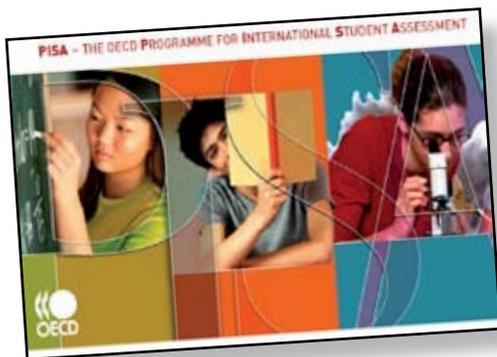


Looking At The ISSUES

March 2, 2007



Proposed: An International Education Assessment for Ohio

Ohio should take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the 2009 round of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). This is the first time in the history of the international testing

program that U.S. states are being offered the chance to participate and receive data back on their students.¹

The Achieve, Inc. report presented to the State Board of Education on February 13th has called for some far-ranging changes in the way Ohio tests its students. Not the least of these is a call to participate in something called the Program for International Student Assessment or PISA as its known, but what is PISA?

Simply put, PISA is a standardized assessment or survey jointly developed by member nations of the Organization For Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and administered to 15 year-olds approaching the end of schooling, a kind of international graduation test, if you will.

As OECD notes, "PISA assesses how far students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society. In all cycles, the domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy are covered not merely in terms of mastery of the school curriculum, but in terms of important knowledge and skills needed in adult life."²

The survey was administered in 43 countries in 2000, in 41 countries in 2003, and 57 countries in 2006 and 62 countries have signed up to participate in the 4th assessment in 2009. The 2009 administration is the first in which individual U.S. states can participate.

For Your Information

PISA Not New

ACHIEVE's recommendation that Ohio students participate on an international stage by participating in PISA is nothing new at Canton's McKinley High School. Approximately 20 students there volunteered to take the 2006 assessment.

Sample Questions

Go to <http://pisa-sq.acer.edu.au/> to view samples of the test questions (math, science and reading) used for PISA 2000.



On the national level, somewhere between 4,500 to 50,000 students are usually surveyed and nearly one million students world-wide have participated to date.

PISA states that its assessment has covered roughly 90% of the world's economy to date. Over 10 major publications have been produced and can be viewed at: http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html.

PISA is and can be many things. It provides information for policy-makers and enables the monitoring of results over time for participating nations and states. It also provides for multiple international comparisons. Some hope (or fear) that it will help create a world-wide education agenda. One thing is certain, participation will put the results of Ohio's education system on an international stage for the first time.

Is PISA right for Ohio? That's a decision that should, perhaps, be widely shared.

¹(2007). Creating a World-Class Education System in Ohio. Washington, D.C.: Achieve, Inc., p 28. Available at: http://www.achieve.org/files/World_Class_Edu_Ohio_FINAL.pdf

²What PISA Assesses at: http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2966,en_32252351_32235918_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

Looking At The Week

OCAN & ECHS

On February 28th, Adele Gelb attended an Ohio College Access Network and Early College High School Partnership meeting held at the Early College High School.

KnowledgeWorks ECHS Coaches Meet

KnowledgeWorks Early College High School coaches from around the state met on March 1st at Early College High School on the Timken Campus. Joe Rochford, internal coach in Canton, participated in the meeting that included a tour of the campus.

Grant Summit

Adele Gelb attended the Ohio Alternative Education Challenge Grant Winter Summit held at R.G. Drage on March 1st.

AIR Interviews

Dr. Adrienne O'Neill and Adele Gelb participated in interviews conducted by the American Institute for Research (AIR) on the small schools effort at McKinley, sponsored in part by the KnowledgeWorks and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations.