

NNDS conference on blended learning focused on future of education in Ohio

Guest Speaker, Dr. Robert Sommers: We need to make Ohio a welcome place for digital education

BEAVER, Pa. – As technology continues to be a major factor in the lives of students today, educators must learn about and decide how best to integrate technology and instruction in the classroom. On Wednesday, representatives from 20 of Ohio’s highest performing school districts attended a seminar to learn more about the possibility of incorporating blended learning into their current curriculum.

The seminar, hosted by the [National Network of Digital Schools](#) –leaders in online and blended learning—and the Ohio-based Alliance for High Quality Education, focused on the important role that technology has in today’s educational landscape. Blended learning refers to the convergence of traditional face-to-face instruction and online instruction in today’s schools. “We are all here today because we see the trend toward a blended model is inevitable,” said Jim Betts, a consultant for the Alliance.

Among those school districts represented were: [Avon Lake City Schools](#), [Beachwood City Schools](#), [Berea City School District](#), [Brecksville-Broadview Heights City Schools](#), [Dublin City Schools](#), [Euclid City Schools](#), [Grandview Heights City Schools](#), [Granville Exempted Village Schools](#), [Hudson City School District](#), [Hilliard City School District](#), [Mariemont School District](#), [Montgomery County Educational Service Center](#), [Olentangy Local School District](#), [Orange City School District](#), [Perrysburg Schools](#), [Rocky River City Schools](#), [South-Western City Schools](#), Sycamore City School District, [Vandalia-Butler City Schools](#), and [Wyoming City Schools](#).

The group of superintendents, curriculum directors, and teachers learned how NNDS develops its courses, how a student is assessed, and how an online course is taught.

To demonstrate, the seminar was held at one of [Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School](#)’s offices in Midland, Pennsylvania. The largest cyber-charter school in Pennsylvania, PA Cyber is a leader in online learning and a client of NNDS. During lunch, attendees had the chance to meet with PA Cyber teachers and observe a virtual class.

Scott Prebles, superintendent of the Brecksville Broadview Heights School District, a suburb of Cleveland, said he was impressed by what he saw presented at the seminar regarding online education but wondered, “How do we make it work on our schools?”

Dr. Robert D. Sommers, appointed in February by Gov. John Kasich as director of the Office for 21st Century Learning, was guest speaker. He said those in attendance had already taken the first step to implementing blended learning into their schools by just being in attendance.

“I am impressed that you are interested in understanding blended learning,” he said. PA Cyber Founder and CEO Dr. Nick Trombetta added, “You being here means you are willing to think differently [about education]. You understand what the school of the future is.”

Sommers said schools have many different models of online education to investigate.

“Everybody thinks they have the silver bullet, but the beauty of blended education is that we can create a million silver bullets.”

In March, Ohio’s Digital Learning Task Force will issue their report on online learning in Ohio, and Sommers said the report will recommend that some changes be made to better allow for blended learning opportunities to happen in the state’s schools.

“[We need to] make the state a welcome place for blended education. The legislation won’t be prescriptive, it will be permissive... it won’t say you have to, but that you can.”

About NNDS and Lincoln Interactive: *The National Network of Digital School is a 501(c)3 non-profit management foundation and the developer and exclusive provider of [Lincoln](#).*

[Interactive](#), the nation's premier online curriculum. A fully accredited early kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum, Lincoln Interactive is used by more than 400 schools nationwide, including statewide online schools in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Colorado.

About the Alliance for High Quality Education: The Alliance for High Quality Education is a consortium of 60 of the highest-performing school districts in Ohio. It represents its members' interests on matters of state education policy and funding, as well as improving educational opportunities for students in their districts.