



SPONSOR UPDATE AUGUST 2025

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[Jennifer Schorr, VP of Education](#)

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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.



Stepping Into the Future: How One Educator is Using Virtual Reality to Transform Language Learning



At Horizon Science Academy, innovation in education isn't just a buzzword, it's a mission - and Assistant Principal of Academics, Aaron Wise, is leading the charge by bringing Virtual Reality (VR) into the classroom to transform English Language Learning (ELL).

Wise's journey with VR began two years ago, during an unexpected moment of inspiration.

"I was preparing my speech for the Concept School Network's Teacher of the Year ceremony," he recalls. "I caught a glimpse of Apple's new VR technology and was immediately impressed. I thought to myself, 'this is something I need to bring into my classroom'. Since then, I've worked to bring VR into my classroom, allowing students to explore new places, practice conversations, and engage in lessons that truly bring language learning to life."

To turn that vision into reality, Wise applied for the Ohio TESOL Mini Grant, highlighting how VR could address common challenges faced by ELL students, like limited background knowledge, language anxiety, and difficulty connecting academic content to real-world experiences. His proposal emphasized VR's ability to create interactive, immersive simulations that build both vocabulary and confidence. The grant, along with support from Umety VR, made it possible to integrate VR into his classroom.

So how does it work? Wise uses the headset to place students in realistic scenarios, from planning a weekend with a friend to visiting museums and historical landmarks. These experiences not only make learning fun, but also give students a shared context to build vocabulary and practice conversational English in meaningful ways.

"After each VR experience, we spend time reflecting together," Wise explained. "Students share what they did, how they felt, and what new words or ideas they picked up, all in English. It's a hands-on approach full of language practice but, most importantly, it keeps the students at the center of their learning."

One standout moment involved a shy newcomer student who had rarely spoken in class.

"After a VR trip to Paris, he excitedly described what he saw and volunteered to share for the first time. It wasn't just new vocabulary. It was having something personal and exciting to talk about. That showed me how powerful it is when students connect with the content."

Wise believes that VR offers advantages that traditional methods simply can't match.

"VR allows students to experience language, not just study it," he shared. "It lowers the affective filter—students aren't worried about making mistakes when they're immersed in a virtual world. It also levels the playing field for students who might not have had certain life experiences yet. For example, a student who has never been to an airport can practice airport conversations in VR before doing it in

real life. That's something a worksheet or textbook just can't replicate."

Students have responded with enthusiasm, often describing the experience as "like being inside a video game."

"What excites them most is that it feels real," Wise said. "They're not just passively watching; they're participating. They also love that they get to "travel" and explore places they've never been. For many of our students, especially those new to the country, VR gives them shared experiences they can discuss with peers, which helps build both language and friendships."

Looking to the future, Wise sees VR becoming a staple in classrooms, especially for English learners. He imagines a world where students can practice job interviews, doctor visits, or classroom interactions with EL-specific content designed by educators themselves.

"At Horizon Science Academy, a Cognia-accredited STEM school, using innovative tools is not just encouraged, it's part of our mission," shared Wise. "When educators thoughtfully integrate technology like VR, we're not just teaching language, we're creating new ways for students to experience it, practice it, and apply it in real-life situations beyond the classroom. Thanks to the support of organizations like Buckeye Community Hope Foundation and Ohio TESOL, our English learners are stepping into the future with both language skills and the confidence to use them."

Wise's work is a testament to what's possible when technology meets passion in the classroom—and when educators see not just what students are learning, but how they're experiencing the world.



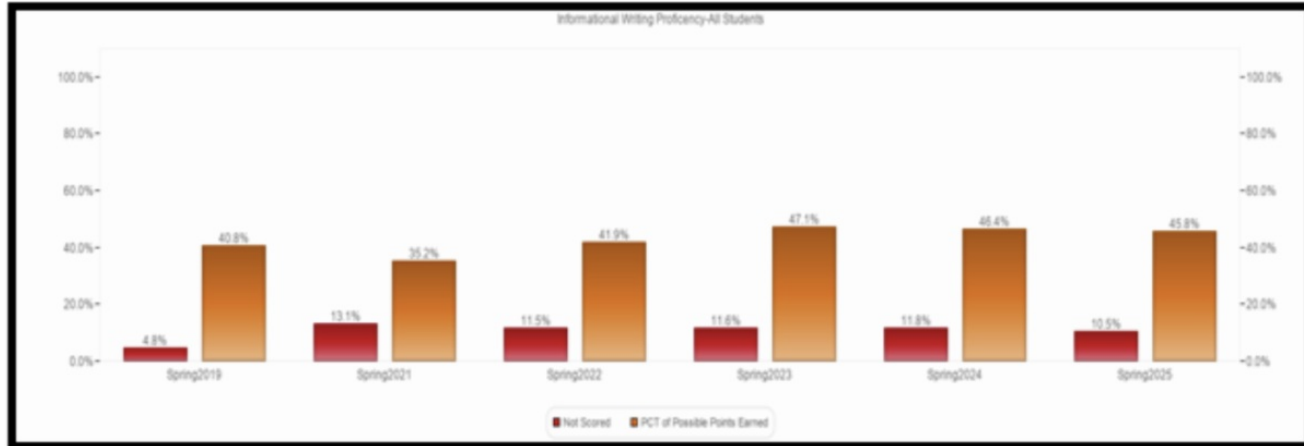
What is AggathA?

By Stan Nicol, Data Analysis and School Accountability Representative, BCHF

Years ago, the Education Management Information System (EMIS) had an error report called the "Agg-5". This was a reporting error report schools would use to clean up their data before submitting it to the State Department. When I worked with the data, I decided that correcting the data even earlier might save time later in the school year. I built a system to analyze as much school data as possible in real time. In honor of the now- defunct Agg-5 report I called my data warehouse system "AggathA".

AggathA went through many variations over the years. It now functions as Buckeye Community Hope Foundation's (BCHF) data warehouse system for Ohio State & End of Course assessment data. While I use as many as six database systems, AggathA does most of the work with data directly relevant to schools in the BCHF portfolio. Each spring AggathA creates reports that allow schools to use data to improve instruction. I recently connected AggathA to our Item Analysis system. This allows grade level staff to see overall trend data along with item type frequencies and standard performance going back up to four test administration.

What is next? Like any data system, AggathA is always under development. New for the 2025-26 school year we have moved AggathA online. This move will allow the School Improvement staff to dig into assessment data in much greater detail.



Can schools have access to this system? Yes! school leaders can “borrow” a temporary login to view their data. We can add up to ten users to the system on a temporary basis. If a school would like to have a data dig session, they simply need to reach out to me (snicol@buckeyehope.org), and I will set up their access. It will be on a first come, first served basis. I am excited to share this system with both our team at the Buckeye Hope Foundation and our schools.

The link below will provide a deeper look at AggathA’s Data Dashboard. Please take a moment to watch this video highlighting this exciting new tool available to you!

AggathA Data Dashboard

Finding Purpose in Possibility: Brit Seward’s “Why” in Education



During our Education Division staff retreat this June, we engaged in strategic planning with The National Charter Schools Institute. A key part of the experience was reconnecting with our “why” in education, a reflection on the personal purpose that drives our work. We’re excited to begin sharing those stories in upcoming Sponsor Updates.

We’re kicking off this series with Brit Seward, School Improvement Specialist, Mathematics. For Brit, education has always been personal. A former elementary and middle school teacher with a diverse background in health, physical education, mathematics, and science, Brit has held roles across Mississippi, Oregon, and Ohio that have shaped her deep understanding of instructional practice and school-based leadership. Now, in her current role at Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF), that foundation continues to guide her efforts to improve educational equity and student outcomes.

What originally drew you to a career in education?

My mother was my first and most influential teacher. As an in-home daycare provider, she ran her program, “Aunties House”, like a full-fledged school—complete with lessons in reading and math, field trips to museums and libraries, family involvement, and even cap-and-gown graduations. Every child left their care reading, writing, and performing math at a first-grade level. She also homeschooled me for a year when the public school was not providing me with what I needed, and ensured I participated in academic enrichment programs, such as IMHOTEP, an African-centered math initiative, as well as extracurricular activities like club volleyball and softball. She instilled in me a love of learning, a spirit of exploration, and a belief that anything was possible.

What motivates you to come to work every day?

I believe every child deserves access to a high-quality education—one that places their needs at the center. I’m primarily driven to serve underserved, marginalized, and minoritized students because I

intimately understand the experiences of students from those communities.” My work focuses on helping them develop self-efficacy, agency, and a sense of belonging (without otherizing), encouraging them to chart bold paths forward, even in spaces where they may not always feel like they belong.

What do you enjoy most about your role at BCHF?

I appreciate the encouragement to pursue work that aligns with my passions, particularly efforts aimed at improving student outcomes and addressing equity. The ability to innovate and build partnerships rooted in student success is deeply fulfilling.

How do you define your “why”? Is there a particular moment that reinforced it?

My “why” is rooted in challenging negative narratives—about myself, and about what others like me are capable of. Studying abroad and traveling opened my eyes to the power of exposure, as well as to the assumptions people often make. When others are surprised by my story, it reminds me just how necessary it is to change mindsets and dismantle stereotypes about who belongs and who succeeds.

How do you reconnect with your “why” during tough times?

I reconnect by reflecting on the journey—both mine and those I’ve worked with. I think about the growth I’ve seen in students, families, teachers, and leaders. I remind myself, “If not me, then who?” Grounding myself in the work and its purpose helps me move forward. I also turn to my faith during challenging moments. In those moments, prayer, scripture, and quiet time with God remind me that I’m not in this work alone. I believe He placed me here for a reason—and I trust Him to sustain me when the work gets hard. One scripture that encourages me deeply is “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” — Proverbs 3:5-6

What have you learned about yourself through your work at BCHF?

I’ve learned that leadership requires hard conversations—and that I’m capable of having them with love, clarity, and purpose. I’ve grown in my ability to challenge others and myself. The “yes, and…” mindset I brought to BCHF has only deepened. I’ve come to embrace the idea that good intentions must be matched by meaningful impact, and that growth requires us to hold space for both.

How do you hope to continue growing in your role?

I hope to keep growing through curiosity, feedback, and reflection. Whether it’s academic advancement, deepening professional relationships, or learning from the wisdom and guidance of mentors, I remain committed to continuous learning and holding myself accountable to the outcomes I hope to influence.

What is a quote or mantra you live by?

“God causes all things to come together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.” — Romans 8:28. This scripture reminds me that even difficult or disappointing seasons can contribute to a greater purpose.

Who inspires you in your work?

My son inspires me every day. I want for him what my family worked hard to give me—access, opportunity, and joy. His presence reminds me that intention matters and that generational resilience is a powerful force. I strive to provide all children with what I want for them: the freedom to thrive, the support to reach their full potential, and the strength to do so with purpose, confidence, and enduring hope.

With purpose, conviction, and a deep well of hope, Brit Seward continues to build a better future - not just for her own child, but for every child.

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 Sandra Moody, who serves on the Academy for Urban Scholars board. *The mission statement at AUS is: to empower students to become college-ready, work-ready, and socially responsible leaders. We foster critical thinking, resilience, and lifelong learning to*



prepare them for success in a diverse global community.

Sandra Moody joined the board of the Academy for Urban Scholars (AUS) three years ago, bringing with her a passion for education and a commitment to long-term impact. Her decision to serve stems from a belief in the power of governance to shape meaningful change.

Outside of board service, Moody finds joy in family, the arts, and wellness.

“I enjoy spending time with our fifteen grandchildren, reading great books, live music, and yoga,” she said.

Lessons in Board Membership

In her time on the board, Moody has developed a strong understanding of the educational landscape and stays proactive in monitoring developments

that may impact AUS.

“I’ve learned a lot about the educational industry and I work to stay abreast of industry changes that impact our school, from programming to student safety,” she said.

Her curiosity and dedication to learning have helped her become a more effective and informed board member.

Increasing Efficiency

Preparedness is key to Moody’s approach. She believes that coming to meetings ready to engage ensures not only efficiency but thoughtful decision-making.

“Coming prepared to the meetings, by having read the minutes and reports prior to the board meeting, is critical to the success of board meetings running smoothly,” she said. “Offering my expertise and thoughts on matters to enhance growth and providing strategies to stabilize the future success of the organization is why I believe board members are at the table.”

Recruiting and Retaining Board Members

Moody understands that identifying strong board members can be a challenge, but she actively looks for individuals who bring both skill and heart to the mission.

“I believe finding solid leaders to serve is always challenging for many organizations,” she shared. “As I engage with other professionals, and identify candidates who could bring value and commitment to AUS, I share those recommendations with our Board Chair and leadership for consideration.”

She also believes that board engagement shouldn’t be limited to meetings. “Keeping board members informed of the activities of the organization outside of board meetings and not just at challenging times helps to keep board members engaged and helps them to feel a part of the organization.”

Proudest Moments

For Moody, graduation ceremonies are powerful reminders of why the work matters.

“Our graduations are proud moments for me as it is a demonstration and validation of the work of the organization,” she said.

Another milestone that stands out was representing AUS on a national level. “The opportunity for me to attend the National Charter School Alliance Conference in 2024 and to represent AUS was a tremendous highlight. I learned the powerful impact of the work we all do on behalf of our country’s future.”

Connecting with the Mission

The mission of AUS is to empower students to become college-ready, work-ready, and socially responsible leaders. For Moody, one part resonates especially deeply.

“I resonate most with the goal of establishing critical thinking, resilience, and lifelong learning in our scholars,” she said. “These are foundational traits for life success and if we can assist them in developing these characteristics, it changes the trajectory of their lives and impacts generations.”

Advice for New Board Members

Moody encourages new and prospective board members to think long-term and continuously invest in their own learning.

“Be committed to the long-term success of the organization and become knowledgeable about the future of the industry so that you also grow and thus enhance your value to the organization,” she advised.

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

August Compliance Update

Annual Policy Review and Approval by the Board of Directors:

- Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Public Records Policy and Retention Schedule
- Homeless Student Policy
- Academic Prevention and Intervention Policy
- Parent Involvement Policy
- Career Advising Policy

The Board of Directors is also required to review all Health and Safety policies and procedures of the Board Policy Manual to ensure the safety of students, employees, and other persons and to ensure that its policies and procedures comply with all applicable health and safety laws and regulations:

- Wellness Policy
- Food and Beverage
- Policy Protective Eyewear Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Automated External Defibrillator Policy
- Bloodborne Pathogen Control Policy
- Chicken Pox Epidemic Policy
- Dangerous and Recalled Products Plan
- Hand-Washing Policy
- Integrated Pest Management Policy
- Bed Bug Process Policy
- Pesticide Notice Policy
- Food Allergy Policy
- Medication Policy
- Radon Protocol Policy
- Vehicle Idling Policy
- Search Policy
- Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting Policy
- Corporal Punishment Policy

Classroom Grant Program

Beginning in 2021, the Ohio STEM Learning Network and Battelle launched a new grant opportunity for K-12 STEM classrooms in Ohio.

The goal of the Ohio STEM Learning Network STEM Classroom Grant is to foster the creation of new, sustainable STEM education programming in classrooms by investing directly in K-12 teachers and administrators. Thanks to philanthropic funding from Battelle, more than 855 projects have been awarded up to \$5,000 through the program.

Applications for the grant are open now and close at 11:59pm on September 2nd, 2025. More information can be found here: <https://osln.org/how-we-help/classroom-opportunities/classroom-grant->

School Highlights

Super heroes in training was the summer camp theme at **Global Ambassadors Language Academy!** The 5-week long camp was held at GALA in collaboration with their program partner, Horizon Education Centers.



Horizon Science Academy Lorain students participated in the annual International Festival Parade, celebrating their community diversity!



Elementary students at **Imagine Schools of Akron** dove into hands-on learning all summer long. From STEM experiments to creative projects, every lesson made learning fun!



Lincoln Park Academy hosted Kinder Camp for new kindergarten families! Scholars got to participate in signing day, make swag bags, participate in center activities, and do mock breakfast, lunch and dismissal. Parents participated some center activities and a round table informational with Principal Vogtsberger.



Upcoming Events

August is the end of summer and the beginning of a brand-new exciting school year! Jumpstart the year with professional preparation for school leaders and staff. Check out the selections below for a “match” to your school’s start-up needs. ***We highly recommend our teacher training lab for new or non-traditionally trained teachers on your faculty.*** Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF’s Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, [available here](#).

ASSESSMENT AUTHORIZING IN THE CRS – August 11, 2025 – 9:00 to 11:00 A.M. – Online via Zoom

Did you know you can use Assessment Authoring, found in the Centralized Reporting System, to build custom assessments based on the needs of your students? Do you also know educators can administer these directly through the State's Assessment system in the same manner as on the Ohio State Test? In this session we will introduce the Assessment Authoring system and how you might use your Item Analysis reports to build assessments based on your school's data. These assessments can be as short as one question covering one standard. This exciting system will make your students comfortable taking these high-stakes tests and provide feedback in real time. Attendees should have access to the Centralized Reporting System and a copy of their most recent Item Analysis reports from Buckeye Community Hope Foundation.

CPI INITIAL TRAINING (Northwest Ohio) – August 11, 2025 – 9:00 A.M. to Noon – In person at L. Hollingworth School for the Talented and Gifted, Toledo

This blended CPI ***Initial Certification*** training is designed for staff new to CPI who are assigned to their school's Crisis Response Team (CRT). The training is blended and includes two parts: an online module (120 minutes) and an in-person physical skills session. The in-person training will take place on August 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Toledo, OH. Participants must complete the online portion prior to attending. Both components are required for complete certification. This training is not available to the whole staff. Schools interested in building-wide de-escalation training for non-CRT staff must submit a professional development request. Questions should be directed to Ms. Brit Seward at bseward@buckeyehope.org.

CPI REFRESHER TRAINING (Northwest Ohio) – August 11, 2025 – 9:00 A.M. to Noon – In person at L. Hollingworth School for the Talented and Gifted, Toledo

This refresher training is for staff ***who have previously completed CPI certification*** and are part of their school's Crisis Response Team (CRT). The training is blended and includes two parts: an online refresher module (75 minutes or a 30-minute test-out) and an in-person physical skills session. The in-person training takes place on August 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Toledo, OH. Participants must complete the online portion prior to attending. Both components are required for complete certification renewal. This training is not available to the whole staff. Schools interested in building-wide de-escalation training for non-CRT staff must submit a professional development request. Questions should be directed to Ms. Brit Seward at bseward@buckeyehope.org.

FROM PASSENGER TO PILOT: Driving Student Agency in Learning – August 21, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

If we want students to engage deeply and grow boldly, they must have ownership over their learning! This session equips educators with practical, research-informed strategies that build

content agency, autonomy, and self-determination across content areas. Participants will leave with ready-to-use tools, ideas for cultivating relevance through purposeful choice, and actionable approaches that help make space for student-driven inquiry.

COHORT: Leadership #1 - Teacher Accountability – August 26, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

What should we, as leaders, expect of teachers if we want a school culture of high expectations? In a time of teacher shortage, teacher accountability may seem like a sensitive subject. Let's discuss why teacher accountability is necessary for ALL students to succeed, and for ALL schools to succeed. Participants should come away from this session with renewed commitment to accountability and non-negotiables, and with strategies that both support teachers and hold them accountable to high expectations. BCHF's leadership cohort is an accepting conversational space where leaders discuss information, share out ideas and best practices, and, overall, support one another in the pursuit of great leadership and great schools!

9. COHORT: Workforce Literacy 1: Kickoff and Creating Purposeful Career-Connected Learning – August 28, 2025 – 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

What does it mean to teach workforce literacy and why does it matter? In this kickoff session, you'll meet the team and fellow educators working to build authentic, career-connected learning experiences for students. We'll define what workforce literacy looks like across content areas and share inspiring examples of successful units from the past two years. Whether you're just getting started or someone that has been with us since the start, you'll walk away with fresh ideas and inspiration for what's possible. We'll end with a networked improvement community where you can begin planning and brainstorming alongside others.

TO THE MOON AND BACK: Creating Challenging and Engaging Lessons – September 3, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom

Do you sometimes feel as if students might as well be on the moon for all of the attention they are paying to you? Let's bring them back by walking through a way to create lessons that are relevant, engaging and well organized to get most of the students back on earth. Bring a unit you are getting ready to present and we will work through a process to improve and augment your lessons.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PARENTS – September 9, 2025 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom

What happens when parents become upset and emotionally "out of control" over a disagreement with the school? Educators are certain to encounter difficult parents at some point in their careers. Learn how and why disagreements happen and what you can do about them. We will discuss strategies, including de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques, as they apply to educator-parent interactions. Participants will come away from this session feeling both more prepared and more confident in handling the inevitable "difficult" interaction with a parent.

12. CPI INITIAL TRAINING (Mansfield/Central Ohio) – September 10, 2025 – In person in Mansfield – 9:00 A.M. to Noon

This blended CPI *Initial Certification* training is designed for staff new to CPI who are assigned to their school's Crisis Response Team (CRT). The training is blended and includes two parts: an online module (120 minutes) and an in-person physical skills session. The in-person training will take place on September 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Mansfield, OH. *Participants must complete the online portion prior to attending.* Both components are required for complete certification. This training is not available to the whole staff. Schools interested in building-wide de-escalation training for non-CRT staff must submit a professional development request. Questions should be directed to Ms. Brit Seward at bseward@buckeyehope.org.

13. CPI REFRESHER TRAINING (Mansfield/Central Ohio) – September 10, 2025 – In person in Mansfield – 9:00 A.M. to Noon

This refresher training is for staff *who have previously completed CPI certification* and are part of their school's Crisis Response Team (CRT). The training is blended and includes two parts: an online refresher module (75 minutes or a 30-minute test-out) and an in-person physical skills session. The in-person training takes place on September 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Mansfield, OH. *Participants must complete the online portion prior to attending. Both components are required for complete certification renewal.* This training is not available to the whole staff. Schools interested in building-wide de-escalation training for non-CRT staff must submit a professional development request. Questions should be directed to Ms. Brit Seward at bseward@buckeyehope.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND PLAN TO ATTEND!

BCHF ALL SCHOOLS MEETING – September 17, 2025 – 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. – In person in Columbus at Fawcett Center for Tomorrow – The Ohio State University Campus

Celebrate the new 2025-26 school year with BCHF! Our All-Schools meeting will kick off the year with vital updates and useful information specific to community schools. We follow presentations with our popular Solutions Center where leaders can talk in depth with an expert. Join us in person in Columbus! ***BCHF requests that one representative of each school attend this very informative and enjoyable "Kick Off" to the 2025-26 School Year!***

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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