

# SPONSOR UPDATE

## MAY 2021

**Peggy Young,**  
**Director**

**Jennifer Schorr,**  
**Associate Director**

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Education Division of Buckeye Community Hope Foundation is to establish strong public community schools by adhering to quality authorizing practices, ensuring responsible oversight, and setting high standards for school performance.

### OUR VISION

The Education Division's vision is strong communities of healthy, well-educated students, and a future in which all students have access to a high quality public education. Ohio thrives as increasing numbers of schools graduate students equipped to assume a positive role in society.

### ***House passes budget bill with new K-12 education funding strategy***

The Ohio House of Representatives passed the state biennial budget bill (H.B. 110) on April 13, following weeks of deliberations. The bill includes the far-reaching overhaul of Ohio's approach to funding K-12 education commonly known as the "Cupp-Patterson" plan in recognition of the legislation's original sponsors.

The new K-12 funding plan received bipartisan support in the House, clearing the lower chamber by a vote of 70-27. A dozen Democrats joined Republicans in support of H.B. 110, with a half dozen Republican votes in opposition with the majority of Democrats.

The new K-12 funding formula faces challenges in the Senate with leadership expressing concerns including over the estimated \$2 billion annual increase in spending.

### ***State Board committee considers report card reform bills***

As the Ohio House and Senate continue to consider how best to overhaul state district and school report cards, members of the State Board of Education's Legislative Committee are reviewing and assessing two legislative proposals.

Introduced by Senator Andy Brenner (R-Powell), who serves as chair of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, S.B. 145 maintains the existing six components provided for under current law.

"It moves components around to better reflect what each component does," Senator Brenner said. "It prescribes new data for each component but prohibits that data from being factored into

*Continued on pg. 2*



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## LEGISLATION FOCUSES ON ASSESSMENTS

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The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee recently heard testimony on a bipartisan bill that would eliminate student retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee and require school districts to form work groups to evaluate the amount of time students spend on testing.

Co-sponsored by Representative Gail Manning (R-N. Ridgeville), who chairs the committee, and Representative Erica Crawley (D-Columbus), H.B. 73 would reduce the amount of time spent on testing by eliminating the requirement that high school students take a college admissions assessment as a graduation requirement and combining the American government and American history end-of-course exams into one test.

The Ohio Department of Education would be required to publish a report on the amount of time Ohio students spend on assessments.

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### *Report card reform — continued*

component scores. This changes how the performance index is calculated. It changes how end-of-course exams can be included in the performance index calculations.”

Additional changes proposed in S.B. 145 include a focus on overall student growth and adding two new components: early literacy (currently labeled “improving at-risk K-3 readers) – based on third grade students’ reading proficiency rates and on year-to-year improvement among K-3 students struggling in reading – and an evaluation of

student preparedness for success.

House Bill 200, introduced by Representatives

Don Jones (R-Freeport) and Philip Robinson (D-Solon) would rename the “improving at-risk K-3 readers” component after the state’s Third Grade Reading Guarantee. It would be based on the percentage of students eligible to advance to fourth grade and would only reflect data from students who complete all of grades K-3 in that district or school building.



Both bills would eliminate the A-F letter grades. The House bill would replace them with descriptive labels (significantly exceeds expectations, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, making substantial progress toward expectations, making moderate progress toward expectations, and in need of support), while the Senate bill is expected to be amended to replace them with stars.

Some members of the State Board have expressed concern that both bills focus more on what’s best for schools and districts rather than students.

“I don’t know where the suggestions are coming from, but it really seems that ... schools are more concerned about doing well as opposed to doing well for all students,” said District 11 member Meryl Johnson. “I’m really concerned about the direction that some of these ideas are moving in.”

The board’s Legislative Committee hasn’t endorsed H.B. 200 or S.B. 145 but did pass a resolution calling on the General Assembly to eliminate the A-F rating system. It states that the board “believes that every student, regardless of mobility, should be included in a measure of K-3 literacy” and that “promotion and proficiency are two

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## **HOUSE COMMITTEE ADVANCES STUDENT RECORDS BILL**

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The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee advanced legislation (H.B. 34) that would require schools to transfer academic records within five school days after receiving a request from the student's new school or district.

Three lawmakers who serve on the committee were compelled to vote in opposition to advancing the bill after objections were raised by the Ohio Association of Independent Schools which defended withholding student records as the "least intrusive way" to motivate parents who have failed to meet their financial obligations to schools.

The bill's sponsor, Representative Catherine Ingram (D-Cincinnati), said she believes that other tools are available to settle debts and that schools have contracts with parents that are legal and binding.

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### ***Report card reform — continued***

important concerns, and that districts should be recognized for improvement."

The resolution also calls for a restructuring of the current "prepared for success" component as called for in S.B. 145 rather than elimination of the component as provided for in H.B. 200. It also recommends the creation of a new report card component "that will shine light on the performance of student groups to ensure schools are accountable for the academic achievement of ALL students in the State of Ohio."

### ***Report examines Ohio's school-based behavioral health services***

The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers recently released the 2021 School-Based Behavioral Health Services Summary report based on survey responses submitted by 76 provider organizations. The findings demonstrated continued growth of nine percent over the previous year despite COVID related interruptions or downsizing -- expanding to 224 buildings.

Highlights of the report include:

- ◆ The 76 participating organizations deliver services in more than 2800 school buildings
- ◆ This cohort of community behavioral health organizations currently provides services in approximately 73 percent of Ohio schools
- ◆ 80 percent of community providers reported being involved in general planning activities with school partners and two-thirds are members of school districts planning teams

While COVID-19 changed the way education and behavioral health services have been provided over the past year, the report is a reminder that

access to mental health services and supports remains essential.

Learn more online at:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Media/Ed-Connection/April-5-2021/Report-examines-Ohio's-school-based-behavioral-hea>



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## **CHANGES TO EDUCATOR LICENSE RENEWALS CONSIDERED**

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The State Board of Education is considering a plan providing for less-intensive pathways back to the classroom for individuals with professional or associate educator licenses.

Part of a five-year review process under the authority of the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR), the proposed changes include allowing for the reinstatement of licenses lapsed for more than five years upon successful completion of 12 semester hours of college coursework – or nine hours under a proposal being considered by the State Board’s Teaching, Leading and Learning Committee.

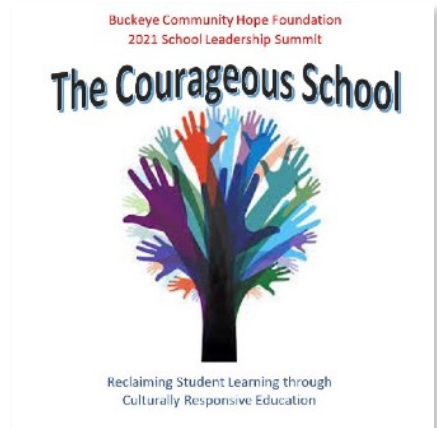
The Ohio Department of Education recommends the creation of a new one-year, non-renewable reinstatement license for individuals absent from teaching for at least one year. These individuals would work with their local professional development committees to complete renewal requirements. The license would be issued for the same grade level and subjects as the educator’s lapsed license.

## **BCHF announces 2021 School Leadership Summit**

Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) is pleased to announce its annual Leadership Summit to be held virtually via Zoom June 10-11. In response to leader input, the theme of the Summit will be: *The Courageous School: Reclaiming Student Learning through Culturally Responsive Education*. BCHF is excited to offer a conference program to support the needs of school leaders as they restart programs coming out of the COVID-19 era! Registration for the Summit opens May 1 at the following link:

[Frontline Education \(mylearningplan.com\)](https://mylearningplan.com)

The Summit will encourage school leadership teams to proactively consider student achievement and progress data, much of which indicates learning loss during the past year. The Summit is also intended to *inspire* leaders with a call to “step up” to a new vision of schooling, rather than “stepping back” to business as usual. In stepping up, leaders and their teams are encouraged to consider culturally responsive schooling practices that embrace and reach all students.



The design of the Summit will encourage school leaders to “bring” and include their leadership teams. Both general and breakout sessions will be offered virtually. Keynote presentations will address *A Legacy for All Students* and *Mental Health Needs of Diverse Students*. In between presentations, teams will have “Zoom breaks” -- collaborative work time to reflect on critical questions. Breakout sessions will pose critical planning considerations, including: What is a framework for reaching all students? How do I better develop school-wide literacy? What support systems can we reinforce for the 2021-2022 school year? What are some major strategies for culturally-responsive instruction?

BCHF will open registration for Summit participants through its new *Professional Learning Opportunities* catalog in partnership with Frontline Learning. This process will require each registrant to open a Frontline account with their first registration. The registration enables participants to track their own professional development throughout the year. Schools are encouraged to register and participate as leadership teams to benefit from as many sessions in the Summit as possible. Registration will close on June 3 -- please sign up soon!

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**FREE SCHOOL  
SAFETY 101 ONLINE  
TRAINING  
AVAILABLE**  
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School Safety 101 is an online, on demand overview of foundational concepts in school safety and violence prevention featuring the following:

- ◆ Module 1 - What is the state of school safety in today's schools?
- ◆ Module 2 - Prevention, not just response: How do we make school safety part of the way we do things in our school?
- ◆ Module 3 - How to effectively respond to crisis events in schools
- ◆ Module 4 - Where do we go from here? Improving safety in your school

Thanks to funding by a Motorola Solutions Foundation grant, the course is free to educators and other school stakeholders.

Access the course online at:  
<http://eschoolsafety.org/101>.



***Teachers' unions support peace officer training for armed school staff***

Legislation (H.B. 99) introduced against the backdrop of an ongoing lawsuit over training requirements for armed school staff recently garnered opponent testimony from more than 130 individuals.

The bill would require armed school personnel to undergo training equal to that required for a concealed handgun license rather than completion of a basic peace officer training program.

The president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers said that Ohio would be better served by providing funding for school resource officers and called for legislators to notify parents of armed staff in their children's school buildings.



The president of the Ohio Education Association told lawmakers that they should provide clear, robust standards for training, pointing out that many states require staff to complete a curriculum established by a state police officer standards and training commission.

The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio also weighed in, saying H.B. 99 would set the stage for school boards to be influenced into using private companies' standards and staff to train school personnel.

Ben Adams, one of the plaintiffs in the Madison Local School District lawsuit, said in his testimony that the legislation would put children in danger by allowing teachers to carry guns "with less training than a little league umpire," a manicurist or a bus driver.

The chairman of the House Criminal Justice Committee said hearings will continue "because it is important for us to hear from community members and interested parties who want to have their opinion heard."

***Opportunities for students abound despite pandemic***

What a challenging school year! Against the backdrop of the COVID pandemic, many schools have struggled to keep students engaged and productive. But The Academy for Urban Scholars (AUS) Columbus hasn't missed a beat.

*Continued on pg. 6*

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## **BILL WOULD ELIMINATE ACT, SAT GRADUATION REQUIREMENT**

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The House Primary and Secondary Education Committee recently heard testimony on legislation (H.B. 82) that would eliminate the requirements that students take a national standardized college and career readiness assessment to be eligible to graduate.

Co-sponsor Representatives Don Jones (R-Freeport) and Jon Cross (R-Kenton) say that the requirement is unnecessary for students and has negative consequences for schools and districts.

"As we all know, students today have different planned career and education pathways, post high school graduation, with some attending college and some entering the workforce, trades or continuing education that doesn't require this specific test," Representative Jones said.

"We have learned that many students who are not interested in the ACT test do not take the test seriously," Representative Cross added. "A student's lack of interest in the exam is reflected on scores, and therefore providing a false narrative and score of the state school report cards."

## **Opportunities abound — continued**

For Kristen Muenster, who has served as the school's director of curriculum and instruction for many years, that has included a shift in focus to adult learners through the 22+ program as vice president of the National Center for Urban Solutions' (NCUS) technology initiative, NCUS TEC, which is dedicated to closing the digital divide between African Americans and information technology.

This is the school's fourth year offering the program serving adults 22 years of age and older seeking a high school diploma. About 100 adult students are currently enrolled and about 200 have graduated through the program.

"I'm especially proud of two ladies in their mid-30s who completed the requirements to earn their diplomas in December," Muenster said. "Both were enrolled in our FANUC Handling Tool Operations and Programming course, learning to operate the robotic arms used in manufacturing and scoring in the 90s – the best in the class – on the exam. They join very few females who have completed the program and earned the certification and now have an earnings potential of about \$42 an hour. Each has three solid job leads."



One member of the NCUS team is specifically dedicated to building and nurturing relationships with employers and helping graduates find jobs. A 19-year-old student who graduated from the AWS Cloud Computing Class and earned his certification, recently received an offer for a job with an annual salary of \$52,000 because of the certifications he earned.

Industry certifications are a big focus at The AUS Columbus – for all students. Earning industry-recognized credentials serves students well, regardless of whether they plan to attend college or enter the workforce upon graduation. It's a focus that aligns with the priorities of the National Center for Urban Solutions, which operates the school and is dedicated to health and wellness, education and workforce development.

Graduation is a huge accomplishment for at-risk teens and young adults – and for adults of all ages – so The AUS Columbus made having a safe celebration for the class of 2020 a priority despite the pandemic.

*Continued on pg. 7*

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## **BILL CALLS FOR AGE APPROPRIATE SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION INSTRUCTION**

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Legislation (H.B. 105) introduced by Representatives Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati) and Scott Lipps (R-Franklin), is under consideration by the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee.

“This bill would require age-appropriate instruction in child sexual abuse prevention for kids in kindergarten through sixth grade, including information on available counseling and resources for children who are sexually abused,” Representative Kelly testified. “For seventh through twelfth grades, the bill would require age-appropriate instruction in sexual violence prevention education.”

The bill tasks the Ohio Department of Education with identifying the most appropriate curriculum with schools and districts potentially having multiple options from which to choose.

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## **Opportunities abound — continued**

“We hosted three ceremonies at the historic Valley Dale Ballroom,” Muenster said. “That allowed us to ensure there was adequate room for social distancing while still allowing each graduate to invite up to three guests to celebrate their achievement.”

The AUS Columbus is always looking for opportunities to partner with other organizations in the community and is currently contracted with Columbus City Schools to provide engagement coaches. The “At Your Door” initiative serves about 100 students who were struggling to stay engaged, with home visits aimed at identifying the barriers they face and finding solutions to address them.

The school is also working with Columbus State Community College, which received Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funds, to offer credentialing opportunities at no cost to the hardest to serve individuals. The goal is to enroll 150 students.



“We haven’t let the pandemic slow us down,” Muenster said. “Social media has been an important tool for us. Although we could not all gather for the annual African American Wellness Walk in 2020, we were able to use social media and held a ‘Walk in Your Hood.’ We had over 32 states join in our live coverage, thanks to NCB 4. Because social media is heavily used, the AA Wellness Agency was able to connect with Bubba Wallace who has signed on as an honorary chair. The Agency’s logo will now be featured on a NASCAR vehicle.”

As a result of the many changes that have occurred in education over the course of the last year, Muenster predicts that education and the workplace will look different in the future.

What won’t change is The AUS Columbus’ commitment to its students and the community.

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## OUTDOOR CLASSROOM SAFETY

With the onset of spring and students attending in-person classes, schools may be taking advantage of outdoor spaces for classes and are reminded by the Ohio School Safety Center to be aware that doing so is not without risk.

Schools are encouraged to consider four key areas when planning the use of outdoor space.

- ◆ Communications – How will communications be handled between the main building and the outdoor space in the event of an emergency? Consider use of cell phones, two-way radios and building public address systems and address their limitations.
- ◆ Line of sight, physical access, routes and schedule – Who has the ability to see students using the space? Who can gain access? Can the line of sight be obstructed in an easy, cost effective manner? Do school cameras reach the outdoor space?

*Continued on pg. 9*

## 24-Hour U-Haul Project helps those in need

Inspired by an Instagram post, Tei'Asha Simms, Academy for Urban Scholars (AUS) Youngstown's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program coordinator, spearheaded the community's first 24-Hour U-Haul Project to collect new or gently used adult and young adult clothing, coats, shoes, hygiene products and various non-perishable items to support those in need.

At the end of the 26-day drive, items donated at various locations, including AUS Youngstown, were placed in a U-Haul truck within a 24-hour period for distribution the next day.

"It's a very fun way to give back because it's challenging ... there's a goal set to fill up this U-Haul truck," Simms said. "So, it's just a fun way to give back and be purposeful in your community."

"When you get the community invested, like, 'Hey, this is not just my goal, this is our goal like as a community, we should be able to fill this U-Haul up to give back,' that's the idea of it that I get, is challenging your community," she continued. "When you (give) the community accountability for taking care of our own, it makes it just more intentional."

The Youngtown Police Department supported the project, collecting donations in-house.

On April 17, about two dozen individuals received take home food bags, hygiene bags, COVID safety kits and as many clothes as they could fit into 30-gallon bags. Clothing that wasn't distributed that day was donated to the Salvation Army, while left over food was stored for AUS Youngstown students and their families.

The National Center for Urban Solutions, which manages AUS Youngstown and The Academy for Urban Scholars Columbus, also supported the initiative, assisting with digital media needs. The African American Male Wellness initiative provided masks and safety kits.

Simms is the founder of a not-for-profit organization -- My Melanin Speaks -- that encourages Black men and women to be "the best versions of themselves" through empowerment, education and inspiration.





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## **OUTDOOR CLASSROOM SAFETY—*continued***

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- ◆ Inclement weather or other threats – Where would students using outdoor space go during sudden inclement weather or a lockdown? Are weather conditions monitored and reviewed before going outside? Is time spent outdoors regulated to prevent dehydration and sunburn?
- ◆ Coordination with first responders – Are your first responders aware of the outdoor space use? Local law enforcement may be willing to drive by during hours of use and/or have suggestions on how to protect students in the space.

Read more about considerations for using outdoor spaces in the Ohio School Safety Center's Spring newsletter available online at: [bit.ly/3eLDnvt](http://bit.ly/3eLDnvt)

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## **UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS**

Tired of testing? Overwhelmed with end of year responsibilities? Take a break and join Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) for some fresh ideas and discussion at one of the following professional development sessions. Don't miss the story about BCHF's annual Leadership Summit, scheduled for June 10-11, on page 4.

To register for the sessions below, email [schoolimprovement@buckeyehope.org](mailto:schoolimprovement@buckeyehope.org) with the name of the session in the subject line of your email. Include full name, sponsored school name, and email address for each registrant in the body of the email.

### **EARLY LITERACY AND K-8 MATHEMATICS NETWORKS *Combined Meeting -- May 6, 4 to 5:30 p.m.***

Join in a discussion of priority practices in both literacy and mathematics that come together in the typical elementary or middle school classroom. This session will address how these subject areas interface and how one can utilize instructional practices in each area to promote overall student achievement.

### **REACHING ALL CHILDREN THROUGH EQUITABLE MEANS (RACE) – *May 11, 4 to 5:30 p.m.***

RACE is a multi-faceted response that supports BCHF's commitment to all students and educators, especially to those of color or who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD). The goal of RACE is to help educators become aware of how the interaction of one's biases affects instruction and learning in the classroom and the ability to build supportive relationships with students of color and those who are CLD. Topics in this series include but are not limited to: parent engagement; recognition and reduction of prejudice; and, effective, culturally responsive teaching practices. School leaders, teachers and others may participate in any or all sessions offered.

### **SPRING ENGLISH LEARNER NETWORK MEETING – *May 13, 4 to 5:30 p.m.***

This network is designed for school personnel concerned with educating English learners. A portion of the meeting will be devoted to sharing strategies, concerns, best practices and updates in the field. Part of the day will also be dedicated to in-depth discussion and presentations on a topic set by the group.

*Continued on pg. 10*

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## COMPLIANCE UPDATE

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### Year-end submission of safety drill logs

All schools are required to submit their safety drill logs to the State Fire Marshall midyear (December/January) and year-end (May/June). The logs should be submitted via e-mail to Jennifer Smith –

[sfm\\_codeenf@com.state.oh.us](mailto:sfm_codeenf@com.state.oh.us)

– of the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of State Fire Marshall, Code Enforcement Bureau. Please copy your school's sponsor representative on the submission e-mail.

### Career advisory policy

Schools are encouraged to check the date on career advisory policies. Evidence that a policy has been reviewed/updated is required every two years. Questions? Please reach out to your school's sponsor representative.

## UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS —*continued*

*Especially important for ELA teachers in dropout prevention and recovery schools:*

### SUCCESS STRATEGIES IN SECONDARY WRITING *Online Course via Moodle – May 15 to June 15*

How do we institute Writing Across the Curriculum throughout a middle or high school? What are strategies that all subject area teachers can use to assign, critique and assess writing? Learn how much writing can improve the thought process for all students. At the end of the course, participants will be invited to experiment with a “workshop model” in the classroom to help engage students and deepen their understanding of any subject. This course will be delivered just in time to help plan for the following school year.

### DYSLEXIA BOOK STUDY – May 17, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

With passage of Ohio's new dyslexia law (H.B. 436), schools should begin preparing now for the three-year implementation process. A good first step is to make sure school staff understand what dyslexia is and how schools can assist students with dyslexia. To support this initial professional preparation, BCHF is hosting a book study among interested leaders and staff from sponsored schools using Sally Shaywitz's book, *Overcoming Dyslexia* (2nd Edition, 2020; ISBN-10: 9780679781592). Future discussions will be held on **May 17** (Parts 3 and 4), and **June 15** (Parts 5, 6, & 7). Participants are responsible for accessing their own copy of the book, which is available in several print and digital formats. *Please note if you registered for the April 15 session, you do not need to register again.*

### LEGAL “HOT TOPICS” FOR 2021-2022 PLANNING – May 25, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Please join Stephanie Klupinski, vice president of legal affairs, and other members of the BCHF team for an update on legal issues essential to 2021-2022 planning! Recent and expected changes to state and federal law affecting charters will be reviewed. Discussion will focus on “hot topic” issues including vaccinations of employees, continuation of remote learning options and school restart in the fall. Participants will also learn about Mahony Area School District v. B.L., a much-watched case before the United States Supreme Court later this year involving a school district's attempt to discipline a student for off-campus speech.

BCHF provides all workshops and seminars without cost to personnel *from its sponsored schools*. However, a minimum number of registrants may be required for a seminar to proceed and BCHF reserves the right to cancel or postpone programs due to low enrollment. Questions about professional development may be emailed to [schoolimprovement@buckeyehope.org](mailto:schoolimprovement@buckeyehope.org).

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

## *Effective summer learning opportunities*

By Carol S. Young, Ph.D., Lead, Accountability & School Improvement Department

What are YOU planning to do with the children in your life this summer? When we pose that question, many things may come to mind: sports camps, swimming lessons, church camps and vacation trips. My niece is a scientist. Her children go to Zoo Camp. As a result, they both now have exotic pets including an iguana.

Summer opportunities allow children and youth to engage with different people, places, content, and, sometimes, different animals! Sadly, though, the types of experiences we have listed above are *not* accessible to all students. Extensive studies of summer learning show economically disadvantaged children and youth engage in few, if any, summer learning opportunities (Wallace, 2009; RAND, 2018). These children are far more vulnerable to summer learning loss in both mathematics and reading. Anecdotally, school leaders often report, “We offered a summer school program, but the kids who *really* needed it did not show up!”

Governor Mike DeWine has urged school leaders to develop plans for extended learning given early indicators of “pandemic learning loss” among students statewide. An influx of federal dollars to support extended learning programs is added impetus for schools to provide programs this summer. Considerations for “extended learning,” include lengthening the school day or school year, instituting a summer program, or offering an early summer start program (Ohio Department of Education, 2021).

But are summer learning programs worth the effort? According to studies over a number of years by the RAND Corporation (2018), results are mixed. Important variables to program success are accessibility and attendance, content and interest, program length and family engagement. Examination of these factors provides insight into planning an effective program.

**Accessibility and attendance** -- Students and families are more likely to participate in a summer program that reduces barriers to participation. Transportation and work schedules pose major barriers. Families are more likely to send their

students to a program if transportation is available. Schools should also consider that parents are likely working during the day. Working parents prefer a full-day program where need for additional summer childcare is minimized.

Students who *regularly* attend summer programs experience the most gains. In fact, the highest impact on learning for “at-risk” students was seen when students attended a summer program for two years in a row. Students were more likely to attend a program regularly when it was voluntary and when it combined academics and other activities. Attendance incentives, in the form of both “prizes” for attendance and regular field trips, enhance participation rates (RAND, 2018).

**Content and interest level** -- Summer programs should be fun, rich in content and interesting! One of my most rewarding summer experiences was when I taught at a summer program where all activities were organized around an ocean theme. Students received beach towels after their first week of attendance. Because they were able to sit on a sandy “beach” we created on the playground, students did not perceive reading and math activities as “remedial.” Students in grades four and above in the program did water testing and ocean vs. pond activities as part of the program. We did not worry about attendance; students wanted to come and see what the next day would bring!

With the variety of resources available now on Project Based Learning (PBL), schools can consider summer programs that maximize content and help solve a meaningful problem. Consider an “ugly” room in the school and how it could be repurposed or redesigned. What about a world problem, including the amount of pollution in our waterways and on our beaches? Resources on the PBLworks website ([pblworks.org](http://pblworks.org)) can be extremely helpful to summer planning teams. These resources were developed and reviewed by educators in setting up PBL programs that directly teach and reinforce state standards.

*Continued on pg. 12*

## Summer learning — continued

**Program length** -- Effective summer learning programs must spend sufficient time on academic learning. The Wallace Foundation (2009) reported that a minimum of 25 hours must be spent on math instruction to show measurable learning gains, and a minimum of 34 hours was needed in reading. The RAND Corporation recommends that programs operate for five to six weeks with three to four hours per day of purposeful academic instruction. They further recommend that program teachers and staff receive professional development on how to maximize academic “time-on-task” while intermixing fun and interesting activities (RAND, 2018).

**Family engagement** -- Successful summer programs engage parents and community members in program planning. Schools can find tremendous support for their programs by tapping into resources offered by museums, parks and recreation departments, and historical societies. Schools should share information about summer programs early to parents, citing both academic and enrichment benefits. Advance announcements and videos of upcoming activities may be shared via emails to parents and families, and on school websites. These advance “teasers” help build understanding and excitement for the program throughout the school community.

Are summer learning programs worth it? Effective summer learning programs require extra effort on the part of schools but, with careful planning, they can significantly boost learning. In addition, innovative and exciting programs provide something new and purposeful for children and youth during the summer months. After all, every student deserves an interesting story to tell when they are asked, “What did you do last summer?” We hope that “something interesting,” perhaps an iguana, can be found at school this summer!

*Author’s Note: The author extends thanks to SI Team members Joni Byus, Mindy Farry and Kim Jones for the research they contributed to this article.*

Ohio Department of Education, 2021, *Planning for extended learning*. Retrieved from: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart/Planning-for-Extended-Learning>

RAND Corporation (2018). *Getting to work on summer learning*. Retrieved from [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org).

Wallace Foundation (2009). *Effective and promising summer learning programs and approaches for economically-disadvantaged children and youth*. Retrieved from [www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center)

**BUCKEYE COMMUNITY HOPE FOUNDATION**  
**3021 East Dublin-Granville Rd; Columbus OH 43231**  
**(614) 942-2030 [www.buckeyehope.org](http://www.buckeyehope.org)**

