

Looking At The ISSUES

February 23, 2007

Report Calls to Replace the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT)

Achieve, Inc. is a Washington think-tank founded in 1996 by the nation's governors with the mission of "help(ing) states raise academic standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work and citizenship."¹

As such, the organization has worked with over half the states in the union on formulating higher standards and new education policies. On February 13th a new report commissioned by Achieve, Inc. and paid for by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was presented to the Ohio Board of Education. If taken seriously, this report could greatly alter the way our schools do business. Testing is one such area.

Entitled *Creating a World-Class Education System in Ohio* the report had this to say about our high school assessments.

- In its current form and in the grade it is currently administered, the OGT is simply not capable of measuring students' readiness for postsecondary pursuits.
- Ohio should improve the quality of curriculum and instruction in high school courses through a series of end-of-course exams. End-of-course (EOC) exams are tests that align with academic standards and are taken at the end of specific courses.
- Ohio should include assessments of college readiness as a required part of its high school assessment system... If Ohio pursues end-of-course tests, they could be designed to serve a similar purpose. The Algebra II and English II tests could be used by postsecondary institutions to determine placement of students into credit-bearing courses, if they are aligned with college-readiness standards.

Looking At The Week

ECHS Student Interviews

Student interviews for next year's freshman class at Canton's Early College High School continued this week on Tuesday and Wednesday. Early college will admit up to 100 new students who will start coursework this summer.

Driving Towards Excellence

The Canton City Schools held its first "Driving Towards Excellence" Steering Committee meeting on Thursday. Over 60 educators, parents, students, and community have agreed to serve. Dr. Joe Rochford represents the Stark Education Partnership.

Dual Enrollment

The dual enrollment subcommittee of the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning (statewide P-16) meets today in Columbus. Dr. Joe Rochford will attend.



Though favored by the Ohio Department of Education, are EOCs the only answer? With some cautions, another approach is proposed, but only for a college readiness assessment.

- Another approach some states are pursuing is to require all students to take the ACT admissions test in the grade 11. Most Ohio postsecondary institutions use this test to make placement and admissions decisions, and experience in states such as Colorado and Illinois suggest that including college admissions tests in the high school assessment system can help increase college-going rates. However, unless these tests are also well aligned with state standards and curriculum, they will not necessarily help improve preparation for college. Instead, they may send conflicting signals to students and teachers about the skills needed to prepare for success in postsecondary education. If the State chooses this approach, it should arrange for an independent review of the alignment between the State's high school standards and the ACT, and if necessary require that the test be augmented to fully reflect the State standards.²

Such an independent review has already been conducted by the Stark Education Partnership, Inc. in 2004 with the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE).

- The major finding of the (Stark Education Partnership) study is that the ACT assessments (social studies excluded) do an adequate to excellent job of measuring Ohio's academic content standards at the 10th grade and beyond into the 11th and 12th grades. When certain Ohio benchmarks are eliminated, the match becomes even more compelling.³

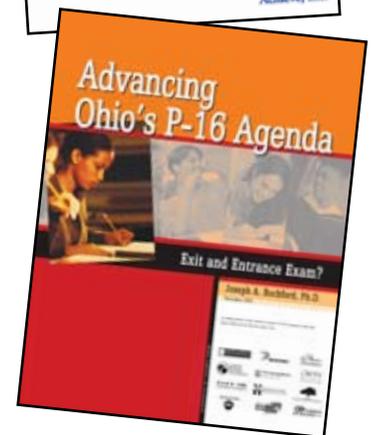
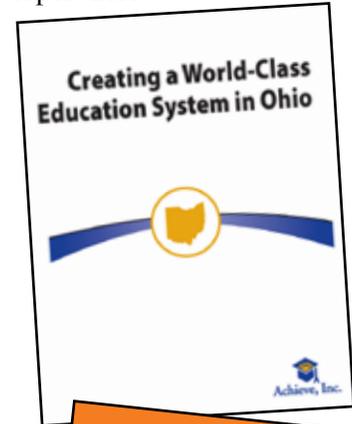
The Stark Education Partnership report, *Advancing Ohio's P-16 Agenda: Exit and Entrance Exam* also called for the OGT to be replaced, but not in favor of EOC tests. The Partnership report contends that the ACT test with some modifications can both measure Ohio's Academic Content Standards and act as an assessment of college readiness.

¹ About Us, from the Achieve web site: <http://www.achieve.org/>

² The bullet points above are direct quotations from (2007). *Creating a World-Class Education System in Ohio*. Washington, D.C.: Achieve, Inc., pp. 27-28. Available at: http://www.achieve.org/files/World_Class_Edu_Ohio_FINAL.pdf

³ Rochford, J.A. (2004). *Advancing Ohio's P-16 Agenda: Exit and Entrance Exam*. Canton, Ohio: Stark Education Partnership, Inc., p.4. Available at: www.edpartner.org under publications

Download the entire Achieve Inc. *Creating a World-Class Education System in Ohio* report here.



Download the Stark Education Partnership report *Advancing Ohio's P-16 Agenda: Exit and Entrance Exam*