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[Jennifer Schorr, VP of Education](#)

[Jason Moore, Senior Director of Education](#)

## 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.

## 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.



The BCHF 2023-2024 Sponsor Annual Report is out now. Click below to read through it.

[2023-2024 Sponsor Annual Report](#)

## BCHF Annual Holiday Card Contest

We are thrilled to announce that this year's annual holiday card will once again showcase incredible student creativity! Students of all ages were invited to submit their festive designs, and we're excited to congratulate the winner of the contest: Zelena S., a talented 7th grader from Constellation Schools: Puritas Community Middle. The artwork will be the cover of our holiday card, spreading cheer and showcasing Zelena's artistic talent!



We also want to celebrate the many other incredible submissions we received from students across our schools. Each design reflected the creativity and holiday spirit of our talented artists. Check out these wonderful entries below!

Art Contest Entries

## Home for the Holidays: Supporting Students' Learning Over Break

By Zoe Plotnick, Accountability and School Improvement Representative

Quick question: *how many days of school are left until winter break?*

If you were able to immediately name a precise number without looking at the calendar or stopping to count, *we see you*. You have certainly earned your share of joyful gatherings, celebrations, treats, and yes, the blessing of some much-needed sleep. (Out of all the misconceptions I held as a five-year-old, I would put hating on naptime at the very top of my personal list of Things I Was Very Wrong About.)

Of course, students also need time to recharge their batteries. While offering a break from lessons, deadlines and assignments is an absolute imperative, however, putting learning and engagement on pause does not have to be. In fact, winter break is full of opportunities to reinforce connections between school and home. Highlighting these opportunities to families not only encourages them to make memories while nurturing students' academic and emotional growth, but also strengthens the partnership between families and schools by showing how learning can be seamlessly integrated into daily life at home.

### Activities For Sharing

From preparing food (I dare you to find a tastier way to apply math and chemistry than baking cookies) to exploring nature (did a squirrel leave those tracks in the snow, or was it a bunny?), the possibilities are endless. Here are a few favorites:

- **Winter Scavenger Hunt:** Give students a list of items they can check off as they find – e.g.,

something shaped like a star, something red, etc. Older students might embark a photo scavenger hunt featuring neighborhood sights such as holiday lights, a snowman, or a festive storefront display. There are many ways to engage students in learning within their family and community, but make sure that the instructions offer enough space for flexibility and choices allowing everyone to participate regardless of family structure, language use, cultural background, and any other social or physical factors affecting their home contexts.

- **Family Interview Project:** Students can interview an older family member about childhood experiences, holiday celebrations or cherished traditions. They might write a reflection or draw a picture to share when they return to school.
- **Story Swap:** Families can share and write down their favorite holiday stories or other cultural traditions.
- **2024 in Review:** Give a list of prompts or questions or share a scrapbooking template where students can reflect with family members on highlights from the past year, either with photos, drawings, writing or other artifacts they choose.

### Resources to Send Home

Give students the gift of something fun to do when it's cold outside. Parents will appreciate this more than a bag of candy, I promise!

- **Games or Challenges:** Create a simple bingo card like [this one](#) (I made it for free in [Canva](#) in less than 30 minutes). Low-stress challenges can involve counting, measuring, estimating, observing, and so on. Alternatively, small acts of kindness such as "Write a thank-you note to someone," "Help clean up after a meal," or "Surprise someone with a compliment" can be listed on a game card, calendar, or checklist.
- **Take & Make Kits:** Provide a set of materials and instructions for activities or crafts in a paper or plastic bag for each student. Activities can be simple, inexpensive, and tailored to different age groups – for example, bags might contain a tiny notebook, a pen or two, and some questions to prompt goal-setting for the new year. For more inspiration, check out projects [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Bookmarks, Game Boards, & Other Printable Activities:** [Here are some examples](#) of printable creations for students. Feel free to reproduce and share them, or you can use them for inspiration as you search for (or make!) more.

### Digital Resources and Activities

I know, I know... a lot can go wrong when students take Chromebooks home over break. However, doing something fun with their devices will decrease the likelihood of them getting lost, and students have options other than playing games or watching weird YouTube challenges.

- **Take Advantage of Public Libraries:** Ohio has the best ones in the nation, hands down! Your city or county library probably offers free e-books, audiobooks, movies, self-paced courses, video tutorials, and more online. If not, though, Ohio residents can get a card from any public library in the state for free, so try calling other libraries in your region.
- **Virtual Field Trips:** Some winter/holiday themed experiences include [tours of polar research stations](#) and [views of the Northern Lights](#). Plenty are out there, but resources such as Nearpod, Google Arts & Culture, AirPano, and Treks make it relatively easy to build digital experiences that support and extend classroom learning, too.
- **Digital Postcards:** Students can share photos and descriptions of things they do over break. You can use [Padlet](#) for this – students do not need to create accounts!

There are countless fun and creative ways to keep students engaged over the break. No matter what they get up to while on vacation, though, students are more likely to return feeling refreshed and ready to learn when the school-home connection is an intentional part of the magic of the season.

## Constellation Schools: Westside Community School of the Arts Accepted as Disney Music School

Constellation Schools Westside Community School of the Arts has been accepted into a 4-year program with The Cleveland Playhouse, as a Disney Musical School!

The program, which focuses on building confidence and creativity through musical theater, kicked off after the school's new academic coach encouraged staff to apply. Following a competitive process that included interviews and a tour of the school, Westside was thrilled to be chosen.

In the first two years, the program is offered at no cost to the school and includes hands-on support from The Cleveland Play House team and professional actors from Playhouse Square. For 19 weeks, theater professionals visit the school every Tuesday to collaborate with a team of teachers, while rehearsals are led by school staff on Thursdays.

This year, Westside students will bring "Frozen" to life on stage. Students in grades 3–5 will perform, while grades 6–8 will form the stage crew. Every student has the opportunity to participate.

“Disney puts the focus on the students,” said Julie Clark, Principal of Westside Community School of the Arts. “It’s incredible to see kids coming out of their shells.”

The cast, chosen through auditions, is already in week eight of rehearsals. Students rehearse for 90 minutes twice a week, with their hard work set to be shown off in performances at both the school and Playhouse Square. Opening night is scheduled for March 8, with an additional performance on March 9.

Beyond building confidence, the program supports literacy and enhances students' skills in reading and comprehension. “The students are doing really well; this program is building on their literacy skills and the science of reading,” shared Clark.

Congratulations on this incredible opportunity to inspire creativity, teamwork, and a love of the arts among students!



## Handbag Hullabaloo

Members of our Education team recently attended the 9th Annual Handbag Hullabaloo, a fundraiser hosted by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Ohio. When a child is in the hospital, family needs to be close. The Ronald McDonald House in Columbus, Ohio is located directly across the street from Nationwide Children’s Hospital. Open 365 days a year, the House helps facilitate the family-centered care that fosters health and well-being for the whole family.

This exciting fundraiser offered guests the chance to win more than 30 authentic designer handbags through a raffle-style game. The evening was a tremendous success, raising over \$87,000—enough to provide 870 nights of rest for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House.



## DEW to Release Request for Applications for Kindergarten-Grade 12 Subgrants in 2025

Governor Mike DeWine announced that Ohio was awarded a \$60 million Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant from the US Department of Education. DEW plans on issuing a request for applications in early 2025 to competitively select recipients.

Read here for more information: [https://education.ohio.gov/Media/Ed-Connection/Oct-22-2024/\\$60-million-Comprehensive-Literacy-State-Developme](https://education.ohio.gov/Media/Ed-Connection/Oct-22-2024/$60-million-Comprehensive-Literacy-State-Developme)

## BCHF Leaders Present at RAPSA Forum

The annual RAPSA (Reaching At-Promise Students Association) Forum provides a collaborative space for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners to learn and share leading-edge efforts to achieve equitable outcomes for At-Promise students and Opportunity Youth.

Jennifer Schorr, VP of Education, and Dr. Carol Young, Director of Accountability and School Improvement, presented at this year's conference in San Diego. Their session on Workforce Literacy focused on How we can better engage students in the literacy skills they need for life.

[See the Presentation](#)



## Math Minds Monthly

Check out the latest edition of Math Minds Monthly, your monthly dive into the world of mathematics, created by Brit Seward,

[Latest Newsletter](#)

## SPED Quarterly Newsletter

Curated by BCHF School Improvement Specialists Sandra Harris and Illie Massey, this quarterly newsletter shares special education, mental health, and behavior resources.

[SPED Newsletter](#)

## Board Member Spotlight

Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) recognizes the important work that governing board members do in supporting their school community. In recognition and support of this hard work, BCHF is highlighting one board member each month in our sponsor newsletter.

This month we are featuring Eric Scott, who serves on the L. Hollingworth School board. The mission of L. Hollingworth is: *to guide ALL students to develop character and maximize their full intellectual*



*potential by empowering them to use their unique gifts and talents. This will lead to academic excellence and a new generation of high-character, contributing members of a Global society.*

Eric has been a board member for a little over 8 months. After seeing the positive experience his children were having in school, he wanted to be more involved and offer support in anyway he could, which led him to joining the board.

Outside of being a board member, Eric enjoys cooking, eating, traveling, and spending time with his children.

### **What have you learned over the years about board meetings, and what changes have you made as a board member that help meetings run more efficiently?**

I have learned that it takes a lot of dedicated individuals behind the scenes, and that there is a lot of thought that goes into school procedures and practices. Meetings go smooth because school officials

make sure we have all documents review prior to meetings. I haven't made any changes yet, but I do come to meetings prepared.

### **How do you solicit and retain new board members?**

I solicit board members by speaking on how great the school is and sharing my viewpoint from a parent perspective. I speak on how diverse the student body is and how fellow board members are great. Every board member has great knowledge in his or her career.

### **What are some of the proudest moments you have had as a board member?**

One of my proudest moments was attending a meeting and voting to create a policy to support students facing homelessness. Another proud moment was seeing the school administration hire more specialized teachers to improve reading scores, recognizing how additional time with teachers positively impacts scores and grades. I also love how, despite the challenges the school has faced in expanding its preschool program, administration has remained positive and continues to pursue ways to achieve the school goal of establishing a preschool building.

### **What part of the school's mission do you most connect with?**

My favorite part of the schools mission is empowering children to reach their full potential.

All of us in the Education Division of BCHF appreciate the commitment to students Eric Scott has shown. We hope, in sharing these stories, others will consider serving as community school governing board members.

## December Compliance Update

### **Rapback Expansion: Bus Driver and Non-Licensed Employee Enrollment**

The State Board of Education has updated the CORE system to allow school bus and van drivers and individuals in non-licensed positions to begin enrolling in the Rapback as a school employee or contractor. All school bus and van drivers should be enrolled by October 31, 2024 and any individuals in a non-licensed position that requires enrollment should be enrolled by December 31, 2024. The manual for how to enroll can be found here: [Rapback User Manual](#)

## BCHF VP of Education Accepted into Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council

Jennifer Schorr, VP of Education, has been accepted into the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Advisory Council. The council, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Workforce, is tasked with reviewing dropout recovery-related existing rules and guidance previously developed or adopted by DEW.

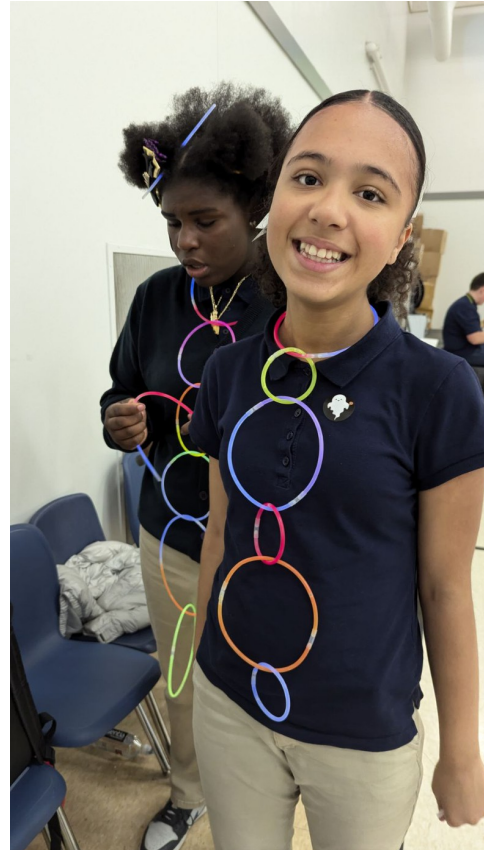
The council convenes regular public meetings to inform the public of any department initiatives, policies or guidelines, any changes to state or federal law and any rule(s) the director intends to adopt, amend or rescind.

All of us in the Education Division congratulate Jennifer on her achievement and look forward to the positive contribution she will bring.

For more information on the council, click here: <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Community-Schools/Drop-Out-Prevention-and-Recovery/Dropout-Prevention-and-Recovery-Advisory-Committee>

## School Spotlights

**Bennett Venture Academy** hosted an incentive party for students! All students who scored a 3.0 or above on either their ELA or Math Interims, were provided with a Glow Party. Congrats to all of the students on their academic success!

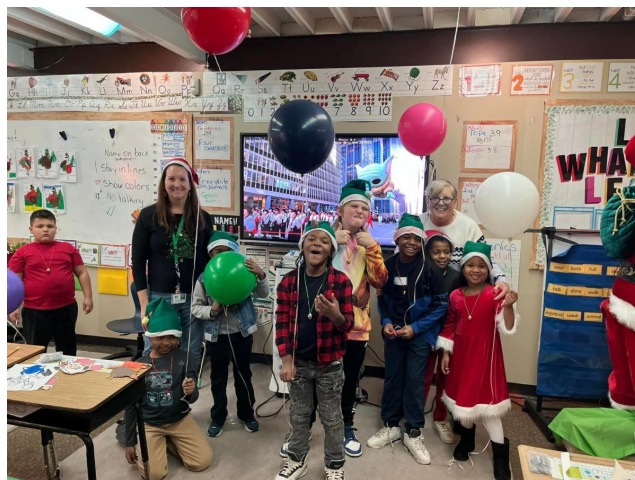


2nd graders at **Horizon Science Academy Youngstown** read "Balloons Over Broadway" by Melissa Sweet. Taking inspiration from the book, the students made their own "floats" and had a parade around the school.





Some of our team took a trip to **Summit Academy Transition High School Columbus** to serve up a delicious Thanksgiving lunch. We then took a tour of the school, and got to see the adorable balloons that the elementary students created to carry in their very own Thanksgiving parade! Thank you for having us out for a festive afternoon!



Also participating in the holiday spirit were students at **The Academy for Urban Scholars Youngstown!** Students created shoe box "floats" in STEM class to show off.



Kindergarten students at **Westside Academy** recently participated in a heartwarming activity centered on building self-acceptance, self-esteem, and positive body image. Through a story that encouraged them to reflect on "the best part of me," they celebrated their unique qualities. By reflecting on what makes them special inside and out, the students took meaningful steps toward learning self-love, boosting confidence, and embracing the importance of respecting and caring for themselves.



## Upcoming Events

We have an early "Happy New Year" surprise for you--- a refreshed professional development catalog! Second semester offerings have been added to our catalog hosted by Frontline Education. The catalog may be accessed at: <https://www.mylearningplan.com/Webreg/catalog.asp?H=1&D=22359>

Many of our professional development sessions are listed as “cohorts.” What is a cohort? A cohort is a group of educators with similar interests, or similar roles and responsibilities in their schools. We consider these sessions as ongoing conversations, often informal, to meet your needs at the moment. It is never too late to join a cohort of interest to you!

Check out our new catalog over the holidays! The warm and enjoyable professional development that is coming up soon is listed below. Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF’s Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, [available here](#).

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**COHORT: TEACHER EMPOWERMENT** – Thursday, December 5, 2024 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. - Online via Zoom

TEACHER POWER! Do you sometimes feel powerless to control anything in your classroom? Join us for a year-long journey as we investigate together major topics that teachers want to know about. Session One will discuss De-Escalation; Session Two will provide hints and tips to increase student engagement; Session Three will give helpful hints to improve student agency; and Session Four will discuss providing deeper learning in your lessons. Join the teacher family and ride with us this school year! Our teacher cohort is a place to learn and share ideas and strategies for helping you not only manage your classroom, but make it a safe and energized space for both the students and you.

**COHORT: MATHEMATICS LEADERSHIP** – Tuesday, December 10 – 10:00 to 11:30 A.M. – Online via Zoom

This program is designed for mathematics leaders at every level (e.g., principals, academic coaches, grade team leaders, and master teachers). The program aims to assess the impact of leaders on improving student learning by examining their current mathematics situation in terms of instruction, structure, and culture. Participants will become familiar with the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM) framework for leadership in Mathematics Education. You will be guided through developing a mathematics program improvement plan (MPIP) through assigned learning activities and deliverables designed to support progress through various stages of the MPIP. Participants are expected to attend meetings fully prepared to contribute to group learning. The primary resource for this year will be NCSM Essential Actions: Instructional Leadership in Mathematics Education. Session topics are: 1. Preparing Your Program (instructional focus); 2. Planting Seeds of Security (structural focus); 3. Cultivating a Healthy Mathematics Garden (cultural focus); and 4. Celebrating Improvement (sustainability focus).

**COHORT: SUPPORTING MULTI-LINGUAL LEARNERS** – Thursday, December 12, 2024 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Join us to stay updated with the latest research and news in multilingual education, learn innovative strategies tailored to your classroom, and engage in meaningful networking with peers. In this supportive community committed to enhancing language development and academic achievement for all students, we meet to share ideas, strategies, and ready-to-use instructional resources. Each session is a blend of learning, sharing experiences, and building a collective knowledge base to effectively support emergent multilinguals in their educational journey. Each session will focus on different topics: September 26: Data Management / Newcomer Q&A December 12: Collaborating with Classroom Teachers / Games We Love

**COHORT: SPECIAL EDUCATION NETWORK** – Friday, December 13 – 3:00 to 4:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

This cohort equips intervention specialists with essential skills across three focused sessions. Session 1 guides participants in exploring effective communication strategies to build trust and respect with families and the community. Session 2 establishes a solid understanding of special education laws, including IDEA and ADA, and imparts practical advocacy techniques. Session 3 centers on cultural competency and equity in special education, equipping participants with tools to support diverse student needs and promote inclusive educational practices. By the cohort's conclusion, participants will possess a comprehensive toolkit to enhance family engagement, navigate legal requirements, and foster inclusive learning environments.

**ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND OVERCOMING RESISTANCE IN IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES** – Monday, January 6, 2025 – 8:00 to 11:00 A.M. – Online via Zoom

Overcoming resistance is crucial for successfully implementing restorative practices in schools. In this asynchronous session, participants will explore common challenges such as staff and student resistance, time constraints, and misconceptions. Through interactive discussions and real-world examples, you'll gain practical strategies and insights from successful implementations. Participants will develop an action plan to address resistance in their own contexts, submitting it as a deliverable to

earn credit for completion and ensuring they can effectively integrate restorative approaches into their educational environment.

**THIRD GRADE READING GUARANTEE DATA AND INSTRUCTIONAL IDEAS – Tuesday, January 14, 2025 – 9:30 to 11:30 A.M. – Online via Zoom**

The fall 3rd grade OST results are in! Educators now can make instruction even more responsive to learner needs before Spring. We will review the results of the fall assessments and discuss how data can help leaders and teachers work together to address the instructional needs of students this Winter and into Spring. Come to learn some ideas to help you plan for data-based instruction and intervention. Leave with a data-based plan for instruction!

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Have a story or event at your school you would like to share? Send it to Hana, Strategic Communications Specialist: [hchandoul@buckeyehope.org](mailto:hchandoul@buckeyehope.org).

**BUCKEYE COMMUNITY HOPE FOUNDATION**

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