



## Education Reform

We are pleased that Governor Strickland's educational reform program sees K-16 education as a driving force behind the state's development as an agricultural and industrial leader across the nation and world. Ohio's education reform plan contains several components that align with key Farm Bureau priorities. These include:

Education is a driving force behind the state's development as an agricultural and industrial leader across the nation.

- Improvement of teacher evaluation process
- The expanded use of distance learning programs
- Creating a system where educational achievement is celebrated at the same level as athletic achievement
- Review of the impact of HB 920 for districts at the 20 mill floor, especially rural districts
- Reform of teacher tenure practices

The Ohio Farm Bureau shares a commitment to education reform, including education funding reform, but is concerned by any plan that does not put forth emphasis on agricultural education, agbioscience integration, or agricultural literacy. Although the Governor's current proposal does outline funding reform, those districts that have been identified as located in rural/agricultural areas should have access to the same increases in funding as schools in urban areas – something which does not seem to be prioritized in the Governor's reform plan.

We also look forward to additional information being distributed about specific elements of the plan. However, we encourage both the Governor and the Legislature to consider the following with respect to school reform plans:

- Reform of "HB 920" should not disproportionately burden residential and agricultural property owners
- Equal emphasis need to be placed on instruction in reading, science, mathematics, citizenship, economics, *agriculture education*, technology, and fine arts
- We encourage the integration of agriculture and related industry in STEM curriculum, especially through OSU's Cooperative Extension programs like 4-H
- We strongly encourage restored funding of OSU Extension, given its success with the implementation of STEM programs
- We oppose any legislation funding public education through cuts in the funding of the OARDC
- We support retaining Industrial Arts and Family Consumer Science courses, and we encourage schools to utilize FFA programs as personal and leadership development programs
- Tech prep programs should include agricultural education
- Funding for after school and summer programs needs to be expanded to include agricultural education
- Agriscience program courses should be granted science credit
- Any educational mandates should be fully funded through the life of the mandate

The Governor's proposed budget reduces OARDC funding to less than 31.8 million in FY 2011. This is nearly 5.4 million (14.5%) less than in FY 2008. The Ohio Farm Bureau Opposes any legislation funding public education through cuts in the funding of the OARDC

*Ohio has nearly 1.9 million students in 3,945 public and community schools. Ohio has 679 school districts served by 59 Educational Service Centers. According to the Ohio Department of Education, school funding comprised 39% of Ohio's state budget appropriations in 2006.*