

Looking At The ISSUES

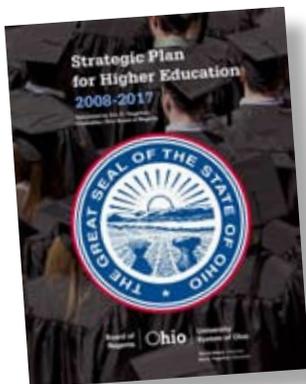
Stark
Education
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inc.

April 4, 2008

Looking At The Week

Community Support for Increased Educational Attainment

Chancellor Eric Fingerhut released a document entitled: *Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2008-2017* on March 31, 2008. The plan contains many new ideas for increasing educational attainment so that Ohio can compete nationally and globally. On the same day, another document *Report on the Condition of Higher Education in Ohio: Meeting the State's Future Needs* was released as the baseline for yearly evaluations for higher education progress toward meeting the goals presented in the Strategic Plan.



Together the reports make the link between an educated workforce and economic development clear and a compelling case is presented outlining the bold actions needed to move Ohio forward. None of the reported data points or the actions proposed are surprises for the many weekly readers of *Issues*. We know that Ohio ranks 38th for educational attainment in the United States. We know that college going rates from high school to college must increase and we know that more adults must complete degrees.

Stark County is already implementing many of the recommended bold actions and as predicted in the *Strategic Plan*, the results are dramatic. As an article in the *Repository* noted, Stark State College of Technology and Kent State University at Stark are working together to enable students to complete a four year degree in an affordable manner. All of the local colleges and universities are working with the Education Service Center and the Stark County school districts to provide dual credit courses to high school students so that many more students will go on to a post secondary experience from high school. Taken together with advanced placement courses, post-secondary opportunities and tech prep courses, more than 80% of our high school students are on track to move to a post secondary experience as compared with the previous high school to college going rate in Ohio of 50%.

The progress in Stark County is possible because many community members are invested in making higher educational attainment happen here. Next week *Issues* will describe some of the community activities that are leading to higher educational attainment, but in the meantime, if you are interested in seeing the enthusiasm of younger students coupled with community support for higher educational achievement, call the Massillon City School's Superintendent's Office at 330-830-3900 for an invitation to the achievement rallies scheduled for April 11, 2008.

Strategic Plan Recognizes Commission's Recommendations

The Strategic Plan has also recognized the groundbreaking work of the *Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration and Innovation Study Commission*, established under the Taft administration and chaired by Stark Countian Ted Boyd. "The commission produced a report with important recommendations, including many on the subject of administrative consolidation and shared services that have statewide, as well as regional, implications," noted the plan. So much so, that the chancellor has now assumed responsibility to see that those earlier recommendations are implemented.

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