

Ohio not well positioned to achieve attainment goal

State education leaders recently held a day-long forum and a Statehouse press conference to highlight the fact that Ohio will likely fall far short of its goal -- for 65 percent of residents to earn a degree or credential by 2025 -- given the current 43 percent attainment and national ranking of 33rd.

“Ohioans should not and will not accept that standing and here’s why: economists ... estimate that in just two years, nearly two-thirds of all jobs will require some post-high school education and many would argue that we’re already at that point,” said Senate Education Committee Chair Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering). “There isn’t a job around that pays a living wage that doesn’t require education and expertise.”



Despite efforts to achieve improvement – including creation of the College Credit Plus program and providing for an increased number of state-funded childcare slots – “there’s a lot we’re not getting right,” Lehner said.

Lehner, and Rep. Andy Brenner (R-Powell), chair of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, agree that Ohio needs to take action on a number of policy recommendations including increased investments in early childhood education, high quality teachers and need-based higher education grants.

Stanford University economist Eric Hanushek, who spoke at the event, said policy leaders should be asking, “How can we put money behind effectiveness?” – focusing on how, rather than how much, existing and new money should best be spent. He cited Florida, where education funding has remained stagnant over the last 20 years but significant educational gains have been achieved, as an example and cautioned that there is no exact recipe for success.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria acknowledged that Ohio has “got a lot of work to do,” but offered assurance that a strategic plan currently under development will provide a roadmap to improved educational outcomes.