

# Education Update

To: LWVO

From: Joan Platz

Education Update for May 3, 2010

1) 128th General Assembly: The Ohio House and Senate are not holding sessions this week, and no committee meetings have been scheduled.

\*Ohio's primary election will be held on May 4, 2010. Voters will choose candidates for the General Election on November 2, 2010; decide two Constitutional amendments (extend the Third Frontier Initiative and change the location of the Columbus casino); and decide 883 local issues, including 176 school issues. For information about the May Primary Election, please visit the Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/voterInformation/whatsontheballot.aspx>.

\*The Forum for Education and Democracy, George Wood Executive Director, is sponsoring a Capitol Hill Briefing entitled "Bridging Differences: What Works in Schools" on May 4, 2010 at 10:00 AM in Washington, D.C. The briefing will be held in the House Visitor's Center Room 215.

Participating in the briefing will beŠ..

-Diane Ravitch, Research Professor of Education, New York University;

-Deborah Meier, Senior Scholar & Adjunct Professor, Steinhardt School of Education, New York University;

-James Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry, Yale Child Study Center and Associate Dean, Yale School of Medicine;

-Doug Anthony, Director of School Leadership, Prince George's County Public Schools; and

-Maya Rockey Moore, President and CEO, Global Policy Solutions, who will be the moderator.

The panelists will discuss the federal policies and pedagogical approaches that are effective at helping students develop their capacities to learn and think critically, and how the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) can support these effective practices.

To learn more about the Forum for Education and Democracy and this Briefing, please visit <http://forumforeducation.org/>.

## 2) National Update

\*The U.S. Departments of Education and Treasury recognized on April 28, 2010 students who scored the highest on the National Financial Capability Challenge. The purpose of the Challenge is to provide resources about financial literacy to participating educators; assess the financial literacy of participating high school students; and focus national attention on efforts to increase student knowledge about personal finances. Some of the high performing students will also receive scholarships from the Charles Schwab Foundation.

Approximately 76,000 students participated in the Challenge this spring, and the average score was 70 percent. Students from Idaho, South Dakota, and Wyoming had the highest average test scores. For more information please visit <http://www.challenge.treas.gov/>.

\*The U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), chaired by Senator Harkin, will meet on May 4, 2010 at 2:00 PM (in Washington D.C.) to continue hearings about the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Last week the committee heard testimony regarding meeting the needs of special populations of students (April 29, 2010) and standards and assessments (April 28, 2010).

\*The U.S. House Education and Labor Committee, chaired by Representative George Miller, will hold a hearing on May 4, 2010 to examine how to best support teachers and leaders in schools, as part of a continued series of hearings the committee is holding regarding the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

\*The U. S. House Science and Technology Committee, chaired by Representative Bart Gordon, voted on April 28, 2010 to reauthorize the America COMPETES Act. This law strengthens science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education in colleges and universities, and focuses on keeping the U.S. competitive in the world's economy.

## 3) State Budgeting Matters Focuses on HB400: The April 22, 2010 issue of State Budgeting Matters, from the Center for Community Solutions, is entitled, "Roadmap to Ruin: H.B. 400 and the Plan to Eliminate the Income Tax" by Jon Honeck, Ph.D., Director, Public Policy and Advocacy.

H.B. 400 (128th General Assembly), introduced by Representative John Adams, would reduce the state income tax by ten percent each year through tax credits until the tax is completely eliminated. The income tax is Ohio's largest source of tax revenue, representing 39 percent of state's general revenue

fund (GRF). According to the Legislative Service Commission, phasing-out the tax would reduce the GRF by \$11.5 billion by FY2020.

The report is organized into the following four parts:

- Part 1 - A comparison of Ohio's tax structure with other states.
- Part 2 - The role of the income tax in Ohio's tax structure.
- Part 3 - An analysis of the budget cuts that would need to be made if the income tax was eliminated.
- Part 4 - Tax liability. Overall, state and local taxes in Ohio take a greater share of income from poor households, while the income tax is the only state tax with graduated tax rates.

According to the author, "Proponents claim that H.B. 400 is being offered in the name of boosting economic development, but in reality it would have the opposite effect. The resulting cuts to the state budget would devastate Ohio's quality of life. They would undermine the basic services that Ohioans have come to expect from government, including education, criminal justice, economic development and infrastructure projects, parks and recreation, and health and social services."

"The state's ability to share revenue with local governments will be dramatically altered as well. Local governments have limited ability to respond to the loss of state services by raising their own revenues. Ohio would be increasingly polarized into "haves" and "have nots." Areas that have suffered the highest levels of job loss and social distress would be left to fend for themselves."

The report includes the following points:

- Ohio's tax rate is close to the national average.
- Government spending matters to the economy. Ohio's General Revenue Fund accounts for 4.5 to 5 percent of Ohio's gross domestic product.
- The income tax has a broad tax base (wages and unearned income), and has been very responsive to economic activity.
- It is "unrealistic" to expect other state taxes to compensate for the loss of the income tax.
- Studies dispute "dynamic effect" claims, which say that reducing income tax rates increases economic growth.
- An across the board reduction in the state's general revenue fund to compensate for the loss of income tax revenue would affect all agencies and branches of government, including the offices of the state auditor, attorney general, secretary of state, legislature, Supreme Court, etc., and local governments and political subdivisions, and affect Ohio's ability to meet federal matching requirements for social programs, finance capital building projects, meet bond holder payments, impact tax subsidy payments, such as the rollback and homestead credit, etc.
- Without an income tax "ŒOhio will become more reliant on slower-growth, more regressive taxes."

The report recommends that policy makers "Œaddress the imbalance in its tax structure that places a disproportionate burden on low-income families. Rather than eliminating the income tax, the discussion

should be about how to lower the sales tax rate and other taxes that are not based on an ability to pay."

To read the full report, please visit <http://www.communitysolutions.com/>.

4) Report Released on the Declining Opportunities for Youth: Policy Matters Ohio and Demos released on April 26, 2010 a report entitled "Building Ohio's Future Middle Class: Addressing the Challenges Facing Young Adults" by Nancy K. Cauthen, Amy Hanauer, and Viany Orozco.

The report examines the status of Ohio's "young adults", those between the ages of 18-24, in the areas of post-secondary education; employment and earnings; debt and assets; and raising a family, and, makes the following points:

#### Post-secondary Education:

- College enrollment has grown steadily in Ohio, and college attainment rates are increasing, but slowly.
- Many who seek higher education are unable to complete degrees.
- Tuition costs are high in Ohio, but increases have been controlled.
- Financial aid has not kept pace with college costs.
- Long work hours and part-time enrollment impede student success in college.

#### Employment and Earnings:

- The differences in the earnings of young workers in Ohio reflect education, race, and gender.
- Ohio workers under age 35 experienced steep declines in earnings over the last four decades.
- Men with limited education and the youngest workers have been hardest hit.
- Young workers in Ohio are more likely to be unemployed and underemployed.
- There has been a dramatic decline in the percent of unionized workers in Ohio.

#### Debts and Assets:

- More than half of the students in Ohio take out loans to pay for their college education.
- Rents are high relative to incomes.
- Many young people lack health insurance.
- There are few opportunities for families to accumulate savings and increase assets.

#### Raising a Family:

- Young working families need affordable childcare.
- Ohio does not offer paid parental leave.
- Forty-six percent of children under the age of 6 in Ohio lived with low-income families in 2008 compared to 37 percent in 2002.

According to the report, while opportunities for young Ohioans have increased in the areas of college enrollment and income levels for women, "Today's young adults are coming of age in a tough economy, on the heels of 30 years of declining economic opportunity and security for all but the most affluent and

most highly educated. These changes are quite evident in Ohio, where the once-mighty manufacturing sector that provided better-than-average jobs in the 1960s and 1970s has eroded, hitting young adults particularly hard. Although many of the levers of opportunity that once fueled and defined America's middle class have weakened or broken, a reorientation could restore opportunity and provide today's young adults with a more secure economic future."

The researchers make the following policy recommendations to help rebuild and restore the middle class:

-Post-secondary Education: Ease the financial burden on students by investing in community colleges, increasing access to affordable student loans and scholarships, lowering interest rates on loans, etc.; increase investments in higher education; provide students with more options to complete post-secondary degrees.

-Employment and Earnings: Create a national public jobs program; reconstruct career ladders; build pathways into green jobs; urge Congress to pass the federal Employee Free Choice Act.

-Debt and Assets: Create a national Consumer Financial Protection Agency and enforce the payday lending law in Ohio.

-Raising a Family: Provide universal child care, and support and expand national health insurance reform.

Tax Reform: Raise adequate revenue through a progressive, well-balanced state tax system; reverse the previous income tax cuts; adjust the corporate tax system to restore revenue to previous levels; and reject efforts to eliminate the state income tax.

The report is available at <http://www.policymattersohio.org/pdf/BuildingOhio2010.pdf>

5) Case Study of Strategic Staffing Initiative: Education Resource Strategies and the Aspen Institute recently released (April 2010) a case study of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), North Carolina, entitled "Strategic Staffing For Successful Schools: Breaking the Cycle of Failure in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools" by Jonathan Travers and Barbara Christiansen.

The study examines how the "Strategic Staffing Initiative" (SSI) has been used in several low performing schools since 2008 as a "turnaround approach". SSI is based on the idea that "High-performing staffs - both leadership and teachers -- were needed to turn around low-performing schools." SSI was developed by CMS under the leadership of Dr. Peter Gorman, superintendent, as one of several strategies that could be used to break the cycle of school failure. SSI is based on the following tenets:

-A great leader is needed, a principal with a proven track record of success in increasing student achievement. Also, great teachers will not go to a troubled school without a great leader as principal.

- A team needs to go to the school so a person is not alone in taking on this challenging assignment; there is strength and support in numbers.
- Staff members who are disruptive and not supportive of reform need to be removed from the school.
- Principals must be given the time and authority to reform the school.
- Not all job assignments are equal in difficulty, and compensation should be varied to match.

The results of SSI are promising. All but two schools in the first cohort of SSI implementation showed increases in student test results in reading, math, and science. The district has launched a third cohort in March 2010.

To read the case study please visit [http://erstrategies.org/documents/pdf/CMS\\_case\\_study\\_APR16.pdf](http://erstrategies.org/documents/pdf/CMS_case_study_APR16.pdf)

6) Charter School Management: An article in the New York Times on April 23, 2010 entitled "For School Company, Issues of Money and Control" by Stephanie Strom, examines Imagine Schools, a for-profit charter school management company.

Dennis and Eileen Bakke started Imagine Schools in 2004. Imagine now has contracts with 71 schools in 11 states and the District of Columbia, making it the largest for-profit manager of charter schools in the U.S.

According to the article, regulators in some states have found that Imagine is making all of the decisions for some of the schools it manages, bypassing the independent boards that are set-up to oversee the billions of public dollars flowing to charter schools. Some states, New York and Georgia, have ended their business relationships with Imagine, and concerns have been raised in Florida and Texas, stopping the expansion of Imagine into those states for now. In fact some charter school proponents believe that using management companies to operate charter schools might be flawed. Josephine Baker, executive director of the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board, which oversees charter schools in Washington, D.C., states in the article that it has become too difficult for some charter school boards to maintain their independence from management companies. In one case a governing board was not able to get certain fiscal information from Imagine about how it was using the money to operate the school, and in other case a charter school board determined that it was paying Imagine more to rent its school building than to pay its teachers and staff.

The article is available at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/education/24imagine.html?pagewanted=1>

7) The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) released on April 22, 2010 their annual report entitled "Innovation Through State Leadership". The report examines the implementation of the technology provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title II, Part D, (Title II-D) in 50 states in FY08 based on the results of a survey completed by state education agency technology directors. The report includes information about trends regarding the implementation of the Title II-D

technology programs, and a profile of state technology programs in classrooms, schools, and districts. Title II -D investments in technology in FY09 totaled \$900 million when funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of FY09 for educational technology are also included.

According to the report, states used the Title II-D awards in FY08 for professional development; to increase student access to technology; and to integrate technology into K-12 curriculum to increase academic achievement and technology literacy.

The following national trends were identified in FY08:

- States focused investments on student-centric, technology-rich learning environments.
- States reported offering a wide range of professional development.
- Title II-D investments are increasing the capacity of educators to access, analyze, and use data to inform learning, teaching, and leadership.
- Title II-D investments, focused on technology-enhanced teaching and learning innovations, demonstrate positive gains in core academic areas.
- Educators are embracing technology-enhanced learning strategies that include online learning, use of digital content, and web-based professional communities of practice.

The report is available at [http://www.setda.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?folderId=6&name=DLFE-669.pdf](http://www.setda.org/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=6&name=DLFE-669.pdf).

#### 8) Bills introduced

\*HB500 (Yuko) School Substance Abuse Prevention: Requires public schools to provide concentrated instruction in substance abuse prevention during May; requires the State Board of Education to adopt guidelines for the development of a substance abuse curriculum; and designates May as "Substance Abuse Awareness and Education Month."

\*HB498 (Hollington) Unearned Income Tax Rate: Reduces the maximum effective income tax rate applicable to unearned income of people age 70.5 years or older to 1 percent.

###