

**HOW LOCAL CHARTER SCHOOLS PERFORMED**

The Ohio Department of Education has released its 2005-2006 report cards, which include data on 295 charter schools statewide. The state assigns ratings to public school districts and individual schools, from best to worst. They are: excellent, effective, continuous improvement, academic watch, and academic emergency.

Statewide, 30 charter schools were rated excellent; 16 effective; 87 continuous improvement; 46 academic watch, and 81 academic emergency. Thirty-five charter schools did not receive ratings for various reasons, such as testing too few students or not operating for enough years. Here is how northwest Ohio charter schools performed:

School	2005-06 Rating	2004-05 Rating	Grade Level	Standards met	Standards possible	Performance Index Score	2006 Overall AYP
<b>Lima</b>							
Auglaize County Educational Academy	CI	Not Rated	K-12	3	6	73	Met
Auglaize County Special Needs School	Eff	Not Rated	K-12	0	1	94.3	Met
Heir Force Community School	AW	AW	K-8	2	14	78.2	Not Met
Quest Academy Community	CI	Not Rated	K-6	2	6	81.2	Not Met
West Central Learning Academy	CI	Not Rated	7-12	0	1	77.5	Met
<b>Maumee</b>							
M.O.D.E.L. Community School	Ex	Not Rated	K-12	10	10	107.5	Met
Ohio Virtual Academy	Eff	CI	K-12	6	14	90	Not Met
Wildwood Environmental Academy	AW	Not Rated	K-8	1	14	74.7	Not Met
<b>Tiffin</b>							
Bridges Community Academy	CI	Eff	K-12	5	12	88.9	Met
Tiffin City Digital Academy	Not Rated	—	K-12	1	1	88.4	Met
<b>Toledo</b>							
Academy Of Business & Technology	AE	AE	K-8	1	14	68	Not Met
Alliance Academy of Toledo	AE	Not Rated	K-12	0	20	56.5	Not Met
Alternative Education Academy	CI	AW	K-12	10	25	86.3	Not Met
Aurora Academy	Ex	AE	K-8	1	1	62.1	Not Met
Bennett Venture Academy	AW	—	K-5	1	8	78.9	Not Met
Brigadoon Academy Community School	AE	Not Rated	K-12	1	8	39.3	Not Met
Eagle Academy	AW	AE	K-6	0	10	63.1	Not Met
Englewood Peace Academy	AE	AE	K-8	1	14	64.7	Not Met
George A. Phillips Academy	AW	AE	K-8	1	14	61.9	Not Met
Glass City Academy	CI	Not Rated	11-12	0	6	0	Met
Horizon Science Academy-Toledo	CI	CI	6-12	7	12	82.2	Not Met
Horizon Science Academy-Springfield*	AW	—	5-8	2	9	76.2	Not Met
Imani Learning Academy	AE	Not Rated	K-8	1	14	63.3	Not Met
Lake Erie Academy	CI	AE	K-8	2	14	74.1	Met
Life Skills Center Of Toledo	AE	Not Rated	9-12	0	12	47.7	Not Met
Meadows Choice Community	AW	Not Rated	1-8	1	7	51.7	Not Met
Paul Laurence Dunbar Academy	CI	AE	K-6	1	10	70.2	Not Met
Performing Arts School Of Toledo	AW	CI	7-12	5	16	76.8	Not Met
Phoenix Academy Community School	AE	Not Rated	7-12	1	7	35	Not Met
Polly Fox Academy Community School	AW	Not Rated	7-12	2	6	54.5	Not Met
Summit Academy Secondary School	AW	Not Rated	7-12	1	3	63.7	Not Met
Summit Academy Toledo	AE	Not Rated	1-8	1	9	53.5	Not Met
The Autism Academy Of Learning	Ex	Not Rated	K-12	0	1	112.9	Not Met
Toledo Academy Of Learning	AE	AE	K-10	1	19	63	Not Met
Toledo Accelerated Academy	AW	AE	6-12	1	13	63.3	Not Met
Toledo School For The Arts	Ex	Eff	6-12	18	18	101.2	Met
Victory Academy of Toledo	AE	—	K-8	0	3	54.4	Not Met
Winterfield Venture Academy	CI	AW	K-6	1	10	80	Not Met

\*The school is not affiliated with Springfield Local Schools.

**Key**  
**AE** — Academic Emergency    **AW** — Academic Watch    **CI** — Continuous Improvement    **Eff** — Effective    **Ex** — Excellent

The state began assigning labels in order from worst to best of Academic Emergency (AE), Academic Watch (AW), Continuous Improvement (CI), Effective (Eff), and Excellent (Ex) to districts and individual schools in 1999. The education department uses several factors to determine the ratings. There are 25 standards, which include 23 standardized tests, attendance, and graduation. A standard is met when a certain percentage of students pass a test, attend school, or graduate.

Districts and schools are also rated on:  
 ■ Their "performance index score," which is a composite of all test scores. The top score for the performance index is 120.  
 ■ The progress of specific groups of students such as minorities, children from low-income families, those with disabilities or with limited English skills, and those in special education. The measure is commonly called "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP).

SOURCE: Ohio Department of Education    THE BLADE

# Ohio school districts near U.S. standard for teachers

By **JOE VARDON**  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Ohio's school districts, as a group, are close to reaching the federal requirement of having every core subject taught by a teacher with a college degree and expertise in the academic area, according to state report cards issued this week.

According to data collected from the 2005-06 school year, 94.4 percent of core courses in Ohio were taught by those who fit the requirements in the federal No Child Left Behind Act. To be defined as a "highly qualified" teacher, under the federal law, a teacher must obtain a bachelor's degree, receive full state certification, and pass competency tests in every subject taught.

Several school districts in Northwest Ohio achieved 100 percent, including Perrysburg, Maumee, Lake, and Bowling Green. Toledo Public Schools scored 98.4 percent, and Washington Local Schools scored 97.6 percent.

In May, the U.S. Department of Education asked all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia to submit revised plans for how each would achieve the goal by the 2006-07 school year. Every state's plan was subjected to a peer review by a panel of 31 education experts. The results of those reviews were released yesterday, and Ohio was given high marks.

Officials from the U.S. Department of Education said Ohio did

not receive any significant suggestions for change in its peer review.

"Ohio is a state that took this effort seriously," said Rene Islas, chief of staff for elementary and secondary education. "It produced a very comprehensive report detailing which teachers are not meeting high quality standards ... and outlined clear steps to ensure they reach that status."

Its plan was one of only nine that addressed the six criteria

## 94.4% of core courses taught in Ohio were by qualified teachers

the panel used in its review. The six criteria include:

● A thorough analysis of data identifying teachers who did not meet high quality requirements.

● Steps local districts will take to help teachers quickly attain high quality status.

● Technical assistance, programs, and resources the state will offer to help local districts get their teachers to attain high quality status.

● Steps states will take if local districts do not ensure all teachers of core subjects are highly qualified.

● The option of an alternative method to ensure all teachers are highly qualified.

● Evidence the state is taking steps to ensure minority

students and students from low-income families are not disproportionately taught by inexperienced or unqualified teachers.

State data showed 90.7 percent of teachers working in high poverty elementary schools were highly qualified. The number dipped to 88.2 percent in high poverty high schools.

Toledo Public Schools is considered a high poverty school district, yet its percentage of high quality teachers was 95.2 percent in 2004-05.

Jan Kilbride, chief academic officer for Toledo Public Schools, said her district is able to keep teachers. But she said a goal for the district is to find more certified special education and foreign language teachers, one she feels can be attained.

"We're going to continue our efforts to have 100 percent high quality teachers," she said.

Teachers in Rossford and Sylvania school districts are nearing 100 percent high quality status. Rossford's teachers are at 99 percent and Sylvania teachers are at 98.8 percent.

Edon-Northwest scored 87 percent, though Edon High principal Bob Morton said his district is small and its percentage was skewed by special circumstances regarding two teaching positions that have since been cleared up.

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# Charter

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erated Academy, and Wildwood Environmental — each posted gains over last year on a composite of state test scores.

Each was in academic emergency last year, except Wildwood, which was not rated last year.

Lake Erie and Paul L. Dunbar are now continuous improvement, and the other four are in academic watch.

While leaders of some schools were pausing this week to celebrate advances, officials from other local charter schools were contemplating disappointing results.

Alliance Academy of Toledo, a kindergarten through 12th-grade school with about 350 students, was among 10 local charter schools placed in academic emergency.

It operated with grades seven through 12 until last school year, when it added kindergarten through six.

Letha Ferguson, the school's educational director, said the results were disappointing but not unexpected.

"This is our first year with grades [kindergarten] through six, ... and we didn't have any past history with the Ohio achievement tests for those grades," she said.

Districts and schools can earn higher ratings from the Ohio Department of Education if a minimum percentage of students pass 23 different standardized tests, attend school, or graduate.

Alliance achieved zero out of its possible standards.

Ms. Ferguson said Alliance,

like many charter schools, enrolls students who have performed poorly for years in traditional public schools — accounting for the current low scores, she said.

Locally, 11 charter schools fell into academic watch, 10 in continuous improvement, and 2 were rated effective.

Kari DiCianni, executive director of The Performing Arts School of Metropolitan Toledo, said her results also were disappointing.

The school, which is located downtown, fell from continuous improvement last year to academic watch.

"We were taking more inner-city kids and more students from

2005-2006.

Leaders of The Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow — an online-only charter school based in Columbus that enrolls 7,400 students throughout Ohio and 131 Lucas County students — boasted about its advancement two steps from academic emergency to continuous improvement.

Critics of the state's charter school system, such as state Sen. Teresa Fedor (D, Toledo), who is a former public school teacher, and Tom Mooney, president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers union, said this week's report cards show the schools are failing to teach children.

"[Tuesday's] report card release also shows that the legislature can no longer stand by as [charter] schools continue to fail Ohio's families and students," Ms. Fedor said in a statement.

"According to [Ohio Department of Education] data, 27.4 percent of charter schools are in academic emergency whereas not one public school district is in that category," Ms. Fedor added.

Mr. Mooney, who is also chairman of a group called the Coalition for Public Education, yesterday said the group's review of state data showed disadvantaged and African-American students enrolled in regular public schools perform better on state achievement tests than their counterparts who attend charter schools.

Allison Perz, executive director of the Toledo-based Council of Community Schools, which is the authorizer of the six Leona Group charter schools in the Toledo-area and 39 others statewide, said charter schools have shown progress.

The percentage of charter schools that received a failing grade this week from the Ohio Department of Education is lower than the number failing last year.

However, the total number of failing charter schools for the 2005-2006 school year increased because the state this year assigned ratings to more charter schools than it did in August, 2005.

Nine out of the 14 schools under the council's watch that fell into the academic emergency category are "drop-out recovery programs," Ms. Perz said.

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## Locally, 11 charter schools fell into academic watch, 10 in continuous improvement, and 2 were rated effective

Toledo Public whose grades were low," Ms. DiCianni said.

Charter schools are public schools funded with taxpayer money but often are privately operated.

The Ohio Virtual Academy, an online charter school based in Maumee that serves about 3,160 students statewide and 160 in Lucas County, moved up from continuous improvement to effective.

Susan Stagner, school leader, said it is the first "eSchool" in the state to reach the effective ranking.

Additionally, the school's performance index score improved from 82 in 2004-2005 to 90 for

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