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## **Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Designates Ohio as a Leadership State**

**Columbus, Ohio** –Governor Ted Strickland announced today that the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (P21) has designated Ohio as a Leadership State based on its demonstrated commitment to world class skills and knowledge in Ohio’s education system.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is the leading national advocacy organization focused on integrating 21st century learning, such as critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills, into core subjects. Ohio is the 14<sup>th</sup> state to join P21’s State Leadership Initiative, a coalition aimed at creating rigorous education systems.

“It’s no secret that companies look for new employees who are innovative, think critically, and know how to solve complex problems,” Strickland said. “In Ohio, by arming our students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and knowledge, we’re preparing them for the cutting-edge jobs our economy is creating.”

The 14 member states educate more than 12 million students or 25 percent of the United States K-12 enrollment.

In becoming a Leadership State, Ohio has committed to, within the next three years:

- Ensure that every educator participates in at least one significant professional development program focused on integrating 21st century skills into content
- Update state standards to reflect a combination of skills and content
- Develop and introduce one significant assessment of 21st century skills

“It is important that states recognize that they are not just competing locally, but globally,” said Ken Kay, president of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. “Ohio’s application is further evidence of the increased importance of benchmarking assessments to international tests that measure critical thinking, problem solving, oral and written communication skills, and other skills. While this work has only just begun, it is a vital first step.”

Joining the Partnership for 21st Century Skills builds on the accomplishments of Ohio’s biennial budget bill and education plan, which:

- Establishes a framework to develop student-centered, collaborative, professional, and innovative learning environments
- Benchmarks Ohio students against their domestic and international peers
- Prepares and supports educators to ensure students thrive in today’s world

“Ohio’s designation as a Leadership State, coupled with our state’s new education plan, will ensure that 21st century learning is infused into our classrooms and curricula,” said Strickland. “Ohio is committed to providing every student with the skills and knowledge that will help them succeed after graduation in a fast-moving world where jobs are constantly advancing.”

As part of Ohio’s work with P21, the state will review and revise pre-K through grade 12 academic content standards and benchmark them to world-leading standards, revise and align teacher standards to the new content standards, ensure instruction prepares students for postsecondary success, and develop a new system of student assessments with multiple measures that go beyond traditional assessments.

"Ohio's school children deserve educational opportunities that prepare them for the future," said Deborah S. Delisle, state superintendent of public instruction. "By joining P21, and with the support of leaders at the state level and in our schools, we are building a foundation for education that will help our students achieve and succeed, whatever the future may bring. It is an honor for Ohio to be accepted as a leadership state and we look forward to deepening our work with Ken Kay and his team."

“Today, our students must learn the critical skills to compete in a 21st century economy,” said Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut. “Ohio’s role as a Leadership State reinforces our commitment to preparing our students with the skills and knowledge that will help them succeed as employees, citizens and leaders in this new economy.”

Ohio will establish a state advisory committee that will include a broad group of leaders and policymakers from education, arts and civic organizations, the business community, government, parents, students and foundations.

“Our ability to attract and retain the state’s top talent is a key driver in growing Ohio’s economy,” said Ohio Department of Development Director Lisa Patt-McDaniel. “Our Department is working closely with our education partners to prepare workers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, demand-driven economy and to ensure Ohio’s businesses have access to the highly skilled workers they need to succeed in today’s competitive workforce.”

**About the Partnership for 21st Century Skills:** The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is the leading advocacy organization focused on infusing 21st century skills into education. The organization brings together the business community, education leaders, and policy-makers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education to ensure every child’s success as citizens and workers in the 21st century. The Partnership encourages schools, districts, and states to advocate for the infusion of 21st century skills into education and provides tools and resources to help facilitate and drive change.

21st Century Skills Leadership States include: Arizona, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin and West Virginia.

This initiative has received support from ranking members of Ohio’s House and Senate Education Committees, the State Board of Education, the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Education Association, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, the Ohio Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Administrators, the Ohio STEM Learning Network, netTrekker, the KnowledgeWorks Foundation and others.