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Ohio Association for Gifted Children Releases New Report on Ohio's Education Accountability System

How accurate are the annual school and district ratings handed out by the Ohio Department of Education? Does the level of student performance in Ohio warrant a quadrupling of the number of districts in the excellent category over the past decade? Are highly rated districts meeting world-class levels of performance? "Grading on a Curve: The Illusion of Excellence in Ohio's Schools," a new report released by the Ohio Association for Gifted Children, finds that actual educational excellence may be far more elusive than our ratings would lead us to believe.

Ann Sheldon, Executive Director of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children and co-author of the report says, "It really was somewhat shocking to see how low Ohio's standards are for a district to receive a rating of excellent or excellent with distinction. It really does a disservice to policymakers, the public at large, and of course, students, when we pretend that the majority of our districts are doing a stellar job when in many cases it just isn't true."

Some of the report's findings are sobering:

- ✓ 67 districts rated excellent or excellent with distinction had zero students take AP exams.
- ✓ 109 districts rated excellent or excellent with distinction had average ACT scores below the state average.
- ✓ 160 districts rated excellent or excellent with distinction had fewer than 20% of their graduating class receive diplomas with honors.
- ✓ 136 districts rated excellent or excellent with distinction had college remediation rates above the state average.
- ✓ 220 districts rated excellent or excellent with distinction serve fewer than 20% of their identified gifted students with 85 of the highly rated districts reporting no gifted services at all.

Co-author Colleen Grady said, “This report provides a closer look at the education accountability system that has evolved over the last decade and offers a candid assessment of the significant gap between current performance and true college- and career-ready expectations. It’s time for Ohio to create a more fair, accurate and meaningful accountability system.”

Some of the report recommendations include the following:

- ✓ *Incorporate high quality metrics such as college remediation rates, ACT/SAT scores, Advanced Placement performance and graduates qualifying for Honors Diplomas.*
- ✓ *Move to nationally normed or internationally benchmarked high school assessments such as the ACT or SAT.*
- ✓ *Eliminate the labeling of districts until a meaningful system can be developed.*
- ✓ *Incorporate an automatic trigger to increase cut scores as more districts receive higher ratings.*
- ✓ *Reevaluate how the value-added growth measure is used and provide results by performance quintile.*
- ✓ *Eliminate multiple pathways to ratings in favor of a single pathway with multiple components.*

To download a copy of the report, please go to the following link:

http://www.oagc.com/files/OAGC_Grading_On_A_Curve_Final.pdf .

For more information, please contact Ann Sheldon at 614-325-1185 or anngift@aol.com or Colleen Grady at 440-376-1325 or cdg.gradylc@gmail.com . For more information about the Ohio Association for Gifted Children, please go to www.oagc.com.