

SPONSOR UPDATE

APRIL 2017

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Peggy Young,
Director
.....

Jennifer Schorr,
Associate Director
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OUR MISSION

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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.

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OUR VISION

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The Education Division's vision is strong communities of healthy, well-educated students, and a future in which all students have access to a high quality public education. Ohio thrives as increasing numbers of schools graduate students equipped to assume a positive role in society.

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Sponsors seek changes to evaluation in biennial budget bill

Various charter school stakeholders are advocating for changes to the sponsor performance assessment implemented last year. Among those calling for improvements is the Ohio Association of Charter School Authorizers (OACSA), whose president, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation Education Division Director Peggy Young, recently testified before the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education.

In testimony, and in meetings with individual policy-makers, OACSA has advocated for three key changes:

Clarification/strengthening of the law to force the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to eliminate from the evaluation framework a provision that automatically lowers a sponsor's overall rating to "ineffective" if a zero score is obtained in any one of the three components – This aspect of the scoring rubric conflicts with state law which requires that the components be equally weighted.

Addition of a provision to state law to require ODE to eliminate average daily membership (ADM) from the academic component calculation to ensure that each school within a sponsor' portfolio is equally weighted, regardless of the number of students – Every charter school, regardless of enrollment, should be equally considered. Assigning lesser weights for small schools offers a perverse incentive for sponsors to focus more on the performance of large schools – an injustice to students whose best educational opportunity is a small school.

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**STATE BOARD
MEMBER RESIGNS;
VACANCY QUICKLY
FILLED**
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Former State Board of Education president Tom Gunlock recently resigned his seat after six years of service. He is recognized as a champion in holding students to higher learning standards, redesign of Ohio's report cards, and the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

On the same day as Gunlock's resignation, Gov. John Kasich (R-Westerville) announced his appointment of Kara Morgan – a Battelle researcher and Ohio State University professor – to fill the vacant seat.

Board member turnover has been high, with 10 of the 19 members appointed or elected in recent months.



Proposed budget bill changes — continued

Addition of a provision to state law to require ODE to provide sponsors with the opportunity to review data and ratings prior to publication to address any technical errors, and the right to appeal ratings – Just as districts and schools have the

opportunity to review report card data before report cards are finalized and published, so, too, should sponsors have the opportunity to ensure accuracy in the calculation of component scores. Under current law, only sponsors rated “poor” may appeal their ratings.

Legislators have generally understood and appreciated OACSA's perspective; however, it remains to be seen if legitimate stakeholders' concerns will be addressed through the biennial budget bill, which will likely be finalized by the June 30 deadline.

In the same hearing at which OACSA testified, members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education also heard from William Phillis, executive director of the Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, who recommended that a moratorium be placed on the expansion of charter schools and Ohio's vouchers be put into place.

Ohio delays submission of federal ESSA plan

Against the backdrop of stakeholders calling for revisions, the Ohio Department of Education will delay until September the submission of a state plan to comply with the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

In making the announcement, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria defended the process for gathering stakeholder input and offered assurance that Ohio's ESSA plan is only a piece of a broader comprehensive strategic approach to improving Ohio's public schools.



In a message to key stakeholders, DeMaria said: The submission of the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) response should be an event that unites us. In recent weeks, we've heard from stakeholders who feel their input was not reflected in the ESSA template. In reality, however, stakeholder sentiments were heard loud and clear, and we have stated our commitment to identifying solutions to the challenges raised. Much of this work can be done outside the narrow focus of the ESSA specifications.”

The delay reduces preparation time for districts and schools, which must implement plan provisions in the 2017-2018 school year.

CONGRATS!

Congratulations to Horizon Science Academy Dayton High School and Oktay Ince - the school's science teacher and STEM coordinator - on his acceptance into the 2017 National Science Foundation summer program sponsored by the Research Experience for Teachers.

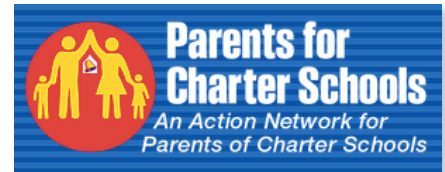
Middle and high school science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teachers are selected to join faculty, researchers and students from the University of Dayton, Central State University and Wright State University for a dynamic six-week program. Ince will join other participants in hands-on STEM learning and real-world engineering research centered around materials and advanced manufacturing engineering, gaining knowledge and skills to better engage students.



BCHF Sponsor Update – April 2017

Parents for Charter Schools launched

A new not-for-profit organization – Parents for Charter Schools – is focused on uniting a key stakeholder group to protect and promote school choice in Ohio.

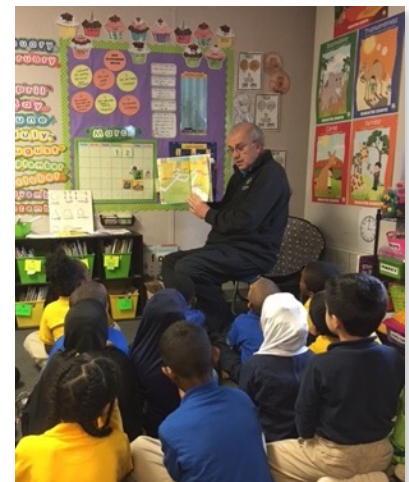


Parents for Charter Schools is backed by the Ohio Coalition for Quality Education, whose president, Ron Adler, serves as the new organization's director. Adler will spearhead efforts to train parents to serve as ambassadors advocating before policy-makers on key charter and choice issues.

Learn more or sign up online at: www.parents-charters.org

Legislator participates in Read Across America Day

State Senator Cliff Hite (R-Findlay) visited Horizon Science Academy (HSA) Elementary in Columbus and read to students in celebration of Read Across America Day. Coinciding with Dr. Seuss' birthday, the 20th annual Read Across America event was a hit with HSA students who enjoyed the very engaging Sen. Hite. Buckeye Community Hope Foundation Education Division Director Peggy Young, who also participated in the day's activities, thanked Sen. Hite and others who made the day so special for students.



New math, English learning standards approved

The State Board of Education has approved revisions to Ohio's learning standards for mathematics and English language arts proposed by the Ohio Department of Education. Some of the changes simply reflect instruction already taking place in Ohio's classrooms. Clarifications in the revised standards will guide districts and schools in reviewing their existing local curricula, instructional plans and resources to see what modifications, but not replacements, they might want to make. Learn more at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio>.

TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM CHANGES CONSIDERED

Recommendations were recently presented by the Educator Standards Board to the State Board of Education for changes to improve the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). Recommendations include tweaking the scoring rubric by rolling in student indicators like value-added, as well as knowledge of students, assessment data, assessment of student learning and professional responsibility. Also recommended is the elimination of schools' average value-added totals into individual teachers' evaluation scores.

The board also recommends eliminating the alternative framework, revising the structure and timing of classroom observations and providing a professional growth process for teachers who receive ratings of "accomplished" and "skilled."

The General Assembly – rather than the State Board – would be responsible for making any changes to OTES, which was created through legislation in 2012 and has already been subject to revisions.

Eagle Award celebrates school's value-added success

"I just could not end my evening without saying THANK YOU," read an email to staff from Stambaugh Charter Academy Principal Landon Brown, who accepted a National Heritage Academy (NHA) Eagle Award at a March 14 event for NHA school principals.

Stambaugh's award for state accountability and school progress recognized a significant academic achievement: an "A" in overall value-added for the 2015-2016 school year.

As Brown congratulated his team for its outstanding accomplishment and well-deserved recognition, he also encouraged them to "keep up the good work with the small groups, intensive interventions and engaging lessons."

"They do make a difference," he continued. "Our goal is to sustain such progress and continue to move each and every scholar towards proficiency."

Brown's encouraging leadership style contributes to the school's success.

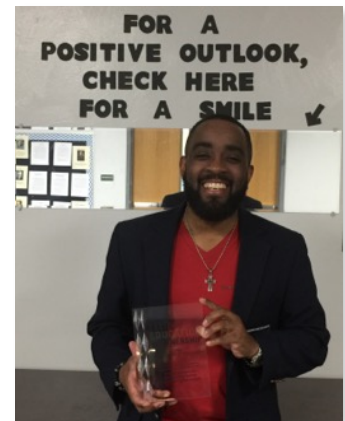
Another key factor, according to Dean of Intervention Joni Byus, is the school's intentionality, from analyzing data to the selection and purchase of resources. "Everything we do is very intentional," she said.

Byus, who oversees the school's Title I program, saw a need for better progress monitoring, which led to implementation of Aimswebplus. The school also uses Iready on Chrome books – a new part of the learning process in the subjects of reading and math.

"We're constantly changing," Byus explained. "There's no simple formula to plug in to achieve success. Our grade-level teams review data every week, and all students receive services from title teachers, classroom teachers or both."

A veteran educator with more than 30 years experience, Byus is proud to work with the most collaborative team she's ever seen at a school with the most opportunities for parental involvement she's ever encountered.

"Building relationships with our students is what really matters," she said. "What matters to them, matters to us. Our kids need to know they aren't throw-aways."



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DIRECT CHARTER FUNDING DEBATE CONTINUES

Three key state leaders - Office of Budget and Management Director Tim Keen, House Finance Chair Rep. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) and Sen. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) - recently met with state budget analysis to review a new report by Bellwether Education Partners on Ohio's school funding system.

The report calls for direct funding of Ohio charter schools - rather than the current process in which state funds pass through students' home school districts.

Rep. Smith expressed general support for recommendations made in the report, but questioned their likely implementation. On the issue of direct funding for charters, Smith said that despite the fact that the issue is often raised, it has "fallen off the radar" because of the significant budget ramifications for the state and districts.

"It's one thing to say, 'Here's what we need to do,' but from a policy standpoint, that's much harder," Rep. Smith said.



Eagle Award — continued

Nearly 100 percent of Stambaugh students qualify for free and reduced price lunch. Byus is personally committed to serving underserved students, and she embraces NHA's four pillars: moral focus; academic achievement; student participation; and, parental involvement.

"Many of our students enroll two grade levels behind in terms of proficiency," Byus said. "So it's important that we celebrate even small victories in student growth. For new students, in particular, we focus on value-added as an indicator even more important than Performance Index."

School, parents welcome local legislator

State Representative Jeffery Rezabek (R-Clayton) recently visited Horizon Science Academy (HSA) Dayton High School where he saw hands-on, student-centered educational experiences and met with students' parents.

One parent who was unable to meet Rezabek shared her appreciation for the school's extraordinary efforts to support her daughter in a letter to the legislator.

"Horizon is more than a school. Its teaching staff and administration are much more than educators," her letter read. "They are 'family' that show an invested interest not limited to the education of our children, but their emotional growth, well-being, and future plans."

The mother of two HSA students expressed her gratitude to one teacher in particular: Oktay Ince, who twice a week visits her 17-year-old daughter, whose health issues prohibit her from attending classes, at the family's home.

"He sits with Fatimah, goes over assignments, offers explanations, and fields questions that she may have," the parent said in her letter to Rezabek. "He takes from his own time for our daughter in a time when many educators in our nation's schools are off the clock when the bell rings."



LEGISLATION TARGETS STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

Bipartisan legislation recently introduced in the Ohio Senate by Senators Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland) and Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) seeks to require public schools to place telephone calls within one hour of the start of the school day to parents whose children are absent without excuse.

Senate Bill 82 - also known as Alianna Alert - memorializes Alianna DeFreeze who, at age 14, was kidnapped and murdered. Despite the fact that she was absent from school, the search for her did not begin immediately because her mother was unaware she was missing.

"It is imperative that parents be notified immediately if their children are not present in school," Sen. Williams said in testimony before the Senate Education Committee. "In a missing person's case, every hour is vital. The search for Alianna could have begun hours earlier if the school had alerted Alianna's mother in a timely manner."

If passed by the Senate and House, and enacted into state law, S.B. 82 would make Ohio the first state to require schools to contact parents to notify them of student absences within one hour.

Crime solving educational materials available through AG

Attorney General Mike DeWine recently launched the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Science School, which will provide fourth-grade students with access to materials to solve crimes along with Ohio investigators.

The BCI Science School, developed by a former fourth-grade teacher, features 26 free, hands-on lesson plans incorporating the topics of science, technology, English, math and the arts that allow students to conduct fictional criminal investigations.



DeWine said his classroom visits have revealed a keen interest on the part of students in the state's crime lab.

"These kids are watching TV, they're seeing crime shows, they're seeing DNA and fingerprints, and so I thought, well there ought to be some way to bring this to the classroom so that these kids would know that these are real jobs," DeWine said. "Maybe they can be a scientist, maybe they can work at the crime lab or maybe they can do some scientific research."

The educator-friendly program - which can be adapted for third grade - can be shared with students over the course of a school year, or completed in just a month. The curriculum can also be adapted for student camps and afterschool programs.

Learn more online at:

<http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Law-Enforcement/Bureau-of-Criminal-Investigation/BCI-Science-School>

Students finish in top three at MathCON competition

Horizon Science Academy Lorain high school students' team finished in the top three at the recent 10th annual MathCON event sponsored by Concept Schools.

More than 230 students, and 100 teachers and administrators, participated in the event. MathCON is a popular math competition in which students answer math questions in an online format in grades 5-12 with two rounds of competition. Individuals and classroom teams from charter, private and traditional public schools compete to become MathCON champions!



LEGISLATION CALLS FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY CURRICULUM

House Bill 108, recently introduced in the Ohio House by Representatives Christina Hagan (R-Alliance) and Rob McColley (R-Napoleon), would require one-half unit of financial literacy in the high school curriculum.

According to Rep. Hagan, the legislation will “give students the tools they need to wisely navigate future financial decisions.” The curriculum would focus on personal finance, credit, debt, investments and sound money management.

The legislation would also require Ohio’s chancellor to prepare an informed students document for each institution of higher education.

In states like Idaho, Georgia and Texas – where education curriculum includes financial literacy courses – studies show that student credit scores increase significantly in the second year after completing the lessons, according to Rep. McColley.

The bill would also require the State Board of Education to include information on the informed student document in the standards and model curricula it creates for financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

Piano Club popular among STEM school students

As music teacher Aaron Ingley wrapped up his first year at Noble Academy - Cleveland, he was already focused on the next school year, thinking about what to do in terms of offering students opportunities to participate in music clubs.

His decision to offer Piano Club this year was well received, with 30 students interested in participating.

Ingley quickly recognized that the new club’s members were new not only to the piano, but also to reading music.

“I was looking for an approach that would allow students to achieve success right away,” Ingley explained. “The best strategy seemed to be using numbers — rather than notation — to teach the basics.”



Each finger is represented by a number — thumb = 1; pointer finger = 2, etc. — and each number assigned to a note. Using a book entitled, “Pianimals,” students are taught how to “play” simple nursery rhymes, starting out by practicing the finger patterns at their seats.

“Once students understand the concept that every finger has a number and every number has a note, the rest follows,” Ingley said. “It’s great when I see the spark in students’ eyes once they ‘get it.’”

Ingley uses the Orff Schulwerk approach which combines music, movement, drama and speech into lessons. Developed by the German composer Carl Orff and colleague Gunild Keetman in the 1920s, the Orff Approach is similar to a child’s world of play.

As the Noble students progress they begin the transition into real sheet music, which leads to learning to read music.

According to Ingley, it’s all about cross curriculum. As club members are learning to play the piano, they’re also strengthening their math and literacy skills.

One might think that STEM schools like Noble focus almost exclusively on science, technology, engineering and math. But incorporating music and art into STEM school studies isn’t unusual, according to Ingley.

“I love that I can engage my students with numbers,” Ingley said. “It prepares them for the real world and sets them up to succeed at learning piano.”

Student feedback has been positive — some are actually disappointed when the eight-week training comes to an end. Given its popularity, the school will likely continue to offer Piano Club and other unique opportunities next school year and beyond.

START TALKING! TIPS FOR SCHOOLS NOW AVAILABLE

When it comes to preventing children from drinking, smoking or using drugs, parents and teachers play a key role. What educators share in the classroom can positively impact a child's decision to not use alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other drugs. Teachers are invited to sign up and receive "Teachable Moment" tips, as well as other educational resources and materials to share the drug and alcohol free message to students.

Gain access to Teachable Moments materials online at: <http://www.starttalking.ohio.gov/TakeAction/Schools/TeachableMomentsSignup.aspx>.



Learning Management System now available

The Learning Management System for Ohio Education is available anytime and anywhere. The online system provides free courses and professional development on important education initiatives for teachers and administrators. It offers another way for those who may not be able to attend face-to-face trainings to learn from experts on essential topics such as formative instructional practices, gifted education and differentiating instruction. Additionally, participants can keep relevant materials and documents in an individualized e-portfolio. Access the system and modules online at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Professional-Development/Learning-Management-System-LMS>

Schools encouraged to use tip line for safety threats

As warm weather and spring testing approach, schools sometimes see the number of bomb threats increase. Use of the free Ohio Safer Schools Tip Line can alert local law enforcement to a school safety crisis. Safer Schools Ohio offers the tip line to students and adults who can anonymously report school safety threats — involving a mass incident or harm to an individual student — by phone or text message. Register and access free posters and handouts online at: https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/tip_line_information

College Credit Plus changes debated

Representatives of Ohio's K-12 public and higher education communities bring different perspectives to the discussion of changes to Ohio's College Credit Plus program addressed in the state's biennial budget bill (H.B. 49).

The proposed changes include limiting participation to students demonstrating college readiness, as well as allowing the chancellor of the Board of Regents and the Ohio Department of Education's superintendent of public instruction to determine which courses are offered through the program.

Representatives of the K-12 public education community have raised concerns regarding a provision in the bill, which would eliminate their ability to negotiate tuition rates less than the \$40-per-credit-hour limit.

Higher education stakeholders have voiced opposition to a provision that would require institutions to rent textbooks for \$10 per credit hour or based on agreements made with districts.

It's difficult to predict whether the Kasich Administration's proposed changes will be ultimately supported by members of the Ohio House and Senate. Some of the College Credit Plus changes included in H.B. 49 were proposed in a bill considered, but not passed, by the House of Representatives in 2016.

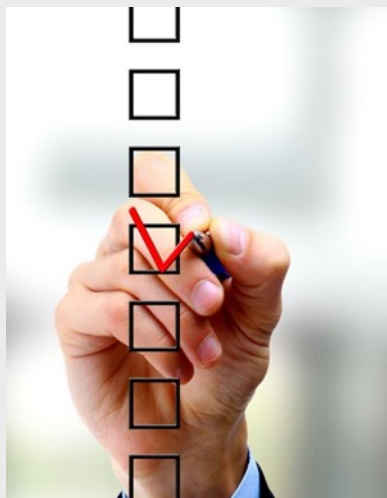
COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Food service licenses

Food service licenses expired statewide on March 1, 2017. Updated licenses for schools and vendors/caterers should be uploaded to BCHF's SharePoint and posted in school buildings.

Truancy policy changes

House Bill 410, which mandated changes to school truancy policies, will become effective April 6. The new law changes the definition of "habitual truancy" and removes the definition of "chronic truancy" from law. It also mandates changes to how schools and courts may address truant students. ODE is required to develop a model policy prior to the July 1 implementation date.



UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Check out BCHF's upcoming events that will keep a "spring" in your professional knowledge for 2017 and beyond. Register early and plan to be a part of these important professional conversations.

WRITING EFFECTIVE IEPs FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS – Date changed to **May 3**

Students aged 14 and older pose special challenges in designing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Experts will guide you through IEP development, including goal development, transition planning and monitoring, and testing considerations. Challenges, considerations, and helpful resources will be shared. Due to conflicts with an earlier date, this workshop will be offered on Wednesday, May 3 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Columbus.

Register at: <https://register.eventarc.com/37455/writing-effective-ieps-for-secondary-students>

HIGH SCHOOL AND DROP OUT RECOVERY ROUNDTABLE

New graduation requirements for the Class of 2018 and beyond, as well as proactive graduation strategies, will be the focus of BCHF's Spring Roundtable. Requirements are changing! To facilitate understanding among all stakeholders, schools are invited to bring their leadership teams and one or two board members to this dinner meeting. The session will be held on April 27, 4 to 6 p.m. in Columbus.

Register at: <https://register.eventarc.com/36839/drop-out-recovery-roundtable-spring>

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

June is the perfect time to get support for school year 2017-2018 planning! The BCHF Leadership Summit, set for June 20-21 in Columbus, is the premier event for school leaders. The Summit will focus on priority needs identified by leaders of schools in the BCHF portfolio. *Please note that this event will fill up early. Be sure and secure a space.* Pre-register at:

<https://register.eventarc.com/35527/leadership-summit>

Please remember to make eventarc a trusted site in your email in order to receive confirmations and email updates on our workshops! Email Josh Miller at jmiller@buckeyehope.org regarding any difficulties with the registration process.

BCHF provides all seminars without cost to personnel from its sponsored schools. However, a minimum number of registrants may be required in order for a seminar to proceed. BCHF reserves the right to cancel or postpone programs as needed.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Similar schools, students and “beating-the-odds”: How can we best evaluate charter school performance?

By Josh Miller, Communications & Data Analysis Representative

The first question any person interested in education at a local level is likely to ask is, “How is this school doing?” After seeing a statistical summary of student test results, attendance rates, and so on, the immediate follow-up question is very likely to be, “OK, but what I really want to know is how is this school doing, compared to other schools?” When a statewide average for the various statistics is presented, the response will likely be, “Well, this is interesting, but I know that there are many different schools in the state which face a wide range of problems. What I really meant to ask is, how is this school doing compared to other similar schools?”

Many people are unsure of how to evaluate academic performance statistics. Without comparison, the numerical values say little about how well the school might be expected to do. Today, it is relatively straightforward to compare a given statistic to a district-wide and statewide figure, or, for that matter, to an aggregate based on any other grouping of buildings. Therefore, the task at hand is to develop groupings of schools that allow for reasonable comparison based on the challenges facing the schools.

Identifying and examining schools that exceed student achievement expectations — sometimes referred to as schools that “beat the odds”— are part of efforts to implement strategies that support continuous improvement and school turnaround. Some state and local education agencies identify “beating-the-odds” schools to recognize them with awards and to motivate similar schools, especially schools that serve disproportionately high-needs students and that exhibit lower performance. The higher performing schools may be studied to develop or identify effective strategies and interventions for supporting and transforming low-performing schools. For example, Arizona (Waits et al., 2006), Delaware (Grusenmeyer, Fifield, Murphy, Nian, & Qian, 2010), and New York City (Connell, 1999) have or had processes to identify and learn from beating-the-odds schools.

When evaluating the performance of charter schools, school comparable groups should be constructed so that they consider school size, school type (elementary, middle, high), percent of limited English proficient

students, and percent of economically disadvantaged students. By assigning schools to comparable groups based on similar demographic factors, it is plausible that more schools could achieve higher performance on standardized test scores. Being assigned to a comparable group provides a more level playing field. Irrespective of demographic factors, schools can identify peer schools that are comparable to their own and model the school improvement process based on best practices from those higher performing schools.

Several states and school districts have identified schools that perform better than expected, given the populations they serve, to recognize school performance or to learn from local school practices and policies. These schools have been labeled “beating-the-odds,” “high-performing/high-poverty,” “high-flying,” and other terms that reflect their demonstration of higher academic achievement than schools with similar student demographic characteristics.

If administrators are to learn from these schools, it is important to correctly identify the schools that perform above expectations. However, as of yet, there is no uniformly adopted approach to identifying these various charter schools in Ohio. Typical identification approaches in several other states often consider many factors, including policy priorities, available data, resources and capacity (including technical analysis) and stakeholders’ preferences. The way for schools to achieve higher results on standardized tests is for classroom instruction to improve by implementing a more rigorous and relevant curriculum. These choices can affect which schools are identified and labeled as exceeding performance expectations.

Last year, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) soundly rejected a proposal that would have added a California measure to Ohio’s accountability system, calling the proposal “neither valid nor useful.” Developed in California, this “Similar Students Measure” (SSM) adjusts grades for schools and districts based on the socioeconomic challenges facing students

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Similar students — continued

including student disabilities, poverty, limited English-speaking ability, and mobility (or how long kids stay at a school before moving).

Some schools, including some high-poverty schools, outperform others with similar student demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Such schools hold promise because they suggest that academic success can be achieved in challenging school environments. Because policymakers, researchers and practitioners want to learn from these

schools about what works, states and districts generate lists of these high-performing schools to study.

It is vital to craft more technical approaches to identifying and examining these schools and explore and compare the implications of using different student performance measures, demographic characteristics, and school sample configurations, etc. In doing so, it is possible to offer education policymakers, state and local education agencies, and researchers issues to consider when developing or reviewing an approach to identifying schools that “beat the odds.”

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