All Schools Meeting inspires and informs

Ninety individuals — including representatives from all 47 BCHF-sponsored schools — came together on Sept. 18 for Buckeye Community Hope Foundation’s (BCHF) annual All Schools Meeting.

Keynote speaker Dr. Joelle Hood spoke on Leading with Courage, Connection & Compassion, offering attendees an inspiring message and her take on how a great leader L.E.A.D.S. — by Leaning in to build belonging and trust; Engaging employees’ purpose; Appreciating and acknowledging; Developing empathy and compassion; and, Showing up with intentional presence.

Attendees also heard from Dr. Marva Jones, senior executive director for the Ohio Department of Education’s Center for Continuous Improvement, who provided a general update and highlights of Ohio’s Strategic Plan for Education.

BCHF’s Stan Nicol challenged the group to have fun with data (yes, it’s possible!), followed by a review of charter stakeholder roles and responsibilities by Jennifer Schorr. Stephanie Klupinski provided an overview and explanation of changes coming to BCHF’s sponsor contracts, and Jason Moore presented on compliance, EMIS and finance. Carol Young provided an accountability and school improvement update.

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**All Schools Meeting — continued**

A number of schools were recognized by BCHF’s Education Division leaders Peggy Young and Jennifer Schorr for accomplishments achieved throughout the 2018-2019 school year, including:

**Highest achievement – Performance Index**
Imagine Hill Academy
SMART Academy Cleveland

**Most improved achievement – Performance Index**
Constellation Schools: Eastside Arts Academy

**Overall report card grade of “A” or “B”**
Achieve Career Preparatory Academy – “Exceeds Standards”
Horizon Science Academy Primary – “A”
Constellation Schools: Stockyard Community Middle – “B”
Horizon Science Academy Columbus Middle School – “B”
Horizon Science Academy of Youngstown – “B”
Imagine Hill Academy – “B”
International Academy of Columbus – “B”

**“A” in overall value-added**
Constellation Schools: Stockyard Community Middle
Horizon Science Academy Columbus Middle School
Horizon Science Academy Lorain
Horizon Science Academy of Youngstown
L. Hollingworth School for the Talented & Gifted
Lincoln Park Academy
Stambaugh Charter Academy
Westside Academy

**Advocacy – Support of BCHF’s Statehouse Lobby Days**
Focus Schools
The Academy for Urban Scholars Columbus

**Communications – Best stories & contributors to BCHF’s Sponsor Update**
Chapelside Cleveland Academy
Focus Schools
L. Hollingworth School for the Talented & Gifted
SMART Academy Cleveland

Here’s what attendees had to say about what they liked best about the day-long program: Dr. Hood was fabulous!; Loved the keynote speaker; I truly appreciate all the support Buckeye gives to administrators/teachers; I found the SEL activity and presentation very useful; Building an empathetic work environment; Remembering that our adults need to be supported as much as our students; It was helpful and informative; You touched on all important topics and it prompted great discussion at my table; Thanks for a great day.
Ohio ranked 21st overall – with a score of 76 out of 100 and a composite grade of “C” – by Education Week’s recently released Quality Counts report, also known as the nation’s report card. Ohio scored just slightly better than the national average of 75.6.

States’ overall rankings are based on scores in three categories: chance for success, school finance and K-12 achievement.

Ohio’s ranking remains unchanged from the previous report. Pulling down Ohio’s overall score and ranking was the gap in achievement and funding between poor and more-affluent students and their schools. Ohio also ranked in the lower half of states with respect to workforce indicators and having adults with postsecondary degrees.

Superintendent: “It’s a really good report card”

Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria characterized the state’s recently released report card as “really good” to members of the State Board of Education.

“It has a lot of indicators that show we’re making progress,” DeMaria said.

An Ohio Department of Education press release highlighted positive outcomes for the 2018-2019 school year, including:

✦ Student proficiency increased for the third consecutive year in both English language arts and math;
✦ All student subgroups increased in proficiency in math and all but one improved in English Language arts;
✦ Across the state, 56.3 percent of schools increased their Performance Index scores;
✦ The four-year graduation rate reached a new high of 85.3 percent for the class of 2018;
✦ Approximately 9,125 more students in the class of 2018 earned dual enrollment credits compared to the class of 2017;
✦ An additional 2,711 students earned industry-recognized credentials; and,
✦ The number of students scoring remediation-free on the ACT or SAT increased by 2,045.

This is the second year in which districts and schools received overall letter grades, which are calculated using results in the six report card components: Achievement; Progress; Gap Closing; Improving At-Risk K-3 readers; Graduation Rates; and, Prepared for Success.

Nearly 80 percent of districts – and about 70 percent of schools – received a “C” or higher, and the overall grades of 666 schools also improved from last year, with 86 schools improving by at least two letter grades. In addition, 106 districts improved their overall grades, with 85 percent of those that earned an “F” last year improving to a “D.”

But Ohio’s system for evaluating districts and schools continues to draw criticism from policy makers and stakeholders.

The recently passed biennial budget bill (H.B. 166) included a provision establishing a study committee to review report card grades and how grades are calculated, and to make recommendations for changes by Dec. 15.
ED BOARD MAKES READING GUARANTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Last month, the State Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution to ask legislators to make a number of changes to Ohio’s Third Grade Reading Guarantee, including requiring schools to expand the use of improvement and monitoring plans – and providing “intensive reading instruction” for students reading below grade level -- from third grade to fifth.

The State Board also recommends that local officials be given authority to determine whether English learners should be exempt from the guarantee promotion score “based on the student’s English language proficiency.” Under current law, the exemption is permitted when a student has been enrolled in a school in the U.S. for less than three full years and has had less than three years of English as a second language.

Grant helps school realize dream of expansion

Take just a couple of steps into Westside Academy's building and you'll notice two things right away: first, like most schools, it's rather noisy; but the sounds are of pure joy; and second, the space is extremely cramped and every square inch of the building is being utilized to capacity.

Established in 2006, Westside Academy has generally focused on serving students in kindergarten through fourth grade, but always with the dream of expansion to grade eight. Now – thanks in part to a $350,000 federal expansion grant – the school is moving forward to make that dream a reality.

“Fortunately, we already had a lot of the pieces in place,” said Director Heather O’Bannon. “We’ve been saving to make improvements to the building for many years, and had already made the decision to add a seventh-grade class this year and eighth-grade next year.”

The school’s academic success has served to increase enrollment – a difficult achievement with such limited physical space -- and made it eligible for a federal expansion grant, which is limited to high performing schools.

O’Bannon and her team have never let the small building stand in the way of academic success, but the facility’s size has forced the school to limit the number of grades served, which has been an issue of concern to parents who prefer that their children attend just one school in their K-8 academic years before moving on to high school.

Although the expansion grant doesn't fund Westside’s building costs – the addition of a gym and multi-purpose room – it does fund other key components of the plan including curriculum, library books, physical education equipment, furnishings, technology and other items that aren't permanent building fixtures.

Thanks to the grant and years of saving, the building expansion plan is finally moving forward. Modular classroom units, which will continue to be used, have been moved to the west side of the building, allowing for construction of an addition on the north side. That wasn't the original plan, but as is typical of construction projects, flexibility has been essential.

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Expansion grant — continued

“We’ve had to roll with it,” O’Bannon said. “But we’re making progress and hope the project will be completed by February, as planned.”

Grant eligibility requirements extend beyond high academic achievement. O’Bannon must also share best practices that contribute to Westside Academy’s success. She points out that there is no magic formula, but cites school culture as a key factor.

The school’s student population is multi-cultural – from French- and Spanish-speaking students, to those speaking Arabic and Swahili. All are economically disadvantaged and many are English language learners.

“Students need to feel safe in order to learn,” O’Bannon said. “Some of our families have faced and fled from traumatic situations and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. And their experiences as immigrants are often challenging. We focus on positive reinforcement and a growth mindset – a belief that everyone can change and grow through hard work and dedication. And we interact with students on a one-to-one basis.”

The grant process was rigorous with a tight deadline for submission just 30 days after the Ohio Department of Education provided the necessary guidance. But O’Bannon met every challenge in pursuit of her dream to make a great school even better.

“We’re so happy and proud to have received this grant,” O’Bannon said. “And we’re excited about the opportunity to make our students’ social and academic opportunities even better. Implementation of our expansion plan is a dream come true.”

Congrats!

Congratulations to Inspire Elementary School for receiving the 2019 Best of Columbus Award in the charter school category by the Columbus Award Program!

Each year, the Columbus Award Program identifies companies that have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local organizations that enhance the positive image of small business through their service to customers and community, and help make the Columbus area a great place to live, work and play.

YOUTH ART COMPETITION CELEBRATES WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage, the National Archives Foundation is sponsoring an art competition for students in grades four through six.

The competition, based on the Rightfully Hers exhibit, will highlight historical achievements in women’s history while promoting the significance of the 19th amendment.

The grand prize includes a free trip, including travel, to the National Archives Museum in Washington, D.C., for the Spring 2020 Sleepover. The entry deadline is Nov. 5.

Learn more online at: https://www.archivesfoundation.org/rightfully-yours/
NEW INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS POSTED

The Ohio Department of Education, jointly with the Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation, has released additions to its fiscal year 2020 Industry-Recognized Credential List. These credentials are available immediately for students to earn as points toward graduation.

A panel of industry professionals reviewed all currently approved credentials, as well as all credential applications received in Spring and Summer 2019. The industry panel did not recommend removing any previously approved credentials from the 2019-2020 list.


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**Students help “Keep Columbus Beautiful”**

Last month, Focus Learning Academy of Southwestern Columbus held its annual Fall community clean up event. Every Fall and Spring, the school partners with Keep Columbus Beautiful to host the event, providing Focus students and community partners with the resources – trash bags, gloves, neon vests and trash grabbers -- needed to put on a successful clean up event.

About 20 students and seven staff members participated, scouring the neighborhood around the school to clean up trash and recyclable items. In total, staff and students collected 23 bags of trash! One elderly neighbor – unable to tend to her yard -- came out of her home to thank the students for the work they were doing for her and the community.

The event was a success, and students were justifiably proud of their efforts. Lilly, a Focus senior, pointed out how important community service is and expressed a desire to become more involved with giving back. Something as simple as picking up one piece of trash helped Focus students realize that even one person can make a difference and that working together, we can bring about positive change!

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**Playground project engages parents, community and partners**

It’s cool when a school provides a new resource – like a playground – to enrich students’ lives. It’s even cooler when a project – like building a new playground – engages parents, members of the local community, and partners with the commitment and resources to support worthwhile initiatives.

A project recently completed by Constellation Schools: Old Brooklyn Community Middle (and its elementary sister school) falls into the super cool category – not just because students now have a great place to play, but because of the synergy created through partnerships with KaBoom!, Major League Baseball’s Players Association Players Trust, UPS and other local businesses, neighborhood churches, parents and others with a passion for community service.

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OhioMeansJobs K-12: NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE

OhioMeansJobs.com is Ohio’s free online career information and exploration tool that assists students in developing career awareness, providing career exploration opportunities and planning for their transition into future careers.

Two new calculators have been added to assist students in developing an expense budget that can be used to generate a career target salary.

Students and other K-12 users now can access the Dynamic Career Pathways Tool, which uses national data to provide a quick view of salary, education and labor market information for occupations.

Learn more online at: http://education.ohio.gov/Ed-Connection/Sept-16-2019/OhioMeansJobs-K-12-New-resources-available

Playground — continued

“...and they were too small for use by all our students,” explained Principal Cherie Kaiser. “Recognizing the importance of physical activity for the well-being of our students, we made building a new playground a priority and discovered KaBoom! grant opportunities while looking for ways to raise the funds needed to make it happen.”

Kaiser first applied for a “build your own” grant from KaBoom!, which contacted her to recommend a “community build” grant instead. Although it would require a great amount of effort to recruit the 250 volunteers needed to move forward, Kaiser embraced the challenge.

“It evolved into a dynamic initiative that resulted in amazing community support,” Kaiser said. “(Carlos) Santana, (Jake) Bauers and other Cleveland Indians players visited Old Brooklyn to talk with students and give them the opportunity to provide input on the plan. That gave students a sense of ownership and built enthusiasm for the project.”

According to Kaiser, students’ parents stepped up to the plate, playing a key role in pulling the project together. They formed committees responsible for various aspects of the plan – from recruiting and feeding volunteers, to babysitting services and public relations.

It all culminated in a one-day build in June when about 250 volunteers came together in support of the school and its students.

“It was amazing,” Kaiser said. “There was great participation by students, and by parents who don’t often volunteer for school projects. Because our build day was a Saturday, we were able to attract parents whose work schedules limit their ability to volunteer. We were sore the next day, but it was well worth it!”

The new playground now features a zip line, rock climbing wall and two GaGa ball pits – thanks to student input – and other equipment to encourage students to engage in physical activity. There’s even an outdoor “classroom” for use by teachers and students.

Additional funding was raised – with support from UPS, Cleveland City Council and others in the community – to build a fence around the school’s property.

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**UPDATED CCP RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

Over the summer months, the Ohio Department of Higher Education’s College Credit Plus (CCP) team was hard at work updating the CCP website and guidance documents to have things ready for students, families and program administrators at college and secondary schools.

Updated documents include:
- Professionals’ Resource Guide (formerly the “handbook”)
- Student Eligibility Process
- Underperforming Students Rule Summary
- Course Eligibility Summary
- Guidance for Grades and Tuition
- Information Session Presentations
- Intent to Participate Forms

Learn more and access resources online at:
https://www.ohiohighered.org/content/college_credit_plus_about

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**Playground — continued**

ESPN did a story about the Old Brooklyn playground project that aired during the All Star Game hosted by the City of Cleveland.

“Apparently there’s some truth to ‘if you build it, they will come,’” Kaiser said. “We had great turnout for the build, and our enrollment has increased in the new school year.”

“You had to be there to really appreciate how amazing our build day was – it was a real community effort,” she continued. “Our students are thrilled with their new playground, and we hope to cultivate relationships with our new partners.”

**Students take advantage of unique opportunity**

Several months ago, the Sponsor Update reported on Buckeye Community Hope Foundation's (BCHF) advocacy outreach on behalf of, and in partnership with, dropout prevention and recovery schools (DOPR).

BCHF Education Division Associate Director Jennifer Schorr spearheaded the effort to engage DOPR school leaders, staff and students in two days of meetings with state legislators in Columbus to advocate for policy changes through the state biennial budget bill.

Julius Wilson Small and Sirrsaiquan Garrett from The Academy for Urban Scholars Columbus were among the students who participated, sharing their life experiences and dreams for the future.

The young men met with members of the Ohio House and Senate Education Committees, including Sen. Bill Coley (R-Liberty Township), with whom Julius shared his goal of pursuing a career in law enforcement.

Sen. Coley generously offered to facilitate a tour of the State Highway Patrol Academy, and did so – providing Julius and fellow students Sirrsaiaquan and Demonte with a unique experience, spending the day with Superintendent Colonel Richard Fabro.

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OHIO AMONG SIX STATES TO RECEIVE ADULT LEARNERS FUNDING

The National Governors Association (NGA) recently announced that Ohio is one of six states in line to receive funding and assistance to develop programs to benefit adult learners through its Educate for Opportunity project. Ohio, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wyoming will share a $2.3 million grant from the Strada Education Network to improve connections between adult education and career pathways.

NGA will also provide technical assistance and access to state-specific data from the Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey.

Ohio will utilize the funds to assist students who have not attended college or took college classes but did not earn a degree.

Unique opportunity — continued

“It’s vitally important to make good choices, because the decisions made today can affect the rest of our lives,” Colonel Fambro said. “I want them (Julius, Sirrsaiaquan and Demonte) to be positive, believe in themselves, and take advantage of opportunities. We all hold the keys to our futures; never underestimate yourself, and keep focused on achieving your goals.”

The three young men were impressed, and surprised at just how tough the training requirements are for State Highway Patrol recruits.

“I knew they were disciplined and focused, but was amazed at the level,” Julius said. “The men and women recruits stay separately at the academy throughout the week, but are free to go home on weekends. It struck me as being kind of like what I’d expect to see in the military.”

Another surprise was that recruits have a tradition—followed the day of their tour—to greet all visitors each time they enter a room.

“It makes you feel important, respected and appreciated to be acknowledged like that,” said Sirrsaiaquan, who hopes to one day be a judge and saw value in understanding the perspective of law enforcement officers.

“We also learned about what to do if you get pulled over by a cop,” Demonte said. “And we learned the importance of being respectful of law enforcement and the laws of the road.”

Like many of the legislators who met with the DOPR students in the spring, Sen. Coley was genuinely touched by their stories.

“I hope their experience touring the academy and talking with law enforcement officers will inspire them to achieve their dreams,” Sen. Coley said. “Despite the challenges they’ve faced in life, these young men are determined to graduate from high school and to make meaningful contributions to society. I’m inspired by their courage and determination.”

Julius, Sirrsaiaquan and Demonte were impressed with the training facility, including the shooting range, workout room and swimming pool. The eternal flame—which burns outside the building to honor state highway patrol officers who have died in the line of duty—left what will likely be the most lasting impression.
SCHOOL ABUSE CASE SERVES AS IMPETUS FOR LEGISLATION

The arrest of a 25-year-old physical education teacher in Warren County – indicted on 36 counts of gross sexual imposition for allegedly touching dozens of students inappropriately – motivated Rep. Scott Lipps (R-Franklin) and Rep. Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati) to introduce legislation to require districts and schools to provide age-appropriate instruction to students on sexual abuse and violence.

House Bill 321 is based on Erin’s Law, which has been enacted in 37 states as a result of lobbying efforts by sexual abuse survivor Erin Merryn. The legislation would require students in grades K-6 to receive instruction on sexual abuse prevention and students in grades 7-12 to receive instruction on sexual violence prevention. School districts would be required to include training on sexual abuse as part of teacher in-service development.

Similar legislation has previously failed to be approved by both the Ohio House and Senate with conservative members raising concerns about the potential expansion of changing sex education in the Buckeye State.

A shout out to one of our own!

Twice a month, The Columbus Dispatch profiles in The Good Life column a central Ohio individual or group whose actions make the world a better place ... and a recent story highlighted the contributions of a member of the Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) family of sponsored schools: John Gregory of the National Center for Urban Solutions (NCUS), which manages The Academy for Urban Scholars (AUS) Youngstown and The AUS Columbus.

The NCUS founder was recognized for his significant contributions through the creation of the National African American Male Wellness Initiative. About 700 people participated in the first walk in Columbus in 2004. Last year, more than 20,000 people participated in the Columbus event, and walks were held in 11 other cities.

Gregory’s idea for the walk began about a decade after founding NCUS as he struggled to understand why African American men had such a hard time sustaining employment.

He guaranteed 100 young men employment, but required them to make and honor a commitment: participating in weekly physical screenings.

“After 120 days, we found out 90 percent of the guys had elevated numbers (of blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol or other health metrics),” he said. “It was shocking and a revelation. So we decided we needed to do something.”

That “something” turned out to be the National African American Wellness Initiative, which includes health screenings by professionals who follow up with men whose results raise red flags.

As the Sponsor Update has previously reported, AUS students have participation in the annual wellness walks, and about 50 continued that tradition in the most recent event.

BCHF joins the Dispatch in applauding Gregory’s significant contributions, despite facing his own health problems. He cites his faith as the motivation for his work and remains committed to helping others despite losing his eyesight three years ago.

“I admire his tenacity and his drive, and I admire most of all his love for people,” his wife, Pam Gregory, told the Dispatch.

We do, too!
FREE VIRTUAL SCIENCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History is offering two new series featuring live 30-minute interviews with working scientists on select Fridays at 1 p.m. for middle and high school students.

Career Connections and Science Explorers showcase interviews with leaders in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) fields and provide examples of science careers around the world.

For those who can’t take part in the live events, interviews will be available in the career programs archives.

Check out the Cleveland Museum of Natural History’s website for details on speakers, dates and registration links: https://www.cmnh.org/careersinstem

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

In October, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) begins many of its network meetings. What is a network? A network is a group of educators with similar roles and responsibilities. Based on the model of professional learning communities, we gather these groups together to share updates and best practices, and to delve further into common problems and issues. Check out the networking and other professional development learning opportunities below.

New Teachers’ Network Meeting #1
October 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Columbus
This continuous series of sessions, 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. Register for any or all of the series.
Registration ends October 1 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://newteachersnetwork1.eventarc.net/e/43009

New Leaders’ Network Meeting #2
October 9, 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. Register for any or all of the series.
Registration ends October 2 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://newleadersnetwork2.eventarc.net/e/43115

School Leader Seminar: Focus on the Real Stuff - Online PD Course
October 15, 2019 through February 15, 2020
How do school leaders stay focused? What should school leaders focus on to address the variety of needs of their students and their staff? What can be put in place to help students learn at high levels? This online course will enable school leaders to prioritize needs, sustain lasting improvements, and maintain focus on improvements that will positively affect achievement. Leaders will work and communicate via the online course to build a community of practice that helps keep leaders focused!
Registration ends October 8 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://focusontherealstuff.eventarc.net/e/43116

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COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Annual reports
State law requires school's to submit annual reports to the parents of all students and the sponsor by Oct. 31, 2019, and the contract between Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) and sponsored school boards require that draft annual reports be submitted to BCHF by Oct. 1.

Per ORC 3314.03 (A)(11)(g): The school governing authority will submit within four months after the end of each school year a report of its activities and progress in meeting the goals and standards of divisions (A)(3) and (4) of this section and its financial status to the sponsor and the parents of all students enrolled in the school.

Re-enrollment
Please make sure to update enrollment packets and websites with new report card data. It is also important to ensure re-enrollment forms and school year 2019-2020 proof of residency documents are included in student files. If you have any questions, please contact your school sponsor representative.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS — continued

Fall Special Education Update
October 17, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Columbus
This session is a networking opportunity for a community of practitioners from BCHF-sponsored schools to share in discussion of best practices in special education. A portion of the update session will be new information from the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children, or other sources. Time will also be devoted to more in-depth discussion of a particular topic and to sharing of information among participants. A light lunch will be provided.
Registration ends October 10 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://fallspecialeducationupdate.eventarc.net/e/43117

Annual Board Training
November 2, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Columbus
BCHF’s annual training event allows board members to fulfill the 2019-2020 training requirements and network with others who share this vital responsibility in charter schools. Sessions will include an overview of BCHF services, board roles and responsibilities, and questions board members need to ask! A working lunch will be provided.
Registration ends October 26 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://governingboardtraining.eventarc.net/e/43118

New Teachers’ Network Meeting #2
November 12, 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. Register for any or all of the series.
Registration ends November 5 at 5 p.m., Register online at: https://newteachersnetwork2.eventarc.net/e/43119

Fall Early Literacy Network Meeting
November 14, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Columbus
The Early Literacy Network is a community of practitioners sharing best practices in K-5 literacy. The Network will meet periodically to discuss updates and best practices in early literacy. A dedicated portion of the time will also be spent in sharing ideas and in exploring a relevant early literacy topic in more detail. The network is open to anyone with early literacy interests in BCHF-sponsored schools. A light lunch will be provided.
Registration ends November 7 at 5 p.m. Register online at: https://fallearlyliteracynetwork.eventarc.net/e/43120
Mentoring new teachers
By Mindy Farry, School Improvement Representative

As every new year starts, I always remember my first days in the classroom. I was young, starting a new chapter of my life and truly had no idea what to do in those first few weeks. I was handed a “curriculum guide” (which laid out a minimum set of “topics” to cover); a grade book; and, a lesson plan book. “Good luck!” the front office secretary said with a bit of a smirk on her face.

That was forty-one years ago, but I can still recall the sheer terror of most of that first year. As the “new kid,” I was given five “remedial” freshman English classes. Most of my students had failed freshman English the year before, had reading levels of fourth or fifth graders, and general hated school (and me!). Add to that normal consternation for new teachers all of the requirements, trainings, new people, new living arrangements, and paying real bills for the first time … it’s a recipe for disaster.

So, what can we, as school leaders, do to help mitigate the anxiety and stress for new teachers? Here are some helpful ideas to try with your teachers:

**Consistent and specific feedback**
New teachers need to become comfortable with principals walking through their classrooms and giving helpful advice. Often, someone with a more objective eye can see an issue or problem in the classroom and understand what is contributing to it. For all teachers, but especially for new teachers, feedback is more appreciated than one can ever imagine. Teachers want to feel valued, and will strive to make improvements that you might suggest. Use the compliment sandwich to deliver specific feedback to your teachers (compliment a specific action and tell him WHY it was effective; list a suggestion you have; follow up with a general compliment). One example might be:

*Your movement in the classroom really helps manage the behaviors of your students. Be sure to ask questions at all levels, instead of primarily yes/no questions. You have really made great improvements since my last visit.*

Develop a system for walkthrough evaluations for all your staff and how you are going to deliver quick feedback.

**Scaffold information that new teachers need -- when they need it**
Teacher orientation processes in the summer before school starts are rushed and fraught with so much information that the typical person just starting a job cannot process all of the important details. Consider having monthly “Breakfasts with the Principal” or after school “Snacks and Soda.” Allow time on the agenda for teachers to share victories and failures and to ask questions. In addition, you can deliver important information that they need for the upcoming month. Topics might include teacher evaluations, testing schedule, parent-teacher conferences, new semester schedule, etc.

**Step in immediately if a teacher is struggling**
Do not wait until the first teacher evaluations are completed to help a teacher who is drowning in the first few months. With the teacher, develop an improvement plan scaffolded for the improvement measures you would like to see. Provide specific resources and assistance to help lead the teacher to improvement (conferences, online learning, co-teaching with someone, observation of effective teachers, etc.). Consider setting up a weekly meeting with the teacher to review lesson plans, classroom activities, objectives and connection to the standards.

**Assign an effective mentor**
Selecting the most effective mentor for each teacher is the foundation of the mentor/mentee relationship. Mentors should be effective classroom

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Mentoring — continued

teachers, of course, but it is essential that they have the energy, time and communication skills to be able to make a difference in the new teacher’s life. It is ideal if the mentors themselves receive training from you to outline expectations, effective coaching strategies and to help monitor issues that come up with the new teacher.

Take a long look at workload and how you can help
We all know that teachers’ workloads carry a heavy burden. There’s not a great deal you can do about the minimum requirements for which teachers are responsible. However, you can assist teachers in collaboration efforts so that no one feels alone in the planning, assessment and data analysis. School leaders have a tremendous workload as well, but you have most likely discovered time management and balance techniques, which you can share with your teachers. As the school leader, you could step in and take over a class period or time slot for a teacher. The teacher gets some time to herself and you get to increase your visibility and relationships with your students.

Show your appreciation
Nothing can replace positive, genuine, specific gestures of appreciation. Thank them for handling a difficult student. Tell them how proud you are of the number of parents who came to parent-teacher conferences. Recognize the added efforts they are putting in every day. Post-it notes, emails, pats on the back — nothing that costs money — just a little time and effort.

Good organizations only become great when they take care of the human capital. School leaders must help build a community of teachers and consistently make sure that the culture is welcoming and helpful to new team members.

Have your new teachers join BCHF in its brand new New Teacher Network, which includes a series of four network meetings. Teachers can join for any or all sessions. Topics to be covered include classroom management, lesson delivery and planning, differentiation, rigor, literacy, special education, dealing with data, and more.

October 8 -- Register online at: https://NewTeachersnetwork1.eventarc.net/e/43009

November 12 -- Register online at: https://newteachersnetwork2.eventarc.net/e/43119

February 11 -- Register online at: https://newteachersnetwork3.eventarc.net/e/43131

May 12 -- Register online at: http://newteachersnetwork4.eventarc.net/e/43143

BUCKEYE COMMUNITY HOPE FOUNDATION
3021 East Dublin-Granville Rd; Columbus OH 43231
(614) 942-2030 www.buckeyehope.org