



## INFORMATION

by Robert Sprague, Ohio treasurer of state

### STABLE accounts encourage empowerment, independence and stability

August is ABLÉ to Save Month, a national campaign aimed at increasing awareness of ABLÉ accounts and encouraging the use of these valuable investment options. As students across the Buckeye State head back to the classroom, there is no better time

to talk about the life-changing impact ABLÉ accounts can make for people living with disabilities.

With costs rising on nearly everything we buy and ongoing economic challenges nationwide, many Ohio families are feeling the squeeze when it comes to back-to-

school shopping and the expenses that come with a new school year. And, as educators know all too well, disability-related expenses can create additional financial strain on the families of students with disabilities.

However, in the Ohio Treasurer's office, we have a powerful tool to help alleviate some of those financial pressures, unlock each person's potential and make our communities and economy stronger. Through the STABLE Account program — Ohio's ABLÉ program — the Ohio Treasurer's office plays a key role in the effort to enhance financial independence and stability for people living with disabilities and their families.

The STABLE Account program was launched in 2016 following the passage of the federal Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act. STABLE accounts are 529-like specialized savings and investment accounts for people with disabilities. Before STABLE accounts, people living with disabilities could only save \$2,000 before losing means-tested benefits such as Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These old

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## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

### What will your district look like two, five or eight years down the road?

As leaders in your district, it's important to look toward the future and anticipate opportunities and roadblocks in preparing students for school and lifetime success.

Let OSBA be your partner in developing an effective, aligned strategic plan to map your district's future. Call OSBA's Division of Board and Management Services at (800) 589-OSBA to get started today.



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORK!

compiled by Scott Gerfen, assistant editor

## Brecksville students' butterfly project wins EPA youth award

Five students at **Brecksville-Broadview Heights City's** elementary school have won the President's Environmental Youth Award for their Monarch Butterfly Project, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 announced.

**Eliza Chen, Eloise Chen, Emmeline Chen, Mary Rose Geiser and Michael Geiser** developed and delivered eight presentations to more than 50 of their fellow students, as well as

their friends and families, about the importance of taking action to save the monarchs. The team also provided seeds, materials and instruction for audiences to build their own monarch habitats.

"The kids worked on this project when school was remote and the world felt bleak," **Bridget Geiser**, Monarch Butterfly Project co-sponsor, told a local newspaper. "This project inspired them to learn more about the environment and how they could make a

difference."

The President's Environmental Youth Award was established by the Environmental Education Act of 1970 and recognizes outstanding community-level environmental projects by kindergarten through 12th-grade youth that promote awareness of natural resources and encourage positive community involvement. This year, 47 students worked as a team or individually on 10 projects.

Source: [cleveland.com](http://cleveland.com)

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rules discouraged saving and investing, and asset limits often kept individuals living in the financial margins.

Now, STABLE account holders can save up to \$16,000 each year without jeopardizing federal assistance. If the account holder is employed, he or she can save an additional \$12,880 each year. Earnings on STABLE accounts grow tax-free as long as funds are spent on qualified expenses, such as education, transportation, health care, assistive technology, personal support services and many others.

For parents, a STABLE account can be life-changing as it provides a secure and sound way to manage

funds and navigate various disability-related expenses. Additionally, for students preparing for graduation and entering the workforce, opening an account can help build the foundation for independence throughout adulthood. We've heard many stories of account holders buying cars, paying rent and even putting down payments on their first homes. This financial stability is powerful and can give students and their families the peace of mind that comes with planning for the future.

As the nation's first and premier ABLA program, STABLE accounts now serve nearly 30,000 account

holders. In Ohio, we've seen how STABLE accounts improve financial stability, promote independence and improve quality of life. There's always more work to be done, but during ABLA to Save Month, we have plenty to celebrate.

We encourage you to share this information with families in your districts that could benefit from a STABLE account. Signing up for an account is easy — it only takes about 20 minutes and can be done from the safety and comfort of home. For more information about STABLE accounts and to sign up, visit [www.stableaccount.com](http://www.stableaccount.com).