SMARTER SCHOOLS

NEWS RELEASE

Dayton, Fairborn join Ohio Blended Learning Network
Association encourages high-quality blended learning in Ohio classrooms

CINCINNATI – Dayton Public Schools and Fairborn City Schools have joined 21 other schools and districts across Ohio in a statewide network that will promote and encourage the development of high-quality blended learning instruction in Ohio classrooms, the Network announced today.

The Ohio Blended Learning Network has grown to include 23 schools and districts representing more than 175,000 students in Ohio, from small charter and rural schools to the state's largest school districts.

"The members of the Ohio Blended Learning Network are banded together by the desire to see high-quality blended learning implemented in more classrooms in their districts and the state," said Andrew Benson, Executive Director of Smarter Schools, the Cincinnati-based non-profit that sponsors the Network. "We are pleased that Dayton and Fairborn – both highly innovative districts – have joined the Network."

"We are excited to be a part of the Ohio Blended Learning Network. We look forward to implementing blended learning in our district and feel fortunate that this consortium will be there to support us," said Fairborn Superintendent Dave Scarberry. "The process of educating children looks different for the future. OBLN is providing valuable opportunities for districts to learn how to provide blended opportunities as a part of daily instruction. "

The Network is chaired by Matthew Miller, Superintendent of Mentor Public Schools, a nationally recognized innovative school district that is implementing blended learning across its district. Mentor was inducted this year into the League of Innovative Schools, a national group of 43 school districts and educational agencies promoting education innovation. Reynoldsburg City Schools, which is also a member of the Ohio Blended Learning Network, joins Mentor in the League of Innovative Schools.

 "I appreciate the opportunity to work with other superintendents and school districts to use blended learning to collectively reshape what teaching and learning looks like in Ohio," said Miller.   - more -

The Network receives technical support from Education Elements, a California-based education consulting firm that has worked with more than 100 schools across the nation, including Mentor and Reynoldsburg in Ohio.

Dayton and Fairborn join Valley View Local Schools as members of the Network in Montgomery and Greene counties. Other members include:

Cincinnati Public Schools	Minster Local Schools
Columbus City Schools	Nexus Academy of Cleveland
Fort Recovery Local Schools	Nexus Academy of Columbus
Hilliard City Schools	Nexus Academy of Toledo
KIPP Columbus	Nordonia Hills City Schools
Lancaster City Schools	Northwood Local Schools
Lorain City Schools	Oak Hills Local Schools
Midview Local Schools	Stepstone Academy
Milford Exempted Village Schools	Vermilion Local Schools

The focus of the Network is to encourage the development of blended learning in Ohio classrooms as way to effectively integrate technology to extend the reach of educators and increase the engagement of students. Blended learning is an approach to education in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction. This is becoming an effective strategy for schools and districts that want to use technology as a tool to enhance and extend the skills of teachers and want to more effectively identify and meet the needs of students.

The Network plans to help create standards for high-quality blended learning in the state as a way to ensure that educators have a model to use as a guide for how they can use technology effectively as a tool to enhance teaching and learning. The Network also plans to help the state create a blended-learning credential for educators who learn to use blended learning effectively in their classrooms.

The Network is pursuing grant funding from Ohio's Straight A Fund for Fiscal Year 2015 to increase capacity in the state to train more educators to implement high-quality blended learning approaches in classrooms.

"We believe that schools and districts can help define and support high-quality blended learning and, with partners, can provide training to educators that will build capacity to create more blended learning classrooms in the state," said Benson.

For more on the Ohio Blended Learning Network, visit www.smarterschools.net.

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Smarter Schools, based in Cincinnati, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of education.