



SPONSOR UPDATE MAY 2025

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[Jennifer Schorr, VP of Education](#)

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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.



BCHF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

BCHF is announcing the theme and arrangements for its summer School Leadership Summit! The Summit will be held on June 9 and 10 at Quest Conference Center, Columbus, Ohio (Polaris area). The Leadership Summit is the culminating professional development event of each school year, and we urge all school leaders to attend and bring leadership team members.

We are very excited to announce the theme for the Summit as: **ASPIRE HIGHER: RAISING THE BAR FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND SELF.**

In direct response to requests from school leaders, the theme will explore how leaders may launch students, staff, and self into a universe of possibilities. Our keynote presenter, Major General David B. Johnson, will challenge us all with both the realities and the opportunities of a leadership role. Schools will also have time to network and collaborate to "jumpstart" important actions for the 2025-26 school year.

[Register Here](#)



ASPIRE HIGHER

2025 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT | JUNE 9TH-10TH

**RAISING THE BAR FOR
STUDENTS, STAFF, AND SELF**

BUCKEYE
COMMUNITY
HOPE
FOUNDATION
Education Division

WRITING WINNERS "TELL ALL" "Technology and You"

By Mindy Farry, BCHF Accountability and School Improvement Team

Each year, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation sponsors a writing challenge for grades three through twelve to emphasize the importance of writing in academic achievement. No matter the grade level and no matter the future plans for students, writing and thinking will be an integral part of their lives. Never has that been more apparent than with the world of social media, technology, and artificial intelligence.

This year's writing challenge asked students to focus on the impact of technology in their lives. Elementary students (grades three through five) were asked to read a book, *When Charlie McButton Lost Power*, and to reflect on what they would miss most if all the power went out. We watch Charlie in the book struggle to figure out what he should do in his day-to-day life without television, the internet, and communication methods. The elementary overall winner, fifth grader, Sabrina Ibrahim is from International Academy of Columbus. Sabrina's voice was humorous and thoughtful as she opined about how technology had taught her many things from YouTube videos to televisions, especially how to become the STI (Sabrina Tasting Industry) for her mother's cooking. But, as Sabrina said, "...not everything is cupcakes, hamsters, kittens, unicorns, and sunshine." She remarked about the advantages and disadvantages of our addiction to technology.

The middle school challenge asked students to discuss how social media and the internet, in general had affected our ability to connect and communicate with others. The middle school winner, and overall (all grades three through twelve) winner was seventh grader, Soraya Deukam, from Hamilton County Math Science Academy. Soraya argued that technology has driven people apart. While recognizing the benefits of technology, the essay says, "While technology brings people together, it also drives them apart." The author's opinion is that the harms far outweigh the advantages of a technological world. Soraya discusses serious issues such as loss of friendship, the inability to establish relationships, and mental health concerns.

And finally, our high school winner, Leonie Monreal, a ninth grader from Focus North High School, conducted research about the effects of technology on the world. The essay, "From Typewriters to Tablets: How Technology Empowers Communication and Education," takes the opposite approach and provides research that convinces Leonie that blaming the technology device for misuse is like blaming an artist's canvas for a less than desirable piece of art. Rather, it is the artist, AKA, the user, who is to blame for misuse. The research for this essay is extensive, citing eleven recent research studies to defend the thesis.

Forty-three entries were received this year from close to half of all Buckeye Community Hope Schools. We appreciate and honor all our writers and their teachers who worked so diligently on this project. The future looks bright when students "tell it like it is"!

Congratulations to our Writing Challenge Winners:

ELEMENTARY:

3RD GRADE: SIRAJ ABDULLAHI (International Academy of Columbus)

4TH GRADE: YAHYA AHMED (International Academy of Columbus)

5TH GRADE: SABRINA IBRAHIM (International Academy of Columbus)

OVERALL ELEMENTARY WINNER: SABRINA IBRAHIM (International Academy of Columbus)

MIDDLE SCHOOL

6TH GRADE: HUDA MOHAMED (International Academy of Columbus)

7TH GRADE: SORAYA DEUKAM (Hamilton County Math Science Academy)

8TH GRADE: GERENA KACIANA (Imagine Great Western Academy)

OVERALL MIDDLE SCHOOL WINNER: SORAYA DEUKAM (Hamilton County Math Science Academy)

HIGH SCHOOL

9 TH: LEONIE MONREAL (Focus North High School)

10TH: AISHA SHARIFF (Focus North High School)

11TH: CHAZ STOKES (Focus Southwest)

12TH: ALEXA CHATTOS (Focus Southwest)

OVERALL HIGH SCHOOL WINNER: LEONIE MONREAL (Focus North High School)

OVERALL WINNER GRADES 3-12: SORAYA DEUKAM (Hamilton County Math Science Academy)

Third Grader Leads the Way in Promoting Autism Acceptance at L. Hollingworth School

In celebration of Autism Acceptance Month, Timmy, a third-grade student at The L. Hollingworth School, took the initiative to educate and promote inclusion within his school community.

Timothy created and presented an informative slideshow to third-grade classes to help his peers learn more about Autism. With support from his Intervention Specialist, Ms. Kreill, Timothy conducted research and developed a presentation that explained what Autism is, what the spectrum can look like, and how students can be kind and respectful toward peers with Autism.

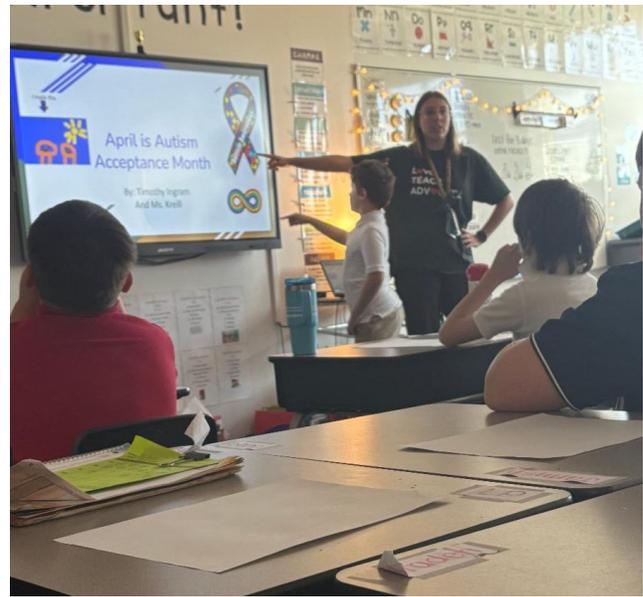
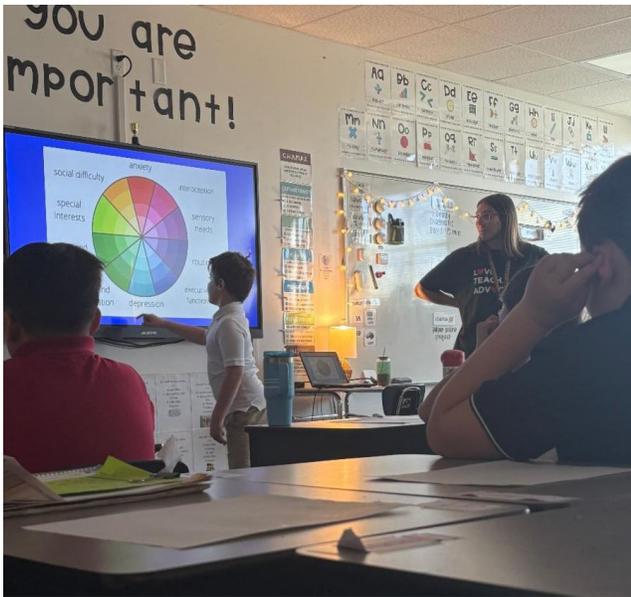
Timothy shared his own experience as a student on the Autism spectrum, offering a personal and powerful perspective. He explained how different people experience Autism in different ways and emphasized the importance of empathy and acceptance in the classroom.

"He passed out a word search with related terms and used his loud and proud voice to teach the class," Ms. Kreill said.

At the end of his presentation, he opened the floor for questions and answered each one with confidence and insight.

Perhaps most moving of all, Timothy's courage inspired a fellow classmate to share his own Autism diagnosis, showing just how impactful one voice can be in creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment.

We admire Timothy for showing his leadership, bravery, and dedication to educating others!



Noble Academy Columbus Students Lead Soccer Event to Spotlight Mental Health Awareness

At Noble Academy Columbus, leadership, character, and compassion were on full display thanks to a recent service project led by students in the Character Education class taught by Coach Travecia Franklin. The initiative was sparked by a group of five outstanding 8th grade boys who were driven by a powerful goal: to raise awareness about mental health among young boys in their community.

Recognizing the importance of mental wellness, particularly for youth, the students envisioned an event that would combine physical activity, teamwork, and open conversation. Their idea took the shape of a soccer event that welcomed 30 students from 5th through 8th grade. The day was filled with energy, friendly competition, and meaningful conversations.

"Participants not only enjoyed the opportunity to play soccer, but also engaged in discussions about the importance of caring for their mental health, supporting one another, and breaking the stigma often associated with mental health challenges among boys and young men," said Coach T.

The event took place on the turf field at Wellington School, whose generosity helped make the day possible. This project is a great example of what can happen when young people are empowered to lead with purpose and compassion. Through this event, these students not only brought their peers together, but also made a lasting impact by promoting wellness and community in a way that truly matters.

Congratulations on an incredible event!



Build a Blue-Ribbon Tree

Buckeye Community School Springfield staff and students won the Build a Blue-Ribbon Tree project hosted by Clark County Department of Family & Child Services as part of the statewide Ohio Wears Blue 2025 awareness campaign!

The staff decorated the tree and the lawn as a gift to the students. The students decorated ornaments with positive words of affirmation and then placed them in the tree! This collaboration of efforts from the entire school is truly a work of art!

Congratulations!



The Amazing Shake

Engage High School hosted their very first Amazing Shake competition! The Amazing Shake is a

nationwide competition that places students in real-world professional scenarios where they are challenged to display confidence, poise, manners, and effective communication. From firm handshakes to powerful first impressions, the students truly rose to the occasion.

Congratulations and best of luck to the winner of the event, Sharyiona, who will go on to represent Engage in the regional competition in Akron against other EEG schools.



Dropout Prevention and Recovery Community School STAR Testing

All students enrolled in grades 9-12 attending a community school designated as a dropout prevention and recovery (DOPR) schools must take the required STAR assessments. Maintaining the DOPR designation and receiving the specialized report card are contingent on administering the STAR assessments to students.

In addition to being assessed upon enrollment, any student whose enrollment spans thirteen weeks or more must be assessed a second time.

The spring testing window closes **Friday, May 23, 2025**. Additional information about the STAR assessments is available [here](#).

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 highlights one board member each month in our sponsor newsletter.

This month we are featuring Kristine McDyer Puess, who serves on the Promise Academy board. The mission of Promise is: *Promise Academy recognizes that all students have the right to, and deserve, an education that prepares them for the post-secondary success of their choosing. We educate and graduate students that have not found success in a traditional high school and have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out.*

In December 2023, Kristine McDyer Puess took a leap outside her professional comfort zone and joined the board of Promise Academy. With nearly two decades of leadership experience at Progressive Insurance and a deep commitment to community

service, she felt compelled to find a way to give back. What she didn't expect was that her path would lead her to education.

"I was looking for meaningful volunteer work and came across Promise on volunteermatch.com," McDyer Puess recalled. "I wasn't necessarily looking to get involved in the education sector, but the

mission spoke to me.”

Outside of her volunteer work, McDyer Puess is approaching her 20th anniversary at Progressive Insurance, where she serves as the Business Leader for Property Systems, Analytics, and Experience.

She’s also an avid reader, traveler, and runner. “I’m currently training for my first half-marathon, which is coming up at the end of April,” she shared.

Lessons Learned in Board Membership

Joining the board came with a learning curve. With a long career in one industry, McDyer Puess was stepping into unfamiliar territory. “At first, I felt overwhelmed by all the new concepts and metrics,” she admitted. “But I’ve learned that you don’t need to be an expert in an organization’s field to make a valuable contribution. It challenged me to get comfortable with not having all the answers.”

As chair of the Finance/HR Task Force, she quickly found ways to make an impact. Her approach to transparency and preparation has helped board meetings run more efficiently. “I make sure to submit detailed notes and follow-ups for our Board book, so everyone can come prepared. That really helps drive more productive conversations.”

Recruiting and Retaining Board Members

McDyer Puess is also a vocal ambassador for Promise Academy. “I talk about Promise in real life and on social media to raise awareness among my network,” she said. “I haven’t brought in a new member yet, but I’m working on it!”

Proudest Moments as a Board Member

Among the many meaningful moments she’s experienced so far, it’s the graduation ceremonies that stand out the most. “Seeing the students walk across the stage, feeling that sense of pride and accomplishment—it’s incredibly moving,” she said. “You see the hugs, the tears, the joy from family and friends. It’s a reminder of why we do this work.”

A Connection to the Mission of Promise Academy

One part of Promise Academy’s mission statement resonates deeply with McDyer Puess: “All students have the right to, and deserve, an education...”

“Education equips individuals with essential knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary for success in adulthood,” she said. “It’s our society’s responsibility to ensure that every young adult has the opportunity to learn in a way that best suits their needs.”

Advice for New Board Members

McDyer Puess encourages new or prospective board members to go beyond the boardroom. “Be present and actively engaged,” she said. “Invest time with the organization, staff, and fellow board members. Take the opportunity to connect with the individuals who drive the mission and bring the meetings to life.”

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

May Compliance Update

The deadline for all eligible educators to complete required professional development in the science of reading is June 30.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce’s [Professional Development in the Science of Reading webpage](#) provides information on which educators must take the course, selecting the most appropriate course pathway from the Department’s Introduction to the Science of Reading courses, and the stipend process.

To qualify for the stipend, educators must finish all parts of the Introduction to the Science of Reading course, including the post-assessment, by 11:59 p.m. on June 30. No exceptions will be made for late completions or technical issues near the deadline.

Hearing and Vision Screening Surveys due June 1

As required by [Ohio law](#), schools and districts should submit their annual [Hearing Screening Survey](#) and [Vision Screening Survey](#) for the 2024-2025 school year by June 1. Schools and districts can find reporting information on the Ohio Department of Health's [Annual Reporting Survey webpage](#).

5-Year Forecast May Submission

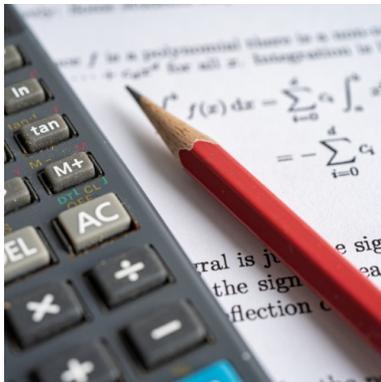
BCHF is required to submit all schools' 5-Year Forecast by May 31st to the Department of Education and Workforce. Please note DEW has released an updated template for this submission. As a reminder, BCHF is not required to submit board minutes or board resolutions with the Spring submission as is required with the Fall submissions. Please make sure you are using [this template](#) when completing May submissions.

Please reach out to your compliance representative with any questions.

Graduation/Promotion Ceremonies

If you have not already done so, please email hchandoul@buckeyehope.org with the date, time, and location of any graduation/promotion ceremonies. Our team would love to attend as many ceremonies as possible.

Math Minds Monthly



Check out the latest edition of Math Minds Monthly, your monthly dive into the world of mathematics, created by Brit Seward. Feel free to share with math teachers, leaders, coaches, paraprofessionals, and anyone else who can come alongside us as we work to improve mathematics culture.

[Latest Newsletter](#)

School Highlights

Congratulations [FLEX High School](#) on the opening of your new building! We were thrilled to be a part of the ribbon cutting and celebration. Here's to all the great things ahead!





Horizon Science Academy Columbus Middle School has started an ESports team! Their ESports program encourages collaboration, sportsmanship, and the responsible use of technology. This season, they will be playing Rocket League and chess.



Horizon Science Academy Dayton High School celebrated their seniors with a brunch! The Senior Red Carpet Brunch was a memorable event celebrating the graduating class of 2025, giving students a chance to reflect on their high school experiences and share insights with their peers. As they walked the red carpet, they were asked a series of thought-provoking questions about their journey, personal growth, and future aspirations. This production was organized by Ms. Whitney Bryd under the direction of School Leader, Mr. Renaldo O'Neal.



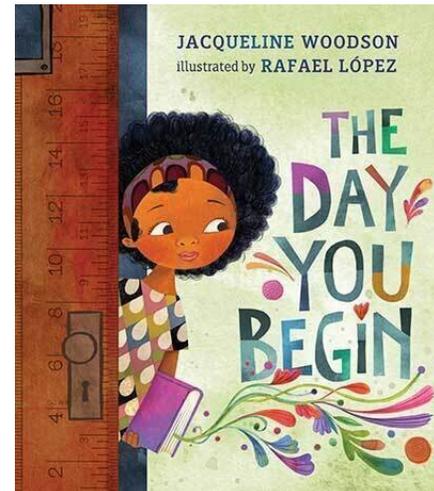
Kindergarten and Pre-K classes at **The Original L. Hollingworth School** had an amazing time learning all about the butterfly lifecycle, from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly! Yesterday, the classes came together to release their butterflies, wrapping up the hands-on science experience with excitement!



To wrap up their exciting unit on Habitats, students from **The Richland School of Academic Arts** took a hands-on learning adventure to the Bird Sanctuary!



Third graders at **Westside Academy** created beautiful inner/outer self-portraits inspired by "The Day You Begin". On one side, they drew how they see themselves on the outside, and on the other, they illustrated what makes them unique on the inside. This activity was a meaningful way for students to reflect on their identities, celebrate their individuality, and share what makes them special.



Upcoming Events

Check out our offerings for May! Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF's Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, [available here](#).

COHORT: MATHEMATICS LEADERSHIP - May 6, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.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).

ASYNCHRONOUS: PBL for the New Year – begins May 7, 2025, and ends July 31, 2025 -

“Hope Hub Session” - work on your own and submit evidence to your instructor

What's all this PBL stuff really about? Is it possible in my classroom? Can Kindergartners do this? How about high schoolers/. This ASYNCHRONOUS session will guide educators through planning their first Project Based Learning project for the 2025-26 school year. Teachers will have 6 weeks to watch guidance videos, plan, interact with a PBL trainer, find out about managing a project. You will have one full project planned and ready to go for the new school year! On May 8th, all materials will be emailed to registered participants. The project will culminate on or before July 31st.

KICK OFF TO PBL! --Let's Design a Project for the New School Year – May 7, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

KICK OFF next school year with a bang! This session will guide teachers to design an impactful Project-Based Learning (PBL) project for the upcoming school year. Participants will explore key elements of successful PBL, including developing driving questions, creating authentic learning experiences, and aligning projects with curriculum standards. Through collaborative planning and hands-on activities, teachers will learn how to structure a project that encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and student-driven inquiry. The session will also provide strategies for assessing student progress, fostering collaboration, and managing a project from start to finish. Whether you are new to PBL or looking to enhance your current practice, this session will equip you with the tools and confidence to implement a meaningful, engaging project that inspires students and deepens their learning. INTERESTED TEACHERS WILL BE GIVEN ACCESS TO AN ASYNCHRONOUS AND SYNCHRONOUS COURSE THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER--so that you will have a complete project planned with guidance along the way.

HAPPY TEACHERS CHANGE THE WORLD! - May 5, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. – online via Zoom

Imagine a classroom where teachers feel energized, balanced, and fully engaged. Studies show that happier teachers lead to thriving students. This session is designed for educators and school leaders interested in fostering a supportive and positive work environment. Participants will explore research linking teacher well-being to classroom success, learn practical strategies for managing stress, and discover ways to create a more joyful, resilient school culture. By the end of the session, you will walk away with actionable tools to nurture your own well-being and that of your colleagues, creating a ripple effect of positivity in your school community.

COHORT: LITERACY AND DYSLEXIA – May 20, 2025 – 10:00 – 1:30 P.M. – In person in Columbus, BCHF training room, 3021 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43231.

The Dyslexia and Literacy Cohort is designed for classroom teachers and anyone who provides instruction in Literacy or Dyslexia support. This special May, in person meeting will focus on the new dyslexia book, *Teaching Beyond the Diagnosis: Empowering Students with Dyslexia* by Casey Harrison. Join us for a dynamic, shared discussion of a book that will add to your understanding and services for students with dyslexia!

REFLECTIVE TEACHING: ENDING YOUR YEAR ON A POSITIVE NOTE – May 21, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – online via Zoom

Feeling end of year burn out? Let's put the 2024-25 school year into perspective! Reflective teaching is not just a key professional development strategy; it is a self-care strategy. We will reflect together on the 2024-25 school year. Join us as we reflect together.

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

BUCKEYE COMMUNITY HOPE FOUNDATION

3021 E DUBLIN GRANVILLE RD.
COLUMBUS, OH 43231
(614) 942-2030

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