



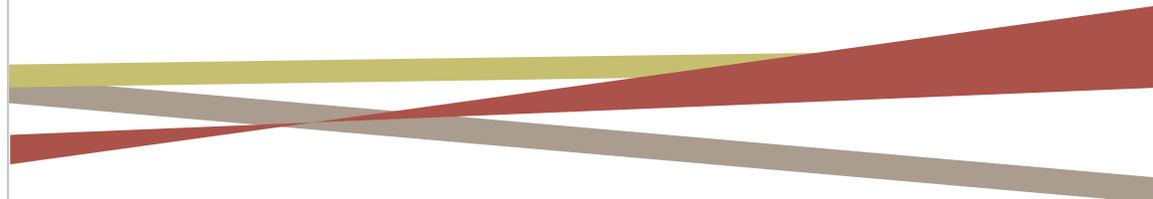
REDUCING THE PREVALENCE OF OBESITY A STEP FORWARD 2003-2010



REDUCING THE

PREVALENCE OF OBESITY

A STEP FORWARD



Dear Friends,

Since 2003, the Osteopathic Heritage Foundations have encouraged effective community planning, collaboration and strategies to reduce and prevent obesity, primarily through the School Wellness Initiative. The Foundations' investments have focused on empowering youth, parents, teachers, school personnel and community members to develop and implement sustainable strategies to increase access to physical activity and healthy food options.

Over the past seven years, local communities have implemented strategies designed to positively impact future generations, including strengthening wellness policies, expanding opportunities for physical activity, and shifting to healthier food options. Moving forward, districts participating in the Foundations' School Wellness Initiative are well positioned to adopt provisions within Ohio's Healthy Choices for Healthy Children (SB 210) related to physical activity, nutrition and health services. Participating school districts are commended for their efforts and are encouraged to build on successes that are improving the health and wellbeing of youth, educators, families and local citizens.

This report describes the Foundations' investments in strategies implemented at the local level to increase opportunities for physical activity and healthy food options. Although we have taken **A Step Forward**, continued attention, collaboration and additional resource are required to reverse the staggering obesity trends. The Foundations remain steadfast in their commitment to working with various sectors of the community to advance healthy living environments for vulnerable populations, especially children.

We look forward to your support in this vital health issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Terri Donlin Huesman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Terri Donlin Huesman
Director of Programs

Purpose of Report

The Foundations established the Obesity Prevention Funding Priority to proactively address the insidious obesity epidemic, supporting comprehensive community planning and implementation of prevention strategies in central and southeastern Ohio.

This report presents an overview of the Foundations' Obesity Prevention Funding Priority, including investments, activities and community improvements. The intent of the report is to contribute to the collective learning about strategic investments and approaches that have moved us **A Step Forward** in reducing the prevalence of obesity.

Our goal: Reducing and Preventing Obesity

As a result of grantmaking investments, the Foundations expected the following overarching outcomes:

- Advocacy efforts that resulted in additional support and leveraged resources to address obesity.
- Increases in the number of community coalitions, school districts and other groups that set and achieved collaborative goals to reduce obesity in their communities.
- Increases in the number and types of organizations that make policy and implement changes to support healthy nutrition and physical activity for the community at-large.
- Increases in the number of individuals and families that are physically active.
- Increases in the number of individuals and families that consume nutritious foods.

The Foundations supported multiple efforts to build capacity, advance innovative and effective programs, and further advocacy efforts. To date, the Foundations have approved \$4.4 million in support of the obesity project, which includes the School Wellness Initiative and related investments in central and southeastern Ohio.

Reducing the Prevalence of Obesity: A priority for the Osteopathic Heritage Foundations

Nationally, obesity has grown substantially for adults and children over the past 30 years. With children specifically, obesity rates for ages 6 to 11 increased from 6.5% in 1980 to 19.6% in 2008. In the same period, obesity among adolescents ages 12 to 19 increased from 5.0% to 18.1%.^{1,2} In Ohio, more than a third of children are either overweight or obese and Ohio ranks 12th highest in rates of childhood obesity.³ Children who are obese when they are 10 years old have an 80 percent chance of being obese as an adult.⁴

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As obesity rates escalate, so too does the propensity for chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Overweight or obese children often face difficult problems such as poor learning, bullying, teasing, low self-confidence, depression, back and leg pain, and poor sleep. Recent predictions also indicate that the current generation of children, due to unhealthy weights, could be the first to have a shorter life span than their parents.

Beyond threats to health and longevity, obesity has an economic impact on society. For adults, obesity-related direct medical costs have grown nationally from high estimates of \$78.5 billion in 1998 to \$147 billion in 2008.⁵ For children, direct medical costs associated with overweight and obesity related care is estimated to be \$14.1 billion annually.⁶ In Ohio specifically, direct spending for obesity-related medical care for adults is estimated to be \$3.3 billion annually.⁷ Prevention and intervention are critical.

Reversing the rising obesity trends will take time, perhaps generations, and a requisite for success is a concerted effort from multiple sectors in the community, including government, business, media, parks and recreation, schools, healthcare, faith-based organizations, philanthropy and citizens. The national trends are now well recognized and communities across the country are working to develop effective and sustainable strategies to take **A Step Forward** toward positive, healthy lifestyles – capitalizing on opportunities to impact places where people learn, live, work and play.

Initial steps by the Foundations were to focus support on community planning and collaborative efforts, including the work of two groups, Healthy & Fit in Columbus and the Appalachian Healthy Living Task Force in southeast Ohio. These efforts helped identify community needs and available resources and provided a framework for the Foundations' targeted support within the public education system through the School Wellness Initiative. Based on nationally recognized best practices, the School Wellness Initiative was designed to assist public school districts in planning and implementing effective wellness plans, establishing district wellness councils and developing strategies to improve sustainable access to physical activity and healthy foods.

Investing for Impact



The school environment was determined to be a venue for significant improvements with the potential to positively impact large student populations, as well as families, staff and community members. Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) coordinated school health model, the Foundations developed the School Wellness Initiative and invited school districts in central and southeastern Ohio to participate.

The design, intent and level of investment varied based on district size, readiness and demonstrated commitment. In central Ohio, the Foundations supported Columbus City Schools in the district’s efforts to make systemic change within a large, urban school district. In southeastern Ohio, the Foundations invested in sustainable improvements led by rural Appalachian school districts, offering a flexible framework for districts to tailor improvements to local needs. Funding and technical assistance supported participating school districts in the development and implementation of high-performing wellness councils, comprehensive wellness policies and enhanced access to physical activity and healthy food options.

In addition to the School Wellness Initiative, the Foundations provided leadership and resources for a number of local and regional community planning and collaborative efforts, including Healthy & Fit and the Appalachian Ohio Healthy Living Task Force.

School Wellness Initiative

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|--------------------|---|
| Central Ohio: | Columbus City Schools, Franklin County
\$2.2 million over five years, including technical support |
| Southeastern Ohio: | 22 school districts in Athens, Hocking, Jackson, Meigs, Morgan, Perry, Vinton and Washington counties
\$1.7 million over five years, including technical support |

Related Investments

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Community Planning and Collaboration: | Healthy & Fit and Appalachian Ohio Healthy Living Task Force
\$603,000 over six years |
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Strategies for Schools to Promote Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

Based on a review of scientific evidence, the CDC identified ten (10) strategies that schools could implement to address and prevent obesity. These strategies provided a framework for the Foundations' School Wellness Initiative.

Build a Strong Foundation

1. Address physical activity and nutrition through a Coordinated School Health Program.
2. Designate a school health coordinator and maintain an active school health council.
3. Assess the school's health policies and programs and develop a plan for improvements.
4. Strengthen the school's nutrition and physical activity policies.

Take Action

5. Implement a high-quality health promotion program for school staff.
6. Implement a high-quality course of study in health education.
7. Implement a high-quality course of study in physical education.
8. Increase opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.
9. Implement a quality school meals program.
10. Ensure that students have appealing, healthy choices in foods and beverages offered outside of the school meals program.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS



Cultivating a Healthy and Active Urban School Culture

System and policy changes are challenging under the best conditions, and shifting the priorities and policies within a large, urban school district may appear insurmountable to some. Yet, in 2005, Columbus City Schools, in partnership with the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, accepted the responsibility to initiate efforts and take **A Step Forward** in improving health and wellness opportunities within the district.

Columbus City Schools first formed a diverse, representative, district-level School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and subsequently developed policies and guidelines to improve the health and quality of life for students, staff, families and community members. During the planning year, the SHAC completed a district level School Health Index, which led to the development of a Wellness Policy adopted by the Columbus City School Board of Education.

This process aligns with the CDC's Coordinated School Health Model and helped Columbus City Schools gain funding, engage influential parties and operate with a plan for the ensuing years. The model substantiates the need for making incremental changes by pursuing strategic opportunities, while maintaining focus and vision.

Keys to Success

Time, Dedication and Leadership

Creating systems-level change takes time, dedication and leadership. The Foundation's investment of over \$2 million in a five-year period ensured Columbus City Schools had the financial support and time to pilot strategies and then implement policy changes district-wide. For example, the district developed, refined and implemented a comprehensive Body Mass Index (BMI) screening and referral program for K, 3, 5 and 7 grades.

With leadership and support from the superintendent, the SHAC, inclusive of physical education and activity, staff wellness, nutrition, communications and school health services representatives, was able to successfully implement a comprehensive district-wide wellness policy designed to create the healthiest school environment possible. Equally important, an effective wellness champion and coordinator helped ensure consistent messaging and communication among all team members. The coordinator identified opportunities for change and pursued a persistent, persuasive approach in advocating for change. As a result of this success, the district will provide sustaining funds for the wellness coordinator position.

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A Blueprint for Change



While developing the wellness policy, the SHAC recognized the need to establish specific nutritional guidelines for the entire district and dramatically shift the tide in support of the newly established goals. The Nutrition Committee developed a comprehensive five-year plan to provide healthier school meals, which has begun to transform the nutritional setting at every building in the district. Notable key accomplishments include:

- *Committing to water-only vending:* With the superintendent's support, the district moved to water-only vending in fall 2008 – resulting in the elimination of all soda, sports drinks and other unhealthy beverages from student-accessed vending. This supported the district's goal of improving nutrition and providing a healthy school environment to support high academic performance.
- *No competitive food sales:* The elimination of all competitive food sales as a result of a directive from district administration further supported efforts to provide healthier choices. Competitive foods are generally unhealthy and sold outside the United States Department of Agriculture's school meal program.
- *Centralizing student vending contracts for healthier vending options:* Vending contracts were centralized and the Snackwise® food rating system was implemented. Execution of Snackwise® included a three-year plan to increase percentages of healthy snacks resulting in the elimination of products with the lowest nutrient quality. To address concerns of school principals' regarding discretionary funds, the new system ensures building vending revenues remain level or increase over time.
- *Serving up a high-quality meals program:* The SHAC fully implemented its nutritional guidelines with a food service contract that required healthier meals in all 160 district school buildings. All schools include healthier versions of popular foods such as pizza and á la carte items that meet or exceed National Child Nutrition Standards. Similarly, only low-fat milk, water or 100% fruit juice is available during meal periods. All district students now have unlimited access to fresh fruits and vegetables during meal times.

- Elementary school cafeterias were transformed into *Kid's Way Cafe* and now offer three entrée choices and salads.
- Middle school cafeterias are now home to *Energy Download Zone Cafes* and offer students eight entrée choices, including fresh deli offerings and entrée salads.
- High school cafeterias were transformed into *Cross Roads Cafes*, which closely resemble college dining halls with 10 entrée choices, made-to-order sandwiches/wraps and salad/pasta bars.

While Columbus City Schools has made significant and sustainable strides over the past five years, childhood obesity remains a significant community issue – one that requires continued attention and resources. Leaders within the district, including the SHAC, remain steadfast in their dedication to reducing the prevalence of obesity and implementing long-term efforts to positively impact staff, students and the community.

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Serving up a high-quality meals program: All schools include healthier versions of popular foods such as pizza and à la carte items that meet or exceed National Child Nutrition Standards.



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Related Investment: Healthy & Fit

In 2003, the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation commissioned the Healthy & Fit community planning process for the city of Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio. The planning process, facilitated by Children's Hunger Alliance, identified and developed strategies to create an environment that supports healthy foods and fitness behaviors for children and families. It resulted in projects to reduce the prevalence of overweight children. In addition, the Foundation provided resources to a number of local organizations to support successful programming, including the YMCA of Central Ohio, Columbus Public Health and Children's Hunger Alliance. This work helped provide a framework for the School Wellness Initiative.

Sustainable Community Wellness in Rural School Districts

In southeastern Ohio, the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville sought sustainable change in various rural Appalachian communities and offered a flexible framework for school districts to tailor improvements to local needs. The Foundation recognized the unique challenges of some rural areas, including narrow and sometimes unpaved roads, making many areas unsafe for biking or walking. There are few community parks, gyms and/or fitness centers in rural communities—and most are too inconvenient or cost prohibitive for many families to routinely visit. Access to health services and information is a challenge and obesity rates in Appalachia America are higher than national and statewide averages.

With schools being the center of activity in many rural areas, the Foundation utilized the CDC's coordinated school health model to support districts in implementing improvements. The School Wellness Initiative in southeastern Ohio included support for planning, capacity building and up to two years for implementation. The Initiative focused on sustainable changes within built environments and allowed districts to tailor improvements around identified needs related to physical activity, healthy eating or health services.

Key Steps and Results

Strengthened Leadership & Wellness Councils

Planning and support to develop wellness councils were among the first steps toward creating successful programs and policies. With Foundation support, participating districts engaged in a planning process using the CDC's coordinated school health model. Using the School Health Index, districts self-assessed and analyzed strengths and opportunities relative to eight modules. Wellness teams then identified goals and developed action plans to positively impact the lives of youth, families and staff in the school communities.

Investment in the wellness councils helped ensure long-term sustainability for the Wellness Initiative. Districts formed diverse teams to address issues and created a "home" for health and wellness. Because of the variability among school districts, some created centralized teams while others opted for subcommittees or building-level groups. Councils with strong buy-in from superintendents, physical education teachers, food service personnel and community members realized a "shift in culture" within the district.

Enhanced Built Environments

The design of the Wellness Initiative provided funding for up to two years for participating districts to implement strategies. Districts could address one or more of three areas based on identified local needs, including sustainable activities and policies related to improving access to i) physical activity, ii) nutritious foods and/or iii) health services.

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All participating districts increased access to safe and convenient physical activity opportunities for their community.

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Improved Access to Physical Activity

All participating districts increased access to safe and convenient physical activity opportunities for their community, including seven (7) outdoor walking paths and thirteen (13) fitness centers. Districts approached access to physical activity from a community-wide perspective, starting with changes for students, but also recognizing the opportunity to address needs with staff, families and community members.

- *New or Extended Outdoor Walking Paths:* Students now safely walk and run regularly during physical education classes, athletic team trainings or after hours. Various walking clubs have formed and include youth, parents, staff and community members. Promoting the new paths has helped raise awareness and encouraged use within communities.
- *New or Renovated School-Based Fitness Centers:* Students now learn about cardiovascular workouts with equipment such as treadmills, stationary bicycles and elliptical machines. Staff and community members routinely use the centers after school hours, including firefighters who serve as role models for youth.
- *New Indoor Exercise Options:* Many districts prioritized indoor exercise options to ensure year-round access to physical activity. Some districts installed equipment and programs such as climbing walls, Wii Fit™ and Dance Dance Revolution. Others adopted active learning styles incorporating movement into classroom instruction and several identified indoor paths for students, families and staff use.
- *Lifelong Approach to Fitness:* Many districts shifted their curriculum to focus on lifelong health and wellness. Aspects include learning about cardiovascular health, lifetime fitness skills (e.g., hiking, climbing, and archery) and encouraging more widespread participation. Programs such as Fitnessgram® and Biomeasure® help students track personal progress.

Increased Access to Nutritious Food

School districts made incremental changes to increase access to nutritious foods. Several added salad bars, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. New ovens have helped reduce the fried food offerings and milk vending has been implemented as a healthy alternative to soda and sports drinks. Several districts now offer universal breakfast, a

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federally subsidized program that offers breakfast at no charge, regardless of income, to all students, with one offering it as a Grab n' Go sack. New gardens and greenhouses encourage hands-on learning about growing fruits and vegetables. With snack and beverage vending, most districts sell only low calorie drinks, water, 100% fruit juice, milk and use Snackwise® for healthier options.

Improved Health and Wellness Services

Some districts focused on improving health and wellness services. A few revised or expanded their health education curriculum to be more comprehensive by covering all aspects of health. Some held community forums to educate parents and community members on the need for lifelong health and wellness practices. Districts now conduct a variety of health screenings, including blood pressure checks, blood sugar tests and body mass index assessments. Many schools offer staff health promotion programs, including at least one who offered reduced staff health insurance premiums for sustained healthy behaviors.

Technical Support

Technical assistance was an important component of the Initiative's design and provided support to participating districts that varied in terms of readiness to change. Technical assistance included grant writing, plan development, implementation strategies, monitoring and assessment, and sustainability planning. Districts were encouraged to gain additional technical support and educational opportunities by participating in national, state and regional conferences, including the state's Annual School Health Conference.

Related Investments: Appalachian Ohio Healthy Living Task Force

In 2005, the Governor's Office of Appalachia and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville partnered to co-sponsor the Appalachian Ohio Healthy Living Task Force. The task force included representatives from state and local governments, non-profits, foundations, area agencies on aging, local health care providers, mental health boards and educators. The task force held a series of meetings to learn about the underlying causes of obesity and identify model community-based programs to address the issue. This work helped inform the framework of the School Wellness Initiative.



Healthy Children, Healthy Communities



The Foundations' investments in the School Wellness Initiative and related community planning and collaborative processes have resulted in sustainable improvements that are positively impacting communities across central and southeastern Ohio. Districts participating in the School Wellness Initiative now have strong and engaged wellness councils that serve as guiding forces for healthy nutrition and increased physical activity within schools and communities. The councils include a broad array of educators, parents and partners that work collaboratively to assess local needs and prioritize goals for reducing obesity.

Schools have changed policies and practices to support healthier food options and offer more opportunities for physical activity. Further, districts have improved built environments to increase access for students, staff, families and community members to be physically active, eat more nutritious food and learn more about improving their health. Moreover, schools and organizations continue to build upon the Foundations' investment in wellness efforts.

Over the past seven years, we collectively have taken **A Step Forward** in addressing obesity prevention. Yet, reversing the decades of rising childhood obesity rates will require concerted efforts, continued dedication and additional resources by multiple sectors in the community. The Osteopathic Heritage Foundations are committed to strategically and collaboratively advancing the development and implementation of policies and programs that will measurably result in sustainable changes for vulnerable children and communities.

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- ³ F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2010. (2010). *Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*. Retrieved October 2010 from <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/obesity2010/>

Partners in Change

The Foundations recognize that **A Step Forward** in the collective commitment to reduce the prevalence of obesity has been taken in central and southeastern Ohio. We further recognize the dedicated leadership, involvement and contributions of the school districts and the organizations that have partnered with the Foundations in this effort.



School District/Organization

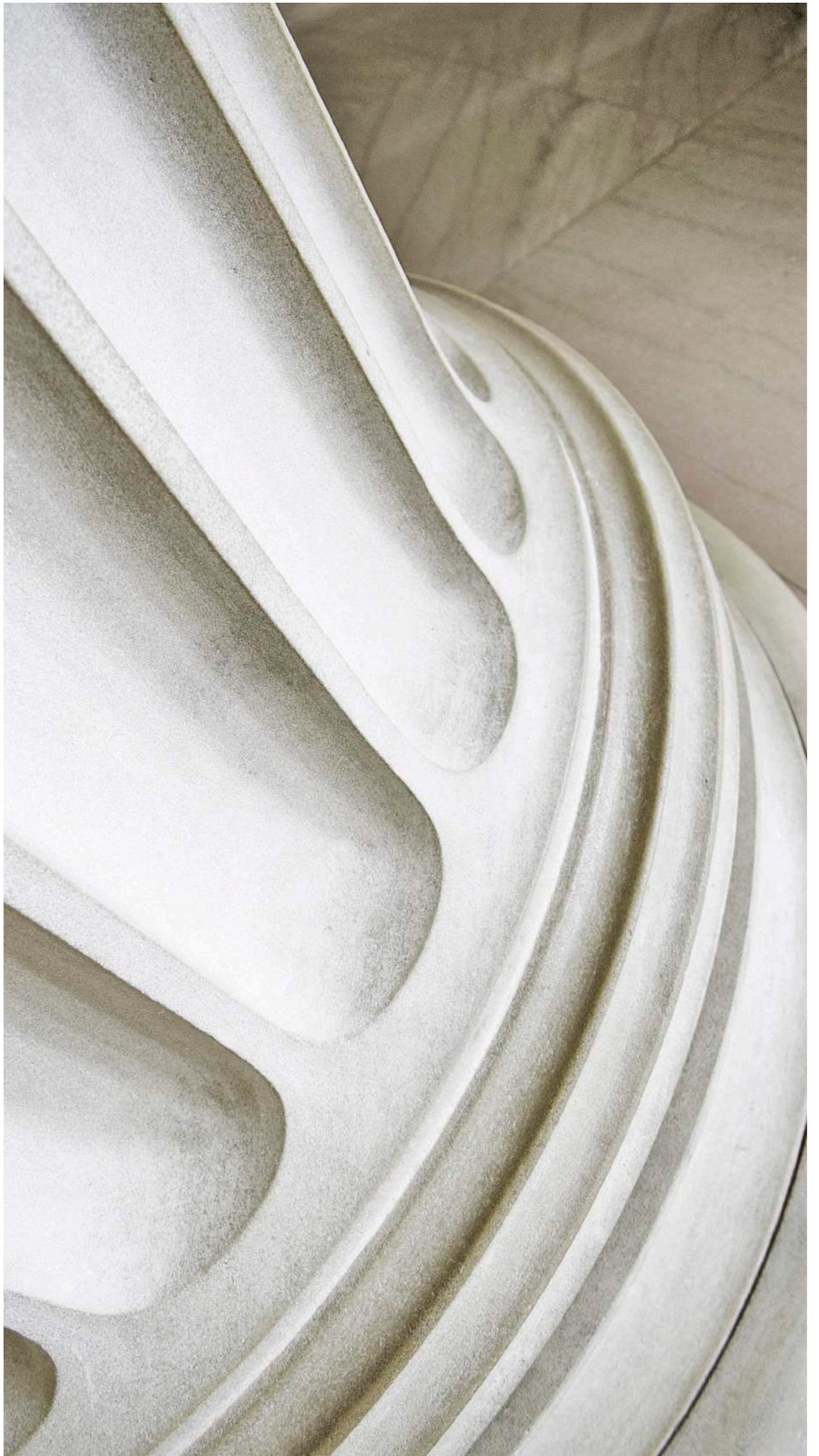
Alexander Local School District	Marietta City School District
Athens City School District	Morgan Local School District
Belpre City School District	Nelsonville-York City School District
Children's Hunger Alliance	New Lexington City School District
Columbus City School District	Northern Local School District
Columbus Public Health	Oak Hill Union Local School District
Crooksville Exempted Village School District	Southern Local School District - Meigs County
Eastern Local School District	Southern Local School District - Perry County
Federal Hocking Local School District	Trimble Local School District
Fort Frye Local School District	Vinton County Local School District
Frontier Local School District	Warren Local School District
Jackson City School District	Wellston City School District
Knox County Health Department	Wolf Creek Local School District
Logan-Hocking Local School District	YMCA of Central Ohio

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About the Osteopathic Heritage Foundations

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville (the Foundations) are pre-eminent in supporting and improving community health and quality of life programs in central and southeastern Ohio as well as advancing, on a national scope, osteopathic medical care, medical research and osteopathic medical education. The Foundations recognize the significant responsibilities associated with the advancement and expansion of osteopathic medicine and measurable improvements in the health of our communities. The mission of the Foundations is to improve the health and quality of life in the community through education, research and service consistent with our osteopathic heritage.

Osteopathic Heritage Foundations

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About the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University



The Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs is a multidisciplinary school at Ohio University. It comprises faculty and professional staff who work with non-profit, government, and business partners to help solve problems and meet the needs of Appalachian Ohio and the state. The work of the Voinovich School is focused in three key areas: Public Service and Leadership; Energy and the Environment; and Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness. In each area, the School has an established track record of conducting applied research and providing services that address regional and state problems. The Voinovich School has been a consultant to the Foundations and school districts on the obesity prevention work.

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