



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.

Thank you for Charting the Waters!

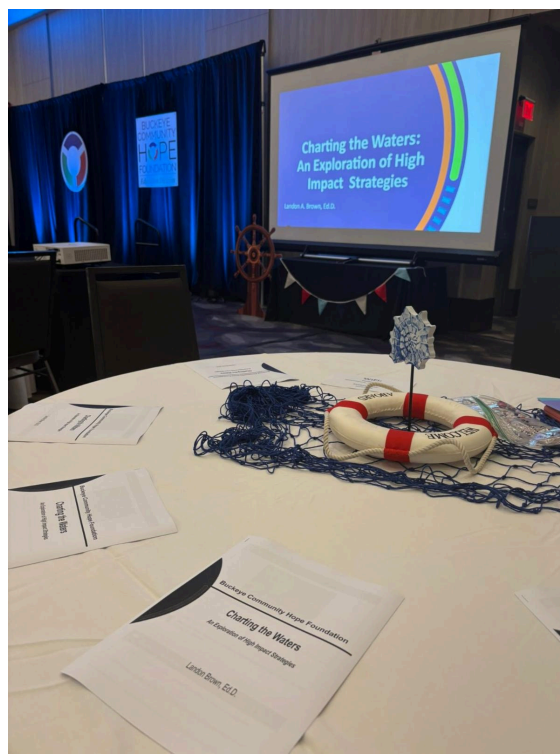


Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2026 Leadership Summit: Charting the Waters! As one of our largest summits to date, we were inspired by the meaningful conversations, collaborative learning, and shared commitment to using data to drive student and school success.

Your active participation is truly what made this event so impactful. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn alongside such dedicated leaders and educators.

A special thank you to our keynote speaker, Dr. Landon Brown, for his engaging and thought-provoking presentation on uncovering our will drivers and identifying strategies for continuous improvement. His insights challenged us all to lead with greater purpose!

We wish you a wonderful summer and look forward to all that you'll accomplish in the 2026–2027 school year. Here's to navigating the year ahead with purpose, innovation, and success!



School Leadership: It May Mean Bold Action

By Carol S. Young, Ph.D., Director, Accountability and School Improvement

Summer is the time of year that school leaders review performance for the previous year to prepare for the year ahead. Leaders approach this task in two separate ways: as a post-mortem or as a window of opportunity. Contrasting questions illustrate how the tone differs for each approach: How did THAT happen? Or how might we ELEVATE outcomes?

One of my responsibilities at BCHF is to notify schools annually of their level of academic performance compared with contractual (charter) performance metrics through a tier of support designation. Tier 0 schools are in their first two years of start-up. Tier 1 schools meet performance standards. Tier 2 schools meet some, not all, performance standards. Tier 3 schools do not meet academic performance standards or are trending down.

Notifying Tier 3 schools is an especially challenging task. As a person who prefers windows to post-mortems, I want so much to support the school in seeing, and seizing, the opportunity to turn the school around, close achievement gaps, and improve outcomes for their students. But the truth is, leaders are often not bold enough to do what needs to be done.

What needs to be done? Today, as educators, we know more about what works in education than ever before. There are strategies that, if followed with fidelity, will improve outcomes for students. Are leaders bold enough to enact them? Strategies listed below may not be easy to implement, but they will make a positive difference. Established high-impact strategies include the following:

1. **Effective, Responsive Leadership.** The school leader must be skilled enough to analyze lead and lag data measures and maintain a positive school climate. The effective school leader cannot compromise on improvement goals and protocols, even under pressure from staff or community. The most important determiner of student learning is teacher efficacy. The most crucial factor in teacher efficacy is leadership direction. If leadership is not effective, school organizations may need to make a change.
2. **Skilled Teachers.** – In this era of shortage, school staffing is a challenge. However, studies consistently show that “teacher quality is one of the most critical factors influencing student achievement. Unskilled teachers, who may lack subject knowledge or effective teaching methods, often fail to deliver lessons in a way that resonates with students” (Jan, 2025). Schools seeking turnaround must consider accelerated in-house training programs or incentives to hire the best teachers for their students.
3. **Supportive Enrollment, Attendance, and Engagement Policies** – An effective charter school worries more about instructional quality than enrollment targets. In fact, many high performing charter schools cut off new enrollments at the beginning of the second semester. Student achievement is closely tied to levels of attendance and meaningful engagement. Effective

charter schools build student attendance and engagement through collaboration, high expectations, and activities that encourage belonging. (Helzberg, 2016)

4. Effective Core Instruction. If most students are in “limited” or “basic” ranges of achievement, core instruction is the problem. The most effective form of core instruction is explicit instruction. Using parallel teaching or co-teaching, all students should be taught fundamental skills and understanding of priority standards by a teacher. Research shows that digital tools provide practice opportunities but do not teach new concepts or understanding well (Rolf & Slocum, 2021).
5. Data-informed Interventions – An effective school uses data continuously to measure the achievement and progress of each individual student. Paired with Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), targeted interventions are provided to classes, small groups, and individual students. Lead measures, such as progress monitoring and curriculum-based assessments, ensure that students receive intervention as soon as they need it.
6. Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum. Effective schools are rich in literacy and emphasize literacy across the curriculum. Students engage in close, repeated, and critical reading of challenging text daily, and they write extended responses to their reading. Explicit learning activities cut across all literacies – reading, writing, speaking, and listening with vocabulary acquisition at the forefront of all content learning. (Croix et al., 2024).
7. Math and Reasoning – Instruction builds a reasoned approach to problem solving that will boost achievement in mathematics as well as generalized reasoning skills. Effective instruction encourages conceptual understanding, problem study, productive struggle, and discourse.

As a supportive sponsor, BCHF is willing to assist all schools to improve academic outcomes on a continuous basis. From one year to the next, our schools are getting better results. Many are the best schools in their region. However, when results decline, we ask school leaders to open the windows and consider bold action. High impact improvement strategies are more than just extra practice or schoolwide intervention periods with adaptive digital programs. High impact strategies are the tools and tough decisions a good leadership team enacts to make educational excellence a reality for their students.

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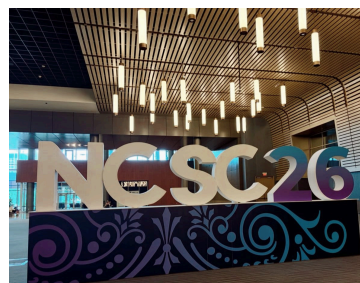
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BCHF Team Attends NCSC26

A few members of our team had the pleasure of attending the National Charter Schools Conference (NCSC) in New Orleans!

It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the country, build new relationships with passionate education professionals, and learn alongside leaders who are committed to expanding opportunities for students. We’re excited to put what we’ve learned into action!



SUN Meals Program Provides Free Summer Meals for Kids



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This summer, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce is sponsoring **SUN Meals**, a summer food program where Kids Eat Free! All children ages 1 through 18 are eligible to receive free meals during the summer months at participating program sites.

Please visit the DEW website for more information: <https://education.ohio.gov/Media/Ed-Connection/June-30-2026/SUN-Meals-program-provides-free-summer-meals-for-k>

No Worksheet Wednesdays!

By Mindy Farry, School Improvement and Accountability Representative

*The opposite of a worksheet is not chaos or lack of structure.
The opposite of a worksheet is purposeful thinking.*

Have you been trying to “ditch” the worksheets but find more and more teachers relying on worksheets and materials provided by your curriculum resources, AI, or worse yet...gasp...Teachers Pay Teachers? Worksheets are comfortable, easy to use, sometimes aligned to the standards, but very seldom aligned to the depth of what students will be asked to do on State tests. In addition, the directions are often confusing or even culturally inappropriate. Teachers often opine that students have lost a sense of curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. But if we aren’t providing those opportunities in the classroom, who WILL cultivate it?

Why not implement, “No Worksheet Wednesdays”? Declare Wednesdays as a day free from worksheets and pre-made activities in the classroom. But, to do that, teachers need to be armed with tools and strategies, and most importantly, the autonomy to experiment with their own ideas to cultivate creativity and critical thinking in the classroom. That’s the job of school leaders. Change is hard. Worksheets are comfortable. Change is hard.

Try replacing worksheets with blank sheets of paper that help students think more deeply and organize their thinking in a graphic way. These strategies will help students think more deeply and ignite discourse among students as they share their results. Students remember what they had to think about.

Sketch noting is a term coined by Mike Rohde (2014) to help all students, but especially students who have difficulty with traditional notetaking. As students read about a topic, watch a video, or listen to direct instruction, students are “doodling,” graffiti writing, drawing ideas, and making connections to the topic.

Worksheet Swaps. Swap out these ideas easily from the typical worksheets:

1. Instead of a Vocabulary worksheet...instead have students generate a way to study and remember new vocabulary words
2. Instead of comprehension questions...have students generate questions to swap with a classmate
3. Instead of math drill sheets...set up stations with incorrect answers and have students analyze where and why the error occurred
4. Instead of Note-taking worksheet (guided notes)...have students design their own note-taking graphic (two column journals; KWLS; webs; mind maps)
5. Instead of “end of chapter responses”—have students write a Claim, Evidence, Response to a prompt

Encouraging Student Discourse

1. "Turn and Talks- or Think/Pair Share"-- tried and true, but try adding in Think/Write/Pair Share (Think about it; write a thought down; then share with a partner)
2. "Give one; Get one" Provide students with a blank sheet of paper with 9 blocks. Ask a question about the reading, the math problem, the chapter in social studies, the piece of art and ask them to fill in the first two boxes with their own thoughts about your question. Then, they move around the room and give one idea to a classmate and have that classmate give them an idea. Once everyone is finished, ask students to share a piece of interesting advice, comment, etc. that they received from a classmate.
3. "I used to think, but now I know." Line students up in two rows facing each other. They then say, "I used to think that _____(the Civil War was caused by...), but now I know there were other factors like...."
4. "Four Corners." Ask questions about a reading assignment or math problem. One corner (I strongly agree); One corner (I strongly disagree); One corner (I agree); One corner (I disagree). Students then defend their decisions.
5. "Collaborative Annotation." Students use markers or sticky notes in pairs of groups to highlight important information in a reading.
6. "Discussion Sentence Stems." (especially helpful for English Learners or reluctant speakers). Provide students with examples of ways to begin discussions:
 - "I agree with ___ because..."
 - "I would like to add..."
 - "Can you explain what you mean?"
 - "My evidence is..."
 - "I would like to respectfully disagree because..."
 - "Another perspective might be..."

For School Leaders:

1. Start small—ask teachers to replace one worksheet a week with more purposeful activities that require deeper thinking.
2. Show teachers how to turn a typical worksheet into a thinking task—generate ideas from teachers.
3. Model a strategy each month in a staff meeting and then focus observations on that strategy for the month. (Gradual Release process: You demonstrate it; they practice it; then independently use it in the classroom).
4. Ask teachers who are using a strategy successfully in their classroom to demonstrate to their peers in a staff meeting.
5. Invite teachers to visit a colleague's classroom using "No Worksheet" strategies. Maybe even cover their class!

Remember....

- "Busy is not the same as engaged."
- "Completion does not equal comprehension."
- "Students remember what they think about."
- The goal is not more activity—it's more cognition.

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If you have additional questions or interest in this topic, please contact mfarry@buckeyehope.org or your school improvement representative.

Small Pencil Cup, Big Story



Sometimes the smallest keepsakes tell the biggest stories.

Years ago, while teaching kindergarten, Buckeye Community School Springfield teacher Anna King received a handmade pencil cup from one of her students, Logan. Crafted from crayons and creativity, the gift earned a permanent place on Anna's desk, where it remained through the years.

Fast forward to this year, and that same student has returned to Anna's classroom! Now a high school student at Buckeye Community School Springfield, Logan is once again learning from the teacher who first knew him as a kindergartner. As he continues to grow, overcome challenges, and embrace new opportunities, one familiar reminder still sits on Anna's desk: the colorful pencil cup he made all those years ago.

The keepsake represents far more than a classroom gift. It reflects the lasting relationships that make education so meaningful and the profound impact educators can have on the lives of their students!

Heather Carney 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 are featuring Heather Carney, Compliance Representative.

Can you give an overview of your background? What originally drew you to a career in education?

My professional journey began as a ballet dancer, where I also had opportunities to teach and mentor students. Later, I became an instructor with the YMCA of Central Ohio, where I discovered a passion for teaching, facilitating trainings, and helping others learn and grow. After my children started school, I returned to college to earn my teaching license, building on my degrees in Psychology and Anthropology. Looking back, education seemed to find me at every stage of my career. My mother always said I should become a teacher, and after years of finding myself in teaching and training roles, I realized she was right. That journey ultimately led me to spend 13 rewarding years as a middle school science teacher.

What motivates you to come to work every day?

While much of my work today takes place virtually or behind a computer screen, it is the people I work with who motivate me every day. The relationships I build with colleagues, schools, and educational leaders inspire me to continuously seek better ways to support compliance and improve educational outcomes. Knowing that my work helps schools operate effectively and ultimately benefits students

gives purpose to what I do. I enjoy being part of a larger mission that supports quality education across our communities.

What do you enjoy most about your role at BCHF?

One of the things I enjoy most about my role at BCHF is the opportunity to combine my educational background with continuous learning in new areas. As a classroom teacher, I had limited exposure to compliance requirements and educational law, so this work has opened my eyes to an entirely different side of education. I find the intersection of education, policy, and law fascinating, particularly how these areas impact schools and students. Every day presents an opportunity to learn something new and contribute in meaningful ways.

How do you define your “why”?

I believe that a strong community, society, and nation are built through education. My goal has always been to help people become curious, informed, and engaged learners. As a science teacher, I encouraged students to ask questions about the world around them and to never stop exploring possible answers. That belief continues to guide my work today. Education empowers individuals, and empowered individuals strengthen the communities in which they live.

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

Whenever I need a reminder of why this work matters, I spend time in a school. Seeing students engaged in learning and watching educators create meaningful experiences for them is incredibly inspiring. There is something special about witnessing curiosity, growth, and discovery firsthand. Those moments remind me of the lasting impact education has on individuals and communities.

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

My work at BCHF has helped me recognize how valuable my diverse professional experiences have been. It has given me the opportunity to combine my background in education, training, psychology, and leadership while exploring new facets of the educational field. I have learned that I enjoy continuous learning and adapting to new challenges. This role has expanded my perspective and reinforced my commitment to supporting education in a variety of ways.

A quote or mantra you live by?

One lyric that has always resonated with me comes from the Indigo Girls' song Closer to Fine: “Why do we hurdle ourselves through every inch and time in space?” To me, it serves as a reminder not to become so focused on the destination that we forget to appreciate the journey. Growth comes from asking questions, seeking understanding, and remaining open to new perspectives. That mindset has shaped both my personal and professional life.

Who inspires you in your work?

I am inspired by educators. Every day, teachers, administrators, and school staff dedicate themselves to helping students learn, grow, and succeed, often while navigating significant challenges. Their creativity, resilience, and commitment to students continually remind me of the importance of our work. Seeing their dedication motivates me to do my part in supporting schools and educational excellence.

Who are you outside of your work?

Outside of work, family and the outdoors are at the center of my life. I met my husband while we were both camp counselors at a YMCA camp in Pennsylvania, and we still enjoy many of the same outdoor activities together, including hiking, kayaking, camping, and gathering around a campfire. We continue to spend time at Deer Valley with our children, creating memories in a place that has been meaningful to our family for years. In fact, our daughter Katie is preparing to marry her fiancé, whom she met at the same camp, and our son Sean is working there this summer. When I'm not reading for work, I enjoy relaxing with a good fiction book on my Kindle.

Heather's story is a reminder that there is no single path into education, only a shared commitment to making a difference. Whether in the classroom, through compliance, or by supporting school leaders behind the scenes, her work is grounded in the belief that strong schools create stronger communities. As we continue exploring the “why” that drives our team, we're grateful for colleagues like Heather whose curiosity, dedication, and passion for education help move our mission forward every day.

July Compliance Update

OPENING ASSURANCES

BCHF Compliance Representatives will conduct Opening Assurances to certify that schools are eligible to open for the school year.

The following documents and requirements must be current and submitted **no later than five (5) business days before the school's first day of student attendance**. Documentation should be

uploaded to Epicenter or emailed to your sponsor representative.

Please note that additional documentation may be reviewed during the Opening Assurance process, and a facility walkthrough will be conducted during the Opening Assurance visit:

Required Documentation:

- Building lease (or proof of ownership)
- Occupancy permits (for first year in building or recent renovations)
- Health & safety inspections
- Fire inspections
- School emergency plans
- Liability insurance

ATTENTION OEDS-R ADMINISTRATORS

As the deadline for Opening Assurances draws near, please be reminded to review and update information in the OEDS-r system, paying particular attention to changes in personnel. As always, if you have any questions, please contact your school's sponsor representatives.

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines from DEW

July:

- 7/1: Deadline to adopt **formal AI policies**
- 7/1: Deadline for **blended learning declarations**
- 7/1: Complete **Community School Gifted Performance Indicator opt-in form**
- 7/15: Deadline for schools to opt in to **K-12 Ohio Direct Admission**
- 7/15: Deadline for **EMIS data collections**
- 7/15: Final day to **submit Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid and Student Wellness and Success Funds report**

August:

- 8/1: Deadline to **adopt online day plans**
- 8/3: **OhioMeansJobs K-12 survey** closes
- 8/28: **RISE Award nominations** close

Fourth Grade History Pass Plus



The **4th Grade History Pass Plus** is a special July-only opportunity for a unique family experience in Ohio. An initiative through America 250 Ohio, the pass offers eligible fourth graders and up to three guests or family members no-cost admission to participating Ohio museums and historic sites from July 1-31.

- Any Ohio fourth grade student of the 2025-2026 school year may use the pass during the month of July 2026 to gain free admission to participating sites with up to three members of their family.
- Admission and verification are up to the museum or historic site's discretion.
- Valid only at participating sites.
- Not valid for special exhibitions, shows, and so forth.
- This pass differs from the regular **Fourth Grade History Pass**, which gives free admission to fourth graders with a paid adult during other months.

Get the pass or find educator resources and more information about the opportunity on the **America 250 Ohio website**.

ALLOhio Online Modules for Educators of English Learners

To support the literacy development of multilingual English learners, the University of Cincinnati Systems Development & Improvement Center's **AllOhio Literacy and Learning Science Project** offers professional development modules about evidence-based practices for teachers of multilingual learners. The 10 modules are self-paced and free of charge, with additional credit-earning options. Visit the AllOhio Literacy and Learning Science website to **[view the learning modules](#)**.

Upcoming Events

We wish you a restful July! Summer is a great time for professional development, however. Listed below are some upcoming options. BCHF will soon be refreshing its professional development catalog. Check back frequently to see new options!

Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF's Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, **[available here](#)**.

[1. ASYNCHRONOUS: WORKSHEET INDEPENDENCE! A Full PBL Planning Session](#) – “Hope Hub” Asynchronous Course (Work on your own) – begins July 1, 2026 – register and you will receive further instructions and materials

ASYNCHRONOUS! WE ARE DECLARING INDEPENDENCE FROM WORKSHEETS! This Project-Based Learning Cohort will allow you to design a project this summer and launch it during the 2026-27 school year. Do this on your own time! The course opens July 1, 2026 with the final project due by August 10, 2026. This is 100% ASYNCHRONOUS--work online at your own pace. This is not just a "course" about PBL; you will leave with a complete, ready to use PBL unit for your classroom! Whether you're new to PBL or looking to refine your practice, this cohort will provide the structure, resources, and support needed to turn great ideas into meaningful learning experiences. Learn. Design. Create. Launch. Your next great project begins July 1!

[2. ASYNCHRONOUS: Teacher Training Workshop](#) - “Hope Hub” Asynchronous Course (Work on your own) – begins July 15, 2026 – register and you will receive further instructions and materials

Start the year the right way! In this ASYNCHRONOUS course, teachers can complete the course on their own time to prepare for the new school year. Find out the latest research about trauma-informed instruction; classroom organization and management; and building a solid lesson plan.

[3. Onboarding and Supporting New Staff](#) – July 21, 2026 1:30 to 3:00 P.M. – Online (synchronous) via Zoom

How do leaders onboard and support new staff before they start and into the first year of employment? New staff have individualized needs that they may hesitate to share with school leaders. Learn strategies for planned outreach, diagnosing needs, and providing the right amount of leadership response. Join us as we discuss the care and tending of new staff!

[4. BCHF SCHOOL LEADER ORIENTATION](#) – July 28, 2026 – 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. – In person in Columbus

Get to know your sponsor and learn some vital information for ALL school leaders! This session will cover roles and responsibilities of schools and sponsors, school compliance, school finance and financial reviews, and academic accountability. In addition, you will learn about all of the supports and monitoring provided by Buckeye Community Hope Foundation. Join us at our training room in Columbus for a vital, information-packed day! **This session is a "must have" for new school leaders and management company leaders and a great refresh for everyone.**

[5. Teacher Workshop: Parts 1 and 2](#) – August 4-5, 2026 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. OR 7:00 to 8:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Start the year off right! Part 1 will center around classroom management, relationship building, classroom organization, and trauma-informed reactions to students. Part 2 will cover the well-structured lesson, concentrating on the Gradual Release of Responsibility process. Attendees can choose to attend either the 4-5:30 p.m. time slot or the 7-8:30 p.m. times lot. Join us for some fun stories and methods you can take right into your classroom in a few weeks!

[6. ALL SCHOOLS MEETING](#) – September 16, 2026 – 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. – In person in Columbus as Fawcett Center for Tomorrow (OSU Campus)

Join us for the official "Kick Off" to the 2026-27 school year! The All Schools Meeting presents vital information and notifications for the sponsor-school relationship and for the upcoming year. We will request at least one representative from each sponsored school attend. A specific agenda will be shared as details become available but **SAVE THE DATE!**

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

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