

SPONSOR UPDATE SEPTEMBER 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, welleducated 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.



Leading With Trust and Inspiration

Mindy Farry, BCHF School Improvement and Accountability Representataive

When I saw Stephen Covey's book, *Trust and Inspire* at a little local bookstore I love in New York City, I couldn't resist. In this book, he makes a strong case for making a systemic shift in leadership styles. He stresses that the world has changed, but that in most cases, leadership has not. The antiquated model of "command and control," which focuses on compliance and supervision does not fit with today's workplace. Younger generations are more purpose-driven and collaborative and expect a leadership style to match. Covey advocates for a "Trust and Inspire" model which is authentic, trustworthy, and inspires commitment.

To be honest, no generation wants to be "managed," and especially not "micromanaged." Leaders who develop trust and inspiration make people feel valued, empowered, and motivated to go above and beyond mere compliance.

This vision aligns with Amy Edmondson's (2019) research on psychological safety, which shows that when employers develop trust and a willingness to listen, employees feel safe to take risks, without fear of consequences. Workplaces that lack psychological safety often tamp down creative thoughts—exactly what Covey warns against when leaders return to command and control.

Similarly, Simon Sinek's (2011) work on leadership underscores the importance of purpose-driven inspiration. Sinek says we are not motivated by what a company/school does, but by *why* it exists. Covey's Trust and Inspire model parallels this idea, calling on leaders to connect people's daily work to a larger sense of meaning.

I especially connected to the chapters in the book highlighting the five barriers to becoming this kind of leader. Overriding all these barriers is the mindset that says, "Oh, I am already this kind of leader!" This thinking leads to believing that the problems are outside of us and everyone else is the problem.

Barrier #1: "This won't work here." There is always an excuse... "But you don't know my school." "My boss wouldn't go for this." The solution is to start with oneself. Model the expectations and work on the systems. Instead of "This can't work here!" strive for "How could this work here?"

Barrier #2: "Fear of the What if...?" What if it doesn't work? What if I lose control? The solutions are to maximize the possibilities and to walk away from formulas that haven't worked in the past. We tell our students not to fear mistakes. We should take that same advice.

Barrier #3: "I don't know how to let go." This is difficult, especially if you have let go in the past and someone let you down or didn't do it the way you would have done it. Trust and Inspire leaders must model the trust to delegate and then help lead and mentor those we've trusted.

Barrier #4: "I'm the smartest one in the room." Trust and Inspire leaders are multipliers. They understand that the solutions to any problem are so much clearer when shared leadership is involved... when all opinions matter. "The person sitting at the apex of the intelligence hierarchy is the genius maker, not the genius." -Liz Wiseman in *Multipliers*

Barrier #5: "This is who I am." We've heard all of these: "I can't change who I am." "It is what it is." This barrier leads to stagnation and top-down leadership. The organization's power is scripted and unable to move forward.

Awareness of the barriers allows us to consciously choose to adopt new behaviors to move from managing people to engaging them in the process. The world is rapidly changing, and the ability to uncover the talents in our schools is more important than the processes we are holding onto. Our schools can become places where all persons thrive: students, teachers, leaders.

References

Covey, S. M. R. (2022). *Trust and inspire: How truly great leaders unleash greatness in others*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Edmondson, A. C. (2019). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Sinek, S. (2011). *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. New York, NY: Portfolio/Penguin.

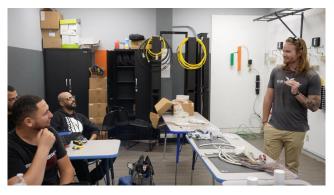
Wiseman, L., & McKeown, G. (2010). Multipliers: How the best leaders make everyone smarter. Harper Business.

Shark Tank Winner Tom Burden Inspires Academy for Urban Scholars Students

The Academy for Urban Scholars recently welcomed Tom Burden, inventor of the Grypmat and winner of Shark Tank, to campus. Burden shared his story of innovation, perseverance, and entrepreneurship, giving students a first-hand look at what it takes to turn an idea into reality. His visit sparked meaningful conversations about creativity, determination, and leadership. His words left a lasting impact, inspiring the next generation of leaders and creators at AUS.







Rooted in Resilience: Jennifer Schorr's "Why" in Education



During our Education Division staff retreat this June, we engaged in strategic planning with The National Charter Schools Institute. A key part of the experience was reconnecting with our "why" in education, a reflection on the personal purpose that drives our work. We're excited to share those stories in upcoming Sponsor Updates.

This month, we're featuring Jennifer Schorr, VP of Education.

For Jennifer, the work of education is more than a career - it's a calling rooted in family, resilience, and hope. Her "why" is a commitment to opening doors for students, ensuring that they, like her father once needed, find caring people and opportunities that set them on a path to thrive.

What originally drew you to a career in education?

My early career started in auditing and accounting. My first professional job out of college was auditing contracts for the Department of Defense.

I also worked for the State of Ohio Treasurer as an Internal Auditor and Ohio Secretary of State as the Assistant Director of the Business Services Division. My boss at that time was the President of a community school board who was looking for an internal auditor and I decided to take the leap. Later I moved to an authorizing position and that started my career in education. My love for this work grew immediately when I realized the amazing impact public school choice has on students, families, generations, and the communities in which they live and work.

What motivates you to come to work every day?

The students and families who deserve access to a quality public education no matter where they live motivates me every day to come to work and give my very best. Over the years I've been lucky enough to see first hand that the work we do changes lives in a profound way and not just by handing a student a diploma. The genuine care, nurturing, and support our educators and leaders give to their school families is so inspiring. It's really, really hard work and I am thankful we have so many people from around the world dedicated to opening a pathway for a student to thrive.

I am also motivated by the awesome team in the Education Division. I see their passion, their focus, their unwavering commitment to making things better for others.

Lastly, I am motivated by our President and our Board whose sole focus is the well being of the students in our sponsored schools. Their commitment and support keeps me going every day.

What do you enjoy most about your role at BCHF?

All the amazing people I get to meet and to see their passion for helping others in practice, both on the Buckeye team and in the schools. I have learned so much about what really makes people motivated and passionate about life. I have learned about new cultures, new ways of educating students, new accomplishments by our students, new perspectives of looking at challenges – who wouldn't want to come to work every day!

How do you define your "why"? Is there a particular moment that reinforced it?

My father was a drop-out, yet he is one the smartest people I know and was a very successful family man and businessman.

My grandfather was an entrepreneur and owned his own jewelry store. He died unexpectedly when my father was only 11 years old. My grandmother had 4 children from 11 to 6 months old and was not prepared to run a business and raise 4 children on her own. She did remarry but unfortunately he was an abusive alcoholic. My father never had a strong male role model in his life growing up and faced many challenges including food insecurity and poverty. He dropped out of high school with no real options in place for his future.

Thankfully, my great-grandmother was determined and knew my father was capable of so much more. She bought him a car he wanted in order to get him to agree to pursue a tech school and find a career in the same industry as his father. He went on to watch making school in Pennsylvania. Based on his training, he not only owned his own jewelry store at one time but also worked at NASA and wired missiles and rockets because of his training working with small intricate parts. He later when onto a career in sales and finance. I often imagine what his life would have been life if he would have had a school choice option available to him with caring people and career tech pathways.

How do you reconnect with your "why" during tough times?

My father would give someone the shirt off his back even if it was his last. He instilled in me growing up the power of not judging others based on their circumstance. He lent people money when he knew they couldn't feed their family knowing he was never going to get it back. He always told us to support the local businesses in our town even if we could go to a big box store and get it cheaper. He supported me with advice and even if I didn't take his advice, he supported my decisions. I draw on those experiences and use them to persevere when we are faced with challenges in this work.

What have you learned about yourself through your work at BCHF?

I have learned more patience, although my team may not agree with that all the time. I have learned that sometimes chaos is a good thing. I have learned that things are definitely not always as they seem. I have learned new leadership skills. I have learned to have more empathy. I have learned that I can't do everything and asking for help is a strength not a weakness.

How do you hope to continue growing in your role?

I hope to keep my mind and heart open to new ideas. The world is changing so quickly and we have to be willing to change with it. We have to learn new technology, we have to be willing to admit that we can't always do things the same way, we have to be willing to make mistakes, and we have to never give up because many students are counting on us.

What is a quote or mantra you live by?

Success doesn't require you to be the smartest, the richest, or the most talented. It requires you to be consistent, determined, and unwilling to quit when things get tough. My father would say to me - "you

just need to handle it". I am unwilling to quit on our students no matter the challenge!

Who inspires you in your work?

Dropout recovery students. I think about the obstacles they have faced in their life and how resilient they are by coming back to finish their education. They need to be honored and celebrated every day for showing up and making the choice to improve their circumstances and set themselves up for a happy and productive life.

Who are you outside of your work at BCHF?

Outside of BCHF I am always surrounded by family which is very important to me. I am definitely the "fixer" in my family. I am lucky to have both my siblings close by with many nieces and nephews. I have many extended family close by as well and we see each other frequently. I grew up with many cousins who are like siblings. Most importantly, my only son Logan lives locally and he and his lovely wife Sara are expecting their first child in January. He is my greatest accomplishment in life as he is kind, willing to help others, resilient, hard working, and committed to family as well. He is a great human being and that is all a parent could ask for in life. I am a huge dog lover. I have a rescue dog Flip that is like another child and if you ask my son Logan he will tell you I love the dog more than him (it might be slightly true). I spend a lot of my time reading. Lastly, one of my big passions is music. I love all kinds of music, attend many concerts (probably in the 100s at this point), and have a diverse and interesting vinyl collection.

Grounded in resilience, compassion, and purpose, Jennifer's "why" fuels her commitment to building brighter futures for students, families, and communities across Ohio.

Summit Academy Middletown Presented with Grant for Gardening Program



The Middletown Community Foundation presented Summit Academy – Middletown Principal Kristen McClanahan-Parkes a check for \$8,098 to support her school's therapeutic gardening program, Sprouting Minds. Led by Jordan Payne, BA, TRCC, the nonprofit Sprouting Minds program provides therapeutic horticulture programs that promote mental health and resilience.

"We are so excited to utilize this grant money for continuing our gardening program. Jordan's teachings have become a pillar of our therapeutic approach to serving and educating the whole child, so we hope to keep this program – and expand it - for years to come," says Principal McClanahan-Parkes. "We are grateful that the Middletown Community Foundation chose to support us and our community. We are better together!"

Thank you, Middletown Community Foundation, for supporting the impactful changes taking root and flourishing in this very special school garden.

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 Rebekah Maynard, who serves on the Summit Academy Columbus board. *The mission statement of Summit Academy is: We design, develop, and deliver educational opportunities in a therapeutic environment so everyone can learn.*



For Rebekah, joining the board was an opportunity to support a community close to her heart.

"I have been a board member for a little under a year," she shared. "I had a friend approach me about an opening on the board in Columbus and the chance to help support a community that is taking care of students with special needs."

Beyond her work as a board member, Maynard is a high school math teacher who finds joy in helping students succeed.

"I love helping students reach their lightbulb moment," she said.

Outside of the classroom, she spends much of her time outdoors. "I love being in nature—hiking, kayaking, or sitting outside and reading. When the weather doesn't cooperate, I enjoy baking with my family."

Lessons in Board Membership

As a newer board member, Maynard has leaned into the process of learning what governance looks like while supporting the school's leadership.

"Being a part of a supportive board with an amazing principal means that we really get to be there to support and ask questions to clarify," she said. "I have been learning about the overall responsibilities of board members."

Increasing Efficiency

Preparation has been key to helping Maynard contribute meaningfully during board meetings.

"Getting the packet ahead of time and reading through it means that we are spending our time on clarifying things and asking questions for more depth instead of reading through the information as a group," she explained. "This allows us to be focused and efficient while also getting to learn more about the school."

Proudest Moments

Despite her short time on the board, Maynard has already experienced moments of impact. She recalls one instance when the board worked through the process of merging two schools into one.

"When we were working through the process of merging from 2 schools to 1 school there were a lot of things I was not understanding," she said. "I felt confident to ask questions and it led to some great conversations between the sponsors, board, school, and management company. We ended by making the decision that is best for the school."

Connecting with the Mission

Summit Academy's mission, "We design, develop, and deliver educational opportunities in a therapeutic environment so everyone can learn," resonates deeply with Maynard.

"So everyone can learn.' This part specifically stands out to me as an educator," she said. "The school understands and focuses on making sure every student has the opportunity and chance to learn."

Advice for New Board Members

Maynard encourages prospective board members not to be intimidated, but instead to embrace curiosity and preparation.

"Take the step and be willing to ask questions," she advised. "While it feels like a lot of pressure up front, doing the reading ahead of time and having questions prepared for what you don't understand makes it significantly less overwhelming."

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

September Compliance Update

Compliance Items to be Posted on School Websites:

- Governing Authority Member Names
- Regular, Special, and Emergency Meetings
- Required Assessments Information
- College Credit Plus Information by February 1st of each year
- Ohio Means Jobs Information by April 1st of each year
- Career Advising and Student Success Plans
- Adequate Yearly Progress
- General Notice of Non-Discrimination
- Right of Individuals with Disabilities
- Written Summary of Verified Incidents of Bullying
- PBIS, Seclusion, and Restraint Policy
- Wellness Policy
- Child Find Notice
- Safer Ohio School Tipline information
- School Annual Report
- · Link to School Report Card
- Title IX information
 - Contract info for the school's Title IX coordinator (name, phone and email)
 - The non-discrimination policy for the school
 - PowerPoints or other training materials that the school has used to train staff on Title IX

*All other items as prescribe by DEW or school policy

Math Minds Monthly

Check out the first Math Minds Newsletter of the 2025-2026 school year! Curated by Brit Seward, this is your dive into all things mathematics.

Math Minds Newsletter

School Highlights

Buckeye Community School Lima set up a booth at the Allen County Fair to promote enrollment in the local community.





Focus Learning Academy East went all out to welcome students back to school!



Welcome back to school at Global Ambassadors Language Academy! Students have been busy learning in Mandarin, Spanish, and English!





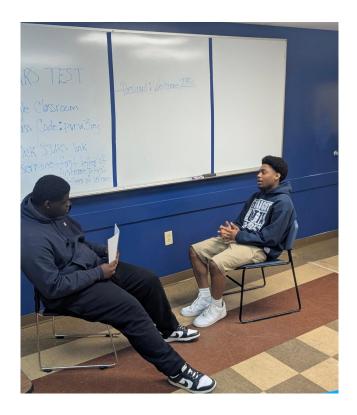


Learning meets creativity in Mrs. Cart's 8th grade English class at Horizon Science Academy Lorain! Students are exploring story structure in a whole new way: by building their own video games.





Riverscape Career Tech students stepped into the hot seat with mock job interviews. They practiced real-world skills that will help them shine in the future!





Stambaugh Charter Academy hosted a Back to School Bash to welcome students and families into the new school year!





Upcoming Events

September is literally a "return to learning" month! This month features our "ALL SCHOOLS MEETING" on September 17; initial sessions for many of our cohort learning groups; and many other interesting professional development opportunities. Be good to your own learning needs this school year! Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF's Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, <u>available here.</u>

***<u>BCHF ALL SCHOOLS MEETING</u> – September 17, 2025 – 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. – In person in Columbus

Celebrate the new 2025-26 school year with BCHF! Our All-Schools meeting will kick off the year with vital updates and useful information specific to community schools. We follow presentations with our popular Solutions Center where leaders can talk in depth with an expert. Join us in person in Columbus! BCHF requests that one representative of each school attend this very informative and enjoyable "Kick Off" to the 2025-26 School Year! *This year we invite you to WEAR YOUR SCHOOL SPIRIT ATTIRE!*

<u>DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PARENTS</u> – September 9, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

What happens when parents become upset and emotionally "out of control" over a disagreement with the school? Educators are certain to encounter difficult parents at some point in their careers. Learn how and why disagreements happen and what you can do about them. We will discuss strategies, including de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques, as they apply to educator-parent interactions. Participants will come away from this session feeling both more prepared and more confident in handling the inevitable "difficult" interaction with a parent.

<u>CPI INITIAL TRAINING (Mansfield)</u> – September 10, 2025 – 9:00 A.M. to Noon – In person in Mansfield

This blended CPI Initial Certification training is designed for staff new to CPI who are assigned to their school's Crisis Response Team (CRT). The training is blended and includes two parts: an online module (120 minutes) and an in-person physical skills session. The in-person training will take place on September 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Mansfield, OH. Participants must complete the online portion prior to attending. Both components are required for complete certification renewal. This training is not available to the whole staff. Schools interested in building-wide de-escalation training for non-CRT staff must submit a professional development

request. Questions should be directed to Ms. Brit Seward at bseward@buckeyehope.org.

<u>CPI REFRESHER TRAINING (Mansfield)</u> – September 10, 2025 – 9:00 A.M. to Noon – In person in Mansfield

This refresher training is for staff who have previously completed CPI certification and are part of their school's Crisis Response Team (CRT). The training is blended and includes two parts: an online refresher module (75 minutes or a 30-minute test-out) and an in-person physical skills session. The in-person training takes place on September 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Mansfield, OH. Participants must complete the online portion prior to attending. Both components are required for complete certification renewal. This training is not available to the whole staff. Schools interested in building-wide de-escalation training for non-CRT staff must submit a professional development request. Questions should be directed to Ms. Brit Seward at bseward@buckeyehope.org.

COHORT: Special Education 1: Bridging the Gap: Integrating Paraeducators into Daily Instruction – September 10, 2025 – 3:30 to 4:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Paraprofessionals play an important role in supporting students with disabilities, but many teachers struggle to fully utilize their skills during instruction. This session focuses on practical strategies for building strong teacher-para partnerships. Learn how to clarify roles, share responsibilities, and plan together, even with limited time. We'll explore ways to involve paras in academic support, behavior strategies, and student engagement, so that everyone is working toward the same goals. Walk away with tools to improve communication, increase instructional impact, and reduce frustration on both sides.

<u>COHORT: Social Studies 1: Kickoff and Curriculum Planning</u> – September 11, 2025 – 3:30 to 4:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Start the year with fresh ideas, helpful tools, and a network of fellow social studies educators. In this kickoff session, we'll explore resources to support lesson and unit planning, from pacing guides to engaging primary sources. You'll meet the cohort members you'll be working with throughout the year, and start building connections that make collaboration easier. We'll end with a networked improvement community, where you can bring questions or challenges and leave with solutions and support for the year ahead.

FROM PASSENGER TO PILOT: Driving Student Agency in Learning – September 15, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

If we want students to engage deeply and grow boldly, they must have ownership over their learning! This session equips educators with practical, research-informed strategies that build student agency, autonomy, and self-determination across content areas. Participants will leave with ready-to-use tools, ideas for cultivating relevance through purposeful choice, and actionable approaches that help make space for student-driven inquiry.

<u>STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY: Student-Led Conferences</u> – September 16, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Parents aren't involved! They never show up for conferences! The parents I really need to talk to do not come in to hear bad news about their child. Here is a way to get parents and guardians more involved in parent/teacher conferences by allowing students to lead their own conference. Putting students in the driver's seat to talk about their progress, their goals, their triumphs, their areas of improvement is an ideal way to not only involve parents more directly, but for students to advocate for and articulate their own learning. From kindergarten through high school, student-led conferences will transform your classroom!

<u>COHORT: TENACIOUS TEACHING COHORT 1: Teaching Up! Increasing Complex Texts in the Classroom</u> – September 18, 2025 - 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Are your students ready for more? This interactive session explores how to "teach up" by designing and implementing more complex, cognitively demanding tasks that challenge all learners-not just those who are already excelling. Participants will examine strategies to elevate instructional rigor, incorporate higher-order thinking, and scaffold appropriately to support diverse learners. Whether you're working to close achievement gaps or push your high-flyers further, this session will equip you with practical tools to raise the ceiling without leaving anyone behind. Leave inspired to shift your classroom culture toward deeper learning and academic resilience.

HOPE HUB (Asynchronous Learning) CREATE YOUR OWN PROJECT BASED LEARNING UNIT! – Register by September 22, 2025 – Online at Your Own Pace – Work due October 28. ASYNCHRONOUS! Project-Based Learning (PBL) --You've heard the phrase. You've even heard teachers claim they are doing PBL when what they are actually doing is a typical "project." Use this "learn at your own pace" session to actually create, revise, and get your first major project ready to go. You will learn about the Gold Essential Elements of PBL, how to decide on a project; how to incorporate multiple standards into one project; what to do about assessment;

what to do about group work, and much more. PBL answers so many higher-level learning goals such as complex tasks, relevancy, and authenticity. Course materials will be sent to registered attendees on September 23 and work will be due on October 28th. SIX CREDIT HOURS AWARDED FOR COMPLETION!

COHORT: Mathematics 1 – September 23, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom This virtual professional learning community brings together K-8 school leaders and teachers across Ohio to strengthen mathematics instruction and improve student outcomes. Meeting quarterly (9/23, 11/18, 1/13, 3/10), each session explores research-based instructional strategies, unpacks legislative updates, and examines problems of practice focused on leading and implementing effective math instruction. A central goal of the cohort is to reframe deficit-based narratives about mathematics by cultivating bold, asset-based mindsets among educators, students, and communities. Participants will be invited to apply new strategies, reflect on implementation, and refine practices, bridging leadership and instruction to foster equity and high expectations. This collaborative space supports educators in creating sustainable systems for strong mathematics teaching and learning practices that benefit all students.

COHORT: Literacy/Dyslexia – September 24, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom This cohort will be meet 4 times this year: Sept. 24. November 12, Jan. 28, and May 19. Attendees will be sharing information about best practices in literacy and dyslexia. Each session will be based on the feedback received after each session, making each session dynamic and interactive. Based on feedback from our final session in May of 2025, the 1st session is "Call for a Champion" from Teaching Beyond the Diagnosis (last year's study book) and discussing any updates in legislature that affect schools. The attendees will be determining the book study for May's in-person session this year.

COHORT: Multilingual Learners – September 25, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom Looking for a space to connect and grow with others who support linguistically diverse students? The Multilingual Learner Cohort is a relaxed, teacher-driven community of practice that meets quarterly over Zoom. Each session is shaped by the group, so we welcome all voices to learn, bring ideas, or even co-facilitate! Whether you're a classroom teacher, specialist, or administrator, you'll gain strategies, build relationships, and stay inspired throughout the year.

COHORT: Leadership #2 - Leader as Coach - September 30, 2025 - 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. - Online via Zoom

May a school leader also be the instructional coach? Should they be? What are some state-of-the-art practices in teacher coaching? Like it or not, school leaders play an important role in coaching and directing teachers. Let's discuss what happens when leaders are the only instructional coaches in the school, and what happens when leaders oversee the work of assigned instructional coaches. Clear coaching of teachers is more important than ever before. Find out ways to make coaching an integral part of your leadership style and an effective process in your school! BCHF's leadership cohort is an accepting space where leaders discuss information, share out ideas and best practices, and, overall, support one another in the pursuit of great leadership and great schools!

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

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