

Education fares well in Governor's annual address

In his fourth State of the State address, Gov. John Kasich placed high importance on learning initiatives in Ohio, specifically citing the move to performance-based funding and the community colleges' role in workforce development, college credit in high school, and GED attainment.

"Governor Kasich's passion for lifting the lives of people, regardless of age, through purposeful and innovative education was most evident," said Dr. Kevin Boys, President of Southern State Community College, who attended the annual event.

"It was music to my ears hearing his support for earlier career awareness among our middle school students, his challenge to prevent more students from opting out of school, and his belief that more high schools students should have access to college courses while in high school," said Dr. Boys. "He seemed particularly impassioned to help people who do not have a high school diploma attain that GED and continue on at a community college for additional credentials. I look forward to supporting these initiatives among our friends in the General Assembly."

Performance-Based Funding

Gov. Kasich praised community college and university presidents for working together on the initiative to move to a 100-percent performance-based funding formula.

"The presidents of Ohio's community colleges have worked diligently on this performance-based funding model for the past year, leading our nation's community colleges in this comprehensive outcome-based initiative," said Dr. Karen E. Rafinski, Interim President of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC).

"We commend Governor Kasich for his encouragement and recognition of the central role that community colleges play in workforce training, transfer and career education," she said. "While community college leaders realize there remains more work to do, they believe that with legislative support and adoption, this proposed funding system will be a tool to tackle the larger issue of student success and making sure that as many students as possible complete credentials with a high value in the labor market," she said.

Dr. Boys, along with Dr. E. Gordon Gee, former President of The Ohio State University, co-chaired the Higher Education Funding Commission which was challenged with recommending a funding formula that emphasized student success and completion over enrollment.

“Southern State Community College, along with colleges and universities across Ohio, has been promoting student success for years. This funding model is an important tool for making greater gains in this area,” said Dr. Boys. “I credit Governor Kasich for transforming Ohio’s education funding model in such a progressive manner. He’s been clear about his goal to incentivize institutions to do more than simply enroll students. I was both pleased and honored to be included in the collaborative approach to build the model alongside Dr. Gee and a number of other college and university presidents. And even further appreciative to have our own Vice President of Academics, Dr. Ryan McCall, serve on the statewide implementation team. It was through this work team that the model was brought to life and we can now begin seeing this results-based system in action.”

Workforce Development

Gov. Kasich proposed programs to support Ohio’s manufacturing workforce, particularly by expanding vocational education opportunities.

“Community colleges play an indispensable role in training our future workforce,” said Dr. Boys. “Locally, Southern State provides both credit and non-credit training to thousands of future workers. We eagerly accept Governor Kasich’s charge to produce a highly trained and qualified workforce and prepare them not only for jobs today but those in the future.”

ABLE-GED

Gov. Kasich proposed a new system in which two-year colleges will work with adults who need a high school diploma. The system will help to both assist adults in gaining that credential and to encourage them to attain more education and credentials.

“The on-campus delivery of Adult Basic Literacy and Education/GED programming offered at Southern State has long been a model for Ohio,” said Dr. Boys. “The initial access and seamless pathway to college has transformed lives since our college’s inception in 1975.”

Southern State’s program has enrolled 19,450 people, ages 16-87, and served thousands more through GED practice tests and other services.

“Community colleges specialize in taking people from where they are to where they want to go,” said Rafinski. “We are pleased to learn of the pilot program and are grateful for the opportunity to further assist people who are trying to help themselves.”

To learn more about educational opportunities at Southern State Community College, please call 1-800-628-7722; enter ext. 2687 for Southern State’s Adult Opportunity Center which offers ABLE/GED programs; enter ext. 4510 for Southern State’s Workforce Development and Community Services. For more information, visit www.sccc.edu.