Uncertainty surrounds DOPR school policy

Policymakers and other stakeholders generally recognize that dropout prevention and recovery (DOPR) schools face unique challenges in educating at-risk students, which is why their performance is assessed and reported on a unique state report card. And while there is broad agreement that DOPR schools should be held accountable for their performance, establishing a fair and meaningful approach to doing so has proven to be a difficult task.

In 2015, the Ohio Legislature passed a charter “reform” bill that called for creation of a committee to study and make recommendations on DOPR school accountability. The committee recommended that study of DOPR issues continue beyond its statutory deadline. It was comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders, most of whom opted not to continue to serve as the superintendent of public education established a new group – which issued a report in 2017 — to continue the effort.

Flash forward to 2019, when the State Board of Education created a DOPR work group comprised of two State Board members, and eight representatives of the DOPR community. The group met on a regular basis and released a report, which included policy recommendations, in December.

The group’s recommendations were not well received by Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria, who wrote a memo in response describing the group’s process as “not one of collaborative co-design,” “somewhat one-sided,” and one that “reflects members of a regulated educational sector given carte blanche to design their own regulations.”

Continued on pg. 2
“Many ideas in the work group's report are worthy of further refinement and adoption,” DeMaria wrote. “However, several would call into question appropriate controls that are in place pursuant to law.”

Last month, the report was submitted to the full State Board, which voted unanimously to approve a resolution acknowledging receipt of the report and forwarding it to the board’s Assessment and Accountability Committee for consideration.

In the meantime, a committee created in the budget bill passed by the Legislature last year to address DOPR issues cancelled its first meeting, which was scheduled for January 29.

“I think there’s broad agreement we need to find better ways to serve this particular population of students,” said State Board President Laura Kohler.

Stay tuned …

CORRECTIONS

Horizon Science Academy Lorain student Evelyn Torres’ entry in the National Charter School Institute’s recent art contest received recognition in the “most creative” category. Due to an editor’s error, a story published in January, “Students, schools shine in annual art competition,” incorrectly identified the category in which her entry was recognized.

Senate Bill 121 — legislation to task the State Board of Education with developing health education standards — is currently being considered by the Senate Education Committee. Due to an editor’s error, a story published in January, “Health standards bill has critics,” incorrectly referenced the chamber in which the bill was introduced.
STATE LIBRARY LAUNCHES FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITY CALENDAR

The Day By Day Ohio Family Literacy Calendar is a tool families, caregivers, educators and librarians can use at home, on the go, and in the classroom. The calendar has monthly themes that highlight videos, suggested books, songs and activities for each day.

Day By Day Ohio offers resources to further develop early literacy skills that help young children prepare for and improve in school. Children enjoy fun, positive learning experiences that support school success and, ultimately, lifelong learning.

Day By Day Ohio is a service of the State Library of Ohio in collaboration with Ohio Ready to Read and is funded, in part, by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Access resources online at: http://www.daybydayoh.org/january/january-20

Remediation rates continue to decline

The Ohio Department of Higher Education's 2019 Ohio Remediation Report shows a decline in the percentage of Ohio high school graduates who needed remedial coursework in math or English at state public colleges and universities -- from 30 percent in 2014 to 27 percent in 2018.

According to the report, the decrease in remediation rates – the percentage of Ohio public high school graduates enrolled in an Ohio public college or university who have taken a remedial course – can be attributed to multiple efforts including statewide initiatives to enhance academic and career advising, educators collaboration to align student-learning outcomes between high school and college, and the implementation of college placement practices that support student success.

New to the report is the inclusion of enrollment numbers and remediation rates disaggregated by economic status. The data show remediation rates among economically disadvantaged students – those eligible for Pell grants – of nearly 39 percent, significantly higher than the 18.2 percent rate for ineligible students.

The report includes several key recommendations:
✦ State, district, and local education leaders need to continuously review and respond to specific metrics at the student level from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary attainment.
✦ Early interventions and attendance matter.
✦ Strengthen advising support for all students. Support training of advisors within high schools and colleges to help raise awareness of all postsecondary opportunities for Ohio students.
✦ To address academic gaps identified in high school, students should have access to transition courses.
✦ Review and implement strategies to close the academic gaps among student populations (racial, ethnic, first-generation, geographical regions).
✦ Improve student success in entry-level courses by aligning mathematics to academic programs of study.
✦ Compressing developmental education with course redesign, such as offering co-requisite college-level courses.

Access the full report online at: https://www.ohiohighered.org/data-reports/college-readiness
LITERACY GRANT INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE

As previously reported, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) was awarded $42 million for a Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant from the U.S. Department of Education to continue its work to improve language and literacy development in Ohio’s children. Nearly 95 percent of the award will go directly to districts, schools and early childhood education programs to improve literacy outcomes for children from birth through grade 12.

The four-year subgrant will focus on developing model literacy sites in early childhood education programs and district preschools, as well as elementary, middle and high schools across the state. The model sites will concentrate on implementing practices outlined in Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement. The grant will also support professional learning and coaching.

Details -- including the grant proposal narrative, eligibility requirements, steps to apply, frequently asked questions and intent to apply -- are available online at: http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/Comprehensive-Literacy-State-Development-Grant

Gun rights group opposes school safety legislation

As the Senate Education Committee considers a substitute version of legislation (H.B. 123) aimed at improving school safety, opponents and proponents have come forward to testify.

The bill – now known as the Safety and Violence Education Students Act, or the “SAVE Students Act” – would require the Ohio Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, to maintain a list of approved training programs for instruction in suicide awareness and prevention, and violence prevention. Each school district would be required to enter into a contract with an anonymous tip-line provider (that meets certain criteria) of its choosing.

Chris Door, director of Ohio Gun Owners, offered opponent testimony, saying the bill “would let organizations antithetical to a free society have access to school kids to ‘teach’ social inclusion programming.”

“Social inclusion and suicide are matters of the heart that require family and church solutions, not government-approved programming designed by far-left radicals who simply want access to children to further their own leftist agendas,” said Door, who also indicated that Ohio Gun Owners would work against any committee members who support the bill if it is voted out of committee.

But other organizations – Sandy Hook Promise and the Ohio Education Association – offered proponent testimony, saying that the bill will make Ohio’s schools safer.

“Operation Warm” so much more than a coat

About three years ago, the Sponsor Update shared a heartwarming story about Great Western Academy and the benefits to its students resulting from an anonymous nomination to receive coats through Operation Warm – thanks to Hollister, a brand under the umbrella of Abercrombie and Fitch, a division of central Ohio-based L Brands, Inc.

It was a pleasant surprise to Principal Kathryn Kountz to learn that for a second time, Great Western Academy’s students would each receive a brand new coat through Operation Warm.

Continued on pg. 5
Operation Warm — continued

“We’re so grateful,” Kountz said. “Some of the coats students received three years ago had been outgrown and passed on to younger siblings ... students were thrilled to be chosen again to receive such generous support.”

Operation Warm’s hashtag – #morethanacoat – and statement of purpose says it best: 
Operation Warm provides warmth, confidence and hope to children in need through the gift of brand new winter coats. We believe a brand new coat is more than a coat. Through serving millions of children in need across North America, we have seen that a brand new coat offers a child physical and emotional warmth, confidence to socialize and succeed, and hope of a brighter future.

Character education is a key component of learning at schools, like Great Western Academy, that are managed by Imagine Schools. The Operation Warm experience achieved even more than the organization’s goals – it also demonstrated service in action, with well over 100 volunteers engaging 750-plus students one-on-one as they selected coats in styles and colors of their choice.

“We heard many of the same comments that were made three years ago – ‘I’ve never had a new coat’ and ‘I always get my brother’s coat when he outgrows it,’” Kountz said. “But beyond the gifts of coats and socks, the kindness of all the volunteers was so heartwarming. They made students feel valued and appreciated ... we saw lots of hugs, dancing and high-fives that day!”

The school provided basic information on students’ needs in advance, allowing for an appropriate inventory of coats and socks to be shipped to the school about a week before the event. Volunteers arrived early for set-up, then worked one-on-one with each of the students who were super excited about the whole experience, including writing their names on labels sewn into each coat.

Senior leaders representing Abercrombie and Fitch, and the Hollister brand, were also in attendance and enjoyed learning all about Great Western Academy from members of the school’s student council, who were hosts that day.

Continued on pg. 6
LEGISLATOR JOINS CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

State Senator Andy Brenner (R-Powell) spoke to students at an early celebration of National School Choice Week at Noble Academy - Columbus.

The event, which featured students performing the school choice week dance, was held in conjunction with a breakfast for parents of the school’s fourth-grade students. Buckeye Community Hope Foundation’s Peggy Young, who serves as the Education Division director, was also in attendance.

Following the celebration, Brenner and Young toured the school and spoke with the school’s leader, Kadir Parlar, about the important role public charter schools play in Ohio’s system of K-12 education and local communities.

OPERATION WARM — continued

“The experience really was about ‘more than a coat,’” Kountz said. “I think the volunteers walked away having gained as much as the students. Students were touched to receive such generous gifts and to be treated with such kindness, love and support.”

There were banners and signs throughout the school’s gym where the event was held, and a photographer and video crew was also on hand to document the excitement.

“The whole event was super well organized ... it ran like a well-oiled machine,” Kountz said. “We are so grateful to Abercrombie and Fitch, Hollister and the Operation Warm team. We’re thrilled to continue our partnership with them.”

SCHOOL INDUCTS RECORD NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN NATIONAL ELEMENTARY HONOR SOCIETY

Hamilton County Math and Science Academy students have been participating in the National Elementary Honor Society since before the program advisor joined the staff after graduating from college in 2016.

“As part of the teaching staff, I was asked to sign up to help coordinate an extracurricular activity for students,” second-grade English language arts teacher Kristen Weickert explained. “I immediately knew that I wanted to be a part of our school’s honor society program – it’s something I have a real passion for.”

Weickert now spearheads the initiative and proudly welcomed a school record of 112 students into the National Elementary Honor Society at the recent induction ceremony.

The national program is limited to students in grades four through six with a cumulative GPA of 85, B, 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or equivalent standard of excellence. The qualifications for membership are based on four pillars: scholarship; responsibility; service; and, leadership.

The Hamilton County Math and Science Academy has made minor tweaks to the national program, including third-grade student

Continued on pg 7
GET INVOLVED IN STATISTICS IN SCHOOLS

The U.S. Census Bureau's Statistics in Schools brings school subjects to life using real-world data to create materials for use year after year at all grade levels.

Schools can help shape the future of students by teaching them about the importance of being counted in the 2020 Census. Statistics in Schools (SIS) resources – including videos and teacher activities guides for elementary, middle and high schools, and English language learners – are available online.

The Census Bureau is sending every school in the country large wall maps of the U.S. and a booklet for teachers that explains and promotes the SIS program.

Learn more online at: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/get-involved.html?utm_campaign=20200114c20s1ccedurs&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Honor society — continued

eligibility and breaking the responsibility pillar into two parts: character and citizenship.

Although the primary focus of the K-8 school is, of course, academics, parents of the nearly 700 students enrolled are attracted to the school’s culture, which also emphasizes community service and leadership.

In selecting students to participate, Weickert starts with the basic task of determining which are eligible based on their academic performance. Then student character and behavior are considered and the field narrowed to those most deserving of the recognition.

“Many of our students continue their membership from year to year,” Weickert said. “It’s a part of our school culture that’s important to students – they are justifiably proud of their continued honor society membership.”

Students selected as honor society members have a voice in determining activities associated with the “service” pillar.

“We asked this year’s inductees what they’re passionate about – where they think they can best serve the local community,” Weickert said. “Supporting the homeless was chosen as a broad area of focus, and students will play a role in deciding how best to go about doing so.”

Although about 90 percent of the school’s students qualify for the free and reduced-price lunch program, they embrace initiatives aimed at supporting those in need and have contributed generously to food and coat drives, and engaged in other community service activities.

“I’m so proud of our students – especially those who earn membership in the National Elementary Honor Society,” Weickert said. “The whole school celebrated their recent induction, which included a ceremony, citing the honor society pledge, and awarding certificates and medals. Students and teachers proudly wore honor society t-shirts the day of the induction.”

“Our honor society members are all-around good students,” she continued. “Beyond a sense of pride and accomplishment, they’re learning important values that will serve them for life.
Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) is continually seeking input about the needs of schools, school leaders, and other key personnel who serve students. Annually, on February 14, BCHF issues its major needs assessment to key contacts in sponsored schools. BCHF wants to know what school leaders think about its technical assistance and what they believe are priorities for future support.

What does BCHF do with the results of the survey? It uses the information to set the theme or overall topic for the Summer Leadership Summit (to be held this year June 11-12). Results are also used to develop BCHF’s annual work plan and professional development catalog.

Please watch for the survey on Valentine’s Day and provide honest feedback to help best meet your school’s needs in the coming year and beyond. Thank you in advance for your input!
COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Tornado drills
Tornado drills must be conducted at least once a month whenever school is in session during tornado season - the period of April 1 to July 31.

Racial balance assessment
In order to comply with admission procedures required under O.R.C. 3314.06, the governing authority must assess the schools' racial balance on a regular basis comparatively to the local district and ensure marketing plans do not contradict the authorizer agreement.

The racial balance assessment requires a comparison of the school’s demographics to the host district. If there are significant differences in the demographics, then there should be a discussion about the school’s marketing practices to ensure inclusiveness.

Questions? Please contact your school’s sponsor representative.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS — continued

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE — continued
restorative practices fit within an overall framework of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and plan for integration into the classroom or school. This course is appropriate for school leaders looking to develop an overall framework, and for educators who wish to implement restorative concepts or practices for a specific group of students.

Registration ends March 8 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://restorativejusticeonline.eventarc.net/e/43137

SPRING EARLY LITERACY NETWORK
March 10, 2020, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Columbus
Confused about RIMPS, RAPS, and RIPS? BCHF’s Spring Early Literacy Network will shed some light on these important aspects of Ohio’s strategic plan for early literacy! Plan to join us to discuss and share in discussion about these topics:

✦ Literacy components – what they look like in our current classrooms, and how can we maximize instruction time by overlapping their use
✦ Preparing for your lesson – ways to work smarter, not harder (sharing best practices)
✦ Writing – it’s never too early to train students what effective writing looks like (looking at what our standards say the students should/will be able to do, and how to make that happen)
✦ Ohio’s strategic plan for literacy and learning, “Each Child Our Future”

Lunch will be provided.

Registration ends March 3 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://springearlyliteracynetwork.eventarc.net/e/43135

SPRING SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE
March 11, 2020, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Columbus
This session is a networking opportunity for a community of special education practitioners from BCHF-sponsored schools to share in discussion of best practices. A portion of the update session will be new information from the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children, and/or other sources. Time will also be devoted to more in-depth discussion of a high-interest topic and to sharing of information among participants. A light lunch will be provided.

Registration ends March 4 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://springspecialeducationupdate.eventarc.net/e/43136
Online Training from Buckeye Community Hope Foundation
By Mike Grote, Ph.D., Educational Consultant

Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) has been offering online training for two years. The workshops run for four weeks, sharing new content and activities each week for the length of the workshop. Participants have follow-up on a weekly basis, unlike traditional professional development that is frequently a one-shot training. We have purposely designed the weekly assignments in the online training to require teachers to implement aspects of the training in their classes weekly. In this way, the work is job-embedded, completely practical and encourages implementation. Through the use of bulletin boards, we simulate the discussions that would take place in face-to-face professional development and provide participants with ideas from their peers. Participants also receive individual feedback on the application of their workshop ideas from the BCHF facilitator.

To participate in an online workshop, interested teachers first register using Eventarc, which collects their name, school, and email address. The link to the registration site is provided in BCHF’s catalog, as well in a reminder email just prior to the beginning of the course. The Eventarc site is only for collecting information on interested participants. The day prior to the beginning of the workshop, an email is sent to participants with information on enrolling on BCHF’s Moodle site which houses its online courses. We encourage multiple teachers from the same school to register for a workshop as it provides the opportunity to discuss ideas offline with colleagues in their school.

Moodle allows us to track teacher participation in the workshop. It is our policy to send a certificate of completion to teachers who complete all the workshop requirements, which is copied to the school leader, thus providing the school leader with information on who completed the training. This certificate validates at least ten hours of workshop participation which the local LPDC can consider for one continuing education unit. We know that sometimes life complications “happen” and try to be generous in allowing participants extra time to complete the training when requested. We also try to be responsive to the needs of school leaders in monitoring the participation of their teachers. If, as a school leader, you wish to have additional information on who is actually participating during the workshop, simply email the workshop facilitator with your request (mgrote@buckeyehope.org).

We currently offer four workshops: 1) Effective Lesson Design; 2) Successful Classroom Management; 3) ENGAGE: Motivation That Works!; and, 4) Restorative Justice. These workshops complement each other and are all components of building high achieving classrooms. Workshops are offered at specific times during the year as listed in BCHF’s professional development catalog.

The next workshop being offered online will be ENGAGE: Motivation That Works! This workshop will examine a large body of research on the factors that grow students’ intrinsic motivation to learn. Ironically, many strategies commonly used by well-meaning teachers actually have a long-term negative impact on intrinsic motivation to learn. School leadership team members and classroom teachers are welcome to participate. Like all BCHF workshops, it will require about 2.5 hours per week. Registration ends on February 12 and the workshop begins on February 15. Register online at: https://engagemotivationthatworks.eventarc.net/e/43133

The Restorative Justice workshop will begin on March 15 (registration ends on March 8). Register online at: https://restorativejusticeonline.eventarc.net/e/