

SPONSOR UPDATE

APRIL 2020

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Peggy Young,
Director
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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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BCHF supports its sponsored schools during COVID-19 crisis

Like its sponsored schools, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) was informed of the DeWine Administration's mandatory closure of all school buildings just a few days before it happened. Members of BCHF's Education Division team were looking forward to the end of winter and upcoming spring activities -- school visits, meetings and trainings with boards, scheduled professional development sessions, trophies for the Writing Challenge, the Leadership Summit and much, much more. Suddenly, all plans were put on hold!

BCHF's Education Division was quickly able to regroup and realize that its mission in this crisis remained the same as always: *To support its schools!* It simply required re-thinking how to best provide that support.

BCHF's first response was to conduct a brief status survey of schools. Responses to the survey were heartening, as all schools were taking steps to keep learning going with their students and families. Many had set up breakfast and lunch services. Based on prior planning, many were able to communicate next steps with parents and families immediately.

A major need identified in the survey was information. In the first week of school closures, BCHF sent out the most vital kinds of information to schools. The team compiled and shared the relevant sources on needed topics: special education, school lunch sites, online resources and the Ohio Department of Education's FAQ document. BCHF also created a "help" email to support schools in getting questions answered.

Knowing that this crisis will extend for an unknown number of weeks, BCHF has long-range plans for support. Regional representatives are attending board meetings virtually and communicating with schools

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FROM THE EDITOR

Identifying content for Buckeye Community Hope Foundation's (BCHF) monthly *Sponsor Update* is usually an easy task ... but we find ourselves in unusual times.

I didn't want to make the April issue the pandemic edition, nor did I want to exclude information on how COVID-19 is impacting Ohio's charter school community.

I think it's important to keep in mind that although we're facing tough times, we will someday return to some form of "normal" life, one in which every member of the BCHF family is better positioned to support the students we serve. For that reason, I've included information that may not, at this time, be very useful or seem very important, but hopefully will be in the next school year. I've also included a couple of positive school stories because I think we all need a break from our laser focus on the challenges our nation and local communities face.

I hope I've struck the right balance! As always, I welcome readers' input and feedback at cwest@buckeyehope.org.

-- Catherine West

Supporting BCHF-sponsored schools

electronically about compliance needs. The Accountability and School Improvement team has transitioned all upcoming professional development opportunities to online formats. Currently, more than 70 educators are enrolled in BCHF's online courses. Finally, BCHF continues to respond to individual requests for technical assistance through email, phone conversations and online meetings. Next steps include options for online postings by our schools to share best practices, resources or just great stories about how they are meeting the needs of students.

A final area of major support is advocacy. BCHF's leadership has been talking regularly with the Ohio Department of Education, the DeWine Administration and school organizations on behalf of its sponsored schools. Some of these discussions have been reflected in recent legislation. BCHF continues to share concerns and seek solutions to major questions from schools about graduation requirements, promotion and retention, and how the school year will end. Answers will be shared as they become available.

"Our first priority is the safety of everyone affiliated with our schools," said BCHF Education Division Director Peggy Young. "We are working to be as flexible as possible on things like deadlines. We're also working to share important communications without overwhelming anyone. Most of all, we are so proud of our schools and how they have responded to an unprecedented challenge."

BCHF will continue to provide support and participate in the dialogue. All schools are encouraged to reach out to help@buckeyehope.org with questions or technical assistance needs.

Let's stay connected!

The COVID-19 crisis has left many people feeling isolated at a time when the synergy of working together is most needed!

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide the best possible support to its sponsored schools, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) is working to establish a networking opportunity that will allow members of the BCHF family to connect through Basecamp – a project management and team

communication application that brings people working remotely together.



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STUDENT WELLNESS FUNDING TO CONTINUE UNDER DEWINE

At a late February meeting of the Ohio Schools Boards Association's Mental Health and Social-Emotional Services, Gov. Mike DeWine (R-Cedarville) pledged that student wellness funding included in the current state biennial budget bill will continue – in equal or greater amounts – in future budget proposals by his administration.

He characterized funding for student wellness services as “vitaly important” to addressing issues outside the classroom that impact student learning.

“We have to try to help these kids whether it's with mental health, whether it's mentoring – whatever it is that's going on in that student's life, we've got to be able to help,” he said. “We want to give these schools the ability to partner with other people in the community to do these things.”



Connected — continued

Through Basecamp, board members, school leaders and other selected staff can connect through a message board, group chats, and sharing of documents and files. Have a great idea – or seeking one – on how best to determine if a senior should receive his or her diploma? Share or seek ideas with your colleagues associated with other schools sponsored by BCHF.

Look for information from BCHF on the roll out of this innovative tool! In the meantime, familiarize yourself with the features Basecamp offers online at: <https://basecamp.com/> and checkout the tutorial to learn the basics.

Testing, report cards waived

As widely reported by various media outlets throughout the state, the Ohio Legislature passed H.B. 197 on March 25 to address wide-ranging issues related to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The legislation waives state testing and school/district report cards for the 2019-2020 school year and creates a safe harbor from sanctions for schools.

Seniors will be permitted to graduate if their schools determine that they were on track to do so prior to the COVID-19 emergency. Schools are also empowered to determine student promotion for the Third-Grade Reading Guarantee.

The academic performance component will be eliminated from sponsor evaluations and ratings.

Under the bill, schools and districts may use distance learning to make up for any missed days or hours of instruction caused by the ordered closure.

Licensed special education providers may utilize tele-health and electronic communication methods to serve students who receive special education services.

House Bill 197 also allows school boards – and various government bodies – to meet electronically, but must allow for public monitoring.



Photo courtesy of Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: COMPETENCY SCORES AND GUIDANCE

Guidance is available now for long-term graduation requirements for the classes of 2023 and beyond. These requirements also are an additional option that students in the classes of 2018-2022 may choose.

The guidance document offers more information on the competency scores required for graduation, as well as detailed information about each Ohio-defined seal. The Ohio Department of Education will update the document as more information and additional guidance become available.

Access the guidance online at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-s-Graduation-Requirements>



Competency scores set below proficient

The budget bill (H.B. 166) passed by the Ohio General Assembly last year tasked the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) with setting competency scores for end-of-course assessments in Algebra I and English Language Arts II.

Last month, Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria announced that cut scores for the two assessments required for graduation will be set at 684 – below the “proficient” score of 700.

“The department has determined that a cut score of 684 meets the working definition for competency,” DeMaria wrote in a written announcement. “This determination was made based on discussions with individuals who supervise or have knowledge of employees for which only a high school diploma is required to perform the job and the specific mathematics and English competencies required.”

In addition to earning “proficient” scores on the two assessments, seniors – beginning with the class of 2023 – must also complete the minimum number of courses mandated by the state and their districts and earn two diploma seals to graduate.

Scores of 682-699 are considered “basic” on the Algebra I exam, while scores of 700-724 are deemed “proficient.” For the English Language Arts II assessment, scores of 679-699 are basic and 700-724 are “proficient.”

DeMaria also wrote that choosing scores is not an exact science and that the established score of 684 represents “a middle ground” subject to change in the future.

School safety readiness resources available

The general School Safety Clearinghouse recently launched SchoolSafety.gov to provide resources K-12 school administrators, educators, parents and law enforcement can use to prepare for and address safety and security threats.

For schools looking to enhance existing safety plans, the website offers a Safety Readiness Tool – an assessment that helps school leaders evaluate the safety of their learning communities.

The site also includes a secure information-sharing platform for designating school personnel to share safety ideas, practices, plans and tactics in a protected environment, and resources and best practices on key school safety topics.

Learn more at: <https://saferschools.ohio.gov/>



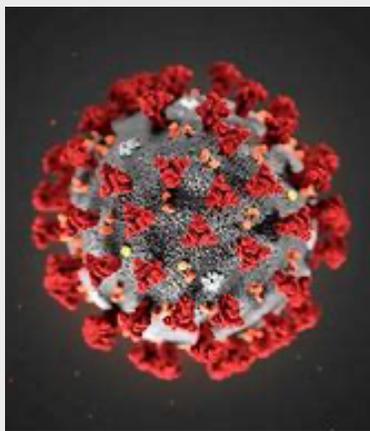
ODE's ROLE IN PANDEMIC EMERGENCY: SUPPORT

At its March meeting, State Board of Education members were told by Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction John Richard that the Ohio Department of Education's role during the pandemic will be that of providing support.

"It's important to remember that - being a local-control state - our ability to actually direct local school districts is very limited," he said. "Really, we don't have the authority to do it in most cases."

He also said that ODE will "practice every bit of flexibility that we have the authority to do outside of the statute."

It's quite possible that schools will remain shuttered through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.



Proposed legislation would eliminate for-profit charter school operators

Despite the fact that there is no correlation between for-profit status of charter school operators and school academic performance, there continue to be calls to require all operators to be not-for-profit.

Rep. Gayle Manning (R-N. Ridgeville) and Rep. Jeffery Crossman (D-Parma) announced plans to introduce legislation that they say will ensure that "public dollars are used for a public good" and "put charter schools and traditional public schools on a more even playing field."

In a March 24 editorial, *The Columbus Dispatch* expressed support for the bipartisan plan, predictably referencing ECOT – run by a for-profit management company – as justification for "reform."

According to Rep. Crossman, schools run by for-profit operators would have options for moving forward, including transitioning to a nonprofit status, contracting with an educational service center, or closing.

The bill also proposes making operator documents related to public dollars subject to public records law.

In light of other more pressing matters, the issue is likely to go unaddressed for now, but could resurface in the future.

House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) has indicated that he would likely support the proposed legislation, stating, "those management entities, I believe should be nonprofit."

Ohio awarded \$3.25 million federal grant for data systems and analysis

The Ohio Department of Education recently announced that it will receive a \$3.25 million federal grant aimed at helping states design, develop, implement and expand educational data systems.

The Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program awarded the funds based on Ohio's plan to accelerate and expand use of its existing data system to better support educators so they can challenge, prepare and empower each student to meet his or her post-high school goals and dreams.

Goals for the funding in Ohio include:

- ◆ Linking preK-12 and workforce data to improve understanding of students' post-high school outcomes;
- ◆ Enhancing Ohio's Equitable Access Analysis Tool, improving access to information about equity gaps;
- ◆ Creating new reports that improve educators' insight into students' progress toward graduation; and,
- ◆ Providing additional training and resources for Ohio's Regional Data Lead Network, further supporting their efforts to build capacity for local data use.

MOST BLACK OHIOANS SUPPORT CHARTERS

According to a poll conducted on behalf of the Ohio Black Legislative Caucus Foundation and the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, 61 percent of Ohio's African Americans support taxpayer funding for public schools (including charters), as well as religious and private schools.

The survey of 1,500 black Ohioans was conducted between December and January, posing 60 questions seeking opinions on a variety of public policy issues, including gun ownership, healthcare and the environment.

The majority of those surveyed identified themselves as Democrats, yet the results suggest that the African American community is not monolithic.



Licensure renewal available now

Professionals whose licenses or permits expire this June and who have met their renewal requirements should submit their online renewal applications now to avoid the summer rush.

Get ready to apply by creating an OH/ID account. (Note: The Ohio Department of Education switched from SAFE to OH/ID accounts in May 2019). Step-by-step instructions are provided on the OH/ID Portal Help webpage.



For some, it is time to update background checks. Teachers can log in to their OH/ID accounts to verify the date of their last check.

Some teachers may need to have their applications approved by a local professional development committee (LPDC). In those cases, documents may not need to be submitted with the renewal application. Teachers who are not renewing through their LPDC will need to submit their official transcripts to reflect completed renewal coursework and/or an Educator Leaving an LPDC Verification form, completed by their former LPDC, to verify the professional development completed for renewal.

Learn more online at:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Media/Ed-Connection/March-16-2020/Licensure-renewal-available-now>

State Board approves OTES 2.0

At its March meeting, the State Board of Education unanimously approved changes to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation, dubbed “OTES 2.0.”

Legislation (S.B. 216) passed in 2018 tasked the State Board with adopting a revised OTES framework by May 1, 2020. The bill also eliminated a requirement that student academic growth account for half of teachers' evaluations.



OTES 2.0 requires teachers to complete a professional growth plan, a formal overall evaluation followed by a conference, annual walkthroughs, and an additional observation focused on areas needing additional support ahead of a summative conference.

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**INFOhio's
EDUCATOR TOOLS
PROVIDE SOCIAL-
EMOTIONAL
LEARNING
RESOURCES**

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The INFOhio Educator Tools website contains more than 75,000 lesson plans, videos, printable materials, teaching strategies and other instructional resources – all free for Ohio teachers.

The tool offers valuable resources to support Ohio's Social and Emotional Learning Standards.

Teachers who need contact hours for licensure renewal can take the Educators Tools class in the Building Your Digital Curriculum Pathway. Earn contact hours and learn how to integrate digital tools and resources into classroom instruction.

Access resources online at:
<https://www.infohio.org/educator-tools>



Ladies of Integrity focuses on self-reflection, self-esteem

The L. Hollingworth School for the Talented and Gifted (LHSTG) recently implemented a new after-school program – Ladies of Integrity – for female students in grades five through eight. Its mission is to explore topics that will help each young lady develop social skills, build life-long friendships and gain confidence.

Lead by paraprofessional Ciaira Jackson, the empowerment group meets every Tuesday, helping the girls discover and develop their self-worth, respect and integrity.



“During our group meetings, our Ladies of Integrity empower each other through character building while focusing on respecting others, friendship, dealing with pressure, handling emotions and enhancing self-esteem,” Jackson explained. “At the beginning, we focused on respecting others and friendship – treating others how you would like to be treated.”

Meetings begin with a character trait lesson, followed by group discussion. Jackson’s vision is that meetings end with each young lady able to say: “I am a lady with: integrity, self-worth and a great education. I am a lady who is empowered.”

The ladies maintain journals. On one side of a page, they write about a negative situation that has occurred in their daily lives. On the other, they write about how they handled themselves in that situation, how they think they made the other person feel, and how they could handle a similar situation better in the future. They also make notes on what they would like to discuss with the group, quotes they find inspiring, and activities they would like to pursue.

“Our group discussions are so important to the ladies because it’s a safe place for them to talk about their problems,” Jackson said. “The ladies use this time to think about who they are, to understand their emotions, and to identify ways they can deal with challenges they face in their daily lives.”

Changes in reporting timeline for restraint, seclusion data

Restraint and seclusion data collection for the current school year will begin June 1. Traditionally, this data has been collected in late fall for the previous school year. To improve accuracy, districts will now report their data for the current school year in late spring. Additional instruction and tools for collecting the data will be coming in early April.

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**CORONAVIRUS FAQ:
RESOURCE FOR
SCHOOLS,
DISTRICTS**
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Based on information from the Ohio Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) website page has been developed.

ODE will update the webpage as additional information becomes available, so please check it on a regular basis.

Access the FAQ document online at:

bit.ly/2WZ9Asi



School hosts first National Honor Society induction

At The Academy for Urban Scholars, scholarship, service, leadership and character are important priorities, so it makes perfect sense for the dropout prevention and recovery school to provide opportunities for students to participate in the National Honor Society (NHS).

Earlier this year, the school's director of curriculum and instruction, Kristen Muenster, completed the NHS application and worked with other members of the team — Charles Nabrit and Olumide Olanrewaju — to identify students who met the academic criteria.

“There were no surprises on the list of 11 students who were eligible to join,” Muenster said. “Each are leaders with good attendance and grades who have earned other honors and are model students.”

The 11 students were inducted into the National Honor Society during a ceremony held in conjunction with the school's Black History Month assembly.

“We followed the nation script, including the pinning ceremony and students citing the honor society pledge,” Muenster said. “Students seemed to really appreciate the importance of the moment and were extremely attentive and quiet.”

It was a significant honor for those being inducted, and a teaching moment for the rest of the student body. Following the ceremony, students learned about the society, its four pillars, and the benefits of membership, including access to scholarships.

The NHS pillars are in perfect alignment with the school's focus on teaching students to be good scholars and members of their communities.

EVERYDAY SCHOLARSHIP stems from a desire to contribute to the world in a positive way by building on one's own knowledge, skills and talent through different experiences.

EVERYDAY SERVICE is seeking out and engaging in meaningful service, not simply doing acts of service to fulfill a school, district or program requirement, or to collect hours.

EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP builds on Everyday Service – carrying oneself with dignity and taking ownership and responsibility for one's own actions and participation.

EVERYDAY CHARACTER is valuing diverse cultures and building relationships that reflect love of self but also concern for others.

“It's easy to implement – they provide everything a school needs and access to so many resources,” Muenster said. “I'm so proud of our first inductees and look forward to future celebrations welcoming other students at The Academy for Urban Scholars as National Honor Society members.”

SHARE YOUR STORIES!

There are countless untold success stories within Ohio's charter school community and the Buckeye Community Hope Foundation family of schools – even in these challenging times!

Serving students remotely in unique ways? Providing online learning opportunities despite the digital divide? Identifying ways to keep students engaged? Staying connected with students and parents in interesting ways?

Share your winning strategies with other schools in the BCHF family! Contact your school's regional representative or send an email to: cwest@buckeyehope.org



UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) is committed to continuing professional dialogue among educators during this critical COVID-19 outbreak and has moved all PD offerings – including the annual Leadership Summit – to webinar and online formats through June 30.

COMING UP THIS MONTH:

April 15 - New School Leaders' Network Webinar

Register online at:

<https://newschoolleaders4.eventarc.net/e/43138>

April 28 - Spring Dropout Recovery Roundtable – Guest Speaker Christine Garlin will host a webinar about graduation requirements and pathways.

Register online at:

<https://springdropoutrecovery.eventarc.net/e/43139>

COMING UP LATER THIS SPRING:

May 6 - Spring Data User's Network Webinar

Register online at:

<https://springdatausersnetwork.eventarc.net/e/43141>

May 12 - New Teacher's Network Webinar

Register online at:

<https://newteachersnetwork4.eventarc.net/e/43143>

May 13 – K-8 Mathematics Network Webinar

Register online at:

<https://registerk8mathnetworkspring.eventarc.net/e/43369>

May 14 – Spring English Learner Network

Register online at:

<https://SpringEnglishlearnerNetwork.eventarc.net/e/43144>

COMING UP THIS SUMMER!!!

June 11-12 – BCHF “Virtual” School Leadership Summit – a complete conference experience offered online. Watch for more details about content and theme! Consider participating with some of your building leadership team members as a virtual team -- reserve a virtual “spot” now.

Register online at:

<https://annualschoolleadershipsummit.eventarc.net/e/43145>

For complete course description, explore the Professional Development Catalog posted on BCHF's website at:

http://buckeyehope.org/community-schools/events/bchf/BCHF_PD_Catalog_2019-20_Revised.pdf

For more information about professional development opportunities, please contact Dr. Carol Young at: cyoung@buckeyehope.org

Remember, BCHF is here to assist you with questions about school programming or responses during the pandemic. Refer your questions to help@buckeyehope.org.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

COVID-19 and the school leader

By Mindy Farry, Accountability & School Improvement Representative

The past month's events have left schools in a place that none of us thought we would ever encounter. We are living in unprecedented times, and as school leaders we still are constantly thinking of our students, our staff and our parents. School leaders must develop distinctive processes as we await the next few weeks or months.

If school is canceled for the rest of the year (Gov. Mike DeWine extended the closure period through May 1 earlier this week), then the processes of working remotely need to continue. If you hurried to get something out to students over that initial weekend, it would be wise to look at the instruction being provided and improve upon it. As leaders, you need to do everything possible to implement a structured program of learning opportunities. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- ♦ What regular program of online, teleconference, or distribution practices will you use? You are likely to need a combination approach given the diversity of students' home resources.
- ♦ Do teachers feel competent with their new "online" lives using the above systems? Are expectations for teachers clear? (Some schools are using a combination of lesson delivery times and teacher "office hours" for answering parent and student questions.)
- ♦ How are you ensuring that instruction is continuing? Are you monitoring instruction, "lesson plans," and student participation levels?
- ♦ Since state testing has been eliminated for this school year, what are your plans for assessing students' achievement and progress levels as they conclude this school year?
- ♦ What interventions do you need to plan for students who are falling behind, especially in

reading and in math? How are you using your supplemental instructors such as Title I?

- ♦ How will you determine which students are on track to be promoted or in need of retention? How will you notify and work with parents on these issues?
- ♦ If your school offers grades 9-12, what your criteria for "graduation ready" and which students are "graduation ready?" How will you notify and work with those students who are not?
- ♦ Are there summer programs that could be offered that would help students fill in the gaps in their education?
- ♦ Will the provisions made for breakfast and lunch still be in place for the remainder of the school year?
- ♦ How will you handle re-enrollment and/or recruitment for the 2020-2021 school year? Have you discussed how best to reach not only the parents of your current students to ensure their re-enrollment, but also the potential students and their families?
- ♦ How will you handle the retention of your teachers and/or the non-renewal of others?
- ♦ If students were loaned computers or school equipment before they left, how will you get those returned and what will the procedure be for safely doing so?

If, by some chance, we return to school on May 4 or later, there will be many other items you must think about before the school doors open again.

- ♦ When and how can you meet with teachers ahead of time to debrief what your procedures will be when students return?
- ♦ How will you prepare teachers for the social-emotional aspects of the very real trauma that this country has experienced?

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COVID-19, school leader — continued

- ◆ How will you kick-start instruction on a positive note and what are your instructional priorities?
- ◆ Have the buildings, equipment and grounds been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, including personal items like bookbags that may have been left behind?
- ◆ What special training might teachers need to be able to lead their students through discussions of proper hygiene?
- ◆ Do you need additional signage in the building to remind everyone of hygiene rules?
- ◆ Do you have enough supplies of hand sanitizers, soap and paper products?
- ◆ Who will contact essential services (i.e. food services) to reinstate service?

Some suggestions for you as you navigate this crisis with your teachers and students:

- ◆ Contact 3-4 parents each day to see how they are doing and to check in. Ask questions like: "How is your family?" "What questions do you have?" "How is your child doing on his/her assignments?"
- ◆ Set up a "hotline" or dedicated email address at which parents can send you questions or concerns.
- ◆ Be brave and set up your own youtube channel where you can send messages to households. Make them upbeat, informational and fun.

- ◆ Provide parents with lists of educational resources---a few at a time, because they may feel overwhelmed at this point."
- ◆ Hold weekly virtual staff meetings to help teachers feel less isolated. Use Zoom (it's free), Join.me or GoToMeeting.
- ◆ Send daily or weekly school announcements to parents with email access. For others, gather them in print form and mail them once a week to parents.
- ◆ Understand the toll this is taking on your teachers, who might also have children at home or a partner who is out of work. Talk with teachers and staff individually to see how they are doing. In addition to worries about their own families, teachers worry about their students.

Dr. Amy Acton said on March 22, "*I know it feels like life is shutting down, but I feel like life is waking us up.*"

Let us be wide awake to help our students, parents and teachers make the best of this difficult situation.

If you need additional assistance, be sure to reach out to your Buckeye Community Hope Foundation representatives or email us at:

Help@buckeyehope.org. Stay Safe! Stay Healthy!

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