

Building learning environments that foster creativity and develop critical thinking skills

In a recent survey of OFT membership, 93 percent of teachers responded that learning has become more about getting the right answer on a test than about the discovery of knowledge. In addition, 77 percent said that they do not have the time to create and deliver lessons that develop critical thinking skills and promote collaboration.

ESSA gives Ohio the opportunity to make learning about more than just getting a good score on a test. Steps toward making this happen include:

- Making sure children have access to a well-rounded education.
- Providing students with opportunity to explore careers and take career tech classes.
- Streamlining evaluation processes so that teachers are spending less time documenting their worth and more time planning and preparing for their students.
- Removing high stakes decisions from testing so that emphasis can be placed on the learning process rather than on a one-time test score.
- Reporting non-academic factors such as school climate on state report cards.

Questions to ask state and district decision makers:

- How does the state/district plan create more time for teachers to design engaging lessons, collaborate with colleagues and share best practices?
- What non-academic indicators should be included on a state report card?
- How do the discipline policies at the state/district level impact student learning?
- What impact are state/district testing policies having on the learning process?

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