BCHF earns “Exemplary” sponsor rating

The Ohio Department of Education recently released charter school sponsor ratings for the 2018-2019 school year. Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) was among the five sponsors to earn the coveted “Exemplary” rating.

Annual sponsor ratings are based on the state’s sponsor evaluation system, which includes three equally weighted components: quality practices; compliance; and, school academic performance.

For the second year in a row, BCHF received the maximum number of points in both the quality and compliance components. Improved school academic performance increased BCHF’s overall score by one point, improving it’s rating from “Effective” (in the 2017-2018 school) to “Exemplary.”

“I’m so proud of our team,” said Director Peggy Young. “We’ve worked hard to build a relationship of trust with our sponsored schools, and have dedicated significant resources to hiring staff with expertise in key areas – like English Language Learners, special education and reading – aimed at helping students and schools succeed.”

“Our focus on school improvement is clearly reflected in our ‘Exemplary’ rating,” she continued. “At the same time, we’re also committed to modeling best practices and advocating on behalf of our schools and the students they serve.”
**BCHF launches annual Writing Challenge**

As first semester wraps up and winter break approaches, it is time to start thinking about Buckeye Community Hope Foundation's (BCHF) annual Writing Challenge. The challenge is designed as a vehicle to help teachers incorporate writing about topics that are meaningful to students in a competition aligned to the Ohio Content Standards and the Ohio Writing Rubrics. This year’s challenge is called, “Developing a Growth Mindset,” encouraging students to develop a positive attitude in tackling difficult situations.

This year, the challenge is even more inclusive for more students. In the past, schools were permitted to enter only one paper for each grade band (3-5; 6-8; and 9-12). However, this year, schools may send in one entry per grade (3-12). This opens up the contest to more students and more grade levels.

Schools and teachers are encouraged to include the writing challenge in their everyday writing curriculum — the requirements align with the Ohio Content Standards and are scored using the Ohio Writing Rubrics. In order to find the entry to represent each grade level, schools often hold internal contests to select the representative papers.

The BCHF team looks forward to seeing over 100 amazing entries this year! The top-scoring essay at each grade band will receive trophies and awards for their schools.

Information packets will be emailed to school leaders in December. Once the writing packet is sent, school leaders can begin to immediately forward to their teachers, ELA instructional coaches, and other interested staff members. The deadline for entries is March 15, 2020.

For more information, please contact Mindy Farry at mfarry@buckeyehope.org.

**Challenged school districts list posted**

The Challenged School District list is now available on the Ohio Department of Education’s website. When a school district is designated as a “Challenged School District,” startup charter schools may open within its boundaries. Access the list online at: [http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Community-Schools/Challenged-School-Districts](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Community-Schools/Challenged-School-Districts)
Gov. Mike DeWine (R-Cedarville) and a group of state officials recently visited students in southern and central Ohio to learn how schools are educating them about drugs and mental illness.

The tour supported efforts to increase awareness of $18 million included in the state biennial budget bill (H.B. 166) for school-based prevention education initiatives, including evidence-based curricula, resources to expand existing initiatives, after-school mentoring programs, and awareness campaigns.

“There’s wisdom in the old saying ‘an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,’” said Lori Criss, who serves as director of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. “Ohio’s schools are uniquely positioned to help educate young people about the danger of alcohol and other drugs and to identify young people who either already have or are at increased risk for mental health or substance use disorders and connect them to local resources for help.”

**Schools earn “High-Quality Charter” designation**

Congratulations to ten schools sponsored by Buckeye Community Hope Foundation that have been designated as “High-Quality Charter Schools” (based on report card results) and are eligible for additional state funding through a provision of the state biennial budget bill (H.B. 166) approved by the Legislature earlier this year. As a result of earning the designation, the following schools are eligible to receive funding of up to $1,750 per pupil for economically disadvantaged students and up to $1,000 for all others in each of the two fiscal years.

- Constellation Schools: Puritas Community Middle
- Constellation Schools: Stockyard Community Middle
- Great Western Academy
- Horizon Science Academy Dayton Downtown
- Lincoln Park Academy
- Noble Academy – Cleveland
- Noble Academy – Columbus
- Stambaugh Charter Academy
- Village Preparatory School Woodland Hills
- Westside Academy

**Congrats, ladies!**

L. Hollingworth School for the Talented and Gifted's girls' volleyball team ended the season with a championship win – a repeat of last year’s performance at the Ohio Community Athletic Conference tournament.

“Thank you so much to all the volleyball girls for their hard work and effort this season,” said Coach Zosia Thomas. “You all did such an amazing job and grew so much! Thank you to all the parents for their continued support! It was a great season and I look forward to doing it all again next year. Go Patriots!”
INFOhio OFFERS BLUEcloud LIBRARY SERVICES PLATFORM

INFOhio believes in the power of libraries to transform instruction and make an impact on learning. As the largest school library network in the country, INFOhio is dedicated to providing the best library user experience for Ohio’s students and teachers.

INFOhio partners with all Ohio information technology centers to offer the BLUEcloud Suite of products free to Ohio schools. The BLUEcloud Suite offers libraries an effective, modern interface, so library staff can spend more time helping students and teachers discover school library assets and INFOhio resources.

A flyer describing INFOhio’s Library Services Platform and the power of the BLUEcloud Suite is available online at: https://www.infohio.org/document-library/item/experience-bluecloud-library-services-platform

Guest speaker’s message resonates with students

At the L. Hollingworth School for the Talented and Gifted, there is a very deliberate focus on the future and ensuring that students are thinking ahead and planning for college or career.

With that broad priority in mind, College and Career Readiness Coordinator Rachel Gerwin routinely invites guest speakers to the school to share their experiences with the school’s six-, seventh- and eighth-grade students.

Christopher Scott – author of the book 7 Secrets To Surviving College – was the school’s most recent, and most popular, guest speaker.

“The book was a reading assignment for students in all three grades,” Gerwin explained. “We then created a quiz based on questions posed at the end of each chapter before Mr. Scott’s presentation.”

Scott, who grew up in Cleveland, didn’t have an easy childhood. His mother raised he and his seven brothers, some of whom – including Christopher – were involved in gangs. He realized that he had to make a change and recognized that education could be his ticket to a brighter future.

“Students were really engaged in Mr. Scott’s presentation,” Gerwin said. “His message really resonated, including with some of the kids who face the greatest personal challenges. They asked thoughtful questions that blew Mr. Scott away!”

Scott, who has a unique personal style, encouraged students to be authentic. He writes and presents in a style that’s easy for students to understand.

“Let’s face it. No one makes it on their own in this world,” his book jacket reads. “Let the 7 Secrets to Surviving College guide you along your education journey. The seven secrets shared between these pages are the components to a successful college experience not taught in the traditional high school classroom or found in college admission materials. When reading, take time to reflect on the information provided and begin to visualize the success you aspire to have during college! At the end of the day, your experience in college is what you make of it … the choice is yours!”

After his presentation, Scott toured the school and stayed for lunch, engaging with students one-on-one.

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“We’re grateful to Mr. Scott for sharing his personal experiences and perspective,” Gerwin said. “For some of our students, his engagement and insight may be life altering – his presentation was that powerful. I’m really proud of how our students embraced lessons he’s learned in life and was so gracious to share with us.”

Students celebrate veterans, service to country

It was Assistant Principal Howie Waugaman’s idea to create a veterans committee at the Constellation Schools: Westside Community School of the Arts – and to host a Veterans Day celebration for the first time this year.

But Waugaman, a veteran of the U.S. Navy, is quick to say that these activities “aren’t about me.”

Instead, he and others involved found ways to honor those who serve – veterans of the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines and Navy – and encouraged students to pay tribute to these local heroes.

“We wanted to try something different,” Waugaman explained. “And Veterans Day served as the perfect opportunity to teach our students about some of our nation’s most honored traditions and the extraordinary sacrifices made by ordinary people.”

Students convened in the gymnasium for what many said turned out to be the school’s best assembly ever. The committee created an educational and inspiring presentation to teach students the meaning behind American rituals often associated with the military – from the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, to Taps and the 13 folds of the American flag.

“We asked students and staff to bring in photos of family members who are veterans or currently serving in the military,” Waugaman said. “We incorporated them into a Power Point presentation during the assembly, and celebrated their service along with other veterans throughout the month of November. Students were justifiably proud of their family members’ service.”

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**KidsGardening INVITES GRANT APPLICATIONS**

KidsGardening is inviting applications for its 2020 Youth Garden Grants program.

Through the program, a total of 25 programs will be awarded packages valued at $775 that includes gardening supplies, curriculum, and cash awards of $250 in support of school and youth educational garden programs that enhance the quality of life for students and their communities.

Projects may include planning a new garden program or expanding an established one, and must serve at least 15 youth between the ages of three and 18.

Learn more online at: [https://kidsgardening.org/2020-youth-garden-grant/](https://kidsgardening.org/2020-youth-garden-grant/)

**Veterans — continued**

Consistent with the school’s focus, students created art celebrating veterans, which was on display in the gymnasium for all to see.

“The veterans committee did a great job,” Waugaman said. “They deserve a lot of credit for making this such a dynamic event that students really enjoyed. It was such a hit that we plan to make our Veterans Day celebration an annual event.”

**School hosts a flurry of fall activities**

The primary focus at Horizon Science Academy (HSA) Youngstown is, of course, academics. But the school also engages students and their families in various events that encourage positive behavior, charity and fun!

Among recent activities was the school’s celebration of Red Ribbon Week, aimed at bringing awareness to healthy living and anti-bullying. Students were encouraged to dress in unusual ways – from Manic Monday, Team Tuesday, and Pink Out Wednesday, to Red Shirt Thursday and Spirit Day Friday.

“The Fall Fest activities for students in kindergarten through fourth grade was everyone's favorite,” said Carie Garris, who serves as the school’s community outreach coordinator. “Students were encouraged to bring a costume for the afternoon parade through the school, and upper class students passed out candy to them. Students then made their way to the gym where parents gathered to celebrate with their kids.”

Third- and fourth-grade students used the Fall Fest as an opportunity to write Halloween-themed short stories. They visited one another’s classrooms and shared their spooky stories.

Kindergarten students used all five senses to explore the inside of a pumpkin and talked about their favorite foods made from the popular fall fruit.

November – traditionally characterized as a month of gratitude and giving back at the school – served as an opportunity for students to participate in a community food drive in partnership with a local organization, Warriors, Inc.

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ALDI INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR SMART KIDS PROGRAM

The ALDI grocery store chain is inviting applications for its ALDI Smart Kids program – an initiative dedicated to supporting the health and wellness of children in communities where ALDI has stores, warehouses, offices, and conducts business.

Through the program, grants of up to $5,000 will be awarded to local community organizations that encourage kids to actively participate in the areas of education, physical activity, nutrition, socializing, and the arts.

Learn more online at: https://corporate.aldi.us/en/corporate-responsibility/aldi-smart-kids/

Fall activities — continued

“Our families were very generous,” Garris said. “We collected more than 1,500 items and are so proud of such strong support for the greater Youngstown community.”

HSA Youngstown families also gathered for the school’s annual Thanksgiving dinner, enjoying turkey and all the traditional side dishes, and the opportunity to get to know one another and to connect with faculty and staff. In the true spirit of the holiday, students and their families shared what they were most thankful for on the Thanksgiving Tree.

State Board addresses high school diploma seals

Tasked with implementing a high school diploma seal system through the state biennial budget bill (H.B. 166), the State Board is moving forward through its Integrated Student Supports Committee, which recently passed a resolution recommending the adoption of ten seals for: Industry-recognized credential; College-ready; Military enlistment; Citizenship; Science; Honors diploma; Technology; Community service; Fine and performing arts; and, Student engagement.

Additionally, the resolution recommends integration of the existing OhioMeansJobs-readiness and bi-literacy seals into the new system.

Starting with the class of 2023, students must earn at least two seals, one of which must be state defined, to be eligible to graduate.

Members of the committee question the appropriateness of implementing the seal system, but there is also general agreement that current graduation requirements should remain in place for many years.

“We’re at a point in the state of Ohio where we need to stabilize graduation requirements,” said Charlotte McGuire, who serves as the board’s vice president.
UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

WINTER ENGLISH LEARNER SUPPORT NETWORK MEETING
January 9, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Columbus
This network is designed for school personnel concerned with educating English Learners. A portion of the meeting will be devoted to sharing strategies, concerns, best practices and updates in the field. Part of the day will also be dedicated to in-depth discussion and presentations on a topic set by the group. Lunch will be provided.
Registration ends January 2, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.
Register online at: https://WinterEnglishLearnerNetwork.eventarc.net/e/43121

EFFECTIVE LESSON DESIGN – one of BCHF’s most popular trainings returns online!
January 15 – February 15
Back by popular demand, this online course examines the direct instruction teaching model championed as most effective by many experts. Participants construct a model lesson to use in their classrooms with the following parts: 1) a hook or anticipatory set; 2) modeling and demonstrating; 3) guided practice; 4) adjustment of instruction, if needed; 5) independent practice; and, 6) summative assessment. Participants will explore each of these components and incorporate into their own lesson plans with the goal of improved instruction and results for all learners!
Registration ends January 8 at 5 p.m.
Register online at: https://EffectiveLessonDesign.eventarc.net/e/43122

NEW TEACHERS’ NETWORK MEETING #2
February 11, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Columbus
This continuous series of sessions (of which this will be the second), hosted periodically throughout the 2019-2020 school year, will walk a new teacher through the “minefields” of the first few years of teaching. Topics will include: classroom management; lesson planning and delivery; teacher evaluations; testing; special education; and, other “hot topics” in education. A light lunch will be provided. Participants may attend one or all of the series of network meetings.
Registration ends February 4 at 5 p.m.
Register online at: https://newteachersnetwork3.eventarc.net/e/43131

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COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Trainings needed in the month of December

The following trainings are due by December 31. Coach certification is required for OHSAA sport coaches.

✦ Coach certification
✦ Bloodborne pathogens
✦ School safety
✦ Seclusion and restraint

Questions? Contact your school’s regional representative.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS — continued

NEW LEADERS’ NETWORK MEETING #3
February 12, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Columbus
This network will walk a school leader through the year, covering topics of interest to all school leaders: testing; legislation; culture; special education; teacher evaluation; data; and, recruitment and retention of staff. Lunch will be provided. Participants may attend one or all of the series of network meetings.
Registration ends February 5 at 5 p.m.
Register online at: https://newleadersnetwork3.eventarc.net/e/43279

It’s never too early to think about summer! For your advanced planning, please remember to mark your calendars for the BCHF School Leadership Summit, scheduled for June 11-12, 2020.
Celebrating their gifts and assets

'Tis the season! As we bask in the warmth of family and friends during the holiday season, may I suggest that we stop and reflect on the gifts of diversity as reasons to celebrate?

A review of diversity in the U.S. reveals a simplistic view: male and female, black and white, blue eyes and brown eyes. However, over the last decade, we, in education, have had the pleasure of having children from all over the world join our classrooms. I think I speak for many educators when I say that it is a privilege to have newcomers in our schools. They bring assets that our "never English learners" can only experience second-hand. (A “never-English learner,” by the way, refers to our native English speakers who have never been, and never will be, labeled as an English learner.) Further, these assets have implications for learning and achievement.

Unfortunately, neither English learners nor “never English learners” recognize these assets as true gifts. That’s where we, as educators, play an important role!

If you have not had the opportunity to observe the assets of English learners, let me take a minute to enlighten you. Among the many gifts we observe are the abilities to: build cultural bridges; use new and different language skills; adapt; gain confidence with new experiences; see things from a world view; and develop appreciation for a new normal. These are just a few gifts that English learners exhibit, and they are worth further consideration as they relate to student achievement.

The ability to build cultural bridges helps us appreciate all cultures and marvel at how easily children adapt to new cultures while sharing the highlights of their first culture. Our “never English learners” listen in wonder at cultural contrasts and celebrate commonalities from around the world.

What do the numbers tell us?

Thinking about the assets of diversity, let’s look more closely at how English learners perform academically after starting with little to no English, few academic skills, and dependence upon the talents and caring of Ohio’s educators.

The state of Ohio is pretty good at describing students in terms of numbers, and the statistics associated with this group of students are interesting if not remarkable. In Ohio, 83 percent of English learners are economically disadvantaged. Forty-five percent are Hispanic, and 16 percent are reported as having a disability. While you may not find these statistics surprising, it is only the tip of what makes English learners such a unique and diverse population.

The majority – 61 percent – of English learners in Ohio are in kindergarten through grade five, 17 percent are in grades six to eight, and 22 percent are in grades nine to 12.

The top five native languages for English learners in Ohio are Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Swahili, and Chinese. Ethnically, English learners are 45 percent Hispanic, 21 percent Black, 20 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 13 percent White, and one percent Multiracial, as reported by their families.

The Ohio English learner population was at 32,941 students in 2006. Today, we serve 61,472 students. Of that number, 24 percent are in their first year as an English learner, 21 percent are in their second year, 35 percent are in year three, and 20 percent are long-term English learners having been in the program for six or more years.

Would you be surprised to learn that the majority of English learners live and attend schools along State Route 3, the old 3C Highway, from Cincinnati to Columbus to Cleveland? It’s true! The greatest number of English learners are in Franklin County with pockets of concentrated immigrant communities in Hamilton and Cuyahoga.
**Numbers — continued**

Most—50 percent—of English learners attend city public schools, followed by suburban schools (32 percent), charter schools (10 percent), and town/rural schools (8 percent). The three city schools with the most English learners are: Columbus with 8,890 students; Cleveland with 4,006; and, South-Western City with 3,013 students. Interestingly, while Ohio’s K-12 school enrollment has been decreasing since 2006, the English learner population has been increasing.

It is on Ohio’s state tests that we see English learners emerge as academic all stars. On the English Language Arts test, 66 percent of never English learners are proficient. This number is eclipsed by the 72 percent of former English learners who are proficient. On the mathematics test, 62 percent of never English learners are proficient while 67 percent of former English learners are proficient. Similarly, on the social studies test, 79 percent of never English learners are proficient compared to 83 percent of proficient former English learners, and the same performance is mirrored in science with 70 percent proficient never English learners and 74 percent proficient former English learners.

When we consider how well students are prepared for success, we see that 28 percent of never English learners have remediation-free scores on the ACT or SAT (2018) compared to 31 percent of former English learners. Eighteen percent of never English learners received a 2018 honors diploma, while 24 percent of former English learners received this distinction. Only the Industry Credential for 2018 shows never English learners besting former English learners, 5.9 percent to 5.7 percent. The number for Dual Enrollment (College Credit Plus) in 2018 shows never English learners at 24 percent and former English learners at 27 percent. For Advanced Placement Credit in 2018, never English learners are at 14 percent and former English learners are at 26 percent. In International Baccalaureate programs in 2018, never English learners are at 0.7 percent compared to former English learners at 3.4 percent.

**Celebrating — continued**

New and different language skills may appear to be a challenge, but when we understand the learning and implications for deep thought and new insights that go hand-in-hand with language acquisition, we want all children to have that experience.

Adaptability and confidence are traits that we want all children to develop. Our English learners, especially those who are newcomers to the U.S., arrive having adapted in ways we strive to understand. Their confidence emerges as we get to know them and help them understand that new experiences are asset builders.

Lessons from moving and starting anew may not seem like an asset that is limited to newcomers. We all have experienced moves and starting anew, but consider the differences—our context is often that of moving from south Columbus to north Columbus with our families intact. Contrast this with fleeing from your home on a moment’s notice, taking only those items that can be plucked up quickly, and traveling on foot for days, sometimes losing sisters, brothers, aunts and uncles along the way. There is no neon sign blinking “Refugee Camp 10 miles east.” You are truly alone without the benefit of food, water, a change of clothes or restrooms. You cannot turn to the authorities for help. No one is really in charge, and few can be trusted. In such a life-changing move, what have you given up? What have you lost? Will you ever have any semblance of the life that you knew? These are very different experiences and result in life lessons that we can only imagine. Our new English learners have a level of gratitude and humility that we may never reach, but from which we can learn.

A world view is something that few children have the opportunity to develop, but when you come from far away and the conversations with family revolve around what’s happening “at home” and whether those who were left behind are well and safe, you develop a world view. Some of our English learners feel immense guilt at the idea of being so well, so safe, and having so much when loved ones left behind continue to suffer.

“New normals” are developed by all of us as we transition through life. It’s a new normal to go to school from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., if you are

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Celebrating — continued

entering first grade. It’s a new normal to transition from school to work. We take it in stride. Newcomers experience new normals as well, but always with an appreciation of what used to be, what was lost, and how different life is in a new country.

If you observe your newcomer English learners, you will see all these gifts and more. Here’s how you, as an educator, can help bring full appreciation of the gifts of diversity. Recognize the assets newcomers bring and talk about these with your English learners with the goal of helping them understand their own special gifts. To the extent that students are comfortable, encourage newcomers to share their knowledge and experiences with all students to help everyone see the gift of diversity.

Maybe it’s normal to want to simplify the diversity of English learners, and it is easy to put all English learners into one group. Educators too often lament the missing skills and concepts that we readily see. This season, we challenge you as educators to really look at the diverse gifts of your students and celebrate them!

Resources:
Ohio Department of Education, “English Learners in Ohio,” 2011 presented at the Ohio Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference, October 11, 2019, Columbus, Ohio.

Numbers — continued

Finally, the 2018 graduation rate for four- and five-year never English learners are each at 86 percent. However, the four-year former English learners are at 91 percent and five-year former English learners are at 90 percent.

One has to be an English learner before he/she can be a former English learner. While current English learners struggle to succeed in many ways, they bring assets that we may not see. These assets, with the academic success of former English learners, should make us, as the educators of these amazing students, proud. Furthermore, the myriad of ways in which the success of our former English learners sets the stage for contributions to society, the economy, and our communities, should not be overlooked.

None of this would be possible without the hard work of Ohio educators and the support of the families and communities in Ohio. We have much of which to be proud and much for which to be grateful. Thank you to everyone who contributes to the education of our English learners.