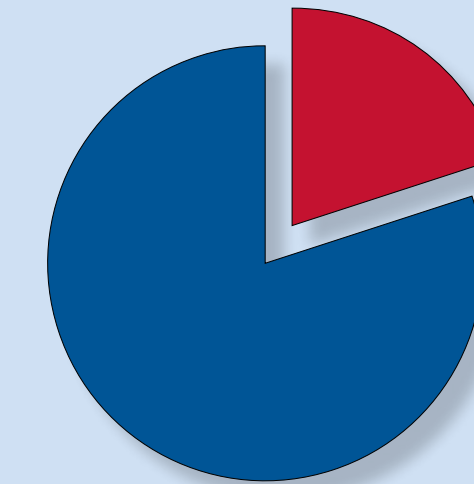
- Private vehicle transportation for special education students is another area in which the ESC aims to help districts increase efficiencies and reduce costs. Districts in Delaware, Franklin, and Union counties are estimated to have spent \$2.2 million in the 2010-11 school year on contracts with private vendors to transport special education students.

#### Future Shared Services Opportunities

The ESC of Central Ohio is continuing to explore innovative shared services practices that can maximize efficiencies in operations and increase cost savings. Building on its many collaborative successes, the agency is ready to play a leadership role as the state of Ohio makes shared services arrangements an integral part of its cost-saving and quality-enhancing strategies.

Among the new shared services opportunities the ESC is studying are the following: (1) business and facility management, including property management, maintenance, safety, cleaning and utility efficiency; (2) the analysis of academic and other student performance data; (3) grant writing and the management of competitive grants and contracts, including fiduciary services; (4) expanded information technology support services; (5) interim administrator services; and (6) low-cost legal services, including legal opinions on matters of concern to district administrators and boards of education.

Shifting district and school services to a shared services model can produce cost savings of 20 percent or more.



Districts faced with the need to "stretch" school dollars – or to improve the quality of services with existing resources – would do well to explore viable opportunities for employing a shared services model. Deloitte has estimated that shifting just one-quarter of all non-instructional services to a shared services model could produce savings of \$9 billion nationwide. With projected savings of this magnitude, it makes sense for districts to be aggressively seeking new and expanded opportunities for shared services, which is precisely what the ESC of Central Ohio and the districts it serves are doing.

SOURCE: Deloitte Development LLC (2005). Driving More Money into the Classroom: The Promise of Shared Services.

Capitalizing on opportunities to deliver savings through shared services

For more information about any of the initiatives referenced in this section, contact George Tombaugh at [George.Tombaugh@escco.org](mailto:George.Tombaugh@escco.org).



## Preparing Students for College, Careers and Life

It's been called a hoax – the notion that high school completion shows that a student is ready for college-level academics, or alternatively, is career ready. The idea has been pervasive for a long time. Most people still believe it.

Yet, increasingly the data suggest that it's not true. Many young people are graduating from high school unprepared for what will be required of them to succeed in college and in the workplace. Colleges and employers report that roughly four of every 10 high school graduates are unprepared – they need remedial coursework, additional

training or work on general employability skills.

Today, the “disconnect” between high school, college and the workplace is attracting the attention of educators, lawmakers, and the business community like never before. From coast to coast, new models are being developed and tested to find how to best ensure that graduates are truly ready to succeed beyond high school.

It is not a simple task because numerous agreements must be reached. What knowledge and skills constitute college-

### College by 9

Beginning in the ninth grade, participating students get the benefits and recognition of being a college student. They are enrolled in a local community college, have library privileges, get access to college-designed field trips and lectures, and meet frequently with faculty. Special sessions offer parents and family members assistance in applying for grants and scholarships.

Through College by 9, students get more information about dual-credit courses and other accelerated learning opportunities as they progress through high school. The initiative gives students a passport to learning experiences that take the mystery out of going to college.

level mastery? How can strong academics, demanding technical education and real-world experience be connected in a wide range of fields? How can high school exit-expectations be linked to college-entrance expectations? How do educators shift from a backward-looking system, asking how much progress has been made, to one that looks ahead, asking if students are ready to succeed?

These are complex issues. Yet, when four out of every five students who start the ninth grade don't earn a college degree and more than 40 percent of new college students need to start with remedial courses, it is clear that all of these questions need to be addressed. That's what the ESC of Central Ohio is doing with its newly launched **Central Ohio College & Career Success Network**.

What's wrong? There is growing evidence that the prevailing structures of American education – the way schools and colleges are run – may be inhibiting learning and frustrating many students' efforts to reach

the “finish line.” Research also indicates that a range of psychological issues are leaving many students disconnected from college early in their school careers, often depriving them of ongoing academic supports and destroying the aspiration to learn beyond high school.

To remove these structural and psychological barriers, the Network is developing an integrated grade nine-to-grade 14 education system that makes learning beyond high school accessible to all young people and adults. This restructured learning system will connect high schools with two- and four-year colleges and adult career-technical centers in ways that allow all students to participate in professional pathways that are relevant, transparent and achievable.

As the Network develops, it will create new learning opportunities for students who are sequestered in traditional academic settings that offer few alternative learning paths, learners who are the first generation in their families to go to college, and under-

represented minorities or students with disabilities. By blurring the boundaries between secondary and postsecondary education, in part through its unique College by 9 initiative, the Network will give students alternatives to address their aspirational and preparation challenges prior to college.

### Building on Past Successes

The Network is not the ESC's first effort to raise students' aspiration to attend college, or to better prepare them to succeed in the workplace. In fact, the Network is grounded in at least three earlier initiatives:

The agency's **Dual-Credit Enrollment Program** gives students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school and was launched in 2006.

Through the dual-credit initiative, college-level classes are offered at area high schools and taught by qualified high school faculty with support from a college or university faculty member. This arrangement allows districts to offer accelerated learning without losing a portion of their state subsidy, which occurs when dual-credit courses are offered through the Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) model.

The dual-credit program has grown significantly since its introduction five years ago, with the ESC's assistance and resources generated at the district level. Today, institutions of higher education are making major commitments to dual enrollment and high schools are looking

## Career & College Success

at dual enrollment with a purpose, not just a random class or two. During the 2010-11 school year, more than 1,000 students from 18 participating districts earned more than 6,000 credit hours from eight higher education partners.

Designed to support foster children in the custody of Franklin County Children Services, **EdPASS (Partnership for Academic Student Success)** delivers critical supports and rewards to improve school performance. A joint initiative of the ESC and Children Services, the program provides students with tutoring, transportation, school supplies, test preparation materials (e.g., ACT and SAT), access to summer activities, uniforms, classroom lab and extra-curricular equipment, and assistance in applying to postsecondary education.

Currently, EdPASS is serving 700 students throughout Franklin County's middle and high schools. Each week, EdPASS specialists meet with individual students to discuss their unique educational needs, review their progress, and, when necessary, write goals for improvement. The specialists then attach incentives to each goal. And the results of this work are impressive: Students' grades are up and nearly 90 percent have improved their attendance; 100 percent of participating seniors have graduated; and a growing number of Children Services' foster children are attending college.

For more than a decade, the agency has partnered with area postsecondary institutions to give Central Ohio **students**

*with disabilities transition services* to improve their lives after high school.

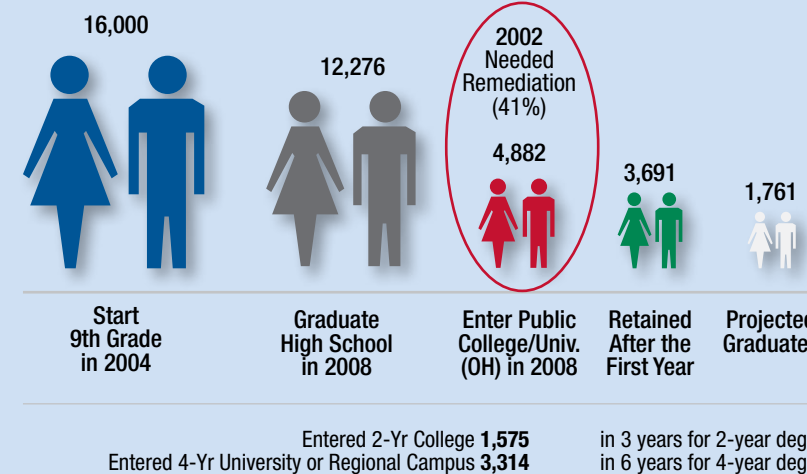
- The **WINGS (Winning Independence through Guided Support)** program based at Columbus State Community College, **STEP (Student Transition Education Program)** and **Project Plus** at The Ohio State University are giving students ages 18-22 necessary training for future employment and self-care.

- The ESC's **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Intervention Support Services** initiative provides customized training for teachers and staff to serve students with ASD on a cost-effective regional basis. With this training, school personnel can better align study plans with student Individualized Education Programs, and they can carry out interventions and instructional strategies that meet the needs of children with the nation's fastest growing disability.

- The **Autism College Transition (ACT) Program** includes direct instruction and academic coaching designed to develop independence for aspiring college students on the autism spectrum. In collaboration with Columbus State Community College, the ESC is providing these young people tools that are required for success in college, including organization, time management, social skills, communication and self-advocacy.

For more information about any of the initiatives referenced in this section, contact Rich Seils at [Rich.Seils@escoco.org](mailto:Rich.Seils@escoco.org).

## Most students in Delaware, Franklin and Union counties are lost along the way from 9th grade to college graduation.



Of the 16,000 students in Delaware, Franklin and Union counties who entered ninth grade in 2004, only 77 percent graduated from high school in 2008 – and only 40 percent of those graduates went directly on to an Ohio public college or university. It is projected that just 11 percent of those who entered ninth grade in 2004 will graduate in three years (two-year degrees) or six years (four-year degrees). The situation nationally is much the same: 85 percent of our students don't achieve the minimal level of educational attainment needed for success in the vast majority of new jobs being created.

SOURCE: Ohio Board of Regents

## Bridging the college-career divide



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