



MAY 2026

SPONSOR UPDATE



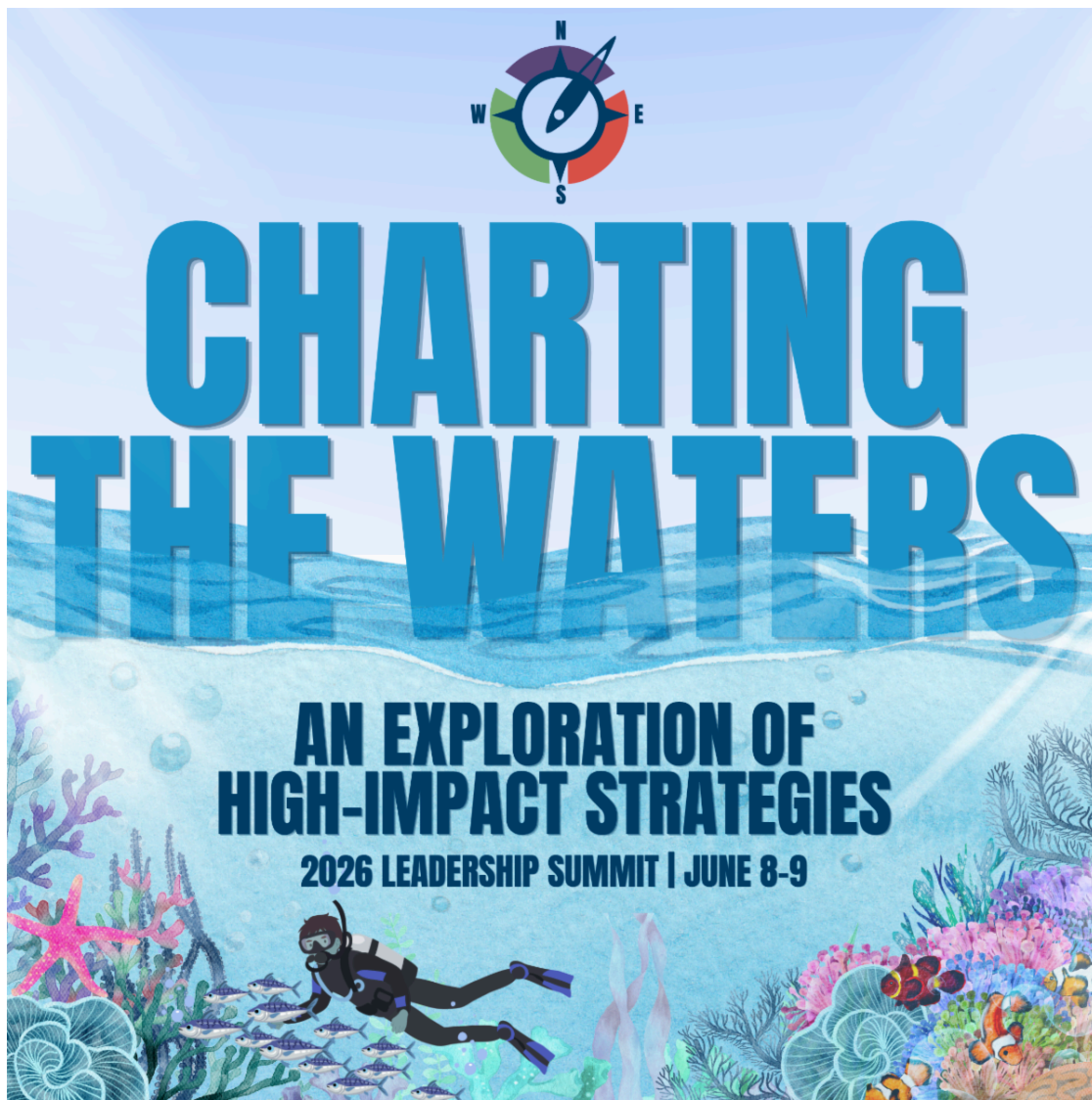
MISSION

Through strategic authorizing and partnership, we develop educational communities of achievement through innovation, hope, and support.

VISION

We envision a rich ecosystem of community schools ensuring ALL students and families have access to a high-quality public education.

Charting the Waters: BCHF 2026 Leadership Summit



Ahoy, School Leaders!

Get ready to chart a bold new course, because the BCHF Leadership Summit is back, and this year, we're diving deep!

Charting the Waters: An Exploration of High Impact Strategies

June 8–9, 2026 | In Person

**Renaissance Hotel Westerville/Polaris
409 Altair Parkway, Westerville, Ohio 43082**

Over two energizing days, you'll join fellow leaders on a journey through the data that shapes our schools. The Summit will then lead participants to explore islands of solutions for their own school data. It is our hope, as the outcome, leaders and leadership teams will gain heightened understanding of school learning data and use this data to match high-impact strategies to priority school needs. We will explore topics YOU suggested through general sessions, activities, breakout groups and creative collaboration!

And what's a great voyage without an inspiring captain? We're thrilled to welcome our keynote speaker, Dr. Landon A. Brown!

Dr. Landon A. Brown is the ideal speaker for our leadership summit because, just a few years ago, he sat in your seat! He was a school leader for a BCHF-sponsored charter school in an urban, high poverty area of Ohio. Through teamwork, high expectations, and inspiration, Dr. Brown turned the school into an "A" (5 star) school on Ohio's school report card. He was selected as Ohio's School Leader of the Year in 2015. His school was recognized with Ohio's Momentum Award for its successive years of high value-added scores.

Dr. Brown has become a turnaround specialist. As former Director of School Quality for National Heritage Academies in Louisiana and Georgia, his schools served over 60,000 learners. Two schools under his supervision became “Comeback Campuses” and one was recognized as a “Best Performing School” in its region. Dr. Brown believes school improvement and turnaround are made possible and achievable with informed leadership, best practices, collaboration, and accurate feedback on teaching and learning.

We can't wait for you to hear his story and start writing the next chapter of your own. This Summit is our premier in-person professional development event of the year - come ready to learn, connect, and leave with renewed confidence and a clear path forward.

Register today and secure your spot on this journey! We'll see you at the shore, ready to set sail!

[Register for the Summit](#)

BCHF Schools Awarded

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce releases the Ohio School Report Cards annually to provide parents, caregivers, community members, educators, and policymakers information about district and school performance — to celebrate successes and identify areas for improvement. The data provided through the Ohio School Report Cards allows the Department to identify schools and districts which are consistently going above and beyond both inside and outside of the classroom, through the District and School Report Card Awards. Several Buckeye Community Hope Foundation schools have earned distinction through these awards. These honors highlight schools demonstrating strong academic progress, effective student support, and meaningful gains in outcomes that matter for students and families.

Six BCHF schools earned the Momentum Award, which recognizes districts and buildings showing exceptional academic growth as measured by the state report card, specifically, significant year-over-year improvement in performance and strong results in the Progress component, reflecting student academic growth. These schools also demonstrate sustained improvement without being driven solely by already-high performance, underscoring real and continuous gains in student learning.

The recognized schools include:

- Hamilton County Math and Science Academy
- Horizon Science Academy Columbus Middle School
- International Academy of Columbus
- L. Hollingworth School for the Talented and Gifted
- Lincoln Park Academy
- Summit Academy Dayton

In addition, seven BCHF schools earned the Exceeds Standards designation for the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Card. This designation reflects strong performance across key measures such as graduation rates, academic achievement, and student growth - indicators of a school's success in re-engaging students and supporting them toward graduation and postsecondary readiness.

The honored schools are:

- Auglaize County Educational Academy
- Focus North High School
- Academy for Urban Scholars Youngstown
- Flex High School
- Southern Ohio Career Academy
- Focus Learning Academy of Southwestern Columbus
- Focus Learning Academy of Southeastern Columbus

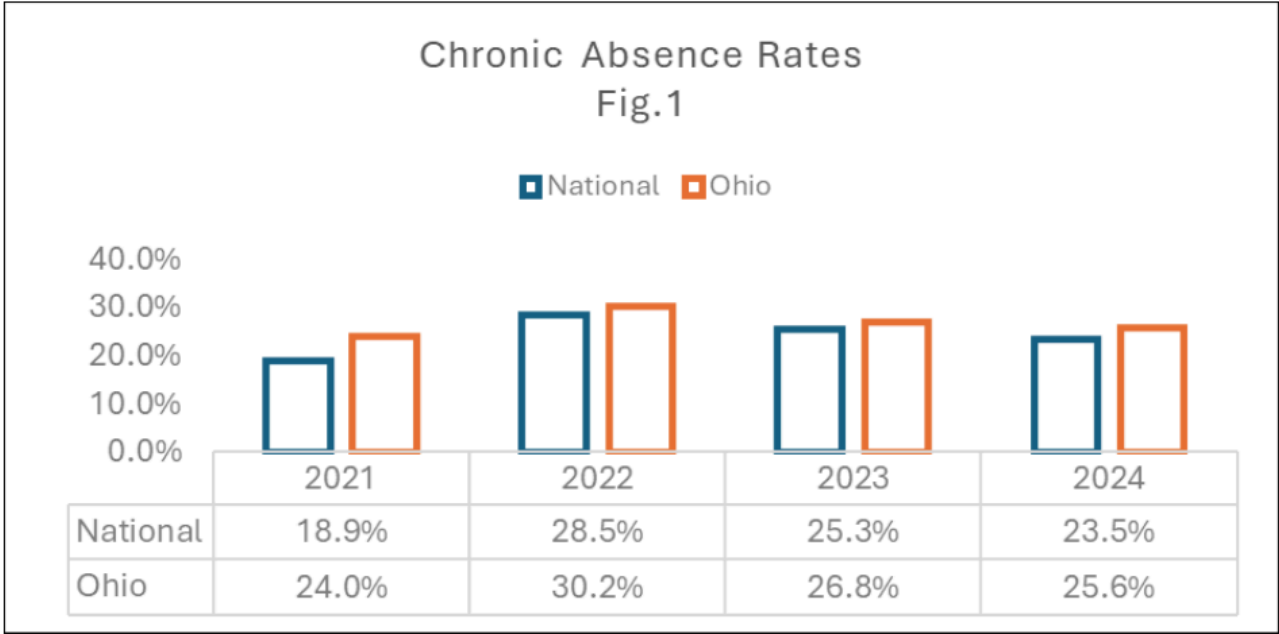
Congratulations! These recognitions reflect the impact of sustained effort across diverse school communities, celebrating both academic growth and the success of schools serving students who benefit from alternative pathways to graduation.

Ohio State’s Initiative to Reduce Chronic Absences

By Stan Nicol, BCHF Data Analysis Representative

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Development (ODEW) defines Chronic Absenteeism as the percentage of students missing ten percent or more of the possible instructional hours. Nationally, Chronic Absence rates have improved since 2022 but are still much higher than the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1 below shows the National and Ohio State Chronic Rates over the last four years.

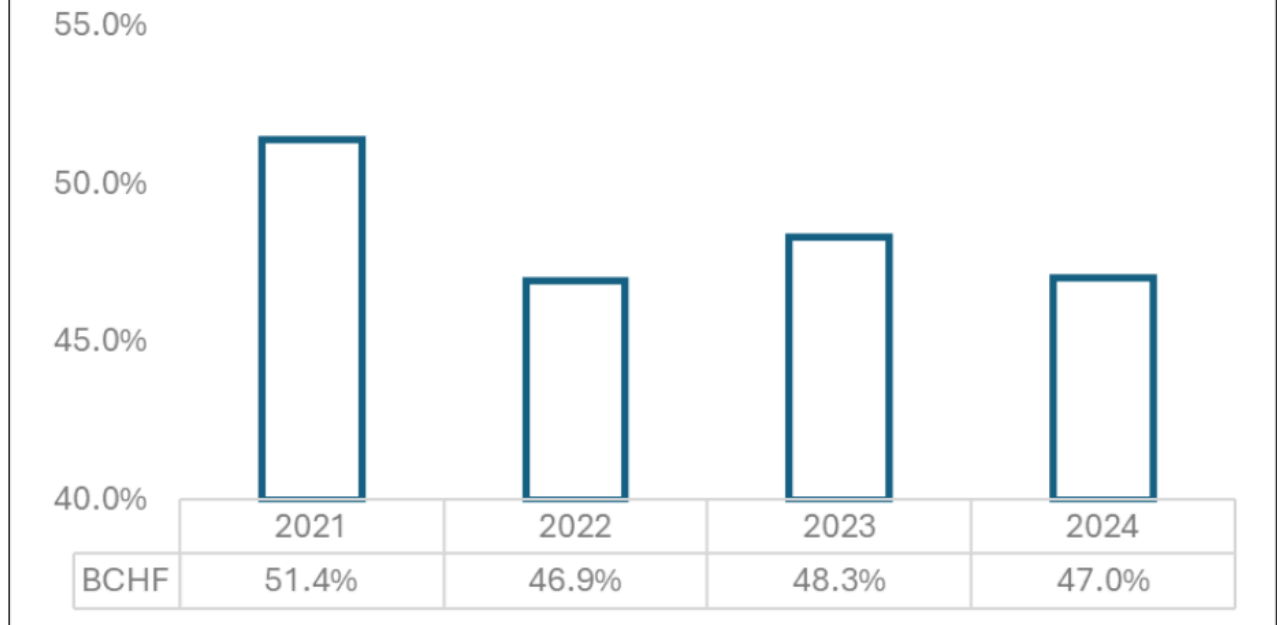


Source: Geduld, A. (2025, August 22). *K–12 chronic absenteeism rates down from peak but remain persistently high*. The 74. <https://www.the74million.org/article/k-12-chronic-absenteeism-rates-down-from-peak-but-remain-persistently-high/>

Attendance data collected by Buckeye Community Hope Foundation shows that more work is needed to improve attendance rates of students in our schools. Figure 2 shows the Chronic Absence rates for Buckeye Community Hope Foundation sponsored schools.

BCHF Chronic Absence Rates

Fig.2



Attendance translates to achievement. BCHF's data show that during the 2024-25 school year, students with attendance rates of ≥ 90 Percent had an English Language Arts proficiency rate of 82.4% versus 51.5% for students reported as Chronically Absent. In Mathematics these Proficiency rates were: 63.9% and 29.8%, respectively.

Because of the importance of attendance, Ohio has joined fifteen other states committed to reducing chronic absences over the next five years.

Governor DeWine set a goal of reducing Chronic Absence rates by 50 Percent over the next five years. To assist in reaching this goal, Governor DeWine has ordered the Department of Workforce and Development to create an Attendance Dashboard. This dashboard was released on April 15th, 2026. Governor DeWine made this announcement about this new tool at his State of the State address on March 10th, 2026:

"This new tool will provide parents, the public, people in the community with simple, fast, and transparent attendance data each week for every district, for every school. This will offer early information about the effectiveness of attendance strategies, so that schools, districts, and communities can take actionable steps to improve attendance."

— Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio

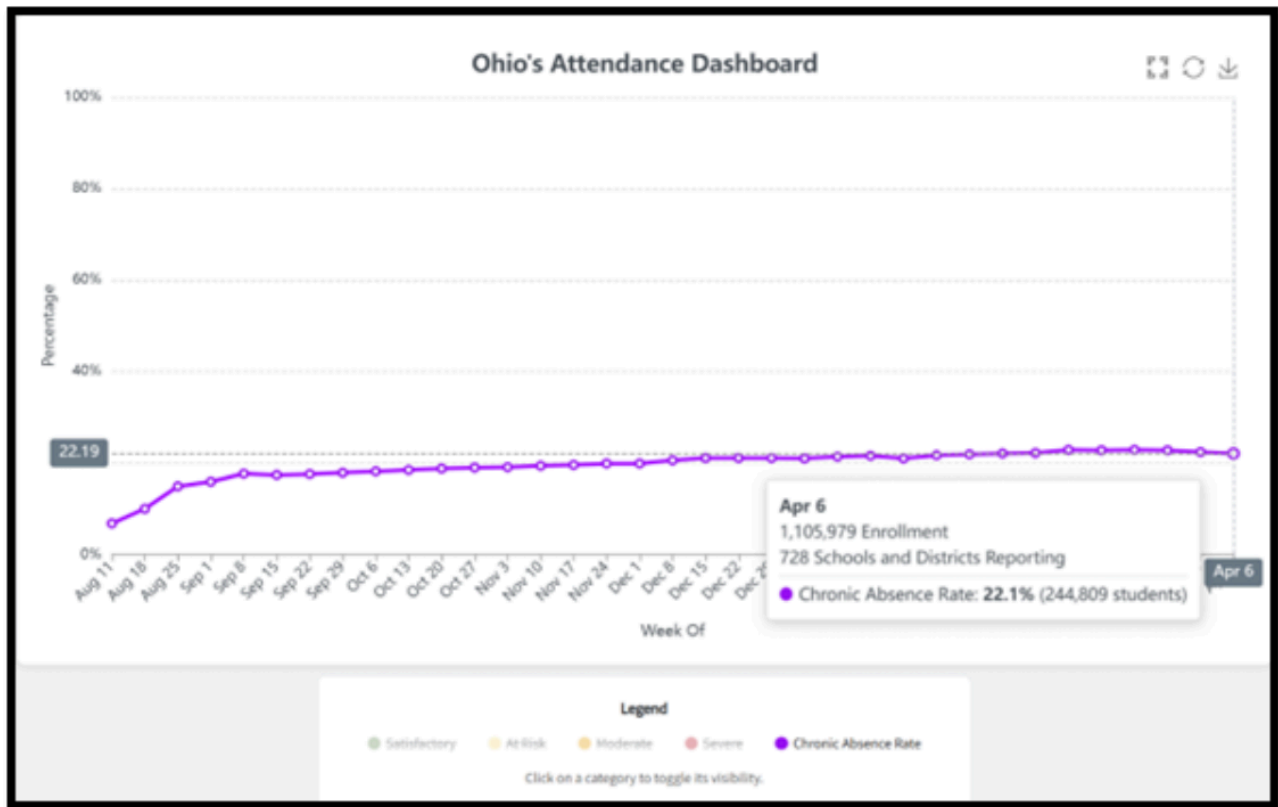
DeWine, M. (2026, March 10). State of the State address. Tribune Chronicle. <https://www.tribtoday.com/news/local-news/2026/03/dewine-highlights-education-in-state-of-the-state-speech/>

The Attendance Dashboard site is active and updated on a bi-weekly basis. This site allows anyone to view the current chronic rate for any District or School in Ohio. It also allows the user to combine Schools and Districts into one view. Combining schools by management company, school type, location, etc. allows personnel to evaluate groups of schools.

The user can view data by chronic absence rate, students missing $\geq 10\%$ of the instructional hours as well as four levels of Chronic absence ranging from Severe, Moderate, At-Risk, Satisfactory attendance.

The Attendance Dashboard can be found at: [District Absences | Ohio Attendance Dashboard](#)

The image below shows the Chronic Absence rate for all Districts and Schools in Ohio.



Digging deeper, this site shows us that, statewide as of April 6, 2026, 22% of students are missing 10% or more of their instructional time. Ohio has 204,809 chronically absent students! The new state tool will allow all stakeholders to monitor school attendance and implement improvement strategies toward the 50% reduction goal. More information about Ohio's improving attendance initiative may be found at: [Home | Ohio Attendance Dashboard](#)

BCHF has been closely monitoring student achievement in our sponsored schools. Our data convincingly shows that regular attendance is the cornerstone of academic achievement. For technical assistance in improving attendance outcomes at your school, please feel free to reach out to BCHF's compliance and school improvement representatives.

Culinary Program at Akron Career Tech High School



Akron Career Tech High School's culinary program is giving students in grades 9–12 a hands-on opportunity to explore exciting career pathways while building real-world skills in the kitchen. As one of the school's many career exploration programs, it helps students discover their passions and prepare for future success.

From mastering essential knife skills at the start of the school year to now creating their own impressive charcuterie boards, these students have made remarkable progress as they continue to grow their talents and confidence. Through hands-on learning experiences like these, students are developing creativity, teamwork, and industry-ready skills that can open doors to future careers in the culinary arts and beyond.

Their dedication and growth showcase the value of career-focused education in preparing students for success both inside and outside the classroom.



Senior Seminar at Auglaize County Educational Academy



Auglaize County Educational Academy's (ACE) Senior Seminar class has been hard at work! Throughout the semester, students completed Franklin Covey courses, where they developed leadership, time management, and personal effectiveness skills.

"The Senior Seminar class has provided students with meaningful opportunities to develop essential life and career skills, ensuring they are well-prepared for their next steps after graduation," shared Karissa Hoersten, Special Education Coordinator/CBI Director at ACE Academy.

Career exploration has also been a major focus. Through an in-depth career research project, students investigated two different career pathways while completing personality tests and interest inventories to better understand their individual interests and goals.

To connect classroom learning with real-world opportunities, students participated in several local industry tours, visiting Pratt, Airstream, Washington Penn, Machine Concepts, and Crown. These tours gave students firsthand exposure to workplace environments, employer expectations, and career possibilities within their own communities.

The class also visited Apollo Career Center to explore adult education opportunities and gain insight into continued learning options after high school. In partnership with OhioMeansJobs, students strengthened their professional skills through a resume-building workshop, creating polished resumes to support future job searches.

"To further enhance their readiness for the workforce, students earned their CPR and First Aid certifications and successfully completed the Tooling U Manufacturing program, gaining industry-relevant knowledge and credentials," Hoersten said.

Most recently, students put their preparation into action by participating in mock interviews with local professionals. This valuable experience allowed them to practice interview techniques, receive constructive feedback, and build confidence, all in a professionally supportive environment.

Through Senior Seminar, ACE Academy students are gaining far more than classroom knowledge, they are building the confidence, experience, and practical tools needed to successfully transition into adulthood. Thanks to these opportunities, they are leaving high school better prepared to pursue careers, further education, and independent futures.



Joni Byus Shares Her "Why"



As part of our ongoing strategic planning work with The National Charter Schools Institute, our Education Division has been taking time to reconnect with our “why”—the personal purpose that drives each of us in education. This reflection has reminded us that behind every role and every initiative are powerful stories rooted in service to students and schools. We’re excited to share those stories through our Sponsor Updates.

This month, we’re featuring Joni Byus, School Improvement Representative.

What motivates you to come to work every day?

It motivates me to know that the work I do is important to the future of the students. I have found over the course of my 47-year career that relationships are the key to building great foundations. I have meaningful relationships with the BCHF team, the schools, and the individuals who run those schools. It is rewarding to be a small part of their success.

What do you enjoy most about your role at BCHF?

I really enjoy the variety of what we do. The pace is varied enough to allow for some really busy times and those moments of assisting with areas of need.

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

My “why” is simple. I grew up in Huntington, West Virginia. My experience with the education system was a really mixed “bag”. I learned at a fairly young age that it was much easier to learn when the person teaching cared about me as a person. In particular, my 4th-grade teacher, Mrs. Carte, stands out as someone who was always relational and treated everyone well.

How do you reconnect with your “why” during tough times?

I want always to be that person who others know and expect that the relationship is there in good and tough times.

What have you learned about yourself through your work? How do you hope to continue growing in your role?

I have learned that I feel more accomplished as part of a team that is excellent at what they are doing.

What is a quote or mantra you live by?

“It’s about the journey - mine and yours - and the lives we touch, the legacy we can leave, and the world we can change for the better.” -Tony Dungy

Who inspires you in your work?

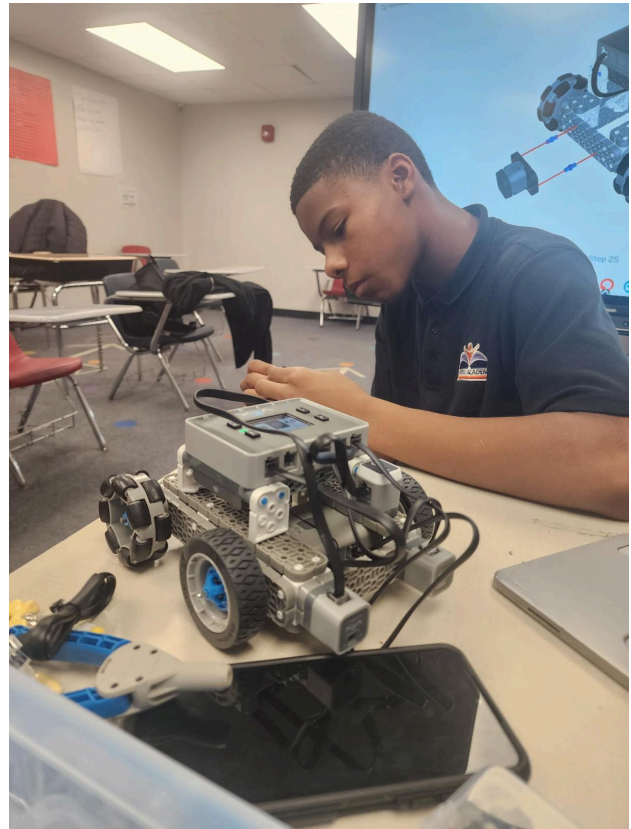
The people I work for and with inspire me to do my best work. Each visit, meeting, PD, and every other part of my job reminds me that we are making a difference by bringing our very best to the table for our students of BCHF’s portfolio.

Who are you outside of work?

So much of who I am outside of BCHF has to do with the people in my life. I am a wife (47 years this summer), mother of 2 adult daughters, a friend to too many special people to count, and best of all, Nana to 7 spectacular human beings. Relationships are the common thread that runs through my life. On a non-relational side, I really enjoy planting flowers (not too great with keeping them alive), sewing, and crafting.

Through every relationship she builds and every school she supports, Joni's journey reflects the heart of BCHF's mission: developing educational communities of achievement through innovation, hope, and support. We are honored to have her on our team.

Noble Academy Euclid Scholars Head to Chicago for MathCon 2026



Noble Academy Euclid proudly celebrated an exciting academic milestone as 18 scholars were selected to attend the MathCon competition in Chicago on April 25. Hosted annually by Concept Schools, MathCon brought together top young mathematicians from across the region for a day focused on competition, collaboration, and discovery.

During the event, Noble Academy Euclid scholars participated in MathCon's academic competition while also engaging in interactive math demonstrations designed to deepen their understanding and appreciation of mathematics. Beyond the classroom, this experience gave scholars the opportunity to connect with peers who shared their passion for problem-solving and academic excellence.

In addition, members of the Robotics Club explored future possibilities by observing robotics programming connected to the event, an inspiring experience that supported the school's vision for expanding its own robotics initiatives in 2026. Congratulations, Noble Academy Euclid, on your continued commitment to STEM education!

May Compliance Update

Artificial Intelligence Policy

Under **House Bill 96**, all Ohio districts are required to adopt a formal AI policy by July 1, 2026. The **newly released model policy** provides a template that districts may adopt as written or customize to meet local needs. Developed in collaboration with **Ohio's AI in Education Coalition**, the model policy reflects extensive feedback from educators, businesses, nonprofits, and government leaders. It addresses appropriate use of AI by students and staff, promotes ethical practices and academic integrity, and sets standards for data privacy and security. The policy also provides guidance for integrating AI into curriculum, evaluating third-party tools, and aligning with existing policies on bullying, academic integrity, and procurement.

Updated Age Requirements for Kindergarten and First Grade Entrance

Starting with the **2026-2027 school year**, under House Bill 114, each school district board of education shall admit to kindergarten any student who is five or, for a student who has not completed first grade, six years of age by the first day of instruction of the school year of admittance. Direct general inquiries to **AcademicSuccess@education.ohio.gov**. Contact **gifted@education.ohio.gov** with inquiries related to early entrance or acceleration.

- If a child turns five or six **on or before the first day of school**, they can start kindergarten or first grade.
- If a child's fifth birthday is after the first day of instruction but prior to the first day of January, they can wait and begin kindergarten the next year. Alternatively, families may contact the local school district to refer the child for kindergarten entrance to be admitted in accordance with **district policy**.
- If a child will turn five or six on or after the first day of January of the school year, the family can make a referral, and the child shall be evaluated for early admittance in accordance with the **district's acceleration policy** adopted under ORC 3324.10.

School Highlights

The combined **Focus Schools** men's basketball team capped off an impressive season by winning the league championship, bringing together student-athletes from all three Focus schools through teamwork, resilience, and strong chemistry. After overcoming early setbacks, the Eagles united on and off the court, earning back-to-back championship success while building lasting bonds supported by dedicated coaches and cheerleaders throughout their memorable season. Congratulations!



Global Ambassadors Language Academy (GALA) celebrated a tremendous milestone with its 7th Annual Gala, which was a resounding success and raised \$37,620 in support of the school community. The annual fundraising event brought together supporters, sponsors, performers, volunteers, and donors whose generosity and dedication made the evening possible. GALA also proudly honored Councilwoman Jasmin Santana and George Kwan with the Culture & Language Ambassador Award for their outstanding efforts to champion language and culture while helping reduce barriers within the community. In addition, Wanda Torres and Josh Ford were recognized with the Excellence in Education Award for their exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to strengthening and improving the GALA school community.



Congratulations to the **Horizon Science Academy Elementary Columbus** students who participated in the CONSEF Science Fair, where they earned outstanding results across multiple competitions. In the Science Fair, Alexandra and Malak both earned Gold, Israe earned Silver, and Fatima and Aminta each earned Bronze. In MathCON, the school placed 3rd overall, with Muhammed receiving a Silver award and Jade earning Honorable Mention. In the RoboCON Competition, the Sumobot Challenge team of Kamilah, Alexis, and Phalyn earned Bronze, while Alexander and Mustaf also earned Bronze in the Cube Challenge.



Cultural Day at **International Academy Columbus** was an incredible celebration of global learning and creativity! Students researched their chosen countries, exploring everything from vibrant art and delicious cuisine to traditional music and dance. It was amazing to see curiosity, culture, and community come together in such a fun and meaningful way.



Upcoming Events

As we get closer to the end of the school year, take advantage of the remainder of our professional learning opportunities! Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF's Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, [available here](#).

[REPLACING "CHALLENGING" BEHAVIOR WITH MEANINGFUL SKILLS](#) – May 7, 2026 – 3:30 to 4:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Instead of just trying to eliminate challenging behaviors, what if we replaced it with something more functional? This session focuses on teaching replacement behaviors that meet the same needs, whether it's escape, attention, or sensory input. You'll learn how to uncover the root cause (function),

identify lagging skills, and explicitly teach alternatives using visuals, modeling, and practice. We will also cover how to embed this instruction into your daily routines, without overloading your day. Ideal for educators supporting students with emotional or behavioral challenges who want long-term change, not just short-term compliance.

COHORT: Leadership #7 - Board - Administrative Relations – May 12, 2026 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Governing Board members are important stakeholders in a community/charter school. Schools overall perform better when governing boards and leaders operate in a collaborative manner, with shared goals in mind. But is your board "on board"? Learn how to be positive and proactive in defining shared goals and delineating board-administrative roles and responsibilities. Share out your best ideas for effective board and committee meetings. The BCHF Leadership Cohort is a safe space for dialogue among school leaders, sharing out of best practices, and discussing problems and solutions. Join us for some important YOU time!

FEEDBACK IN MATHEMATICS: SUPPORTING LEARNING, IDENTITY, AND AGENCY – May 13, 2026 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Feedback in math class should do more than correct-it should build understanding, confidence, and ownership. This session focuses on how to give feedback that affirms students as mathematical thinkers. Participants will analyze student work to practice feedback strategies that promote growth and reasoning. Leaders will also explore how to apply these principles in coaching conversations and walkthroughs to foster a culture of meaningful learning and reflection.

TEACH LIKE A CHAMPION 4--A Guide to the Science of Reading – May 14, 2026 – 3:30 to 4:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

This is the fourth and final session for the book study on Teach Like A Champion's Guide to the Science of Reading. Anyone can attend any session! Attendees who register and attend at least two sessions will receive a copy of the book. In this concluding meeting, we synthesize our learning by focusing on the purpose of literacy instruction. We will explore The Power of the Book, discussing why sustained engagement with whole texts is the optimal format for building understanding and comprehension. We will then tackle Close Reading, reframing it as the intentional, final act of intellectual rigor. We will share concrete strategies for improving students' ability to access and analyze complex texts, equipping them with the skills necessary for long-term academic and professional success.

COHORT: Literacy and Dyslexia--IN PERSON AT BCHF OFFICES (The Gift of Dyslexia) – May 19, 2026 – In person in Columbus, 3021 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43231

This session will be a facilitated book study of *The Gift of Dyslexia* by Ronald D. Davis. It will take place as an in-person session at Buckeye Hope, with each participant presenting a short activity about a chapter in the book. We will begin assigning the chapters at our January meeting of the cohort, but welcome everyone to join us even if you weren't available for our previous sessions!

To register for any of the above sessions, click on the live link of the title or browse our professional learning opportunities catalog at:

<https://www.mylearningplan.com/Webreg/catalog.asp?H=1&D=22359>

Have a story or event at your school you would like to share? Send it to: hchandoul@buckeyehope.org.

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