



AUGUST 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.

Welcome, New School Leaders!



It was a full house at our School Leader Orientation! Thank you to everyone who joined us. We are excited to partner with you throughout the school year as you lead, inspire, and create learning environments where students and educators can thrive.

We look forward to seeing the incredible impact you'll make. Here's to a successful school year ahead!

The First 30 Days Matter More Than the Next 150

By Mindy Farry Accountability and School Improvement Representative

By the time you're reading this article, classrooms are airing out, teachers are decorating bulletin boards, buses are running, and everyone is wondering the same thing: "How do we make this our best year yet?"

The answer isn't found in January data meetings or spring testing. It starts long before that—in the first month of school. I've visited enough schools over the years to know that you can often tell by the end of September what the rest of the year is going to look like. That's not because every problem has been solved. It's because effective leaders establish a culture that says, "This is how we do things here." Those first few weeks matter.

Decide What Is Non-Negotiable

Teachers are walking into a new school year with new students, new responsibilities, and often a few new initiatives. They don't need a list of twenty priorities. They need clarity.

What are the two or three instructional practices that every classroom should demonstrate every day? What expectations will never change, regardless of grade level or content area? When leaders are clear about those non-negotiables—and consistently reinforce them—teachers can spend less time guessing and more time teaching.

You ask teachers to review their non-negotiables in the classroom. What are the non-negotiable expectations for every classroom, every day?

Keep Saying It

One faculty meeting isn't enough. Neither is one email. If something is important, it deserves to be repeated. Whether you're talking about attendance, classroom expectations, instructional strategies, or school culture, your staff should hear the same message in meetings, walkthroughs, coaching conversations, and informal visits to classrooms. Sound like a broken record, and the message is getting across! Consistency builds confidence. Mixed messages create confusion.

Guard Every Minute of Instruction Time

One of the quickest ways to improve student achievement doesn't cost a dollar. Protect instructional time. Every unnecessary announcement, interruption, extended transition, or last-minute schedule change chips away at learning. Five minutes here and ten minutes there doesn't seem like much until they've added up to hours of lost instruction.

Ask yourself—and your leadership team—a simple question: "Would I interrupt this lesson if I were the student sitting in that classroom?" If the answer is no, it can probably wait.

Get Into Classrooms Early

Don't wait until evaluation season to find out what's happening. The first month should be filled with quick classroom visits—not to "catch" teachers doing something wrong, but to understand what's working, identify where support is needed, and celebrate effective instruction.

The best walkthroughs end with conversations, not checklists. When teachers know you're there to support them, those visits become opportunities for growth instead of sources of anxiety. So many tasks (major and trivial) take time away from administrators. There is nothing more important, however, than helping teachers become better teachers. You cannot do that unless you are in classrooms consistently, encouraging, giving advice, assisting.

Set personal goals for how many classrooms you will visit in a week. Publish that goal. I used to display a huge poster "thermometer" with my weekly goal on it right outside the main office. It kept me accountable to the staff and to myself.

Resist the Temptation to Do Everything

Every year brings new programs, new requirements, and new ideas. Some are excellent. But trying to implement everything at once usually means implementing nothing particularly well. Schools improve when leaders stay focused. Instead of asking, "What else can we add?" consider asking, "What should we become exceptional at?" When there are too many priorities, it becomes like skimming a stone across the lake. The stone only brushes the surface instead of sinking in deeply to the bottom.

Depth almost always beats breadth. Many of you may have heard my story about one of my favorite bosses. He came into a leadership meeting with a huge bull's eye on a piece of poster paper. He then drew multiple arrows on the poster. Some arrows were pointed directly at the center, while others were flying haphazardly in a multitude of directions. He said, "These arrows are just like you. You all have great arrows with sharp tips, but if they aren't linked to our overall goal, set them aside for another time." That helped me as I walked back to my building. It helped guide purchases, hiring, scheduling... every decision had to be aimed at the bull's eye.

One Final Thought

As leaders, we don't control every challenge the school year will bring. There will be staffing changes, enrollment issues, unexpected obstacles, and moments when even the best plans need to be adjusted. But we do control how we begin. The first 30 days are our opportunity to establish expectations, build relationships, protect learning, and create momentum that carries us through the rest of the year. A

strong start doesn't guarantee a successful year—but it certainly makes one much more likely. Here's wishing you a school year filled with purposeful, targeted leadership, great teaching, and students who thrive because of both.

References

Fullan, M. (2020). *Leading in a culture of change* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). *Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems*. Corwin.

Global Ambassadors Language Academy Breaks Ground on Permanent School Home

Global Ambassadors Language Academy (GALA) has reached a major milestone! After years of planning, fundraising, and perseverance, construction has officially begun on the school's permanent home in Cleveland's historic McKinley building.

The more renovation project represents the culmination of years of dedication - from GALA's founding in 2010 and opening in 2016 to the purchase of the building five years ago and more than three years of securing financing. Once complete in July 2027, the transformed facility will feature modern classrooms, a renovated auditorium and gymnasium, updated building systems, an elevator, expanded office space, and the relocation of the school's beloved Fialeny Playground.

Congratulations on this exciting achievement; we look forward to seeing students and staff thrive in their new home!



Positivity, Stacking Bricks, and Long-Term Success

By Dane Puterbaugh Accountability and School Improvement Representative

The summer is a wonderful time to work in education. From the outside, it looks like we all take the summer off and sit poolside with mystery novels and cool drinks. The reality is the work never stops, it just looks different. Summer provides a time to “sharpen your saw”, as Stephen Covey says. During my summers, I like to go on long runs in the woods on non-work hours or between projects. Running without headphones gives me a lot of time to think. This summer I have been thinking more and more about the crossover between successful endurance training and how to improve schools and student outcomes. Three ideas stand out that educators can take from the endurance world - the long term growth from consistency, the power of positivity, and the importance of a team.

Brick stacking is not a new idea for anyone in the endurance world. To be good at endurance events, it takes many workouts or “bricks” over a long enough time horizon. When you want to run a 50 mile race, no single workout is going to make or break your ability. Instead, it is that daily effort and consistency that leads to growth. The same is true for our students. No single lesson is going to help your students pass their state tests. Our students’ success comes from daily brick stacking. The

routines, strategies, and words you use everyday to build up your students is what leads to long term growth. Consistency beats the newest buzz words every time.

The next idea, positivity, involves a little bit of math. There are several studies that examine how mindset affects performance in running. Those studies have found that positive self-talk leads to a 2-4% increase in running performance. That might sound like a small number, but think about that over a long enough time horizon. A 4% boost everyday leads to a fundamentally different runner over the course of a year. And the good news? The boosts are even greater for students. One study published by the Institute of Education Science found that a positive mindset (tied to growth mindset) led to a 13% boost in student academic outcomes. Think about a student that is 13% better every year over the course of their education. That is life changing academic growth.

The last idea is important to think about now when things feel good. We all know that the school year gets tough. Those long days and meetings that feel like they're pulling us away from what we want to be doing come for all of us. But there are important studies that apply to running and teaching. In an incredible study from the University of Virginia, they found that when confronted with a physical hill, we perceive them to be less steep when we are around people that we consider friends. Being surrounded by "our team," people we feel supported by, literally changes how big a hill looks! And we all know the school year is one big proverbial hill we need to climb every year. If you want to know more about yourself, look at the people you surround yourself with. Is your team one that will make big hills look small? Investing in your people early and building strong connections will pay dividends over the course of the year.

Start this school year off strong and don't overcomplicate it. There is no silver bullet, but there are strategies that are proven to work. Your consistent brick stacking will help build the foundation your students need to excel. Stealing, and slightly tweaking, a phrase from Ernest Hemmingway, growth happens two ways: gradually then suddenly. Surround yourself with the right people, keep a positive attitude, and keep stacking those bricks, and your students' growth will happen the same way - gradually then suddenly.

Works Cited:

MARCORA, S., STAIANO, W., DE MORREE, H., HARDY, J., & BLANCHFIELD, A. (2014). Talking Yourself Out of Exhaustion: The Effects of Self-talk on Endurance Performance. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 46(5), 998–1007. <https://doi.org/10.1249/MSS.0000000000000184>

Schnall, S., Harber, K. D., Stefanucci, J. K., & Proffitt, D. R. (2008). Social Support and the Perception of Geographical Slant. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, 44(5), 1246–1255. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.04.011>

What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2022, January). Growth Mindset Interventions for Postsecondary Students. <https://whatworks.ed.gov>.

Stay on Track with English Learner Compliance

The start of the school year is the perfect time to ensure your school is meeting all English Learner (EL) identification and compliance requirements. From collecting Home Language Surveys to screening eligible students, identifying English Learners, and providing timely parent notifications, each step plays an important role in supporting students and maintaining compliance.

Use the infographic below as a quick reference to help your team stay on track. Remember, the screening, identification, and parent notification process must be completed within the first 30 days of school.



Is Your School **ON TRACK** with EL Services?

**English Learner compliance deadlines
may be closer than you think!**

Start 2026-27 on the right foot with timely
SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION and
NOTIFICATION processes.



Step 1

Schools must collect information about languages used at home for ALL new students.

Enrollment packets submitted without language use survey responses are considered incomplete.



Step 2

If a language other than English is used in a student's household, that student should be screened with OELPS.

Students in multilingual families can qualify for EL services even if they mostly speak English at home.

Step 3

If the student does not meet the proficiency cut score in all tested domains, they are classified as an English Learner (EL).

Avoid funding delays by ensuring that student records are up to date in EMIS!



Step 4

Parents and caregivers of identified students must receive written notification of the student's placement, including an explanation of their parental rights and how services will be delivered, in a language they understand.



**THIS PROCESS MUST BE COMPLETED
WITHIN THE FIRST 30 DAYS OF SCHOOL.**

Questions? Please reach out to Zoe Plotnick:
zplotnick@buckeyehope.org

The Why Behind the Work: Dane Puterbaugh



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 Dane Puterbaugh, Accountability and School Improvement Representative.

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

I started attending college as a business economics major during the Great Recession. Out of fear that the economy might cease to exist, and feeling like I was surrounded by people who were only self-interested, I looked for a new major where I felt like I could make a difference. I transferred to the college of education, helped start a student advocacy group that lobbied for better schools, and eventually joined Teach for America. Since then, I helped start two schools, worked on a farm-based high school, and spent time in administration.

What motivates you to come to work every day?

I feel motivated when I get to help others. Education is hard work. I feel very lucky to get to help educators everyday.

What do you enjoy most about your role at BCHF?

Connecting with leaders and teachers all over the state. There are so many people doing wonderful things for their students. I love working with people that are passionate about helping students and doing my best to support their work.

How do you define your “why”?

We all have a responsibility to help one another. Our lives and successes are more intertwined than we realize. When those around us are better, we all do better.

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

Remembering how important this work is helps me during tough times. A student's life is fundamentally changed for the better when they go from being a disconnected youth to having a high school diploma and a career pathway. The work we are all doing literally changes lives.

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

I don't feel like I am working when I am helping others. I feel so privileged to get to help so many educators in my role.

A quote or mantra you live by?

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say “It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.” Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”
— Fred Rogers

Who inspires you in your work?

The educators and school leaders who show up every day for their students. Education is hard work and oftentimes thankless. I am so lucky to get to work with so many hard working, inspiring educators.

Who are you outside of your work?

Outside of work I love spending time with my wife and three rescue dogs, trail running, and finding the best vegan restaurants when we travel.

At BCHF, our work is rooted in the belief that when we support educators, we create better opportunities for students. Dane's story is a reminder that meaningful change begins with people who are willing to serve others with purpose, compassion, and commitment. Thank you, Dane, for the impact you make every day and for helping schools and students thrive!

August Compliance Update

Annual Policy Review and Approval by the Board of Directors:

- Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Public Records Policy and Retention Schedule
- Homeless Student Policy

- Academic Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Parent Involvement Policy
- Career Advising Policy

The Board of Directors is also required to review all Health and Safety policies and procedures of the Board Policy Manual to ensure the safety of students, employees, and other persons and to ensure that its policies and procedures comply with all applicable health and safety laws and regulations:

- Wellness Policy
- Food and Beverage
- Policy Protective Eyewear Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Automated External Defibrillator Policy
- Bloodborne Pathogen Control Policy
- Chicken Pox Epidemic Policy
- Dangerous and Recalled Products Plan
- Hand-Washing Policy
- Integrated Pest Management Policy
- Bed Bug Process Policy
- Pesticide Notice Policy
- Food Allergy Policy
- Medication Policy
- Radon Protocol Policy
- Vehicle Idling Policy
- Search Policy
- Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Policy
- Corporal Punishment Policy

Please reach out to your Compliance Representative with any questions.

School Supply Grant for Educators

LifeChanger of the Year is a national recognition program that honors K-12 educators and school employees making a difference in the lives of students.

This summer, **\$750 Back-to-School Supply Grants** will be awarded to 10 public, private, and charter school employees in K-12 schools across the country. These grants are designed to help cover the out-of-pocket costs educators often spend on classroom supplies.

Applications close on August 15th.

Application

School Highlights

Bennett Venture Academy hosted a Summer Play & Connect event, bringing together new and returning families for an afternoon of fun, connection, and preparation for the upcoming school year. Families enjoyed school tours, assistance with enrollment paperwork, free ice cream and snacks, swag bags, playground activities, and games while getting to know the school community.



Constellation Schools Westside Community School of the Arts welcomed students, families, and community members for its Art in the Park event, celebrating creativity, self-expression, and the power of the arts. Participants enjoyed creating artwork together while showcasing the imagination and talent that make the school community so vibrant.



Riverscape Career Tech High School recently brought students and community members together for a meaningful intergenerational experience focused on connection, conversation, and shared learning.

During the event, students spent time engaging with members of the community, exchanging stories, laughter, and life experiences that created mutual respect, understanding, and lasting relationships. These conversations provided valuable opportunities for students to learn from others while strengthening connections beyond the classroom.



Upcoming Events

August is the end of summer and the beginning of a brand-new exciting school year! Jumpstart the year with professional preparation for school leaders and staff.

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

1. Readiness System Introduction - August 7, 2026 – 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.

"By the time we get the State testing results, the school year is over." Join us for an introduction to the Readiness system. The same platform students use for Ohio State Testing (OST/EOC) also supports Checkpoint and Benchmark assessments. Readiness Assessments help students become familiar with the testing system while allowing educators to identify areas of need before the high stakes Spring testing season. In this session we will review the basics of the Readiness system so you can decide if it will benefit your students.

2. Drop Out Recovery Series: Teaching Algebra in a Non-Traditional High School Setting - August 19, 2026 – 3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

ESPECIALLY FOR MATH TEACHERS IN DOR SETTINGS-- How do we encourage our drop out recovery students to tackle Ohio's rigorous Algebra 1 standards? Knowing the key terminology and the "golden rules" of Algebra are the first steps. In addition, students need to learn problem solving strategies, ways to literally "tackle" algebra. Algebra is something we all can learn and enjoy. Come prepared to discuss and to share out YOUR most promising strategies for supporting students in Algebra 1.

3. New Leader #1 - August 25, 2026 – 4:00 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.

More information coming soon!

4. LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY #1: A Positive Start - 1:30 P.M. Session - August 27, 2026

START YOUR YEAR ON A POSITIVE NOTE! This session will encourage YOU as a leader to check the climate and move positively through the challenging first days of school. Join us and let's discuss. Our goal will be feelings of joy and equanimity as we begin the year. The Leadership Strategies CLC is a safe space for leaders and aspiring leaders to share, solve, and discuss the strengths and needs of their schools. With a focus on mission fulfillment, this CLC will allow leaders to enhance their capacity to plan, communicate, and implement strategic actions to move their schools forward toward goals. Each session will focus on real-life situations and administrative actions.

5. LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY #1: A Positive Start - 3:30 P.M. Session - August 27, 2026

START YOUR YEAR ON A POSITIVE NOTE! This session will encourage YOU as a leader to check the climate and move positively through the challenging first days of school. Join us and let's discuss. Our goal will be feelings of joy and equanimity as we begin the year. The Leadership Strategies CLC is a safe space for leaders and aspiring leaders to share, solve, and discuss the strengths and needs of their schools. With a focus on mission fulfillment, this CLC will allow leaders to enhance their capacity to plan, communicate, and implement strategic actions to move their schools forward toward goals. Each session will focus on real-life situations and administrative actions.

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.

BUCKEYE COMMUNITY HOPE FOUNDATION

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

[Get In Touch](#)



Buckeye Community Hope Foundation | 3021 E Dublin Granville Rd | Columbus, OH 43231 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!