

November 17, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

I have really enjoyed working with you to improve the lives and education of Ohio schoolchildren. That is why I am sending you this personal letter.

Since 2002, thanks to the leadership of founder Abigail Wexner and an engaged and committed board, KidsOhio.org has been privileged to:

- Provide data-driven nonpartisan analyses and fresh perspectives on complex issues by producing over 90 reports, fact sheets and presentations;
- Raise public understanding of issues, including rising poverty in suburban schools, third grade reading, voter participation in school board primary elections, career-technical education, and high-performing district and charter schools; and
- Work with a wide range of individuals and organizations to improve opportunities for Ohio children.

The KidsOhio.org board members have a great sense of accomplishment. They determined that the organization had been credible and effective. As a staff, we were fortunate that our board cared about getting results and not about getting credit.

But, KidsOhio.org will be ending its nearly 15 years of work by year's end. Our funders and our board have determined that KidsOhio.org has made a significant difference and now is the time for our community to explore other means of conducting nonpartisan analysis and public policy work.

We thank our financial supporters for their generosity. Because we did not pursue government funds, we had greater freedom.

My long-time colleague Mary Hopmann and I will settle accounts and close the office. We owe Mary our appreciation for her dedication and creativity. She will be pursuing new opportunities to continue her lifelong mission of empowering and supporting children and families. Our website www.kidsohio.org will remain open for the next two years so readers can access past reports.

Fortunately, my opportunity to serve our community does not end with the sunset of KidsOhio.org. I am honored to report that Abigail Wexner and other community leaders have asked me to be available to advise on specific areas of education policy.

Mary and I thank you for this opportunity to work together to make a difference for Ohio children.

For Ohio's children,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a blue horizontal line.

Mark Real