



# The ESC

# CONNECTION

**RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION  
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**STORY ON PAGE 14**

**SUMMER 2014**

**The Educational Service Center (ESC) of Cuyahoga County**

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# Superintendent's Message

By Dr. Bob Mengerink, Superintendent

## Investing Resources into Early Childhood Education



The ESC of Cuyahoga County has always been committed to investing time and resources into early childhood education. We know that high-quality early learning opportunities can close the achievement gap for disadvantaged children, which already exists prior to these children entering Kindergarten. Most

recently, leadership at the ESC of Cuyahoga County participated in a taskforce that developed PRE4CLE, a new, four-year, comprehensive strategy to expand access to and enrollment in high-quality preschool for children in the City of Cleveland.

Driven by Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Cleveland Plan and starting with the 2014-2015 school year, this strategy will increase the number of high-quality Pre-K seats available in the City of Cleveland—for four-year olds and then three-year olds. By 2016, the goal is to have at least 2,000 additional 4-year-old children enrolled. To accomplish this, the new

Cleveland Early Childhood Compact will oversee the implementation of PRE4CLE that addresses family and community engagement, tuition assistance, transportation barriers, and provider professional development. PRE4CLE Pre-K will be available within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District schools, as well as private, community-based providers who meet strict quality standards. The plan will also facilitate rapid and efficient expansion of eligible high-quality, high-capacity early learning settings, both public and private, by adding 750 high-quality pre-K spots through programs that are prepared and waiting for state high-quality ratings through the state's Step Up to Quality rating system.

PRE4CLE is a major next step in implementing Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools and improving youth outcomes. The ESC, in partnership with Starting Point Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, is privileged to have been selected as the administrative entity for implementing this work. Our staff and I are personally committed to investing in this initiative that will be critical to increasing school readiness for Cleveland's youngest children.



# Cuyahoga County Transition Expo

The 2014 Cuyahoga County Transition Expo was held on Saturday, May 3, 2014 at Cleveland State University's (CSU) Student Center. As in the past, the ESC of Cuyahoga County and State Support Team—Region 3 were co-sponsors of this annual event along with community agencies, organizations, school districts, and career centers. This year, over 300 participants were able to talk to and get informational materials from more than 80 exhibitors ranging from recreational opportunities, adult care, educational and employment information, residential living, higher education, financial planning, and much more. CSU also led campus tours to give prospective students and parents a quick taste of college life in an urban setting.

Included in the Transition Expo were 16 breakout sessions presented by local experts. Some topics included Medicaid Waivers, Self-Determination/ Self-Advocacy, Sexuality and Relationships, Age of Majority and Guardianship, Continuing Your Education after High School, and more. These sessions were open to parents, students, and professionals and were based on requests made by attendees at previous Transition Expos.

The Cuyahoga County Transition Expo will return next spring bigger and better. So keep an eye out for the "Save the Date" flyer for the 2015 Cuyahoga County Transition Expo. You won't want to miss it!





# What Makes You A Scientist?

That was the question Jodi Brewer of the Akron Fossil and Science Center asked students April 7<sup>th</sup> at Richmond Heights Elementary School. Then she gave the answer—wonder, as in wondering why toothpaste bubbles when you brush your teeth.

“Then you just have to figure it out,” Brewer said.

Brewer was at the school through a grant from the Innovation Lab Network Fund, sponsored by the ESC of Cuyahoga County. She explained the scientific method to the children in her energetic and entertaining style, with the help of vinegar, baking soda, a balloon, and bubbles.

“I liked that she was so enthusiastic with everything,” fifth-grader Emma Shaw said after the afternoon session. Third-grader Arman Dhillon enjoyed watching the balloon fill up from the chemical reaction, while his classmate Varun Ramesh liked when she added the bubbles. “I

liked learning what was different in the first and second experiment,” he said.

The program was designed to help students with their own projects for the school’s science fair held on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Fifth-grader Raina Hubbard worked hard on her project, determining if it is possible to see sound. “If you can see your breath in the cold air, why can’t you see sound,” she asked. She already plans to become a scientist. “I think it is really interesting, and I really want to get into chemicals.”

Raina may be one of the students Brewer was talking about when she explained why she likes to do programs like this one in schools. “I like working with kids because I see tomorrow’s leaders,” she said. “You might be the next great scientist who will change the world.”



# Bringing Air to Life through Science

Air is something that everyone needs, but nobody can see—most of the time. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, students at Richmond Heights Elementary School “saw” air, or at least what it can do, thanks to a program from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (CMNH).

Lee Gambol, distance learning coordinator, and Julia Swanson, science instructor, brought air to “life” with a variety of experiments. They were at the school through a grant from the Innovation Lab Network Fund, sponsored by the ESC of Cuyahoga County. First, they taught how molecules stick together when it is cold, then added dry ice to water to create water vapor in the air, visible as fog.

Student volunteers assisted in the experiments, helping fill a balloon with hot air and watching it rise to the ceiling, and helping demonstrate the principal of low pressure with a leaf blower and a ball. They enjoyed their roles as assistants, even when the experiments did not work, such as when Swanson told them to stretch a balloon over a bottle, tuck it inside, then blow it up while in the bottle. Swanson’s balloon inflated, but the students were unable to blow up their balloons. “I tricked you,” she said. “My bottle has holes in it.”

Gambol created the program for the museum in 2007 but has also taught similar classes at other museums and schools around Northeast Ohio, including the Great Lakes Science Center. Swanson recently began working with CMNH, and the Richmond Heights assembly was her first time to help with the program.

It was easy for the kids to pick out a favorite part, when the scientists and their helpers created miniature exploding “rockets” out of plastic film containers. Students agreed, “It was the best assembly ever.”





# Richmond Heights Elementary School Participates in Science Fair

Richmond Heights Elementary School students capped off their spring focus on science May 23<sup>rd</sup> with a science fair. The annual event was bigger and better than it was last year, thanks to a \$1,500 grant from the Innovation Lab Fund, sponsored by the ESC of Cuyahoga County. Funds from the grant paid for two science-based assemblies in April, from the Akron Fossil Science Center and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Gifted teacher Eric Cohen said participation in the fair nearly doubled this year, with 50 projects compared to about 30 a year ago.

“I think it was a result of the assemblies we brought in increasing awareness in the scientific method and more interest in science overall,” he said.

The projects spanned a range of topics ranging from the typical volcanoes and bottle rockets to plant life, astronomy and how to make lightning. Volunteers from the city and area businesses judged the projects, which were given ratings of

satisfactory, good, excellent, or superior based on the student’s use of scientific method, ability to explain the experiment, and how the data were displayed.

Fourth-grader Molly Repasy took home the top prize for her project “How much grease is in your potato chip?” She picked the topic from several she and her father, Paul Repasy, found on the Internet. “It interested me the most,” she said. The experiment required her to weigh a potato chip, then crush it and leave it on a piece of paper for five minutes to extract the grease.

Even though student participation was up, Cohen has some ideas on how to improve the fair even more for next year. He hopes to have enough funds left from the grant to pay for at least one assembly. He also plans to work with small groups of students at a time to teach them how to better use the scientific method. “This year we increased the quantity, but we hope to see the quality of the projects go up even more next year,” he said.



# North Coast Academy Students Visit Shaarey Tikvah for Holocaust Education Program

Students from North Coast Academy (NCA) visited Congregation Shaarey Tikvah April 24<sup>th</sup> and heard a story of hope in the midst of one of the most horrifying periods of world history.

The NCA teens took part in Face to Face, a Holocaust education program. Rabbi Shana Nyer of Suburban Temple Kol Ami explained the basics of Judaism and the symbolic meaning of items used during worship and at home.

“I did not know there were that many symbols in Judaism. Also, I did not know that they read and write right to left,” NCA senior Anthony Graham said.

NCA senior Imani Ambers said, “I knew about the Jews and I knew about the Gypsies, but not all the other different populations of people who were in the Holocaust.”

The students viewed the exhibits in the Face to

Face Holocaust Museum, including photos, artifacts, posters and artwork.

Topics included life in the Jewish ghettos, Nazi policy, concentration camps, Kindertransport, the resistance and liberation.

Finally, the teens gathered back in the sanctuary to listen to Holocaust survivor Stanley Bernath of Lyndhurst, who was born in 1926 in Romania. He told the students he was about their age when his family was taken from their home and forced to march. Then they were rounded up again, crammed into cattle cars, and taken to Auschwitz, one of the most notorious death camps. There he was separated from his parents. He spoke about his journey. NCA senior Melanie Tyler summed it up. “I liked the part about the hope. Even with all the tragedy, there was still a lot of hope left.”



# North Coast Academy Students and Staff Participate in Blood Drive

North Coast Academy (NCA) students learned that sometimes it is possible to do something good while lying down. Students and staff of the school, located in Richmond Heights, took part in a blood drive April 16<sup>th</sup>, collecting 14 pints for the Red Cross. They also donated blood in November. NCA director Rena Wertheim organizes this event two times a year as a way for the students to do

community service. They earn two community service hours for donating. The school also takes buses into the community for other service projects, she said.

Every pint can help up to three people. “It makes me feel good because I can help save newborns with my blood,” said junior Eris Dixon.



# Students at North Coast Academy Inspired by Guest Speaker

Like most kids, Lloyd Bachrach enjoyed swimming, baseball and riding a bike. But, since he was born with a congenital bone deficiency that left his legs unusually small, he found different ways to do all those activities and more.

Now a motivational speaker through a company he founded, “Yes, You Can,” he spoke April 14<sup>th</sup> to students at North Coast Academy (NCA) in Richmond Heights, which is supported through the ESC of Cuyahoga County and the Simon Youth Foundation.

“I don’t like the word handicapped. I am differently-abled. I do things in a different way,” he said.

Bachrach demonstrated moves he learned in high school, when he competed in gymnastics, winning a medal at the Illinois state tournament his senior year. Later he switched sports again, to “sit volleyball,” so he could compete in the 1996 Paralympic games in Atlanta.

He encouraged the students to have a positive attitude and build their self esteem, set goals and

persevere, and take care of their health. Now in his 50s and married with two daughters, he coached gymnastics and worked in the Chicago Mercantile Exchange before launching his speaking career.

“I believe in you, and I believe you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it,” he said. “Live your dreams, as I am living mine.”

His message hit home with the students. “It was very cool, especially when he said to be a friend to somebody. You never know what it might mean to that person,” Khristian Philmon said.

Imani Ambers said she had been having a bad day before she came to school. “I did not want to deal with anything, but he made me feel better. It was nice to hear about someone else’s life, and how he overcame his problems.”

Justin Mack said he had never heard anyone like Bachrach. “He was very inspiring. He showed you to go for it, no matter what anyone says.”



# Thirteen Youth Graduate from North Coast Academy, Two Earn College Scholarships

Simon Youth North Coast Academy (NCA) at Richmond Town Square Sears held a graduation and scholarship presentation on Thursday, June 5, 2014 to honor the perseverance and accomplishments of 13 teens. The ceremony was held at the Richmond Town Square – Macy’s Corridor. North Coast Academy is run by the ESC of Cuyahoga County, which supervises the educational efforts and purchases the computers, on-line curriculum and other materials used in the daily instruction of the students.

Three of the students have been selected as Simon Youth Foundation Academy Scholarship Recipients. These scholarships have been made possible through the generosity of the Warren and Zoann Little Dusenbury Charitable Trust.

Two winners, Justin Mack and Imani Ambers, will receive \$7,750 for each of the next four years (a total of \$31,000 each). All the recipients were referred to NCA by the **Shaker Heights City Schools**.

The scholarship is awarded to individuals who have worked tirelessly to earn their diploma, and seek to pursue their dreams in post-secondary education. SYF is a national non-profit dedicated to providing educational and career development opportunities to youth.

“We are so excited to honor these amazing kids,” said Kate Miller, area director of marketing and business development. “Their dedication to their future inspires all of us.”

“The partnership between the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County and the Simon Youth Foundation has been critical to helping students at-risk of dropping out of high school achieve the credits for their diploma in a setting that meets their needs in a smaller-school, computer-

based environment,” said Rena Wertheim, NCA director. “Simon Youth Foundation has added to the experiences of these students by providing funding to the school for such things as field trips to local colleges. This partnership has helped almost 500 students graduate over the years.”

The graduate speakers who shared their personal, inspiring stories included Imani Ambers, Justin Mack, and Kelijah Smith of Shaker Heights Schools. Wendy Rapport, teacher at NCA for 13 years delivered the address to the graduates.

The following school districts participate in the Simon Youth NCA: **Beachwood, Chagrin Falls, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Euclid, Garfield Heights, Mayfield, Nardon, Orange, Richmond Heights, Solon, South Euclid/Lyndhurst, and Twinsburg.**

“Anything is possible with education, and Simon Youth Foundation is committed to igniting this kind of hope in students,” says J. Michael Durnil, Ph.D., President and CEO of SYF. “We are proud that our Simon Youth Scholarships help remove financial obstacles that would otherwise prevent deserving young people from pursuing the dream to attend college or another post-secondary institutions.”



# *Congratulations Class of 2014!*





# Rose-Mary Center School

## Rose-Mary Center School 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Stroll & Roll

The second annual “Stroll & Roll” fundraising event was held on a cloudy afternoon on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Once again, the playground fundraising committee planned a well-organized, weather-cooperating event. For a \$15 donation, a student was sponsored and the donor received a very smart looking ESC-RMC tote bag. Staff, families and friends walked with the students through familiar sights in the Tremont area. They included community based training destinations, such as the library, recycle center, ice cream shop, “Civilizations” coffee shop and numerous other sights. After the stroll, everyone was invited to the gym for snacks and a picture video of last year’s walk. The stroll raised approximately \$450 for new playground equipment – a new swing set with two swings. Additional tote bags can be purchased for \$5 at future school events or calling the school at 216-621-3451.





## Graduation Day at Rose-Mary Center School



*Rose-Mary Center School's graduation was held May 30<sup>th</sup>. Congrats to Manny, Muffy, and Ryan!*

## Rose-Mary Center's Spring Formal

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, Rose-Mary Center School held its annual spring formal. The students dressed up for the event and enjoyed their favorite lunch. Each classroom created the table centerpieces. The Mexican Fiesta theme decorations embellished the gym as Action DJ's filled the room with Mexican themed music, including the "Mexican Hat Dance." Two seniors, Muffy and Ryan, were crowned Queen and King.



# Recognizing Excellence in Education for Students with Disabilities



On May 16, 2014, more than 200 people came together for the 36<sup>th</sup> recognition of excellence in education for students with disabilities awards program at the Essex Place in Independence, Ohio. The event is planned by the ESC of Cuyahoga County and the State Support Team—Region 3.

The recognition brunch is an opportunity for educators, teachers, students, and community members to celebrate the great things that are happening in special education today. Students, peers, parents, educators, paraprofessional and educational aides, as well as community partners received awards.

The Outstanding Student Achievement Award acknowledges achievements of school-age children and youth with disabilities in Cuyahoga County.

The Outstanding Peer Achievement Award recognizes students with or without disabilities who have established positive relationships, and who have assisted other students with disabilities and have been exemplary role models.

The Outstanding Educator Achievement Award honors educators and educational teams who are

exemplars in designing instructional strategies and programs.

This year's keynote speaker was Justin Bachman, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader at Solon High School. Justin knows firsthand what it is like to be different. He has Tourette Syndrome, a neurological disorder that causes his body to make strange movements and noises that he cannot control. He also deals with severe ADHD and dysgraphia, which is a fine motor skills disorder resulting in an inability to write legibly.

Justin told the audience that throughout his life he has faced many challenges. Through great strength and courage, Justin has used his experiences to rise above his differences. He regularly volunteers for the Solon Blue Ribbon program that provides opportunities for special needs people to participate in typical activities. Last summer, Justin was a coach for one of the teams. Justin also participates in Social Advocates for Youth, Look Up to Cleveland, the Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio, Project Love, Dancing Wheels, and has spoken to over 21,000 people in schools, clubs, and civic organizations. He has traveled to five states as a speaker.

In 2011, he planned and hosted a Tolerance Fair in which 1,000 people had the opportunity to interact with 48 charitable organizations to learn how they could get involved in community service or find resources to help them deal with their differences. He held a second Tolerance Fair in March, 2013 in which 3,000 people interacted with 129 non-profits and professional exhibitors. He recently created a Leadership Academy. This group consists of 18 high school students from nine schools across Northeast Ohio. As President, Justin is working with this prestigious group to plan and implement the 2014 Tolerance Fair.



**2014 Outstanding Student Achievement Award:**

**Michael Cantu**

Brecksville/Broadview Heights High School  
Brecksville/Broadview Heights City School District

**Dominic Presot**

Independence Primary School  
Cuyahoga Heights Local School District

**Megan Teets**

Parkside Intermediate School  
Westlake City School District

**Enrique Torres**

Brecksville/Broadview Heights High School  
Brecksville/Broadview Heights City School District



**2014 Outstanding Peer Achievement Award:**

**Austin Heil**

Berea-Midpark High School  
Berea City School District

**Emma Paoletta**

Shiloh Middle School  
Parma City School District

**Elena Papparizos**

Independence High School  
Independence Local School District



**2014 Outstanding Educator Achievement Award:**

**Dania Beard and Brian Smith**

Goldwood Primary School – Preschool Teachers  
Rocky River City School District

**Kathy Booker**

Heritage Middle School – Intervention Specialist  
East Cleveland City School District

**Madison Chyllick**

Cuyahoga Heights Elementary School -  
Paraprofessional  
Cuyahoga Heights Local School District

**Denise Cook**

Mayfair Elementary School – Intervention  
Specialist  
East Cleveland City School District

**Sarah DeBrock**

Middleburg Heights Junior High School –  
Intervention Specialist  
Berea City School District

**Mary Jo Gilchrist**

Millridge Elementary School – Kindergarten  
Teacher  
Mayfield Heights City School District

**Christine Goudy**

Brady Middle School – Intervention Specialist  
Orange City School District

**Darling Hatcher**

Chambers Elementary School – Intervention  
Specialist  
East Cleveland City School District

**Pat Jones**

Shiloh Middle School – Paraprofessional  
Parma City School District

**Desiree Korpowski**

Euclid High School – Intervention Specialist &  
Instructional Coach  
Euclid City School District

**Mariel Krakowiak**

Olmsted Falls High School – Art Teacher –  
Advisor/Helping Hands  
Olmsted Falls City School District

**Jeffrey Martin**

Central Office – Supervisor  
Strongsville City School District

**Helene Ozog**

Independence High School – Paraprofessional  
Independence Local School District

**Chris Sutton**

Cleveland Heights High School – Intervention  
Specialist  
Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School  
District

**Darla Wagner**

Brady Middle School – Principal  
Orange City School District

**Lisa Wiegand**

Lakewood High School – Intervention Specialist  
Lakewood City School District

**Georgia Wos**

Albion Elementary School – Paraprofessional  
North Royalton City School District

This activity is funded by IDEA, Title VI-B Grants to states through the Ohio Department of Education grant to the ESC of Cuyahoga County, Fiscal Agent for the State Support Team–Region 3.

Special thanks to:

The staff of the ESC of Cuyahoga County and the State Support Team–Region 3 for their efforts and work in making the Awards Ceremony possible.

The State Support Team–Region 3 Family Council Committee members: Angie Chapple-Wang, Mark Curtis, Yvonne Daycak, Sharon Humphrey, Paula Kucinic, Terri McIntee, Meghan Shelby, Bonnie Simons, and Paula Woods





# ESC Honors Students With Humanitarian Awards

The ESC of Cuyahoga County recently named several area students as recipients of their annual Humanitarian Awards. Recipients were nominated by administrators in their schools for showing leadership and community service as well as possessing great character during the 2013-14 school year. One student from each middle and high school in the communities of **Cuyahoga Heights, Independence** and **Richmond Heights Local Schools** received the scholarships and award. The awards were presented by ESC board members during their individual schools' award assemblies during the months of May and June. In addition to a cash award, students received a personalized plaque, starfish pin and starfish keychain. The starfish is the symbol of a story of the impact one person can make in a community.

## This year's ESC Humanitarians include:

### Recipients from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools



**Autumn Cohara**, eighth grader at Cuyahoga Heights Middle School

Principal Tom Evans said Autumn shows a spirit of kindness, generosity and compassion in her daily interactions with fellow students and staff. "She

does this, not because she feels obligated, but because it is part of her nature. Her random acts of kindness have benefitted countless people, and have not gone unnoticed."



**Michele Marcinick**, graduating senior at Cuyahoga Heights High School

Michele has given up study halls in order to organize and run meetings of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes for the middle school. "She freely gives her time, never asking anything for herself, in order to better the lives of those she works with," Principal Tom Evans said. "The group has met with great success thanks to her kindness and caring attitude. Michele is the epitome of what it means to be generous and good natured."

ESC Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr. presented both of the awards.

### Recipients from Independence Local Schools



**Christina Brunzman**, eighth grader at Independence Middle School

Christina has been a member of the Builder's Club, Choir, Student Council, volleyball, basketball and track, along with charity drives and Kiwanis weekend activities. In each activity she made an effort to reach out to other students to make them a part of the middle school family. Principal Ben Hegedish said she is on a mission to make life better for others. "Christina came to our school this year with a broad smile and a loud laugh. Christina made a palpable difference in the eighth grade, our school and the community."

ESC Board Member Carol Fortlage presented the award.





**Brittany Byomin**,  
graduating senior at  
Independence High  
School

Brittany put in more than 500 hours of community service, including volunteer work with special education students, a church food pantry, St. Michael’s PSR program, and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park on the Polar Express. Principal Bill McGuinness said, “She is a terrific individual, who never looks for personal gain or recognition. She just wants to help others.”

ESC Board Member Christine Krol presented the award.

### Recipients from Richmond Heights Local Schools



**Ihunanya (Precious) Obasi**, eighth grader  
Richmond Heights Middle  
School

Principal Tara Roberson said Precious demonstrates kindness and compassion towards others, treating everyone with equal respect and dignity, “turning the other cheek” to those who treat her poorly, and even

providing pens, pencils and paper to classmates. “She is truly deserving, not because of a single incident, not because she is nice to her friends, but because every day Precious practices humanitarianism to all people.”

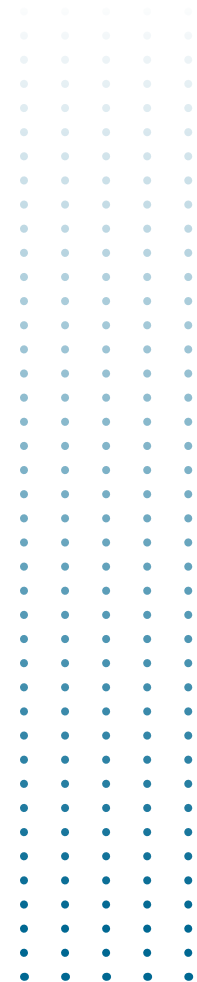
ESC Board Member Tony Hocevar presented the award.



**Nichelle Blake**,  
graduating senior at  
Richmond Heights High  
School

Nichelle agreed to be a “shadow” for a girl who had just moved from India. She was eager to help her fellow student assimilate into a new culture, new school, and the class of 2014. She showed caring support, not only to her new friend but toward others in the senior class. Principal Jason Tidmore said, “Her ability to bring the student into the Richmond Heights family was a stunning success. I have no doubt that their friendship will last long after high school.”

ESC Board Member Anthony Miceli presented the award.



# GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT PROGRAM

## Second Annual Middle School Academic Super Bowl

The ESC of Cuyahoga County sponsored the second annual Academic Super Bowl on April 9<sup>th</sup>. More than 70 students from **East Cleveland, Fairview Park, Independence, Lakewood, Rocky River, South Euclid-Lyndhurst** and **Westlake** participated in this event. Teams had practiced since January answering questions using buzzer systems in science, mathematics, language arts, and social studies. Three team head-to-head competitions, computer questions, and individual team events determined the six teams that would participate in the final round. Westlake took home the district tournament trophy and the individual team champion medals.



### Teams

#### First Place:

#### Westlake Team I

- Patrick Lee
- Kyle Yu
- Ryan Karpuszica
- Matthew V. Vulku
- Reddy Akhilesh

#### Third Place:

#### Fairview Park L

- Cole Yurkiewicz
- Anna Giang
- Grant Howes
- Dylan Luptak
- Kristy Ng
- Jose Eszersky

#### Second Place Tie:

#### Westlake Team B

- Albert Zhou
- Sharifi Kayvon
- Miranda Li
- Lalit Kulshreshtha
- Kyle Kinney
- Matthew W. Wallenhorst

#### District Winners

- |        |             |
|--------|-------------|
| First  | Westlake    |
| Second | Rocky River |
| Third  | Lakewood    |

#### Rocky River F

- Sophia Hess
- Adam Hackett
- Sasha Rufus
- Justin Smith
- Christian Devorace







## ESC/University of Phoenix Partnership



The Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County has formed a partnership with the University of Phoenix to help teachers and staff take classes that are designed for busy, working learners.

The academic alliance means students will be able to earn continuing education credits or bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees from more than 20 programs and 50 concentrations. State-specific seminars will be available, as well as individual classes offered at flexible times.

Other benefits include a 10 percent reduction in tuition and a customized page for the student's information.

More information is available at [phoenix.edu/esc-cc](http://phoenix.edu/esc-cc).

## GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT PROGRAMS (cont.)

### Back to Nature

Staff members from **Westlake** (Kate Vitek), **Warrensville Heights** (Nevin Jenkins and Rebecca Dallas), Cleveland Metroparks (Carly Martin), and the ESC of Cuyahoga County (David Dewey) met frequently during the past year to develop an outdoor experience for the 40 eighth grade students from the two districts involved in the project. The event was held at Look About Lodge in Bentleyville. The goal was to provide an up-close and personal nature experience based on the common core science standards that include habitats, soil erosion, plant and animal food chain webs, and wetland conservation. The students had the chance to skip rocks, while some of the braver students waded into the Devil's Bathtub to cool off. The river bed waterfall offered an additional challenge to the students as well. It is hoped that this pilot program will develop into an opportunity for all middle school students in the Gifted Consortium of the ESC next year.







# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## High School - Higher Education Alignment Pilots Highlighted

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, the ESC of Cuyahoga County hosted the Bridging Regional Resources for High School-Higher Education Alignment Showcase to demonstrate the achievements of the consortium's members as a result of the three-year pilot project to enhance college and career readiness for students. Specifically, the goals were 1) to alleviate remediation rates in Mathematics and English for entering freshmen in Ohio's public universities and colleges, and 2) to enhance teacher preparation for Common Core and Ohio's New Learning Standards.

Members of the ESC's consortium included math and English faculty from high schools in **Beachwood, Hudson, Olmsted Falls, Solon and Strongsville**, as well as from **Cuyahoga Valley Career Center**. University and college faculty from Baldwin Wallace (BW), Cleveland State (CSU), Cuyahoga Community College (CCC), and Ursuline also participated. With mini-

grants, **Beachwood** and CCC collaborated on math placement exams and early interventions for students, while **Strongsville** and BW English faculty and students cooperated to improve student writing skills at the high school's Writing Center. **Cuyahoga Heights** faculty participated with BW faculty in a professional learning community. Consortium members are planning to continue the collaborations begun through this grant.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) hosted a culminating 2014 Spring Symposium on May 12<sup>th</sup> in Columbus to demonstrate the outcomes of the 14 High School-Higher Education Alignment pilot projects that were funded through Ohio's Race to the Top funds. Eight team members from the ESC consortium attended and presented about our projects.



*ESC of Cuyahoga County hosted the "Bridging Regional Resources for High School-Higher Education Alignment Showcase" on April 10<sup>th</sup>.*



*The HS-HE 2014 Spring Symposium was held on May 12<sup>th</sup> at Quest Center.*



## State Support Team - Region 3 Hosts OCALI's "Expect Success" Series

Ten teams, including intervention specialists, paraprofessionals, administrators and support staff participated in a four-day series entitled Expect Success! Understanding and Supporting Behavioral Challenges that Impact Learning, Social Competence, and Academic Progress. This series was facilitated by Wendy Szakacs and Denise Sawan-Carusio from the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI). The purpose of the series was to help educators to better support students with behavioral challenges that limit them from participating in educational opportunities, limit social interaction or interfere with academic progress.

This series is unique in that intervention specialists and paraprofessionals (with additional team members as appropriate) attend together and learn about the underlying characteristics of students that drive them to engage in behaviors

that interfere with learning. The team learns how to use a functional behavior assessment process to determine appropriate supports for students with complex needs, and then develops and implements intervention plans, using evidence-based practices, to teach the student critical skills for academic and social success. On the final day of the series, teams share their plans and present their outcomes.

Teams from **Cleveland, Independence, Shaker Heights, Warrensville Heights** and **Westlake** participated. The series will be offered again next year, and some of the modules are posted at [www.ocali.org](http://www.ocali.org).

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## North Coast Shared Service Alliance

The North Coast Shared Service Alliance (NCSSA) was formed to provide a substitute teacher management service for school districts in the Northeast Ohio region. The ESCs of Cuyahoga, Lorain, and Medina counties partnered with Rachel Wixey & Associates to create a cost efficient and effective substitute teacher management system to provide interested school districts increased capacity in recruiting high quality teaching candidates, on-boarding of substitute teaching candidates, providing in-person and online professional development activities, overseeing daily management of substitute teacher assignments, access to a large pool of substitute candidates, and oversight of human resource functions and payroll/fringe benefit management services. The NCSSA has created a comprehensive management system,

along with the capacity to individualize the substitute teacher services requested by school districts.

During the 2013-2014 school year, the NCSSA substitute teacher management system was launched and secured by 16 school districts in Columbiana, Cuyahoga and Lorain counties. The ESC of Cuyahoga County serves as the fiscal agent/human resources and payroll/fringe benefit manager and currently employs over 1,100 substitute teachers. The Alliance is currently marketing and attracting new school districts to join the consortium and is on target to open the 2014-2015 school district with 17 school districts providing close to 2,000 substitute teachers for our customer school districts.

# Innovation Lab Network

ESC and district superintendents from around Ohio attended a meeting in March hosted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to discuss innovations and barriers to educational transformation in Ohio. Northeast Ohio districts that demonstrate the student-centered principles of NextGEN (Next Generation) learning include **Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Orange**, and **Maple Heights**. Ohio education leaders are exploring ways to scale up competency-based pathways to prepare students for future careers and higher education. The fifth annual Innovation Lab Network (ILN) Conference, *Autonomy for Innovation and Transformation: Taking It to Scale Takes 360 Degree Leadership*, is scheduled for the Quest Conference Center in Columbus on June 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. On the first day, superintendents from around Ohio and leaders of educational foundations and organizations will consider multiple pathways to innovation, 21st century competencies, global education, and

digital content research.

The keynote speaker for the second day is Phil Schlechty speaking about Leadership for Innovation. The program features David Cook, Director of the Office for Innovation at the Kentucky Department of Education, and Dr. Carmen Coleman, Superintendent of the Danville Kentucky Schools, who led her district in adopting a competency-based pathways model. Breakout sessions include a presentation by a team of educators from **Orange City Schools** on “Technology that Supports Personalization.” Northeast Ohio districts in the ILN have received mini-grants to support their innovative student-focused projects through a grant from the CCSSO administered by the ESCs of Cuyahoga County, Central Ohio, and Hamilton County.



# Ohio Online Learning Program

The ESC of Cuyahoga County’s Ohio Online Learning Program has been in operation since August 2012. This program is one that allows students to re-enroll in their resident school district from other online schools and also participate in extracurricular activities. In partnership with the National Network of Digital Schools, districts now have access to the award winning Lincoln Interactive curriculum with over 250 courses offered online.

There are currently over 30 school districts participating in the program representing six counties. Enrollment has climbed to over 500 students as we close out the 2014 school year. In efforts to improve access and the overall online experience, the program will be changing learning management platforms for the fall of 2014. The program will switch from Blackboard

to BRAINHONEY™, which is cloud-based and offers more flexibility for students. All curriculum is being reviewed, upgraded and enhanced for rigor and relevance.

Onsite training is provided for district personnel on enrollment procedures. Full time students have the option of a laptop and printer/ scanner/copier combination with wireless capability allowing learning to take place anywhere, anytime. This program is truly the best of both worlds.

Summer school enrollment opportunities are now available for students wanting credit flex or credit recovery courses. For more information, visit [www.ohionlinelearning.org](http://www.ohionlinelearning.org) or call toll free at 855-491-9660.



# Summer Institutes and Workshops

## **Summer 2014 Teaching Cleveland Institute June 16-20, 2014**

The Teaching Cleveland Institute (TCI) is an exciting professional development opportunity for teachers of all grade levels interested in teaching about Cleveland. The TCI focuses on Cleveland history, economics, public policy, and youth engagement. Participants experience Cleveland like never before, then learn how to incorporate Cleveland's past and present into lessons and units for their classrooms. To learn more about TCI, contact Greg Deegan, Executive Director, at [teachcleveland@gmail.com](mailto:teachcleveland@gmail.com), or to register for the institute go to the ESC Calendar of Events at [www.esc-cc.org](http://www.esc-cc.org).

## **5-Day Intensive Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Classroom Training Based on TEACCH Structured Teaching Strategies**

**June 23-27, 2014**

This year's five-day intensive classroom Autism Spectrum Disorders training will focus on staff working with students aged 5-14 who are on the autism spectrum. The training is very intensive and includes daily lectures and hands-on experiences with students with autism in a model classroom. Close guidance and feedback from five trainers will be provided throughout. While the focus group is students with autism, the strategies learned by teachers are applicable to students with other developmental disabilities as well. To register go to the ESC Calendar of Events at [www.esc-cc.org](http://www.esc-cc.org).

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## **Next Steps on the Journey to Implement the Common Core**

**August 6, 2014**

The transition to Ohio's New Learning Standards is a big undertaking, and it cannot be done overnight. Support the work of teacher teams as they collaborate to enact classroom instruction and assessment practices designed to maximize achievement for all students. The ESC of Cuyahoga County, in partnership with Battelle for Kids and InfOhio, will present a workshop on August 6<sup>th</sup> that will allow participants to experience the BFK Suite of Common Core Tools with YouTube and User Manual Supports. Created for teachers, these planning tools provide a clear and easy understanding of the standards, learning progressions, and grade-level academic vocabulary. The tools are designed to support a collaborative team approach to developing units with sound tasks and assessment practices that ensure student success. To register go to the ESC calendar of events at [www.esc-cc.org](http://www.esc-cc.org).

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# Summer Institutes and Workshops (cont.)

## **Northern Ohio's 4th Annual Early Learners Conference: Winds of Change**

**August 12-13, 2014; with Preconference August 11, 2014**

On August 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, the ESC of Cuyahoga County in partnership with its State Support Team—Region 3 and the ESC of Lorain County and its State Support Team—Region 2 will host the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Early Learners Conference: Winds of Change.

This year's conference will feature keynotes from Jeremy Brueck, University of Akron, and Rebecca Tolson, Keystone Literacy, as well as offering several opportunities to attend breakout sessions and hear from local experts. Institute highlights include: Early Literacy and STEM; Setting the Groundwork: The Cohesive Ties of Early Literacy; Autism and Early Learning; Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for Early Learning; Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS); Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA); and Electronic Resources and Tools for Early Learners.

In addition, participants interested in learning more about Mindful Motion: YogEd and the New Early Learning Development Standards may attend the preconference scheduled for August 11, 2014. To register, go to the ESC Calendar of Events at [www.esc-cc.org](http://www.esc-cc.org).

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## **2014-2015 Professional Development: Focus on Literacy**

**Supporting Reading and Writing in the Middle School Grades: Leadership Academy, Grades 6-8**

**August 13-15, 2014 and continues throughout the 2014-2015 academic year**

This year-long academy emphasizes the critical components of middle school reading and writing instruction, grades 6-8. Teams will study and focus on the research-based practices that are the foundation of the Common Core and Ohio's New Learning Standards. Academy members will research, identify and implement effective teaching practices that are formed from essential components of scientifically-based reading and writing. In addition to focusing on the foundation pieces with the literacy framework for reading and writing, participants also will learn how to incorporate frequent learning checks using formative assessment in daily instruction to raise student performance and drive efficient differentiated grouping.

Year 1: Focuses on the foundational pieces with the literacy framework for reading and writing instruction, data to drive instruction, and developing and understanding depth of knowledge through assessment

Year 2: Develops the leadership potential of teachers within the cohort to serve as literacy leaders within their districts

Cohort Training Dates – August 13-15, 2014 (additional dates to be determined)

Principal and Curriculum Directors will be required to meet with coaches in the fall and spring.

Site Visits/Observations: 2-3 site visits will be scheduled and conducted by the coaches throughout the 2014-2015 academic year



## **Academic Language Therapy Association Certification Courses (ALTA)**

**Semesters Begin July, 2014 and Continue through April, 2015**

- Prepares teachers to work with language-based learning disabilities such as dyslexia and dysgraphia
- Expert teaching strategies for the Five Essential Components of scientifically-based reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension)

Year 1: Students must successfully complete 75 instructional hours, five teaching demonstration lessons, and 120 supervised hours of clinical teaching experience. Students become eligible to sit for the Alliance National Registration Exam at the Practitioner/Teaching Level and fulfill the ALTA certification requirements under the Ohio Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

Year 2: Students must successfully complete an additional 75 instructional hours, five teaching demonstration lessons, and 580 supervised hours of clinical teaching experience. Students become eligible to take the Alliance National Registration Exam at the Therapist Level (IDA Level II Dyslexia Specialist). For more information or to register go to: [www.KeystoneLiteracy.com](http://www.KeystoneLiteracy.com)

## **Essential Components of Literacy Instruction and Assessment**

**Begins June 12 and continues June 16, 23, 2014 and August 5 and 14, 2014**

This five-day course emphasizes the critical components of reading instruction and follows the typical development of reading skills. Participants will study the sequence of basic reading skills, from recognizing sounds to decoding words, oral

language, listening, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. For additional information or to register go to the ESC Calendar of Events at [www.esc-cc.org](http://www.esc-cc.org).

## **Foundations of Reading: Preparing Teachers in the Principles of Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction Year-Long Cohort (Face-to-Face and Webinar)**

**September 6, 2014 and continues January 10, 2015 (Face-to-Face dates)**

**October 1 & 22, November 19, December 17 February 4 & 25, March 11, April 15 & 29 and May 20 (Webinar dates)**

This Reading Foundations course prepares K-3 teachers in the principles of scientific research-based reading instruction. The course enhances teachers' reading instruction and intervention and builds a deeper understanding of all skills that contribute to competent reading according to the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Kindergarten through third grade general and special education teachers will learn to determine who is "on-track" and "not-on-track," as well as provide research-based foundational reading techniques for the entire class.

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