

# 20 OHIO LEGISLATORS RETREAT

ISSUE BRIEF

### EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS | COORDINATING A HIGH-QUALITY STATEWIDE SYSTEM

With decades of research informing our understanding of <u>brain science</u> and the long-term impacts of targeted investment, one conclusion is increasingly clear: the years of early childhood matter – both for children themselves and for society at large.

Translating this knowledge into practice is particularly important for the <u>estimated 816,772</u> Ohioan children aged five and younger. States and local communities must provide comprehensive, coordinated, well-funded systems of high-quality services that foster success in school and life to support the healthy development of all children. In Ohio, however, sizeable gaps are persistent in the early care and education system.

- Early Head Start served 6,265 infants and toddlers and 206,504 children ages three to five had access to Head Start in Fiscal Year 2021.
- In 2020, only 15,052 three- and four-year-old children were enrolled in a preschool program, covering just two and nine percent of three- and four-year olds in the state, respectively. These preschool programs are operated by public schools, eligible community schools, educational service centers, boards of developmental disabilities, and chartered nonpublic schools.
- In 2020, there were 6.178 state-licensed child care programs with a total capacity to serve 528,174 children. Yet, about 39 percent of Ohio families live in a child care desert. Geographical disparities exist and 60 percent of rural families live in areas without enough licensed child care providers.

### **Child Care Desert Definition**

Child care deserts are areas where there is limited capacity for the density of children that live in the area. Typically measured as one seat for every three children.

- Even when slots are available in high-quality child care programs, the cost is a barrier for families. Only about 12 percent of families can afford infant care (defined as seven percent of a family's income) as the cost of infant care averages 16.9 percent of a median family's income at over \$9,000 annually.
- About 48,200 children and 25,400 families are served through state-administered child care subsidies, known as the Publicly Funded Child Care Program, which provides financial assistance to eligible parents and caregivers for licensed child care.

15,052

Source

Three- and four-yearold children enrolled in a preschool program

528,174

Licensed child care slots

Source

48,200

Children receiving child care subsidy

Source

39%

Families living in child care desert

Source

- How can policymakers support the expansion of child care access in Ohio, particularly in rural areas and for infants and toddlers?
- What policies are necessary to facilitate access to the varied early childhood programs families need

## READY TO READ | EMBEDDING EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY INSTRUCTION ACROSS THE CONTINUUM

The <u>science of reading</u> represents the collection of evidence-based practices learned from decades of research across various disciplines, including education, psychology, linguistics, and neuroscience. The notion of the science of reading is relatively new, growing out of the 1997 <u>National Reading Panel</u>. As a result, other practices for teaching literacy are still widely used.

### The Prevalence of Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction

It is difficult to determine how many teachers use the science of reading in classrooms, but we can surmise that the probability is higher if teachers learned the evidence-based practices in their teacher preparation programs. As of 2021, 32 states required educator preparation programs (EPPs) to address the science of reading for some teacher candidates.

### Efforts to Align Literacy Instruction with the Science of Reading Nationally

The practice of aligning reading instruction to the science of reading has gained traction nationally.

Best practices from states like Mississippi, Arkansas, Colorado, and North Carolina include:

- Aligning state literacy standards to the science of reading
- Funding professional development for teachers in the science of reading
- Requiring that reading interventions for students be aligned with the science of reading
- Working to align teacher licensure exams with the science of reading
- Requiring educator preparation programs to include coursework in the science of reading

### Efforts to Align Literacy Instruction with the Science of Reading in Ohio

Ohio has a longstanding commitment to literacy instruction. In 2020, the Ohio Department of Education published its updated <u>Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement</u>. This plan serves as a guide to evidence-based language and literacy teaching and learning for all learners from birth through grade 12. The plan stresses the importance of early learning and expanding access to quality early learning experiences as well as calling for schools to infuse literacy skills in all grades and subjects.

To fulfill the goals of the plan, the Ohio Department of Education received a \$42 million Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to improve the language and literacy development of children. This four-year grant focuses on:

- Developing model comprehensive literacy sites in early childhood education programs, preschools, and K-12 classrooms
- Implementing practices consistent with Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement
- Providing professional learning and coaching opportunities
- Supporting traditionally underserved students

- How can legislators support schools in developing a multi-tiered system of supports that promote literacy achievement?
- What approaches are necessary to better align literacy practices in preservice programs?
- How can legislators facilitate in-service opportunities to build educator capacity?

### RECRUITING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE AND EFFECTIVE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

### The Educator Workforce | Public Perceptions & Community Engagement

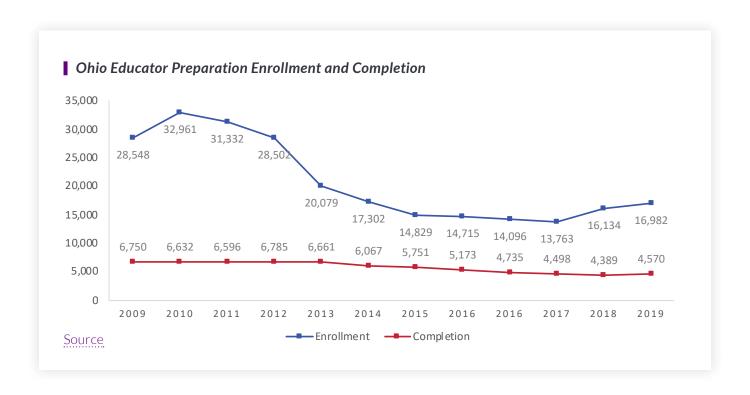
Public perception of America's public school systems continues to decline, and an astounding <u>62 percent</u> of parents surveyed in a 2022 poll indicated they would not want their child to become a public school teacher in their community. Teacher morale in the United States is also at an <u>all-time low.</u> A <u>January 2022</u> survey conducted by the National Education Association reported that 90 percent of members felt burned out by the profession, and 55 percent of those surveyed also indicated the pandemic made them more likely to retire or leave the profession early – further revealing an educator staffing crisis in public education.

As enrollment and completion in teacher preparation programs continues to decline nationally, with 25 percent fewer students completing educator

preparation programs in 2020 than 2012, states must begin thinking critically about how to rethink and reimagine how they strengthen their educator pipelines.

While identifying the precise reasons for the decline in the number of individuals entering the teaching profession is difficult, public opinion on a variety of issues that impact teachers reveal startling insights. Low compensation is a consistent problem for educators both in Ohio and across the country, with teachers typically making less money than their non-teacher peers with similar levels of education. One national poll reports that 62 percent of American adults believe public school teachers are being paid too little. Educators also believe there is a lack of professional respect for the profession, with less than half of educators indicating they believe the general public "respects them and views them as professional" – a decline of nearly 25 percent in the last decade.

Despite these challenges, states have attempted a variety of initiatives aimed at increasing the number of individuals who enter the teaching profession.



### **ARKANSAS**

The Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education has taken a cross-sector approach to address growing shortage concerns. In March 2022, the state partnered with nonprofit organization Forward Arkansas to launch Teach.

Arkansas, a statewide initiative aimed at educating Arkansans about the various pathways to entering the teaching profession, as well as what financial resources may be available for students.

The Teach Arkansas initiative offers one-on-one career coaching for prospective educators. Coaches are trained to aid individuals from diverse backgrounds, from high school and college students to individuals looking to make career changes. Once a prospective teacher is paired with a career coach, the coach guides them through the various licensure pathways available to them, as well as financial supports, grants, and reimbursement programs they may qualify for.

### **TENNESSEE**

The state of Tennessee recently utilized \$2 million in ESSER funding to establish a Grow Your Own (GYO) competitive grant program. The grant supports partnerships between Local Education Agencies and teacher preparation programs to remove barriers to entering the teaching profession.

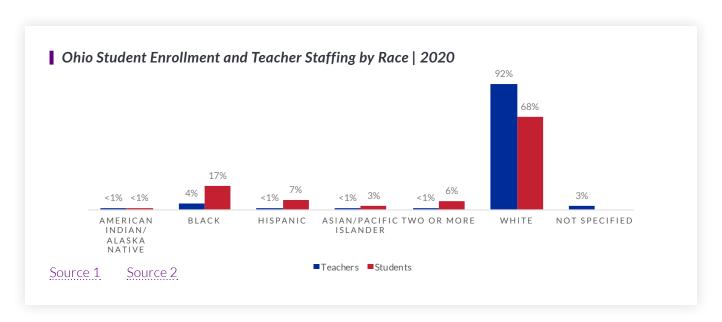
Selected participants train as paid educational assistants, receive guidance from teacher mentors, and are provided the necessary resources (including tuition, textbooks, and fees) to complete a residency for a bachelor's degree or one-year program. Grant funding has been used to establish GYO partnerships in 37 districts across the state.

### INDIANA

Indiana has taken a targeted approach to address teacher shortages in certain content areas, particularly Special Education. The state has collaborated with a higher education partner, the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis, to launch the Indiana Special Education Assisted Licensure (I-SEAL) program. I-SEAL offers a variety of different options for individuals looking to acquire their Special Education teacher license, with most offering financial support for tuition, textbooks, etc.

### Challenges to Building and Retaining a Diverse Educator Workforce

Educators of color experience significant barriers both before and throughout their professional careers, making it more difficult for these individuals to enter or stay in the teaching profession. In fact, Black students who have just one Black teacher by the third grade are 13 percent



more likely to enroll in college, and Black students with two Black teachers by the third grade are 32 percent more likely to enroll in college. The benefits are most significant for students of color, though all students experience greater engagement, higher achievement, and cross-cultural interactions from having access to a diverse group of educators, including teachers, principals, superintendents, and other school-based personnel.

### **COLLEGE ACCESS**

The barriers people of color face in attaining college degrees begin long before entering college or other educator preparation programs. Often, students of color are <u>more likely</u> to attend schools that are underfunded, have fewer qualified educators, and sparser educational offerings – limiting the resources that will support these students ability to matriculate to college. Students of color, as well as low-income students are <u>less likely</u> to be offered a quality education resulting in systemic barriers that often delay their graduation and thus increase the cost of their education.

Low or decreased funding for colleges of education can often lead to the financial burden being placed on students. Educators of color, particularly Black educators, are more likely to finance their college education through student loans, causing them to carry more debt. Therefore, students of color and/or low-income students, who may lack the resources to support paying college tuition or who may be supporting additional family members, take on additional financial responsibilities when attending college – likely leading them to pursue more financially stable careers over teaching.

### **DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM**

Studies have shown that educators of color report higher levels of discrimination, microaggressions, and other forms of racism while on the job compared to white educators. In one study, educators of color in predominately white school settings were more likely to receive lower evaluation scores – which may lead educators of color to leave their schools for other opportunities due to bias within the evaluation process. Flawed hiring processes, racial bias, and inconsistent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts

create unwelcoming and hostile work environments for teachers and leaders of color.

### THE INVISIBLE TAX

The "Invisible" tax is levied on educators of color when they are expected to take on additional duties. Often, educators of color are required to serve as DEI experts within their schools without the proper training and development or pay to support additional duties. They are also more likely to be placed on tracks to become deans and disciplinarians rather than instructional leaders or content experts, which heavily influences their career pathways. Teachers who speak more than one language may be required to translate documents or liaise with families that do not speak English, often for no additional compensation.

Black male educators, who are already underrepresented in the education profession, are also often asked to take on additional duties. Black male teachers report spending more time mentoring and counseling students than teachers of any other demographic, and often have to serve as disciplinarians to students of color in their schools as well. These additional duties require educators to spend more time at work and expend more intellectual and emotional labor, potentially leading educators to leave the profession for less demanding opportunities.

- How can Ohio leverage federal funding to improve or develop programs focused on making teaching and the education sector more appealing to the public?
- In what ways can Ohio implement policies that support its current educator workforce and increase retention?
- How can the state create and strengthen educator pipelines that target recruitment and support for educators of color?

### IDENTIFYING & SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF OHIO'S STUDENTS

### Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are negative and potentially traumatic events that have long-lasting impacts including abuse, neglect, poverty, as well as food and housing insecurity. These traumatic experiences can have long term consequences on health, wellbeing, educational outcomes, career potential, and life opportunities. Exposure to early adversity can lead to prolonged activation of the stress-response system, known as toxic stress, which negatively impacts brain development, especially in young children. Toxic stress is far reaching, leaving a permanent impression in children's immune and stress-response systems, which translates to reduced attention span, hindered decision making skills, and compromised learning ability.

The higher number of ACEs a child experiences, the more likely they are to experience poor health and low quality of life as adults. Additionally, many of these negative impacts can be passed down from one generation to the next, and children can experience ACEs due to historical and ongoing trauma such as systemic racism or poverty. The CDC estimates the impact of ACEs costs the U.S. healthcare system around \$748 billion annually. Just by reducing the number of ACEs that children across the U.S. experience by 10 percent, the country could save \$56 billion every year.

### Impacts of ACEs on Students

For students, the impact of ACEs can negatively affect many aspects of learning, from academic attainment to social and emotional maturity. Students who have experienced ACEs are more likely to have:

- High dropout and low graduation rates
- Poor standardized assessment scores
- Low postsecondary enrollment

- Increased instances of absenteeism and behavioral referrals
- Lack of focus due to worrying about out-of-school factors
- Little to no involvement from their parents
  They are also more likely to:
- Come to school hungry and tired
- Be in a constant state of 'fight or flight'
- Become withdrawn or marginalized by their peers

Unfortunately, the impact of ACEs continues past childhood into postsecondary educational settings. Research from New Mexico State University maintains that higher education students who have experienced ACEs are more likely to:

- Be depressed or suicidal
- Have problems with substance abuse
- Have poor studying skills, including the inability to focus
- Have low academic achievement
- Be unaware or unable to articulate why they feel traumatized
- Struggle to ask for help and find support
- Drop out with no skills for employment

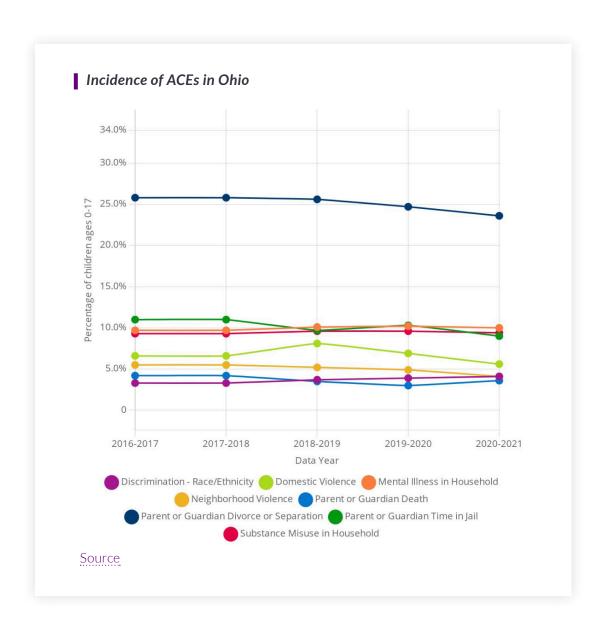
Overall, ACEs can severely limit a child's capacity to fully develop their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical capabilities. This means that ACEs can have a significant impact on a student's ability to thrive in an academic setting and to reach their full potential as an adult.



### The State Of Ohio

In Ohio, 16 percent of children from birth to age 17 have experienced two or more ACEs – higher than the national average of 14 percent. Of this trend, early adversity is important to note as research has demonstrated that longer and more negative outcomes result from experiencing ACEs at a younger age. Yet, nearly one in five children in Ohio under the age of six have been exposed to two or more ACEs. In the state, the exposure to adversity is most commonly lived through divorce or separation of caregivers, mental illness in household, substance abuse at home, or incarcerated caregivers.

- How can Ohio reduce the incidence of ACEs from birth to high school graduation?
- In what ways can policymakers support communities across Ohio to leverage their strengths in supporting parents, schools, and students?



### **LEARNING LOSS IN OHIO**

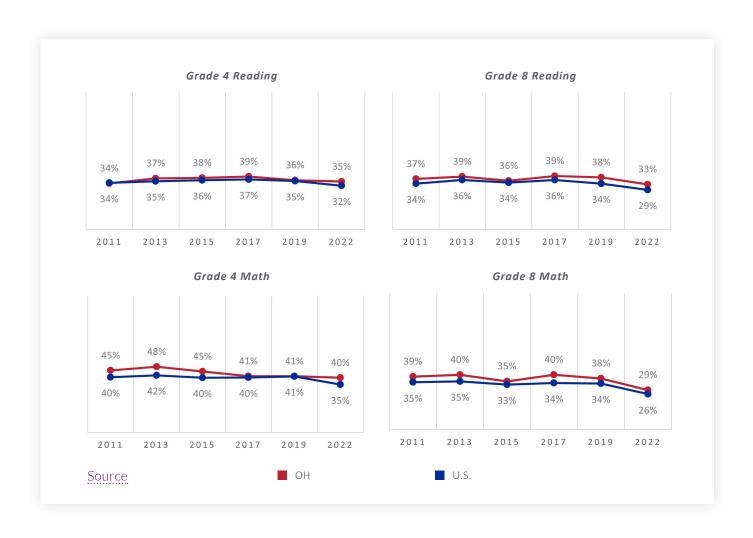
Learning loss, also referred to as <u>unfinished learning</u>, refers to any loss of knowledge, skills, or academic progress due to extended gaps or disruptions to students' learning. Nationwide school disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the education of millions of students. Many students experienced inequitable access to distance learning and educators find growing evidence of disparities by race and income.

While it will be years before the consequences of learning loss experienced by students can be fully realized, studies have already indicated learning loss could lower educational attainment and reduce the lifetime earnings of children by \$70,000. As schools continue to tackle learning inequities exacerbated by the pandemic, there are opportunities to identify and utilize evidence-based practices to provide equitable access to innovative learning.

### NAEP Proficiency Rates for Ohio

While most state assessments differ by state, a sample of students from across the country take the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) every other year, providing an opportunity to compare performance across states. NAEP is a congressionally mandated project the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics administers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NAEP was not conducted between 2019 and 2021.

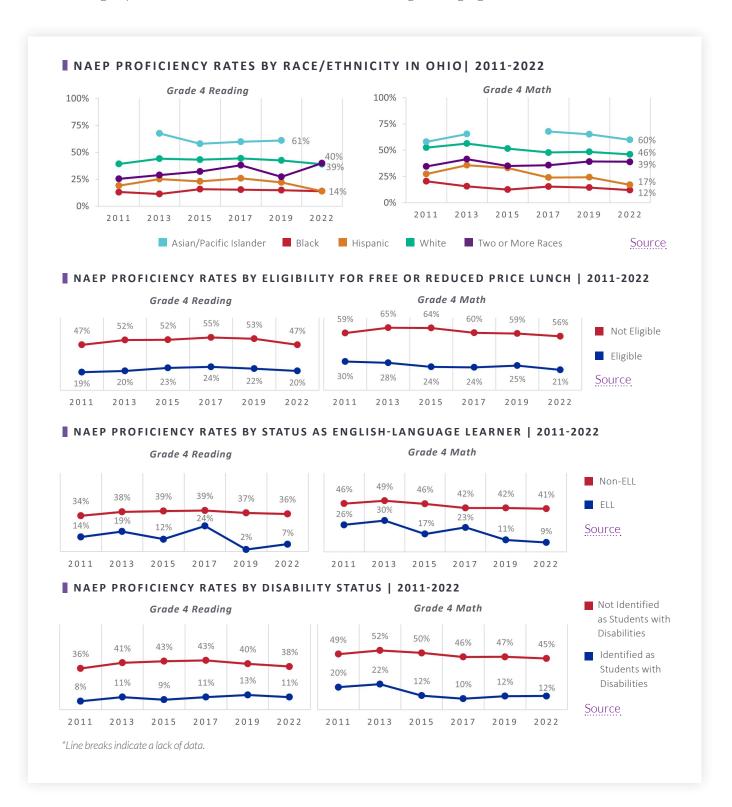
The following graphs show how students in Ohio scored at the proficient level or above as compared to the United States. As can be seen, Ohio's proficiency scores for eighth grade reading and math declined compared to 2019. In contrast, fourth grade results for reading and math, although one percent lower from 2019, demonstrate a smaller impact from the pandemic period.



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Average rates can mask variations in performance among student subgroups. In contrast, disaggregating the data by student subgroups can highlight achievement gaps between those student groups.

The following graphs show the percentage of students scoring at proficient or above, disaggregated by race/ ethnicity, students who receive free or reduced-price lunch, English-Language Learners, and students with disabilities.



### Efforts to Recover from Learning Loss

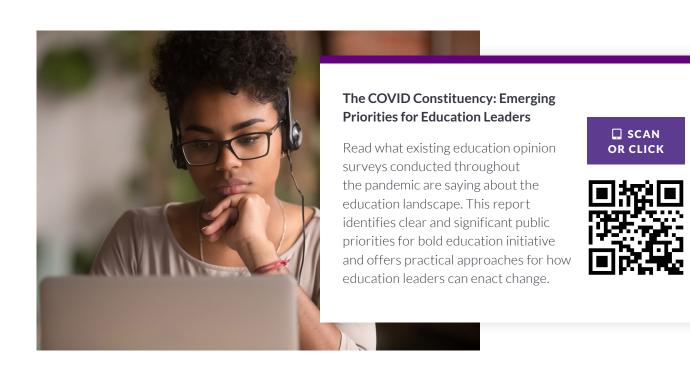
Ohio education leaders can look at examples of innovative learning loss interventions within the state as they consider statewide strategies to accelerate learning. For example, Dayton has received <u>national</u> <u>attention</u> for its innovative use of ESSER funding to address learning loss. The city leveraged its ESSER funds to reduce student-teacher ratios by hiring two times as many teachers in classrooms for grades first through third. This allowed for one math and one literacy teacher to be assigned to every classroom in grades first through third for two years. The result of this intervention saw the district's spring 2022 test scores <u>return to 2019 levels</u> with Dayton students showing faster academic growth than other students across the nation using the same test.

Implementing high-impact tutoring programs can also accelerate student learning and compensate for interrupted instruction due to COVID-19. High-impact tutoring is defined as one-to-one or small-group support that supplements classroom learning and complements existing curriculum by focusing on specific goals in response to individual students' needs.

Research has shown that frequent in-school tutoring is one of the best ways to support students' academic progress. Ohio has invested in high-dosage tutoring through its Statewide Mathematics and Literacy.

Grant. The \$14 million grant will allow for colleges and universities to create or expand mathematics and literacy tutoring programs for Ohio's K-12 students in one-on-one or small group settings.

- How can Ohio expand learning opportunities to improve learning outcomes?
- What whole child supports are necessary for students and families to ensure academic success?
- What early identification strategies can be used to address student needs earlier?
- How can the state ensure that ESSER investments are sustainable long after funding runs out?



### **COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the national job market. As of November 2022, 243,200 workers were unemployed in Ohio, despite over 300,000 job vacancies listed online alone. This growing gap, and employer's challenges hiring workers with the proper training and skills necessary to work has become known as the skills gap. This gap was a concern even prior to the pandemic, with a 2019 national survey highlighting that 75 percent of human resource professionals had difficulties recruiting candidates for a job because the candidate pool lacked the requisite skills.

The <u>majority of jobs</u> across the nation require education and training beyond high school. However, <u>52 percent</u> of jobs require only skills training – education and training that falls between a high school diploma and a conventional four-year degree, compared to 32 percent of jobs that require at least a four-year degree and just 16 percent requiring

only a highschool equivalent. Yet of Ohio's workforce between the ages of 25-64, eight percent have less than a high school diploma, and nearly 40 percent of Ohio's workforce has a high school diploma or less, making them underqualified for many of these "middle-skills" jobs. Thus, the importance of preparing students with the skills for postsecondary education or the workforce after high school is clearer than ever.

### CTE Programs

Career and technical education (CTE) courses focus on workplace competencies and hands-on experiences that provide students with the skills, knowledge, and training to succeed in future careers. In secondary institutions, these programs prepare students for skilled positions in the workforce after graduation. At the postsecondary level, these programs also serve adult learners returning to school to complete a degree or shift careers. As a component of the United States education system, CTE programs improve the labor market and meet the needs of a changing economy.

### **Higher Education Landscape**

Number of postsecondary students in Ohio: 656,4451

2-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS		4-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS		4-YEAR PRIVATE NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS		FOR-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS	
# of Institutions <sup>1</sup>	20 <sup>9</sup>	# of Institutions <sup>1</sup>	40 <sup>9</sup>	# of Institutions <sup>1</sup>	65 <sup>9</sup>	# of Institutions <sup>1</sup>	33 <sup>9</sup>
% of All Current Postsecondary Students <sup>2</sup>	22% (OH) <sup>6</sup> 26% (U.S.)	% of All Current Postsecondary Students <sup>2</sup>	55% (OH) <sup>6</sup> 49% (U.S.)	% of All Current Postsecondary Students <sup>2</sup>	19% (OH) <sup>6</sup> 22% (U.S.)	% of All Current Postsecondary Students <sup>2</sup>	2% (OH) <sup>6</sup> 4% (U.S.)
Completion Rate <sup>3,4</sup>	77% (OH) <sup>7</sup> 77% (U.S.)	Completion Rate <sup>3,4</sup>	71% (OH) <sup>7</sup> 70% (U.S.)	Completion Rate <sup>3,4</sup>	77% (OH) <sup>7</sup> 77% (U.S.)	Completion Rate <sup>3,4</sup>	Not reported due to lack of mandatory reporting (OH) 35% (U.S.) <sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>As of 2019-2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> As of 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cohort year 2015.

<sup>4</sup> The rate of students who completed a degree within six years at a four-year institution or within three years at a two-year institution.

<sup>5</sup> Cohort year 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> <u>Data Source</u>

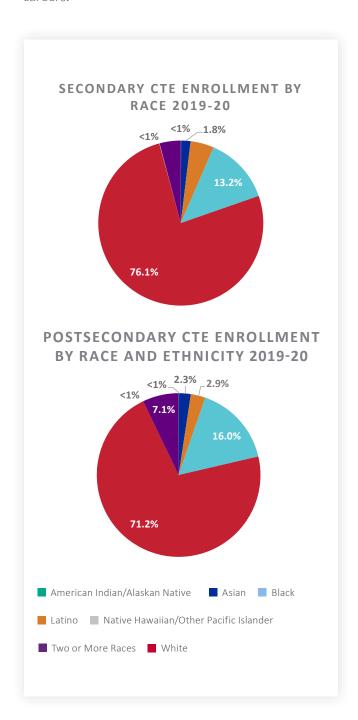
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Data Source

<sup>8</sup> Data Source

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> <u>Data Source</u>

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CTE programs vary across states and districts, from job shadowing opportunities to specialized technical training and apprenticeships, all aiming to equip students with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary for success in their careers.



In Ohio, over <u>130,000</u> high school students were enrolled in CTE courses during the 2019-20 school year, and <u>nearly 120,000</u> students were enrolled in CTE coursework at the postsecondary level.

The ability to access postsecondary skills training through certificates, associate degrees, and other CTE programs is even more crucial for Black and Hispanic adults, who are historically disadvantaged in the United States workforce due to racism and discrimination in hiring and compensation. White workers with a high school degree or less have a 39 percent chance of being employed in a "good job," defined as a position that pays a family sustaining salary. For Hispanic workers, this figure drops to 25 percent, and for Black workers, it is just 22 percent. Increasing to a middle-skill level through a CTE program increases those odds by about 15 percentage points.

### **Leveraging CTE To Increase Attainment**

There are at least two ways Ohio can leverage CTE to improve educational attainment. The first is to provide secondary students with meaningful access to CTE programs. Many high school CTE programs result in industry certification upon graduation, immediately providing graduates with the opportunity to access middle-skill jobs.

High school CTE programs also provide a direct pathway into postsecondary certification or an associate degree or bachelor's degree program. Enrollment in high school CTE programs leads to reduced dropout and increased graduation rates.

Access to high-quality CTE programs in high school is particularly important to close achievement and opportunity gaps for students of color. While participation in high school CTE programs is beneficial to all students, Black and Hispanic students graduate at lower rates than white students, drop out at higher rates, and will earn less over time than their white peers, and the positive impact of CTE programs offer an avenue for closing these gaps. However, inequities persist in CTE as well, stemming from the practice of tracking students by race and social class

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into low-quality vocational programs as an extension of Jim Crow-era segregation. To leverage CTE as a means to benefit all students, schools should ensure that students of color have access to advanced CTE courses aligned with high-earning industries and should build accountability systems to monitor enrollment trends.

The second opportunity is making CTE available to those already in the workforce without a postsecondary credential. Slightly less than 12 percent of the workforce has some type of postsecondary education but no degree and an additional 26 percent only have a high school diploma. Consequently, millions of Americans would benefit from additional career and technical training allowing them to pursue advanced career opportunities in today's labor market.

### **Youth Apprenticeship Programs**

When it comes to policy initiatives that help create stronger connections between education systems and the workforce, many state leaders cite apprenticeships as an effective – but often underutilized – strategy. Apprenticeships involve various models that integrate classroom learning with on-the-job experience and allow students to develop the skills that will make them valuable employees. Traditionally, apprenticeship programs have been heavily concentrated in occupations within certain trade industries such as construction and manufacturing.

Apprenticeship participants are also generally older than many students – the average age of a new apprentice in the United States is 29. However, a new, innovative apprenticeship model has emerged in recent years: youth apprenticeship programs. These models, designed to start in high school, involve partnerships between three key players: high schools, IHEs (most commonly technical colleges), and employers. There are four core elements of high-quality youth apprenticeship programs:

- Paid, on-the-job learning under the supervision of skilled employee mentors;
- Ongoing assessment against established skills and competency standards;

- Related, classroom-based instruction; and
- Culmination in a portable, industry-recognized credential and postsecondary credit.

Currently, Ohio has its own youth <u>apprenticeship</u> and <u>pre-apprenticeship</u> programs through the Ohio Department of Education.

- In what ways can policymakers support innovative college and career preparation in classrooms across the K-12 continuum?
- How can Ohio strengthen its college and career preparation programs across the state, such as youth apprenticeship programs, work-based learning, and other CTE initiatives?
- How can Ohio continue to strengthen its CTE pipelines to ensure that all students have access to training and resources necessary to thrive in the 21st century?



Established in 2001, The Hunt Institute honors the legacy of James B. Hunt, Jr., the former governor of North Carolina who distinguished himself as an ardent champion of education.

The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education, resulting in visionary leaders who are prepared to take strategic action for greater educational outcomes and student success.

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