

Supporting Ohio's Students

We believe that public schools are the most crucial investment Ohio can make. We have a vision for Ohio's children that supports them through every phase of life, starting with our plans for [early childhood](#) and including [workforce development](#). At the heart of this focus lies our vision for Ohio's schools that involves local communities, elevates our educators, and supports every aspect of a child's well-being – regardless of background, socioeconomic status, or developmental challenges.

This holistic approach is needed now more than ever. In 2010, Ohio's public schools ranked fifth in the nation. Since then, due to piecemeal legislation passed without educator input or adequate funding, Ohio schools have slipped to 22nd. Although our public schools face many challenges and are asked to do more than ever before, state lawmakers have steadily funneled resources away from them to vouchers and scandal-ridden charter schools.

Ohio must take a comprehensive approach to education that stretches far beyond the classroom. We will do that by meeting the needs of the whole child. If we want the best for all of Ohio's students, then we must put their needs first and support the communities that help them reach their full potential. Our students deserve better, and the state has a moral and legal obligation to demand it.

The Cordray-Sutton Administration will support Ohio's students by:

Expanding wrap-around social and health services.

Public schools are the center of their communities. The two are linked — one cannot succeed without the other. Schools need communities invested in educating their students; communities need schools that support their neighborhoods outside of the classroom. To ensure that all students can succeed academically, including those who are differently abled, schools must have access to the full range of physical and mental resources to meet their needs, along with parents and the entire community.

We will help our communities support the entire student experience, offering more services for students and families who need them. Services like mental health, dental, after-school, and parent support programs will establish our schools as the center of our neighborhoods – as they should be.

Several districts have already recognized that the most effective way to help our students is to help their communities, and we can use them as our models. Providing better access to social and mental health services is a key part of making our schools safer. Each district has unique challenges, but by learning and adapting these examples, we will take meaningful steps to give all students the education they need, in the environment they deserve.

Leaving more time for learning.

For too long, Ohio's schools have been hyper-focused on test scores. These policies fail to realize that different students learn in different ways with their own strengths and interests. Overtesting, combined with inadequate funding, have narrowed the curriculum in a way that pushes out art, music, and other meaningful ways to engage students.

Ohio is one of 12 states with high-stakes testing for high school graduation. Although testing remains a necessary benchmark, we will move away from using high-stakes tests to drive learning and instead give students the tools to become resilient, lifelong learners. We will reduce testing to the minimum that is federally mandated. We will grant educators more freedom to engage students in learning social, emotional, and academic skills instead of spending their limited resources on preparing for standardized tests. Teachers are well trained to teach our children, and we must stop hindering them by over-regulating the classroom setting.

We will also reconsider more broadly how we evaluate our schools and teachers. Our administration will work with the State Board of Education and the legislature to shift away from a cycle of testing and punishing to a system where students, educators, parents, and the community all share responsibility for our children's future.

Securing adequate funding for education professionals.

Budget cuts have forced many school districts to cut back on hiring education professionals like librarians, nurses, guidance counselors, and social workers. Like our teachers, these education professionals are an essential piece of our vision for educating the whole child. We trust our educators, and we will honor the professionalism that all of them – our teachers, bus drivers, food service personnel, support staff, and before- and after-school staff – bring to our schools and our students. Our children benefit from a well-rounded education, and they benefit from the services provided by essential support staff to help them thrive.

Effective schools are more than a cluster of independently-run classrooms. Our teachers excel at teaching our children, but they need more people working with them to support their students' full range of needs – both inside and outside the classroom. We will work with districts to provide resources that focus on the whole child.

Attracting and retaining good teachers.

No one becomes a teacher thinking they will leave in just a few years – it's a calling more than a career. But budget cuts and unfunded mandates have contributed to a growing teacher shortage. If we plan to keep providing our children with a quality education, we need to attract and retain good teachers. Our administration will restore respect for the profession, leveraging available federal funds to recruit more well-trained, certified educators. We will also create loan repayment and financial incentives that encourage our certified educators to remain in the classroom.

Purging Ohio's charter schools of corruption.

For-profit charter schools were responsible for one of the worst scandals in our state's history. Over six years, the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow cheated taxpayers out of nearly \$600 million and thousands of children out of their education. Our schools are not businesses, and our children are not customers. But those involved in the ECOT scandal put their own profits above our students' needs, and Republican state legislators aided their theft of taxpayer funds.

We will prohibit for-profit companies from running charter schools, limiting their operation instead to non-profit entities. We will strengthen the state's charter oversight system, requiring operators to

demonstrate a record of academic success before contracting with schools in Ohio, and requiring existing schools to demonstrate academic growth and achievement to maintain their standing.

But our challenges do not end with the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow and for-profit charter schools. Charter schools are exempt from many state education laws that apply to Ohio's traditional public schools. We will see to it that no school gets special treatment, and that all schools are held accountable to the same standards.

Making school funding more transparent.

Charter schools and voucher programs also drain resources from the public schools that educate 90% of Ohio's children. Since 2010, Ohio's public schools have received much less state funding while funding for charter schools has increased. Over the next two years, charter schools will siphon nearly \$2 billion from school districts – despite performing worse on average than traditional public schools.

We will ensure districts have the full resources they need to give our students a comprehensive education. Under our administration, any public funding for charters and vouchers will come directly from the state. We will eliminate the complex system of transfers that often results in a funding gap for taxpayers to fill through local levies. Ohio's tax dollars should remain in the classroom, not be used to pad companies' bottom lines.

Respecting local control of public schools.

Different schools have different needs, and we will trust each local, elected school board to know what its own students and families value. We will respect the full range of paths available to students in transitioning to college or a career – vocational training, apprenticeships, and other similar options. We will also end the undemocratic practice of state takeovers for low-performing school districts, which only silence community efforts to help our children succeed. Instead of taking local control away from elected leaders, we will work with our communities by providing the time and resources they need to transform struggling schools into thriving ones.

[Click here for our early childhood plan.](#)

[Click here for our workforce development plan.](#)