



FACT SHEET

"It's not just about graduation. It's about preparation."

Governor Bob Taft, State of the State, January 25, 2006

We are living in a global economy. Ohioans are not only competing for jobs with neighboring cities or states, but we are competing with countries around the world. And not just for low wage, low skilled jobs. We are competing for jobs in advanced manufacturing, information technology, healthcare and high tech research.

Employers seek a talented workforce. Workers must be prepared to apply increased knowledge and skills that can be quickly upgraded and adapted to meet the rapidly changing conditions of the 21st Century. We must prepare every young Ohioan to succeed. If we don't, our students will not be able to compete with talent from around the world.

Here's what we know:

- More than 40 percent of factory jobs will require post-secondary education by 2012.
- More than 2/3 of new jobs require some postsecondary education.
- 40 of the 50 fastest-growing occupations in the nation and 92 of the 100 highest-paying jobs now require at least some education beyond high school.
- By 2010, employment requiring an associate's degree is expected to grow an astounding 32 percent; requiring a bachelor's degree by 21.6 percent.
- Students who earn industry-recognized credentials and college degrees have greater job prospects, earn more money and require less support from state services.

We also know that to succeed in a good entry-level job, apprenticeship, the military or college, students need the same academic foundation in math and English. And they aren't all getting it before they leave high school.

The Ohio Core, a rigorous high school curriculum, will be the standard expectation for Ohio students because:

- Students who complete rigorous academic courses in high school earn an average of 13% more than their peers, regardless of whether they went to college.
- Recent national research shows that individuals need the *same core academic skills* in *math and English*, regardless of whether their next step is a well-paying job or college.
- A rigorous core curriculum dramatically increases a student's chances of earning a college degree, especially for African American and Latino students.
- Students who complete Algebra II in high school are three times more likely to earn a college degree than if they only progressed through geometry.
- In a global economy, students need to learn a language beyond English to be able to compete.

Thirteen states, including Ohio, have already moved to implement a rigorous core curriculum:

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| ➤ Texas | ➤ South Dakota | ➤ Mississippi |
| ➤ Arkansas | ➤ Indiana | ➤ Kentucky |
| ➤ Michigan | ➤ New York | ➤ Delaware |
| ➤ Oklahoma | ➤ North Carolina | ➤ Minnesota |

A total of **26 states** are aggressively pursuing this path.

We acted now because incremental improvement isn't good enough anymore.

- Employers and major business groups in Ohio and across the country have sent out an urgent call for students to be better prepared before they leave high school, particularly in math and science.
- The President has announced a competitiveness initiative to better prepare our high school students for today's global marketplace.
- 26 states, including Ohio, have joined together to close the expectations gap for high school students through the American Diploma Project, an initiative aimed at preparing every high school student for college and the world of work.
- Many Ohio school districts are *already* demanding more of their students and students are rising to the challenge.

Ohio has strong academic content standards through the 12th grade. But we only assess students against 10th grade skills. We must expect our students to learn what we have already determined is important for high school graduates to know and be able to do before they leave high school.

THE OHIO CORE:

Only 24% of Ohio's students currently complete a rigorous high school curriculum. The Ohio Core will require students, beginning with the high school graduating class of 2014, to complete a rigorous curriculum as a requirement for high school graduation *and* on prerequisite for admission to Ohio's four-year state assisted institutions of higher education.

The Ohio Core includes:

- 4 years of math, including Algebra II or its equivalent;
- 3 years of science with inquiry-based laboratory experience, including physical science, biology, and advanced study in one or more of the following sciences: chemistry, physics or other physical science; advanced biology or other life science; astronomy, physical geology or other earth or space science;
- 4 years of English;
- 3 years of social studies, including American History and American Government;
- ½ unit of health;
- ½ unit of physical education or two semesters of ; and
- Combination of 5 units to be chosen from among foreign language, fine arts, business, technology and Career Technical.

Schools are to formally integrate economics/financial literacy into the social studies requirement or as a stand-alone class to ensure that every student is exposed to these important concepts. Economic and financial literacy standards already exist within the social studies academic content standards.

Students must complete two semesters of fine arts sometime between grades 7 and 12 as a requirement of graduation.

Districts may choose to excuse students who participate in at least two full seasons of interscholastic athletics, marching band, or cheerleading from the ½ unit physical education requirement. The student must, however, complete ½ credit in another course of study in its place.

Recognizing the importance of foreign language in today's competitive global economy, a *Foreign Language Education Council*, comprised of education and business leaders will be tasked with developing and recommending a plan for foreign language learning across Ohio's P-16 education spectrum.

Current law requires that Ohio students complete 20 units to graduate. The Ohio Core requires 20 units to graduate. Schools will not be required to provide *more* units for graduation, just units focused on disciplines we know better prepare students for work, college, and life.

The Ohio Core also upholds the various pathways that exist for today's high school students, including career and technical, Tech Prep, Project Lead the Way, High Schools that Work, Early College High Schools, traditional college prep and others. The high expectations of the Ohio Core will be integrated into these pathways so that all students receive the rigorous academic preparation they need for life after high school.

Until 2015, students may choose to opt out of the Ohio Core after the end of their second year of high school and graduate under the requirements of current law. Students attending Drop Out Prevention/Recovery Programs and meeting certain criteria will be permitted to earn a high school diploma under the requirements of current law. While these students would not be eligible to attend a state-funded four-year college or university immediately after high school, they could attend a two-year campus first, and after earning at least 10 credit hours, apply to university as a transfer student.

The Partnership for Continued Learning will study the effect of the new graduation requirements, the opt out and the exception for drop out prevention/recovery programs and provide recommendations to the General Assembly for their review and action.

The Ohio Core will also:

- Charge the Department of Education to work with the Board of Regents and Partnership for Continued Learning to develop a statewide plan for determining student competency by 2009, for phase-in beginning in 2010. School districts can then grant students units of credit for demonstrating competency/skills and knowledge. This will enable students who excel to take on more challenging coursework without requiring them to fulfill seat-time requirements in a course.
- Focus remedial and developmental education on Ohio's two-year college campuses, where costs are lower for students.
- Designate a common standard for credit bearing work in college and one or more indicators of college and work readiness to determine if students are on track for future success.
- Add a measure to the School Report Card to indicate how well high schools are preparing their graduates for college and work.
- Increase the opportunity for earning college credit while still in high school through dual enrollment, advanced placement and other options.

And we must support school districts with implementation:

Ohio's focus on teacher quality and capacity is among the best in the country. From the work of the Educator Standards Board to the work of the Teacher Quality Partnership, Ohio has long been dedicated to helping teachers be the best they can be for our students. But we know that the Ohio Core will require more teachers in high-need and hard-to-staff areas, specifically in secondary science and mathematics.

In May, the General Assembly appropriated an additional \$13.2 million for use this year to build an additional teacher capacity. The Ohio Core bill includes the General Assembly's intention to continue funding strategic initiatives to support existing teachers and to attract and retain new ones at an expected investment of \$120 million over 5 years. In addition, \$16.8 million is appropriated this fiscal year and at least that much in each year through fiscal 2012 for the Ohio Core Grant Program for use by districts in building teacher capacity, recruitment/retention

programs for teachers in required disciplines, student intervention services or other related activities. All told, \$30 million was appropriated for this fiscal year with an anticipated investment of over \$200 million over 5 years for purposes of better preparing this state's high school graduates with a rigorous Ohio Core curriculum.