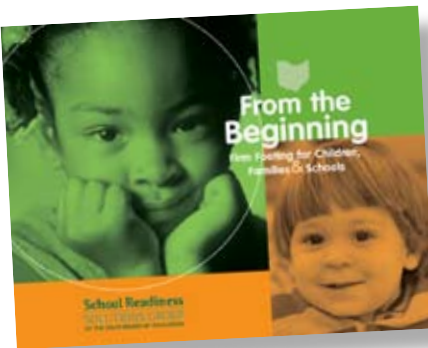


Looking At The ISSUES

December 1, 2006

Focus on Finding Solutions: Early Childhood Education – Part I



Early Childhood Education was mentioned as a huge systems challenge by the Ohio Business Roundtable. Locally, Joni Close, Sisters of Charity Foundation, served as a member of the School Readiness Solutions Group of the State Board of Education which released recommendations for a systems overhaul in August 2006. See http://www.schoolreadiness.ohio.gov/documents/news/SRSG_report_10.6.pdf for the full report.

Ten recommendations by the Solution Group (http://www.schoolreadiness.ohio.gov/documents/news/SRSG_NewsRelease_8.25.06.pdf) were given:

Strategy 1: Improve the quality of all early education and care settings and ensure that they have a sufficient number of highly qualified early learning professionals.

- **Recommendation 1:** The state of Ohio should establish a new approach to licensing early learning settings, operated by a single agency, to ensure that all children in out-of-home settings are in learning environments that support and promote their development and readiness for school.
- **Recommendation 2:** The state of Ohio should establish a new teacher license that recognizes the specialized knowledge base required of those who educate children from birth through kindergarten.
- **Recommendation 3:** The state of Ohio should create a professional development system that supports an explicit expectation that all early learning personnel will extend and deepen their knowledge, skills and competencies throughout their careers.
- **Recommendation 4:** By 2015, all Ohio school districts should be required to offer full-day kindergarten as an option for all families who desire it.

Looking At The Week

Fulbright Senior Specialist Candidate

Dr. Rochford was named a candidate this week on the Fulbright Senior Specialist Roster. Candidacy is approved by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FSB), the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State (ECA), and the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES). As a candidate, he is eligible to be matched with incoming program requests from overseas academic institutions requiring his expertise.

Strategy 2: Create an effective governance structure and improve access to high-quality early learning services by improving the coordination of services among child-serving and family-serving systems.

- **Recommendation 5:** The state of Ohio should establish a Board of Early Education and Care to govern early learning programs and services for children from birth to kindergarten.
- **Recommendation 6:** The state of Ohio should co-locate major early learning funding streams in a single agency.
- **Recommendation 7:** The Ohio General Assembly should convene a task force to identify the policies and processes needed to ensure that children and families have access to a continuum of services that support school readiness, including screening, assessment, consultation, treatment and access to a medical home.

Strategy 3: Support parents and families in their efforts to promote their children's early development and readiness for school, and engage them in the governance of Ohio's early learning system.

- **Recommendation 8:** The state of Ohio should make parent and family education resources and programs available to all families, friends and neighbor caregivers to enhance their ability to promote children's development and readiness for school.
- **Recommendation 9:** The state of Ohio should plan and promote parent and family involvement in the early learning system by giving parents opportunities to participate in governance and programmatic decision-making.

Strategy 4: Create a reliable financing system for early learning services and strengthen accountability for public and private investments in early care and education.

- **Recommendation 10:** The state of Ohio should establish a financing model that ensures the availability of high-quality early learning services and makes them accessible to all children from birth through kindergarten.

Early College High Schools

Dr. Joe Rochford attended a meeting of Early College High School (ECHS) coaches at the University of Toledo this week where he viewed the Toledo ECHS operation. Dr. Rochford serves as internal coach for the Canton ECHS, one of only six in the state.