



SPONSOR UPDATE

JUNE 2025



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[Jennifer Schorr, VP of Education](#)

[Jason Moore, Senior Director of Education](#)

Mission

The mission of the Education Division of Buckeye Community Hope Foundation is to establish strong public community schools by adhering to quality authorizing practices, ensuring responsible oversight, and setting high standards for school performance.

Vision

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





Annual School Leadership Summit



Our School Leadership Summit is right around the corner, and we can't wait to see you! The Summit will be held on June 9 and 10 at Quest Conference Center, Columbus, Ohio (Polaris area).

We are excited to announce that Major General David B. Johnson will provide the keynote address on "Leadership Challenges" for BCHF's Annual Leadership Summit on June 9 and 10, 2025 in Columbus. Maj. Gen. David B. Johnson is the Assistant Adjutant General for Air, Ohio National Guard, at Joint Force Headquarters, Columbus, Ohio. In this role, he is responsible to the Commander of the Ohio Air National Guard for directing Air National Guard operations and establishing policy to ensure mission readiness of more than 4,700 personnel assigned to four air wings and four geographically separated support units. His leadership and oversight ensure the mission readiness of the Ohio Air National

Guard to support community, state, and federal missions. Maj. Gen. Johnson is also serving as the Chair of the Strategic Planning System Steering Committee where he oversees the activities, develops, and guides the implementation of Strategic Partnerships. We are so pleased to have him share insights with our BCHF portfolio of leaders.

Major Johnson's address aligns perfectly with this year's Summit theme: **ASPIRE HIGHER: RAISING THE BAR FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND SELF**. The theme will explore how leaders may launch students, staff, and self into a universe of possibilities. It is our hope that, because of the Summit experience, leaders will embody high expectations, foster a joy of learning, and reclaim the belief that all students can reach the stars. Schools will also get a "jumpstart" on important actions for starting the 2025-26 school year. Please join us - it is our hope that all school leaders and leader team representatives will attend this culminating professional development event of the school year!

"COUNTED OUT SCREENING" – June 8, 2025 – 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. – in person in Columbus.

School leaders received a special invitation to view "Counted Out," a landmark film about mathematics achievement of our children and youth. The screening of this film will be in the Polaris area of Columbus, reserved for BCHF and its portfolio of schools. If you wish to attend and have not yet reserved a ticket, please contact Hana Chandoul at hchandoul@buckeyehope.org. Seats are limited.

It's Never Too Late to Graduate

At 70 years old, James Way achieved a long-awaited milestone: he graduated from the Academy for Urban Scholars (AUS) in May through the 22+ program, which supports adult learners over the age of 22 in earning their high school diplomas.

James came to AUS to strengthen his basic skills in reading, writing, math, and digital literacy. Through the program, he was taught computer skills, and was able to take classes online.

"It's awesome because these older adults come in here who need digital skills, and they're so open to learning," said Erika Simmons, Director of Adult Workforce Education.

Though he was on track to graduate last year, an illness delayed his plans. Once recovered, he returned to finish what he started.

Having entered the workforce early in life and retiring just a few years ago, James had always carried the desire to complete his education. Now, with his diploma in hand, he joins a proud group of graduates who prove it's never too late to achieve your goals.

The 22+ program at AUS continues to change lives, helping adults like James reach lifelong goals. This year, 69 adults graduated from the Columbus campus, including 18 individuals aged 50 and older. Remarkably, James is not even the oldest to complete the program - AUS has seen graduates up to age 76.

In recognition of their achievements, this year's graduates received proclamations from the county commissioners' office, honoring their perseverance and dedication.

"We're enrolling - it's never too late to graduate." said Simmons.

See the video of Mr. James walking across stage: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/15zv1vfFyg/>





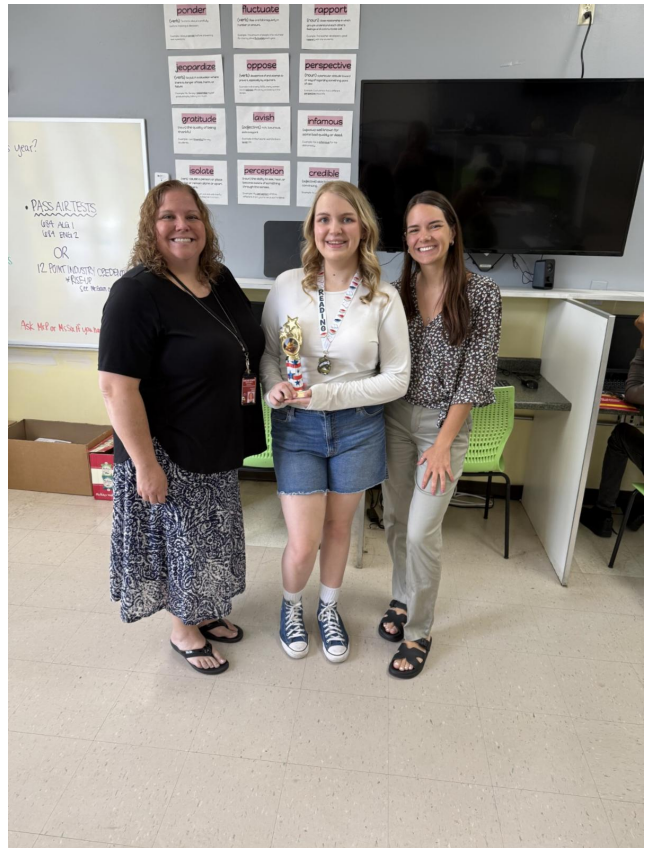
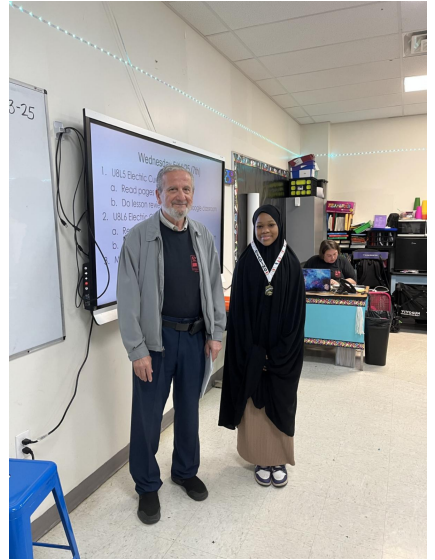
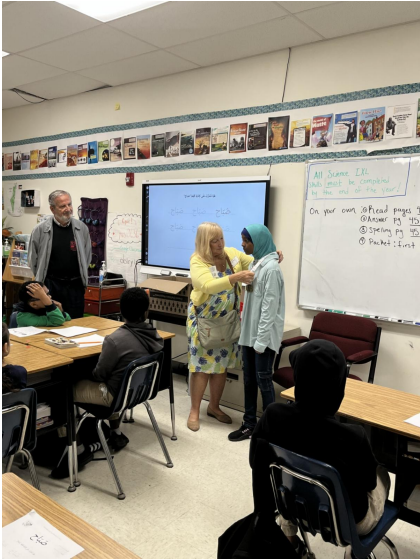
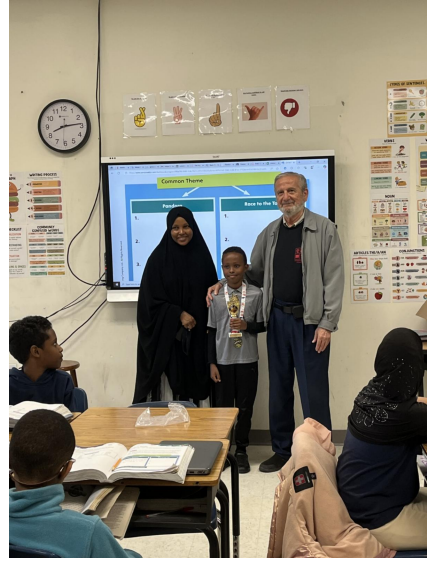
Writing Challenge Winners Awarded

Each year, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation sponsors a writing challenge for grades 3-12 to emphasize the importance of writing in academic achievement. No matter the grade level and no matter the future plans for students, writing and thinking will be an integral part of their lives. Never has that been more apparent than with the world of social media, technology, and artificial intelligence. This year's writing challenge, "Technology and You", asked students to focus on the impact of technology in their lives.

Congratulations to our 2025 Writing Challenge Winners! We had a wonderful time visiting the winning students and handing out well-deserved awards for their fantastic entries. Click below to see the full list of winners, as well as read the overall winning entries.

[Read the Winning Entries](#)





Principal Power: Rewriting the Math Narrative

By Brit Seward, School Improvement Math Specialist

What do we truly believe about how students learn mathematics—and what do our classrooms reveal about those beliefs? As school leaders, are we courageous enough to confront outdated practices that quietly undermine student thinking?

Too often, mathematics remains the most compliant subject in school. Students quietly copy steps from the board and are expected to follow along without understanding why the math works. This is not rigorous instruction. This is not how students learn. It's time to reimagine mathematics instruction—and that starts with a shift in mindset.

The Mindset Trap of Teacher-Centered Instruction

The commonly used “I Do, We Do, You Do” model, when misapplied, becomes a trap. Instead of gradually releasing responsibility, it keeps the teacher at the center—viewed as the sole owner of mathematical knowledge. Students mimic procedures without meaning, silencing their thinking and creativity. It tells students that success comes entirely from parroting the teacher's method—not understanding. That's a mindset issue.

Low Expectations in Disguise

We often talk about meeting students where they are, but sometimes, we remove the challenge entirely. Over-scaffolding and over-reliance on intervention deprive students of the opportunity to struggle productively and develop independence, suggesting “you can't do this on your own.” Similarly, labeling students as “low,” “medium,” or “high” reinforces fixed mindsets—ours and theirs.

Let's be clear: students are not the problem—our instruction is. When we operate from a deficit mindset, we limit what's possible. But when we believe all students can engage deeply with mathematics, we open the door to growth and achievement.

Boredom Is a Warning Sign

When students disengage, it's rarely about ability. More often, it's due to uninspiring instruction. If students are bored, we need to ask: Is the math worth doing?

Rote lectures rob students of discovery. Math becomes steps—rather than sense-making. Quality instruction should include tasks with multiple entry points, real-world relevance, and space for student discourse and reasoning.

The [TRU Math Framework](#) reminds us that powerful classrooms provide rich content, support productive struggle and sense-making, ensure equitable access, foster positive math identities through discourse, and create a learning environment that is responsive to student thinking. These principles align with the [NCTM's Eight Effective Teaching Practices](#), which are grounded in research and emphasize student-centered instruction that promotes deep mathematical understanding. In classrooms rooted in these frameworks, students are doers—not followers of math.

A Call to Principals

If you walked into a math classroom today, would you describe it as collaborative, conceptually rich, and centered on student thinking? If not, it's time to ask why. As instructional leaders, your beliefs drive your decisions. You influence what's prioritized, what gets celebrated, and how instruction is supported.

As summer approaches, take this opportunity to reflect on your mindset about mathematics and establish a clear intention for your school. How will you lead staff conversations around beliefs and expectations? What learning opportunities will you create—for yourself and your team—to explore what high-quality, student-centered math instruction indeed looks like?

Don't wait until August to decide who you want to be as a school. Set the tone now: next year, we will center math instruction around student thinking, agency, and belief in every learner's brilliance.

Final Thought: Mindsets Before Methods

Improving math instruction isn't just about new resources—it's about rethinking our assumptions. If we truly believe in students, our classrooms must reflect that belief.

So, start now. Reflect. Plan. Prepare—not just for better instruction but for a mindset shift that impacts

every student. Let's stop focusing on what they can't do—and create space for them to show us what they can.

Resources:

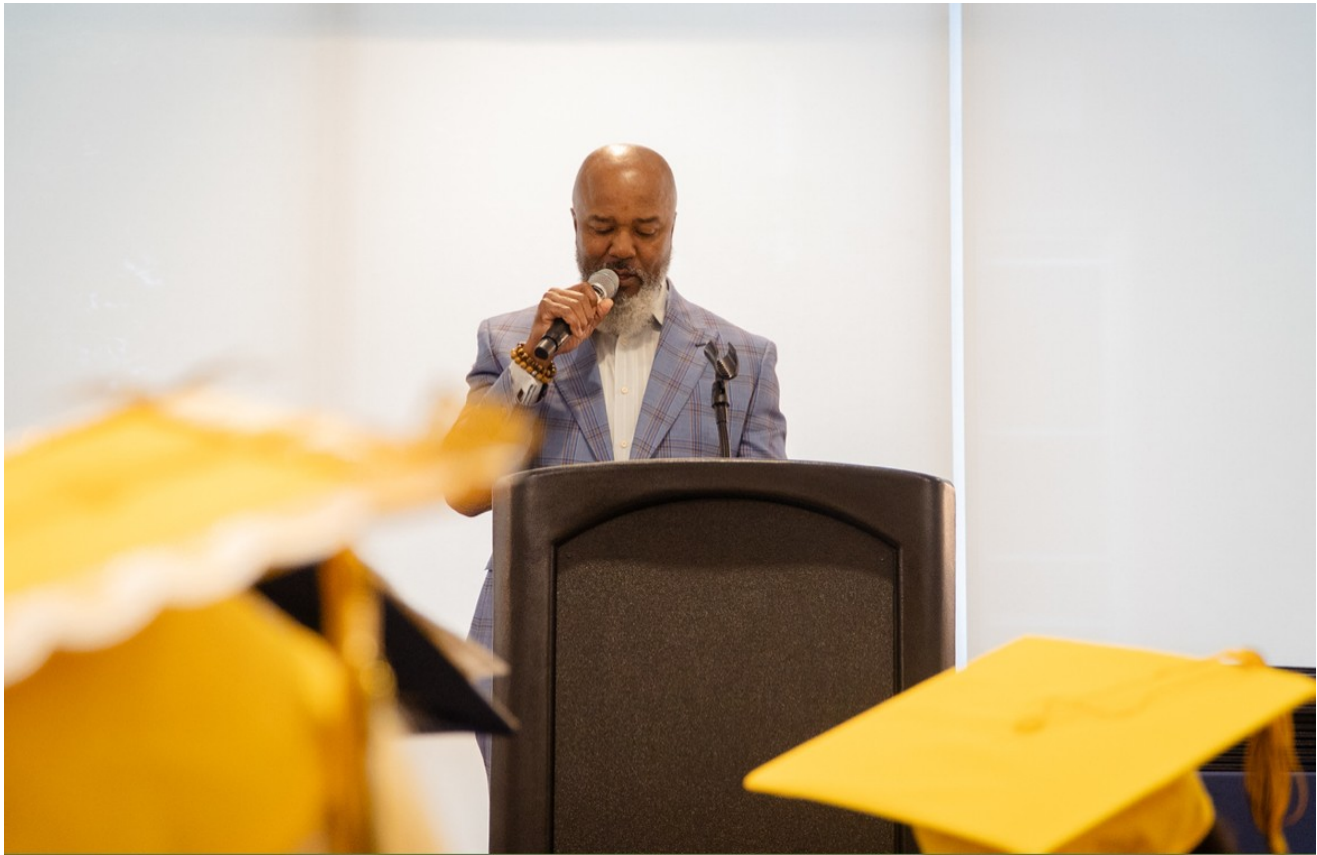
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BCHF's Mark Baker Inspires Graduates at Riverscape Career Tech High School



Mark Baker, a Buckeye Community Hope Foundation Compliance Representative, recently served as a guest speaker at Riverscape Career Tech High School's graduation ceremony. In a heartfelt commencement address, Baker delivered a message rooted in resilience, grit, and transformation - encouraging students to find strength and purpose even in the most challenging circumstances.

Reflecting on his own life, Baker shared a deeply personal story from his childhood.

"I shared a story about when I was a kid growing up in Arlington Courts (projects). On a hot, humid summer day, I watched a man get shot in my neighbor's yard and fall face down in the mud (in my yard). I silently vowed that I would never live in the mud," Baker told the graduates. "And I realized that if I wanted to live a good life and secure my future, I had to learn to 'get it out the mud.'"

Instead of allowing that traumatic experience to define him negatively, Baker used it as a source of motivation. He urged students not to run from their own "mud moments", those difficult, painful, or uncertain experiences, but to embrace them as opportunities for growth.

"I could have spent the night listing my accomplishments," he said. "But this night was about the mud. Don't be ashamed of where you come from. Use it. Own it. Grow from it."

Baker's speech centered on the lessons that adversity teaches:

- Mud teaches us how to grind.
- Mud teaches us how to believe in ourselves when nobody else does.
- Mud makes us resilient.

He concluded with a challenge to the graduates:

"When life is life-ing... get it out the mud.

When haters are hating... get it out the mud.

When it seems impossible... get it out the mud.

When no one believes in you... get it out the mud."

Baker also reflected on a deeper symbolism behind the word "mud." While the dictionary definition fell short, he found significance in what mud represents: the emotional and environmental layers that shape a person's identity and beliefs. In this way, "mud" becomes more than just a metaphor, it becomes a foundation for greatness.

"I pray this inspires and encourages you," Baker concluded. "Go be great - because great things come from the mud."

Board Member Spotlight



Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) recognizes the important work that governing board members do in supporting their school community. In recognition and support of this hard work, BCHF highlights one board member each month in our sponsor newsletter.

This month we are featuring David Montesano, who serves on the Main Preparatory Academy board. The mission of the school is: *Main Preparatory Academy is dedicated to improving the lives of its scholars by providing authentic learning experiences in a collaborative, nurturing environment that will build a foundation for success in school, at future work and in life.*

For David, stepping into a board role at Main Preparatory Academy came from a strong belief in the power of education and civic responsibility.

"I've been a board member for the past 10 years," Montesano said. "I became a board member because I believe in the power of education that will shape the future of our society. Also, I have a desire for accountability and transparency to make sure tax dollars are being used effectively and that our school is accountable to tax paying citizens."

Outside of his board responsibilities, Montesano enjoys exploring the world. Travel has played a significant role in shaping his perspective.

"I enjoy traveling. I've visited approximately 50 countries," he shared. "Travel has introduced me to many different people, cultures, and traditions. Travel broadens a person's horizon by offering a deeper understanding of other people and offers a more global perspective."

Lessons Learned in Board Membership

Over the years, Montesano has gained a deep understanding of the structure and legal framework that guide board operations.

"I've learned that there are specific rules and legal constraints governing how boards operate, including meeting notices, quorum requirements, and agenda settings," he explained. "This is all conducted in a public setting allowing the community to observe."

Efficiency is essential to Montesano; he attributes successful meetings to thoughtful preparation.

"As a board member, I review the agenda in advance before the board meeting," he said. "This allows our meetings to be very efficient and effective."

Recruiting and Retaining Board Members

Montesano is proud to serve alongside a committed team, noting that retention has never been an issue for Main Prep's board.

"Luckily, we have a very dedicated school board team," he said. "We have not had issues retaining our board members. I believe our success comes from having efficient and effective meetings."

Proudest Moments as a Board Member

When reflecting on his proudest accomplishments, Montesano points to the school's growing impact on students, staff, and the broader community.

"The proudest moments revolve around the positive impact on students, staff, and the community," he said. "Recently, Main Preparatory Academy was given the award of Best of Akron 2023."

A Connection to the Mission of Promise Academy

Main Preparatory Academy's mission centers on preparing scholars for success in school, work, and life through authentic, collaborative learning. Montesano sees this mission in action every day.

"The board, sponsor, management company, legal and financial counsel are all collaborating to give our scholars the best possible foundation through education to be successful in school, at future work and in life," he said.

Advice for New Board Members

For those considering joining a school board or just starting out, Montesano emphasizes the importance of understanding the boundaries of the role.

"I would advise to understand your role—it's governance and not management," he said. "Your job is to set policy, approve budgets and evaluate results. Trust the professionals. The school leader and team are hired to run the school. Your role is to hold them accountable for results, not to do their job for them or micromanage."

All of us in the Education Division of BCHF appreciate the commitment to students David Montesano has shown. We hope, in sharing these stories, others will consider serving as community school governing board members.

Upcoming Deadlines from DEW

Emergency Medical Waiver Application Submission Window Update

Ohio's annual state tests are required by federal and state law. While Ohio expects all students to participate in these tests, rare circumstances, such as medical emergencies, may prevent students from taking one or more assessments during the testing window. In cases of medical emergencies, districts and community schools must apply for an [Emergency Medical Waiver](#). The application window is now open until June 6, 2025, to submit their applications.

2025 Teacher Leadership Summit

Register now for the [2025 Teacher Leadership Summit](#) hosted by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. The Teacher Leadership Summit is a great way to support teacher leaders and building leadership teams through professional learning, collaboration, and networking. The Summit is free and takes place on June 11, 2025, in Columbus. This year's theme is "Spark Innovation: Ignite Change."

Ohio Evaluation System 2024-2025 Window Closing Soon

OhioES will close soon for the 2024-2025 school year. [All evaluation data for OTES, OPES, and OSCES](#) must be completed & entered by June 15. OhioES will reopen August 1 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Important Dates and Resources for End of School Year Data Validation

Several [EMIS collections](#), including student records and most Ohio's State Tests records, will close on July 16, 2025. As the school year wraps up and staff availability decreases, the Department urges school staff to submit records promptly. Timely submission is essential for districts and schools to validate their data, as these records directly influence Ohio School Report Cards.

The following EMIS reports are valuable resources found in the data collector to validate data reported for report cards in EMIS:

- **Where Kids Count (WKCD-001):** Verifies which students will be included in accountability calculations for the Local Report Card based on Majority of Attendance (MOA) IRN reporting.
- **Derive Reading Diagnostic Result Report (LTRC-001):** Tracks student-level information regarding reading diagnostic assessments for grades K-3, ensuring students are properly assessed and monitoring their reading diagnostic status. These records directly impact the Improving K-3 Literacy measure on the upcoming Report Card as well as next school year's measure.
- More information regarding accessing EMIS support can be found on the [EMIS Communications and Information webpage](#).

For questions regarding Report Card Data, please contact accountability@education.ohio.gov or schedule a [Report Card Work Session](#) with the Office of Accountability.

June Compliance Update

Compliance Review

This is a reminder that all schools must be fully current and compliant with Epicenter tasks no later than June 30th, including the completion of required board training. If you have any questions regarding outstanding items, please contact your sponsor representative for further details.

Existing Board Member Background Checks

Please make sure that your BCI background checks are up to date. BCI checks should be updated every 5 years for current charter school board members.

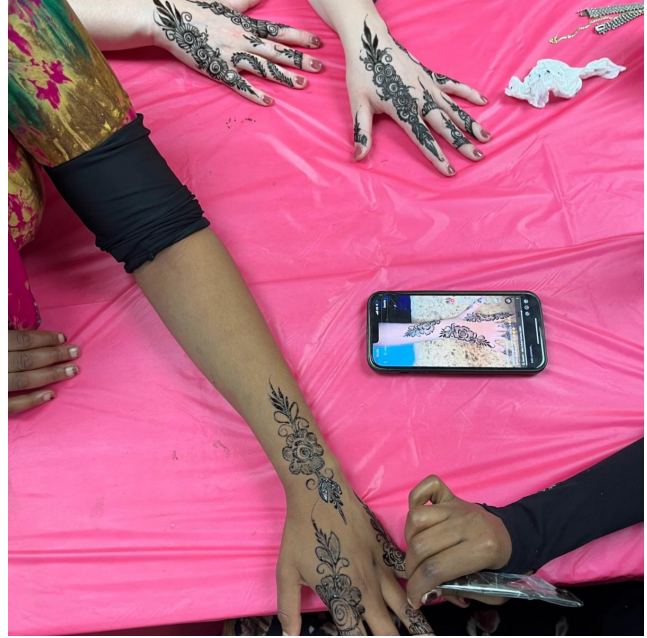
Questions? Please contact your School Representative.

School Highlights

Congratulations to the first graduating class of **Engage High School**! Your success is a tribute to strength, growth, and transformation.



International Day at **Focus North High School** was full of delicious food and community. ESL students and staff shared custom food dishes from around the world. Henna tattoos, games, and music topped off the event for a memorable day!



The annual Kinder-Senior Walk at **Horizon Science Academy of Lorain** is a heartwarming tradition! Their tiniest graduates and their Class of 2025 seniors proudly walked the halls and grounds of HSAL in their caps and gowns while the entire school community cheered them on! The walk is a great symbolization of both the beginning and the end of an educational journey - from the first steps of kindergarten to the final strides of senior year.



International Academy of Columbus hosted a family night for students to have some fun to celebrate the end of the year!



The Original L. Hollingworth School hosted their second annual Art Show! It was a successful and heartwarming event - the students were thrilled to share their creativity and hard work with their community! Take a look at some of the fun displays.



Check out the future farms at [The Richland School of Academic Arts](#)! If you have the right soil, the right temperature, and the right care, you can grow colossal cabbages!





Upcoming Events

BCHF's Professional Learning Opportunities catalog will refresh over the summer. We invite you to check and browse often to see offerings for summer and early fall. Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF's Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, [available here](#).

PBL FOR THE NEW YEAR--ASYNCHRONOUS! – May – July 2025 – Materials will be sent to you for this BCHF Hope Hub course!

Have you heard about Project Based Learning? What do you know about it? This asynchronous course will take place as school ends and give you time to learn about and actually PLAN your first PBL project. It is an exciting adventure that will allow you to kick start next year's instruction in the best way. All materials will be emailed to you on May 27th, or up on registration, with a schedule and further explanation of the course.

HIRING AND SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF – July 23, 2025 – 3:30 – 5:00 P.M. Online via Zoom

What personnel are qualified to deliver specially designed instruction? What related service personnel must a school have? As school leaders face the teacher shortage, they must plan for the needs of students with disabilities. Learn about licensure requirements, ways to develop your personnel, and successful staffing strategies.

BCHF SCHOOL LEADER ORIENTATION – July 29, 2025 – 10:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. – In person at BCHF's Training Room in Columbus

Are you and your school new to the BCHF portfolio of schools? Have you just been promoted to a school leadership position? Are you brand new to a school leadership role? Or are you a leader within our portfolio of schools who wishes to update their information? If so, this meeting applies to you and to members of your management/leadership team! Our annual orientation covers the basics of Buckeye Community Foundation sponsorship, our role in support of your schools, and our key operations. We also cover school funding basics for leaders, compliance monitoring, school improvement supports, and school discipline. Former participants tell us that this was the most relevant training of the year for leaders. Join us "in person" at our Columbus training room for an information-packed day! A light lunch will be provided.

Have a story or event at your school you would like to share? Send it to Hana Chandoul, Strategic Communications Specialist: hchandoul@buckeyehope.org.

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