

NEWS RELEASE

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Business Leaders Launch New Education Non-Profit

Ohio business leaders say preparing students for success in life must be a priority

COLUMBUS, OH – Leaders of the Ohio business community today announced the creation of Ohio Excels, a new non-partisan coalition of business leaders committed to ensuring that all Ohio students have access to excellent early childhood, K-12 and post-secondary education experiences.

Ohio Excels' work reflects the reality that all students can achieve at high levels and deserve the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that will enable them to be successful later in life. By creating Ohio Excels, the business community recognizes the important role it can and must play in addressing Ohio's education and workforce challenges. The business community knows that improving the quality of education will give students a better chance to succeed and will help Ohio businesses grow and innovate, fueling a robust state economy.

"We believe that the business community can and must play an important role in these critical discussions, debates and policy solutions to ensure the personal and economic success of Ohioans and the long-term success of our state," said Joseph D. Roman, Ohio Excels' Board Chairman and President and CEO of the Greater Cleveland Partnership.

The success of Ohio's students and families will be predicated on the collective ability to prepare our students for a world of work that is rapidly changing. The business community will use its collective voice and influence through Ohio Excels to identify and support policy solutions. "With leadership from sectors across Ohio – families, policymakers, educators, academia, philanthropy and business – we will keep focus on our students and the excellence of their education," said Alex R. Fischer, President and CEO, Columbus Partnership.

Ohio Excels is driven by the following core principles:

- **Expect Academic Excellence** – All students deserve the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.
- **Focus on Students** – Students needs must be at the center of all policy and practice decisions.

- **Use Data** – Education decisions must be informed by data that honestly illuminate student performance.
- **Strengthen Implementation** – Leaders must support educators in crucial implementation challenges to ensure student success.
- **Maximize Investments** – The state should better coordinate all of its investments to serve students’ comprehensive needs.
- **Offer Quality Choices** – Families and students deserve the right to choose the school that best meets their unique needs and have funding for that choice.
- **Build on Success** – Share examples of success and best practices so that students have access to proven options.

According to Board Member Pat Tiberi, President and CEO of the Ohio Business Roundtable, “With the new administration, General Assembly and State Board of Education, we believe the time is right to develop early and lasting partnerships with Ohio’s education policymakers. Ohio Excels is committed to engaging business leaders from across Ohio and partnering with elected leaders, education policymakers and other stakeholders to ensure Ohio’s students are well-prepared at each level of the education system and ultimately to engage as productive and successful Ohioans.”

Ohio Excels is led by an all-business Board of Directors and Founding President Lisa Gray. Gray has been a longtime education advocate in Ohio.

“We are excited about the interest from the business community in helping to prepare our students for success,” said Gray. We look forward to growing the business community’s involvement and partnering with other education stakeholders to ensure Ohio’s children have the greatest opportunities to achieve success. Our students need and deserve our continued commitment.”

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