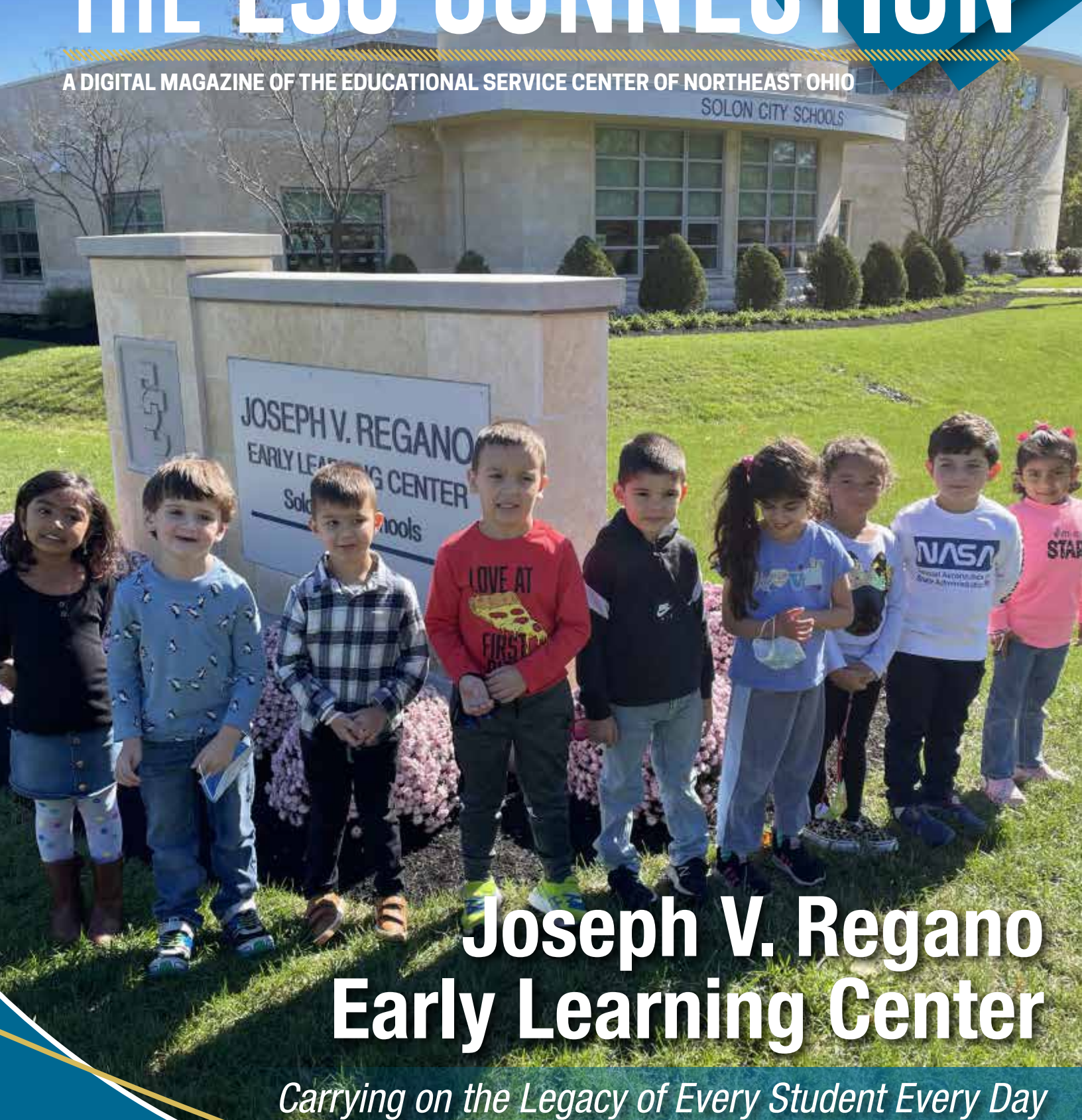


FALL 2021

THE ESC CONNECTION

A DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER OF NORTHEAST OHIO



JOSEPH V. REGANO
EARLY LEARNING CENTER
Solon City Schools

Joseph V. Regano Early Learning Center

Carrying on the Legacy of Every Student Every Day



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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dr. Bob Mengerink, *Superintendent*

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

For many years, we have used our *ESC Connection* digital magazine to share stories about what we have been working on at the ESC. While we are always excited about our efforts, we also want to acknowledge the extraordinary things happening in our school districts. In this new edition, you will notice a section called "Education in NEO," which highlights great achievements across districts in Northeast Ohio. As you read through these articles, one thing becomes very evident – you are all dedicated to caretaking, nurturing, fostering and unifying our youth. As educators, we are all aware of the importance of academics, but creating environments where even the youngest students can thrive and feel successful while learning how to accept each other, give back to others and advocate for change. We need this now more than ever and you should all be proud of what you are giving to our next generation.

Sincerely,

Bob



@ESCNortheastOhio



@ESCNortheastOH

www.escneo.org

Cover photo: Solon's youngest Comets now head to school every day in a building dedicated to the lasting legacy of one of Ohio's most loved and admired student advocates. The district's integrated preschool is now the Joseph V. Regano Early Learning Center. As a teacher and administrator, Joe Regano impacted the lives of thousands of students and families over his more than 40 years as an educational leader. He passed away in summer of 2020. Read the entire story on page 20-21.

National Blue Ribbon Schools



U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona has recognized 325 schools as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2021, including 16 schools in Ohio. The recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Among Ohio schools named as National Blue Ribbon Schools and members of the ESC of Northeast Ohio are:

- Bay Village** – Westerly Elementary School, Bay Village City School District.
- Beachwood** – Hilltop Elementary School, Beachwood City School District.

Congratulations to these districts, educators, and students!

CONGRATULATIONS TO EAST CLEVELAND CITY SCHOOLS' PROSPECT ACADEMY PRESCHOOL BUILDING

Prospect Academy received a National Partnership Award on September 7, 2021 from the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University for its collaborative community partnership to provide weekly Play and Learn Family sessions from February through May 2021. Joan Spoerl of The Ohio Literacy Cooperative, with funding from the Ohio Collaborative for Educating Remotely, met virtually with Prospect families in January 2021 to describe the program and gain input from families and staff on content and timing of sessions. Sessions occurred weekly with both a morning and evening session available. Books and materials were ordered and distributed through Prospect Academy. Some activities included virtual tours of the Cleveland Zoo, Aquarium, Holden Gardens and Forests, and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. At the end of the program, families received free passes to visit some of these organizations over the summer.

The NNPS is celebrating its 25th anniversary under the leadership of Dr. Joyce Epstein. Prospect's Play and Learn Family Sessions will be published in NNPS' Promising Partnership Practices 2021 e-book. In the time of pandemic, families have been very pleased to have these opportunities to experience with their children the enjoyment of learning and exploration.

For more information, contact:
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ESC Special Education Supervisor
Assigned to East Cleveland City Schools
laurie.albright@escneo.org

A bin sent to families with materials funded by the Ohio Collaborative for Learning Remotely.



LITERACY LEADERS NETWORK WELCOMES NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT

At the first Literacy Leaders Network meeting of the year, Dr. Curtis Jones, superintendent of Bibb County School District in Georgia, provided an inspirational presentation on inclusive leadership to address achievement gaps. Dr. Jones spoke about the important role that leadership plays in the development of structures within an educational system as the only way to support the work of school improvement. The importance of creating a culture based upon trust also played a factor in closing the gap for students.

Dr. Jones was Georgia's Superintendent of the Year, and in 2019 he was named the National Superintendent of the Year. Under his leadership, his district increased the graduation rate from 78% to 90% and has made reading at grade level the district's top priority.

As Dr. Jones stated, "The work of leadership is to get results in a way that inspires trust." His motivational speech set the tone for the districts in attendance to focus and strategically work on their "problem of practice" for this school year.

All of our districts are focused on literacy as a leverage for school improvement including the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant districts: **Bedford City Schools, Brooklyn City Schools, Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools, East Cleveland City Schools, and Warrensville Heights City Schools**, as well as **Cleveland Metropolitan School District**, which also is a recipient of a CLSD Grant.

The partnership between the State Support Team—3 and the ESC of Northeast Ohio supports



the districts that are a part of the CLSD Grant. This year during the Network Meetings, these districts will be collecting data on their problem of practice as a way to look at data regionally and form the basis of our discussion. While the meetings remain virtual, we are very focused and intentional with this work.

For more information, contact:
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Kenston Bombers Fly Together Learning About the Science of Reading on Convocation Day



Kenston Schools, led by Superintendent Nancy Santilli, kicked off their annual convocation day with a district-wide discussion on the Science of Reading facilitated by the ESC of Northeast Ohio Curriculum Department. Kenston Curriculum Director Kathleen Poe had participated in a Science of Reading discussion at an ESC Curriculum Network meeting last spring and wanted to bring this topic forward for all staff at their annual meeting. The opening day discussion emphasized the importance of support for all learners across the Language and Literacy Development Continuum,

including Word Recognition in K-3 through explicit phonemic awareness and phonics instruction and in grades 4-12 the importance of teaching students to use text evidence while reading content through their discipline's lens. The presentation included a calibration on the Science of Reading definition, the four theoretical models, and the Big Five Ideas of Reading. The session closed with a vocabulary instruction protocol from Anita Archer's Explicit Instruction that can be used in any K-12 classroom to support literacy instruction. Teachers were engaged and excited about this discussion and are looking forward to their next steps in learning more about evidence based practices that support the Science of Reading.

Padua Franciscan Project Based Learning

Led by Vice Principal Elizabeth Oles Smith, **Padua Franciscan High School** staff began a year-long exploration of implementing Project Based Learning (PBL). Project Based Learning is defined as a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge. These projects are designed for learning rather than projects executed after learning. The faculty keyed in the attributes it values in the profile of a Padua Franciscan graduate, including collaborative teamwork, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and verbal and written communication. Prior to beginning their curriculum work, the faculty reviewed sample PBL projects and evaluated them according to the Gold Standard for PBL. The session wrapped

up with a discussion on the "why," including consideration for Hattie's Visible Learning and how it fits within the PBL framework. Elizabeth Oles Smith reports, "Teachers are on board and working nicely." Padua Franciscan will continue its year-long focus on PBL through two future engagements with the ESC of Northeast Ohio.



A MINUTE OF *Fame,* A BRIGHT FUTURE *Ahead*

Westlake teen doesn't let blindness stop him from announcing football games



[CLICK](#) to watch the news story.

When our teachers of the visually impaired work with students to help them access the curriculum and succeed in life, they do not always see the happy endings! In this case, the world can see the progress and happy ending of one student, Allan Wylie, of Westlake. He has worked with several of our TVIs, our rehabilitation specialist and orientation mobility specialist over the years. As a team they have provided instruction in braille and navigating life's challenges. In this short news video clip, you can see just how far this student has come and be reassured he is on a positive life path. Kudos to the parents, district, our team of professionals and the student!

For more information, contact:
Dana Lambacher
ESC Special Education Supervisor
dana.lambacher@escneo.org



FOSTERING A STRONG PBIS COLLABORATION BETWEEN ESCs AND SSTs



Upon award of a U.S. Department of Education School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG), the ESC of Northeast Ohio has welcomed Anthony Pizzuti

Ph.D., PC. into the role of Regional Field Coordinator (RFC). As one of four RFC grant positions in the State of Ohio, Anthony's main roles and responsibilities are to scale up and expand Ohio PBIS by increasing the capacity, knowledge, skills, and abilities of school improvement and PBIS consultants in Educational Service Centers (ESCs) and State Support Teams (SSTs) by providing regional training and coaching, development, and coordination across the Northeast Ohio quadrant.

In addition to supporting consultants at the ESC of Northeast Ohio, Anthony supports ESC consultants from

Northpoint ESC, ESC of Lorain County, Columbiana County ESC, Trumbull County ESC, and the ESC of Eastern Ohio, as well as SST consultants from regions 2, 3, 4, and 5 that provide direct PBIS support to Ohio Schools. Specifically in SST-region 3, Anthony has collaborated with both the ESC of Northeast Ohio and SST by improving communication systems, facilitating monthly coaching meetings, providing high quality professional development offerings, sharing of resources, and through encouraging and modeling the importance of collaboration to support all Northeast Ohio schools. Anthony's leadership has led to fostering a strong PBIS relationship between the ESC and SST, and his guidance has made a significant and positive difference as seen by the increase in the number of schools and districts that are implementing PBIS with fidelity regionally.

For information, contact:
Anthony Pizzuti
Regional Field Coordinator
anthony.pizzuti@escneo.org



OHIO ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

It seems that something is always changing for online learners in Ohio as each year passes, and this school year is no exception. House Bill 110 is new legislation this year that gave school districts the opportunity to create online learning schools. This plan is different from the Remote Learning Plan of the 2020-2021 school year, and with some additional new guidelines from the state, the ways in which school districts used the Ohio Online Learning Program (OOLP) also changed. With HB110 being signed on July 1st that left little time for districts and OOLP to adjust before the start of the school year, but the OOLP team worked hard to meet the needs of districts and ensure the necessary support to districts, students, and families was provided.

To further support our online students, OOLP is offering a new opportunity this year called the Community of Online Learners for 6-8th grade students. This program is meant to support students emotionally and interpersonally. It's led by two Student Learning Advocates, Jaime Furda who has a background in clinical counseling, and Dan Ogilvy who has a background in student wellness. The first community session was a success and we're hopeful this online community will help our students feel more connected and joyful!

We're also celebrating the third year of our Student Recognition Program led by our two Student Learning Advocates Alexa DelRusso and Debra Fisher. The program recognizes our students for their personal and academic success. Some examples of recognition include semester award

certificates, showcasing student work on our website, and senior recognition. Many of our students are fully online and we want them to feel acknowledged for their hard work.

Finally, this year the ESC and OOLP have partnered with the University of Cincinnati to offer the Early College Information Technology Program, an opportunity for 9-12 graders who are interested in the field of Information Technology. Students who successfully complete the entire program will have completed the equivalent of their freshman year and are guaranteed admission to the University of Cincinnati-CECH Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) or Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BS Cyber) program. The first cohort of students will begin in January 2022.

OOLP is off to another great year! In addition to these great initiatives, we've offered 20 virtual student/parent orientations, enrolled nearly 800 students, and support 40 school districts.

Acknowledgments must also go to the OOLP team who always goes above and beyond and works tirelessly to ensure our districts, students, and families are supported. Thank you to Cheryl Kloscak, Regina Parks, Alexa DelRusso, Debra Fisher, Amy Kasperczyk, Jaime Furda, Julie Kemper, Dan Ogilvy, Ashely Mitko, Joe DiCicco, and Mark Miller!

Kajal Brazwell
Program Coordinator
kajal.brazwell@escneo.org

EDUCATOR QUALITY

EVALUATION SYSTEMS UPDATES

The Educator Quality Department continues to be responsive to district needs regarding evaluation systems.

OTES 2.0

This school year marks the required implementation of OTES 2.0 for most districts*. New Evaluator and Bridge trainings are currently offered in a variety of modalities including online coursework, virtual via Zoom, and we are extremely excited to return to in-person beginning in October. Registration for these trainings will be through the Training and Registration application of the OH|ID portal.

*Districts with current collective bargaining agreements effective prior to 11/2/2018 may still have the option to implement OTES 1.0 in the 2021-2022 school year.

The Educator Quality department can provide implementation and calibration sessions for the OTES 2.0 model.

For customized support, please contact:
Mindy Geschke
Educator Quality Consultant
mindy.geschke@escneo.org

OPES 2.0

In 2021-2022, districts have the option to early adopt OPES 2.0 or continue with OPES 1.0 for an additional year. The ESC of Northeast Ohio will continue to offer asynchronous OPES 1.0 training for new OPES evaluators.

OPES 2.0 Evaluator Credentialing will be offered in multiple modalities, beginning with in-person training and synchronous options in the late fall and an asynchronous option available beginning in January 2022. Trainings will be differentiated with a New Evaluator version for educators new to principal evaluation and a Bridge Training version for those who were credentialed in the OPES 1.0 model (need not be current). Registration for these trainings will be through the Training and Registration application of the OH|ID portal.

To support the transition to OPES 2.0 separate from the credentialing pathway, the ESC of Northeast Ohio recommends district OPES teams communally register and attend a "deep dive" professional learning session focused solely on the 2018 Principal Standards. Varying learning options will be available for this training as well. To register for one of these support sessions, search for Principal Standards Deep Dive in the Training and Registration application of the OH|ID portal.

For customized support, please contact:
Gretchen Lawn
Educator Quality Consultant
gretchen.lawn@escneo.org

ESC NORTHEAST OHIO BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

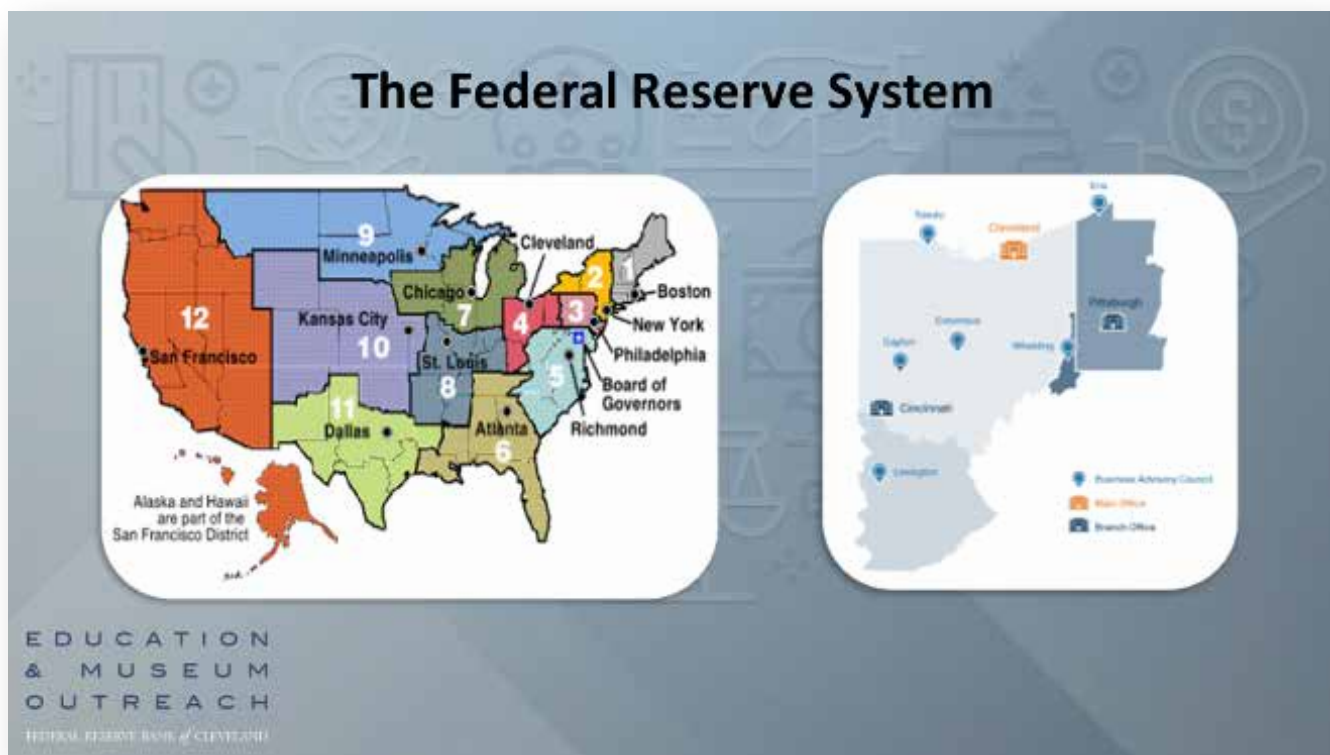
On October 6, the ESC of Northeast Ohio's Business Advisory Council met for its first session this academic year. Administrators and educators from ESC member districts and area businesses learned about Career Pathways Programming with the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. The Cleveland Federal Reserve is in the 4th district among 12 Federal Reserve areas and covers Ohio, parts of Kentucky, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania.

Alexandria Halmbacher and Khaz Finley, managers in the Bank's Education and Museum Outreach program, explained how the Cleveland Federal Reserve has expanded its recruitment pipeline by developing a continuum of k-12 and collegiate student programming to prepare students for the workforce. Programs include hands-on activities for financial literacy for grades 3-5 through the Danny Dollar Academy. The middle school Exploration Series for grades 6-8 covers topics like financial decision making, inflation, and career exploration. Developing an Employable You is the high school offering developing employability skills, job interviews and resumes, paychecks and taxes,

and budgeting training. An Information Technology and STEM-focused program provides training for coding, particularly for girls and students of color. A program called What's Next? Explores alternative career options for students not pursuing college. The Federal Futures Professional Program provides paid internships for undergraduate students in fields of finance and economics.

BAC participants were updated about the ESC Northeast Ohio Workforce Development Consortium, which is developing relationships between districts and businesses to provide opportunities for collaboration to best prepare students for the workforce of the future. The ESC is providing opportunities for districts through the NextWork platform, the UC Early IT pathway program, BILTS (Business & Industry Leadership Teams), and student skills training, such as the Student Think Tank.

For information, contact
Nadine Grimm
ESC Coordinator of 21st Century Learning
Nadine.grimm@escneo.org





ESC NORTHEAST OHIO ANNOUNCES THE NORTHEAST OHIO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM

The ESC of Northeast Ohio is pleased to announce the launch of the Northeast Ohio Workforce Development Consortium (WFDC). The mission of the Northeast Ohio WFDC is to identify, develop, and support innovative programs and services for educators, students and businesses that enhance a knowledgeable and skilled Northeast Ohio. In 2021-2022, new services and initiatives underway include: The NextWork Initiative, Student Think Tanks, and the development of the Northeast Ohio Business and Industry Leadership Teams (BILTs) Network.

The NextWork Initiative, in partnership with Knowtion, Inc., is a consortium of area school districts and more than 40 businesses working together to connect students and employers. Nextwork is an experiential learning platform that offers a virtual approach for connecting businesses with potential employees, resources, internships, externships, site visits, job shadowing opportunities, and professional speakers. For more information about this initiative please reach out to any one of our team members:

- » Paula Kucinic, Director of Professional Development, paula.kucinic@escneo.org
- » Tippi Foley, Career Pathways and Early Childhood Consultant, tippi.foley@escneo.org
- » Nadine Grimm, Coordinator of 21st Century Learning, nadine.grimm@escneo.org
- » Amy Harker, NEO Regional Career Specialist, amy.harker@escneo.org
- » Sanjay Parker, CEO, Knowtion, sanjay.parker@knowtion-inc.com

Student Think Tanks - Student Think Tanks, also known as the ALPHA project (Authentic Learning Personalized for Higher Achievement), are designed to increase student collaboration, critical thinking skills, leadership, and creativity. Using design thinking, students work in teams to solve real world problems submitted by local businesses and/or students can solve problems

they have identified in their school or community. Training is provided to districts and schools to build skills through a structured learning process. District teams may participate independently or in a collaborative intra-district manner to create solutions.

To learn more about student think tanks, contact amy.harker@escneo.org

Northeast Ohio Business and Industry Leadership Teams (BILTs) Network – On August 24, 2021, the ESC conducted its first Business and Industry Leadership Teams (BILTs) Forum. The forum provided NEO businesses and organizations with an opportunity to learn more about the ESC, and also to learn more about each other. More than 20 representatives from area businesses and agencies, including Cornerstone of Hope, Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservative District, CVS Industries, Davey Tree, Dollar Bank, Goodwill Industries, Portage County Jobs and Family Services, The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, The Holiday Inn, and others, discussed and shared their thoughts about the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) that employers are seeking from potential employees.

For more information about the BILTs please contact: paula.kucinic@escneo.org or nadine.grimm@escneo.org



First Ring Schools Collaborative

Leadership ACADEMY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

The First Ring Leadership Academy is a year-long professional development and leadership training program for Teacher Leaders in the 16 districts that surround the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Participants are nominated by their superintendents each spring to become part of the cohort the following school year.

The Academy meets for nine full days throughout the academic year with a focus on building capacity to address the unique challenges of First Ring districts: Poverty, Student Mobility, Diversity, and Closing the Achievement Gap. Participants engage in a variety of learning activities including on-site presentations and discussion, readings and reflections, and coordinating and mentoring a team of high school Student Leaders within their district. Sessions are held at the ESC of Northeast Ohio, district sites, and area colleges.

[CLICK HERE for the 2021-22 brochure.](#)

PARTICIPANTS THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

Bedford - Karla Eberhardt, sixth-grade teacher, Heskett Middle School

Berea - Sherri Fox, teacher, Berea-Midpark High School

Brooklyn - Julie McGarey, intervention specialist, Brooklyn High School

Cleveland Heights-University Heights - Desiree Caliguire-Maier, world history teacher, Cleveland Heights High School

Cleveland Heights-University Heights - Nicole Gardner, Algebra 1 and MDM IS teacher, Cleveland Heights High School

Cuyahoga Heights - Mike Janatovich, Middle/High School principal, Cuyahoga Heights High School

East Cleveland - Amanda Stanoszek, intervention specialist, Shaw High School

Euclid - Sara Mattinson, school counselor, Euclid High School

Euclid - Katie Gonakis, guidance chair/CTE director, Euclid High School

Fairview Park - Grant Graves, social studies teacher, Fairview Park High School

Garfield Heights - Khiara Kimbrough, third-grade teacher, William Foster Elementary School

Lakewood - Eric Fortuna, elementary principal, Hayes Elementary

Lakewood - Meredith Wojtkun, principal, Lakewood High School

Maple Heights - Maria Rodgers, curriculum specialist

Parma - Bill Forney, math teacher, Normandy High School

Parma - Lynn Monaco, Spanish teacher, Normandy High School

Richmond Heights - Alicia Trescott, 21st century program director

South Euclid Lyndhurst - Raymond Smith-Watkins, youth development specialist

Shaker Heights - Dr. Nicole Patterson, DEI learning specialist

Warrensville Heights - James Ranc, world history teacher, Warrensville Heights High School



First Ring Schools Collaborative

Student Leadership INSTITUTE

EMPOWERING STUDENTS

The First Ring Student Leadership Institute empowers high school sophomores and juniors to become leaders of change in their schools and communities. Every fall, high school principals in the 16 school districts surrounding the Cleveland Metropolitan School District nominate a team of five sophomores to attend the Institute. When they become juniors, these students have the option to return for a second year to further their leadership skills.

Participants attend a total of seven sessions held at district locations and area colleges during school hours. At the Institute they will:

- » Hear from dynamic speakers in fields like professional sports, the sciences, finance and education
- » Learn about a social justice framework called Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) and use that knowledge to solve an issue of importance to them in their school or community
- » Develop the skills to lead and inspire others
- » Share their ideas and experiences with students from other First Ring districts

SOLVING IMPORTANT ISSUES

In Year 1 at the Institute, high school sophomores work as a team to investigate an issue in their school or community.

- » Using a YPAR framework, five students from every First Ring high school research the nature, causes & potential solutions to an issue of importance to them.
- » Each team collaborates with a teacher or administrator from their district who acts as a guide.
- » At the final meeting in May teams share their findings and present their recommended solutions to their superintendent and principal.

Students who have completed Year 1 move on to Year 2 as high school juniors to put their recommendations into action and mentor incoming students.

- » Participants learn how to raise awareness and influence decision-makers to act on their recommendations.
- » Teams attend a youth research symposium to present their research and project outcomes.
- » Students earn undergraduate credit for their work and participation in the program.

[CLICK HERE for the 2021-22 Brochure.](#)

For more information on the First Ring Schools Collaborative, contact:



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Co-Director
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Jennifer Dodd
Co-Director
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Jodie Hausmann

TO LEAD CONNECT ITC AS NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Connect, the largest Information Technology Center (ITC) in Ohio serving more than 160 schools, has named Jodie Hausmann as the next executive director beginning August 16.

Hausmann has most recently served as superintendent of Bay Village City Schools. She will replace John Mitchell, who after 21 years of leading this ITC, is retiring. “We are proud of and grateful for John’s leadership and stability as our ITC grew from the old days of the Lakeshore Northeast Ohio Computer Association to the merged North Coast Council to our reimagined Connect,” said Connect Chairperson and Superintendent of the Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio Bob Mengerink.

Prior to Hausmann’s role as superintendent in Bay Village, she was the superintendent of Perkins Local School District and director of teaching and learning for Parma City Schools.

“Jodie brings with her a background that includes a unique combination of educational leadership, instructional pedagogy and technology,” said Mengerink. “This experience and understanding of district needs will allow Jodie to continue leading Connect towards our vision of a premier

ITC. As school districts find themselves relying on innovative solutions to transform their educational models, Jodie will help ensure Connect also evolves to be the primary source of service and support for new technology needs of districts in their operations, collaboration and instruction.”

“My new position will allow me to grow professionally in a different sector within the education industry,” said Hausmann. “I look forward to being our districts’ partner in designing a trusted learning environment within their school buildings by supporting safety protocols, cybersecurity best practices, technology upgrades, and valid data for decision-making.”

Hausmann is a recipient of the 2018 Betsy M. Cowles Women in Leadership Award from the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) and, in 2020, was named a “Superintendent to Watch” by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). Additionally, during her tenure in Bay Village City Schools, the district was named a “Top Workplace in 2020.”

Hausmann earned her superintendent license at Cleveland State University; principal’s license at the nationally recognized “First Ring Leadership Academy” at Cleveland State University; Masters in Educational Technology at Baldwin Wallace University; and Bachelor of Science in elementary education at Cleveland State University.



CONNECT HIRES CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER



Connect, the largest Information Technology Center (ITC) in Ohio serving 66 school districts, has named Joseph Prchlik as chief technology officer. He will be responsible for

leading Connect's network, systems and managed service areas.

“Joe is an energetic, collaborative leader and technical administrator who is passionate about leveraging technology to shape, improve and support K-12 organizations,” said Executive Director Jodie Hausmann, Connect. “He has led a diverse team with an array of skill sets in

the vision of outstanding customer support and dedication to utilize and implement technology as a transformative tool. We are delighted to have him join the Connect team.”

Prchlik comes from Northwest Ohio Computer Association in Archbold, Ohio where he was Director of Operations and Technology. Prior to that, he was a manager at Ingersoll-Rand ARO Fluid Products Division and also the U.S. Bureau of the Census. He is a member of numerous professional technology trade associations, author of a variety of trade articles, and has presented at many national conferences, many times explaining the relevance and importance of well-managed utility based infrastructure technology services.

Prchlik received his Masters and Bachelor of Arts degrees from Bowling Green State University.

SNAPSHOTS FROM CONNECT'S EMPLOYEE PICNIC AT WESTCREEK RESERVATION IN PARMA



PASSPORT **School Program**

Guiding Extraordinary Individuals Toward a Future of Hope

For information, contact:
Lisa Adler, Director
lisa.adler@escneo.org
440-688-1280

GRADUATION DAY - MAY 28, 2021



Carol Vollnogle, E. Palestine School District (left) presented Ryan's diploma and his proud mom was in attendance.



Courtney B. Jones, E. Cleveland School District (right), presented Ky'Shawn's diploma - mother and sisters were in attendance.



Rocketta is with her classroom staff, Cody and Brad.
Steve Rogaski, Director, Pupil Services, ESCNEO



The flowers planted in the spring still need some tenderness in the fall. Gabe is watering them.



School has begun with all students back. The vestibular room is a great place to spend time and have fun. Kishan and Cody



Delana and sunflower - height even! She and Rob are checking the growth of garden flowers.



Story time with Mary and Ja'Meela, Delana and Gabe.



Kishan uses the iPad for the lesson on weather as Mary, Gabe and Cody look on.

CAPSTONE ACADEMY

As schools begin a second school year under pandemic conditions, our main focus continues to be student and staff safety. Our situation at Capstone Academy poses some unique challenges as compared to traditional school settings since our program is housed within a residential facility. The introduction of a contagious virus would have serious consequences for our medically-fragile students. While following infection control measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 throughout the building, students have been granted limited time off the residential units to receive one-on-one or small group direct

instruction in the education wing. Our Fall 2021 Blended Learning Plan provides for a combination of in-person and remote instruction as well as therapy services weekly.



Barb and Angelo watching a lesson during math class.

To accommodate the safety of each child, an individualized schedule has been created for every student that supports their instructional and therapy services as per their IEP (Individual Education Plan). The number of weekly direct instruction time provided in the classroom is also based on the grade-level specific core curriculum (Ohio Learning Standards–Extended or the Early Learning and Developmental Standards) required



Cevanna enjoying her Adaptive Physical Activity class

for each student's grade. Adaptive Physical Activity (physical education), Art, and Music instruction will be provided both in-person and virtually. Students will also be provided access to asynchronous opportunities. Self-directed remote instruction will be provided through supplemental online academic content, activities, and resources based on the lessons taught by the teachers.

For information, contact:
Mary Wideman, Program Administrator
mary.wideman@escneo.org
330-732-8249



Diana and Audriana working together during a Social Studies lesson.



Even a small amount of lead is dangerous to a child, but did you know that children under three are at the greatest risk of lead poisoning?

Young children absorb lead more easily, and are more likely to be crawling on floors and putting their hands and other objects in their mouths that have come in contact with lead dust. If a young child's blood lead level is 5 mcg/dL or higher, they are automatically eligible for Early Intervention.

Ohio Early Intervention works with families with children birth to age three who have elevated blood lead levels, and other developmental concerns and disabilities, so they can have the best possible start in life. Ohio Early Intervention is a part of the Help Me Grow system of supports and services are provided through Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

As the Help Me Grow Central Intake and Referral contractor for the state of Ohio, Bright Beginnings and its regional partners processed nearly 2,000 referrals for families of children with elevated blood lead levels between July 2020-June 2021.

Early Intervention can support families with children with elevated blood lead levels by connecting them to resources to get rid of lead; helping them access safe housing; addressing the child's behavioral or physical health concerns; and more.

Any child with a confirmed elevated blood lead level should be referred to Early Intervention right away, and the referral process is simple. Visit helpmegrow.org/refer to access our web referral form, or call 1 (800) 755-GROW (4769) to speak with an intake specialist.

[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about how Early Intervention can help those impacted by elevated blood lead levels.



Solon City Schools

Solon's Integrated Preschool is Now the Joseph V. Regano Early Learning Center

Solon's youngest Comets now head to school every day in a building dedicated to the lasting legacy of one of Ohio's most loved and admired student advocates.

The Solon integrated preschool was renamed this month as the Joseph V. Regano Early Learning Center. As a teacher and administrator, Joe Regano impacted the lives of thousands of students and families over his more than 40 years as an educational leader. He passed away in summer of 2020.

"Joe was a caretaker at heart and highly valued the strong foundation our youngest students receive by attending the integrated preschool program," said Solon Superintendent Fred Bolden. "Planning for the renovation of the preschool building to design and reimagine learning spaces for our littlest Comets, especially those with special needs, was exceptionally rewarding for Joe.

"He was always humble and kept the spotlight on our students," Mr. Bolden continued. "The newly named Joseph V. Regano Early Learning Center sits on a prominent spot along SOM Center Road. We know seeing Joe's name on this school will spur wonderful memories for generations of students and their families."

And while the Regano Early Learning Center is located on one of Solon's busiest streets, inside the building the students and staff quietly go about the business of learning and meeting educational goals.

As an integrated preschool program, the Regano ELC meets the needs of the district's youngest students with disabilities through authentic and engaged learning with same-age typical peers.

The majority of students with IEPs at the school have communication delays of some type, while other students have IEPs addressing issues that include gross or fine motor delays, behavioral challenges, social-emotional concerns like anxiety, as well as sensory processing challenges such as over-stimulation to sound and touch.

The curriculum is aligned to Ohio's Early Learning and Developmental Standards. Students learn through language-based thematic classroom units covering topics such as seasons, fairy tales, nighttime, holidays and family culture. Pre-academic skills, such as letter awareness, numeric reasoning, pre-writing and fine motor development are also embedded. For example, students recently painted with feathers for their focus on the letter "F." Similarly, their hands-on learning also reflects the unit themes, such as exploring the consistency of the inside of a pumpkin and talking about the seeds, pulp, rind and stem.

The students participate in daily gross motor activities, such as playground play, riding toys, bikes, scooters, music and movement.

Importantly, students' social-emotional development is a key program focus, such as creating friendships, respecting others, self-advocating, regulating emotional and behavioral reactions, and perspective taking.



“Joe Regano believed strongly in the district’s mission to focus on the needs of every child, every day, creating an educational pathway for all students to follow from their first day in a Solon classroom through graduation,” said Solon Board of Education President Julie Glavin. “His vision was that the Early Learning Center would be the gateway to that important journey.”



Carrying on the legacy of every student every day





Bedford High School Holds Unity and Kindness Day

Students at Bedford High School started off the school year on the right foot with the school's first "Unity and Kindness Day."

The idea for the event came as a response to the tragic death of student Royce Hamilton. "This hit the Bedford community very hard, and we knew there was a need for healing for our students and staff," said Bedford High School Assistant Principal Khalisha Lewis.

Teachers and the school's social emotional learning team planned the kindness day over the summer so the event could kick off the new academic year. The day was broken up into morning and afternoon activities.

In the morning, students visited four different stations. At the first station, students created kindness posters and took a pledge of kindness and unity by writing their name on a leaf and placing it on the Unity Tree. In the second station, Bedford alumni shared their experiences since graduating. Students had the opportunity to engage in conversations with the guests and ask questions to determine what they may want to do after high school. The third station focused on fun, with students playing corn hole, Jenga, ring toss and other outdoor activities. Students also entered a raffle to participate in afternoon pep rally activities. The final station featured the Cleveland Peacemakers group, who spoke to the students about the importance of making good decisions

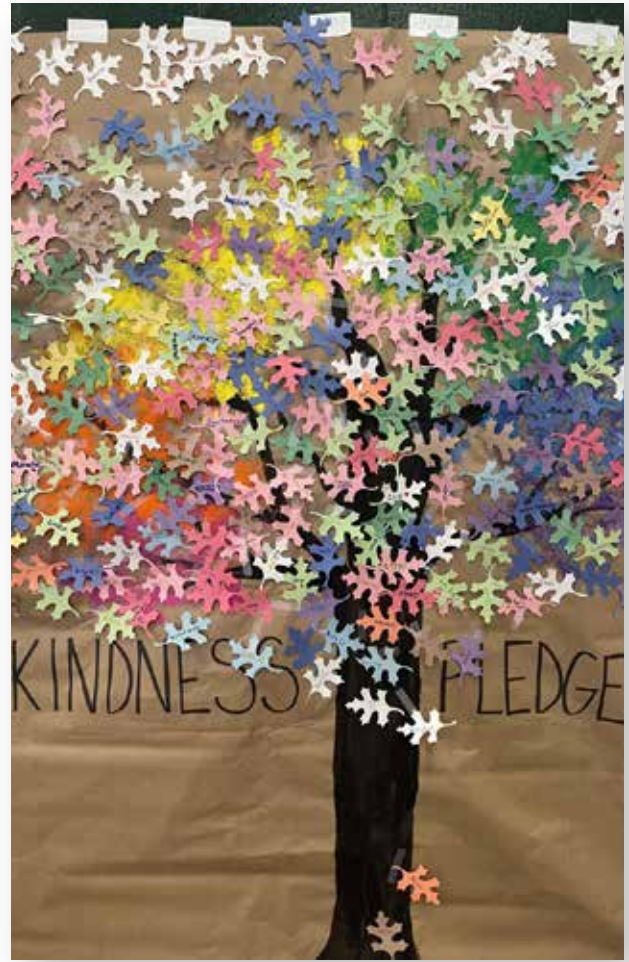
and how decisions they make today directly affect their lives tomorrow. This group of mentors helped students to build conflict resolutions skills and assisted them in creating goals for themselves.

In the afternoon, the students gathered in the stadium for a pep rally, which included performances from the band and cheerleaders. PBIS Students of the Month and class officers were also recognized at the rally.

Students were selected from the raffle earlier in the day to participate in rally activities including trivia, water balloon toss and an egg relay race. The keynote speaker for the afternoon was Mr. Hamilton, the father of Royce Hamilton, who passed away last school year. His message to the students centered around one theme: In a world where you can be anything, choose to be kind.

"It was a day filled with lots of positive energy and great resources for our students," said Lewis.





Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month



Students at Cuyahoga Heights High School and Middle School will be referring to books, desks, and workbooks as los libros, los escritorios, and los cuadernos thanks to the efforts of Cuyahoga Heights

In addition to the labeling project, the Spanish Club will hold a “pulsera” or bracelet sale October 4-18. The bracelets have been made by children, teens, and young family members in Guatemala and Nicaragua. Because neither country’s government has its own education system, families must pay to send their children to school. “Every amount raised will go to help kids in these countries pay for their schooling,” said Bennett. Those who make the bracelets also learn a skill. “I think it would be fun to help some of the families out who don’t have what we have here (in the U.S.),” said junior Kayla Vallee, about the bracelet sale.

High School’s (CHHS) Spanish Club to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

Breaking into teams of two and three, club members have visited more than a dozen classrooms to identify common items that can be labeled with their Spanish name. During the week of October 4, students will adhere the labels to the classroom fixtures. They also will label items in the upstairs and downstairs main hallway at the high school and the main hallway at the middle school. In addition, teachers are being given information about Hispanic Heritage Month to share with their classes.

“We do have Spanish speakers in our buildings and it is important for us in our school bubble to realize and respect the cultures of others,” said Spanish teacher Christine Bennett, about the project. The club saw this as a way to increase knowledge and understanding of the history, culture, and contributions of Hispanic-Americans, and, at the same time, “get the word out” about the fun things happening in Spanish Club.

Then, on Saturday, October 30, the Spanish Club will host Spanish I and II students to participate in Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) Ohio presented by the Cleveland Public Theatre. “This is the only event in which students will have a really immersive experience featuring the Spanish language, art, culture, music, dance and food,” said Mrs. Bennett.

Since 1988, the US has observed Hispanic Heritage Month by celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson. President Ronald Reagan expanded the observance in 1988 to cover a 30-day period from September 15 and ending on October 15.

The Spanish Club’s positive efforts were featured on Ideastream’s NewsDepth program during its A+ Award segment.



Richmond Heights Local Schools Offers New Manufacturing Pathways for Students



Richmond Heights Local Schools is now offering a new opportunity for students looking for a career path in the manufacturing field after graduation.

This pathway enables students to build foundational manufacturing skills through a mixture of video, text, 3D animation, and interactive activities while fulfilling graduation requirements.

There are four certification areas used to assess knowledge including: Safety, Quality Practices & Measurement, Manufacturing Processes & Production, and Maintenance Awareness. In order to receive a Certified Production Technician (CPT) certification, students must pass all 4 individual areas. The CPT certification is a nationally-recognized credential.

“This program is what you need to become an entry-level production technician,” said teacher Joshua Patty, Richmond Heights Local Schools. In order to teach the class, Patty took an instruction course that included troubleshooting a Skills Boss machine to test his ability to problem solve.

To incorporate work-based learning, hands-on activities, and field trips, Patty is reaching out to local manufacturing companies to establish partnerships. “Through cultivating partnerships within our community, the district will be able to sustain and grow this valuable program,” said Principal and Assistant Superintendent Marnisha Brown.

The intended impact of this program is to give students the training necessary to get a foot in the

door of the manufacturing industry and to show these types of programs will benefit companies.

“With more exposure, and as we build more partnerships, companies are going to see the benefits of fewer training costs of their future employees since we will already have a lot of that accomplished with our graduates,” said Patty.

Currently, there are three seniors enrolled in the courses. Beginning next year, the course will be offered to both seniors and juniors to allow time for additional certifications including CPT + (Skills Boss Machine).

Richmond Heights offers this program through a grant awarded through the Ohio Department of Education.

“We saw the need with the new graduation requirements to ensure that students had different career pathways and not just a focus on college,” said Brown.

This pathway is one of several elective courses that students are able to explore through Richmond Heights Local Schools.







Independence Primary School Student Makes Gym More Acoustic-Friendly

When third grader Isaac D’Anza noticed that the gym in the Independence Primary School was noisy during class, he decided to do something about it.

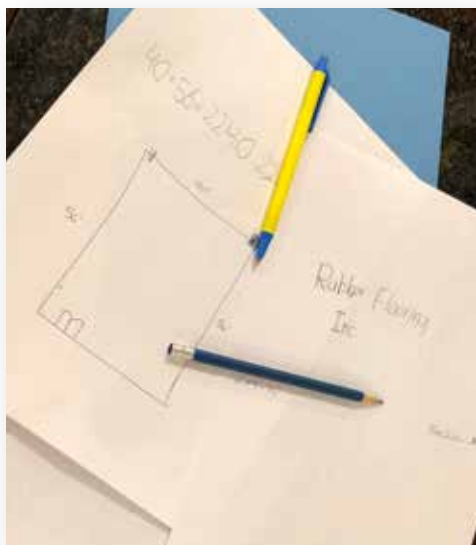
When he was standing outside of the gym one day, Isaac started a conversation with a staff member about the echo and noise in the gymnasium. This led to a collaboration with Assistant Superintendent Tom Dreiling on finding a solution to the problem. Dreiling and Isaac held weekly meetings over the summer where they discussed adding acoustic-friendly wall padding to the gym walls to absorb the sound.

Isaac measured the wall space in the gym for the mats and was involved in the process of finding companies to perform the work and analyzed their quotes. He and Dreiling looked at design options and ultimately chose a company that could provide a customized look with Independence Primary School on one wall and the IPride logo on the other.



Dreiling and Isaac presented their project at the August 17 school board meeting. Isaac said that after working on this project, he learned he had a lot of guts to speak up about the problem and then present the project in front of the school board members.

“To see his excitement not minimize from day one all the way up until his board presentation is part of the beauty of teaching,” Dreiling said. The mats have been delivered and installed. Students are already noticing less echo and noise in the gymnasium thanks to D’Anza’s efforts.



Maple Heights City Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan

At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, the Maple Heights City School District shared our five-year Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is a joint effort with the Maple Heights City School District Board Members, administrators, teachers, parents, and teachers.

The Five-Year Strategic Plan focuses on four key areas:

- » Academics
- » Diversity. Equity. Inclusion.
- » Communication
- » Finance

How will the Maple Heights City School District work to accomplish the expectation of our board and community?

Academics

Our mission statement highlights our dedication to preparing our students for a lifetime of success. The District will review the curriculum, teaching, and honors/gifted programs. We must meet or exceed the standards set by the state. We are setting goals to increase our graduation rate and increase college and career readiness among our students to accomplish this. We plan to evaluate our progress with high-quality assessments and data analysis.

Diversity. Equity. Inclusion.

We are providing our students with culturally inclusive classrooms to reduce disproportionality. To create culturally and equity-informed District policies and practices, the District will conduct an equity audit. The District will perform a curriculum audit to minimize the gap for structurally disadvantaged students. We are committed to creating an equitable and inclusive school environment; that is

why we need to hire diverse and culturally proficient teachers, administrators, and staff.

Communication

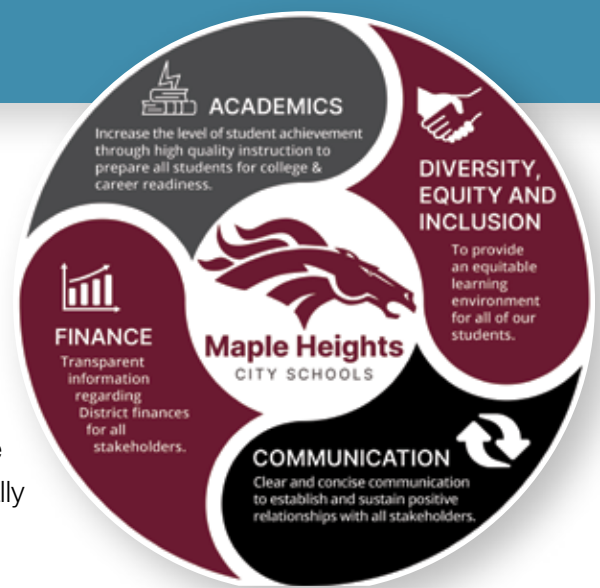
We believe that providing clear and consistent communication with all our stakeholders is essential to academic success. To ensure that we are successfully communicating with all of our stakeholders, we will evaluate how and through which platforms we will share with you. We will establish clear expectations and protocols for communicating. We believe that our stakeholders should have the opportunity to engage with Board members, administrators, faculty, and staff.

Finance

We must be transparent with our information regarding the District's finances for all stakeholders and provide an environment where you, our stakeholder, can ask questions if you need clarification. We plan to keep our financial systems updated and prepare and present the Five Year Forecast twice a year as the Ohio Department of Education requires.

With the implementation of our Five-Year Strategic Plan, our commitment to our students, community members, and other stakeholders are visible through the work taking place in our District.

You can view the complete Five-year Strategic Plan on our website: mapleschools.com.



Barberton School District Honored with Best Communities for Music Education Designation



Barberton School District has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. Now in its 22nd year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is

awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Barberton School District answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“At Barberton City Schools, we value music education just as much as core subjects like math or English,” said Superintendent Jeffrey Ramnytz. “Receiving the Best Communities for Music Education designation reinforces our belief that music education greatly benefits the success of our students.”

Since the passage by Congress in 2015 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and a stated emphasis on a well-rounded education, many school districts have re-committed to music and arts education programs and found that in this time of a national pandemic, provides a valuable way to keep students engaged in school. ESSA provides designated funding for well-rounded educational opportunities through Title IV Part A Student Academic Success and Achievement grants.

NAMM Foundation research has revealed that these grants are being widely used by school districts to address instructional gaps in access to music and arts education.



“We have seen firsthand at Barberton how having the element of music education is incredibly impactful for students,” said Ramnytz. “Students are more engaged in all subject areas when music education is part of their curriculum.”

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music: After two years of music education, researchers found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound: young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers. Not to mention, social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.



Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools Opens Cardinal Credit Union Student-Run Kiosks

Willoughby-Eastlake is proud to announce the ribbon cutting ceremonies on October 1 to mark the official opening of the Cardinal Credit Union Student Run kiosks. The student-run kiosks will be located at both Eastlake North High School and Willoughby South High School.

The kiosk will be open during school hours and staffed by student tellers who will be guided by a Cardinal Credit Union employee. The branch will have the functionality of a full size branch and give students the opportunity to experience careers in banking and economics. Additionally, students

will be able to obtain real-world lessons in money management.

"We are excited to engage in this collaborative experience for students," said Superintendent Steve Thompson, Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools. "Working with the Cardinal Credit Union allows us to create instruction opportunities that cannot be duplicated in a traditional classroom setting and increases educational opportunities for students. We are grateful to Cardinal Credit Union for their dedication to Willoughby-Eastlake students."

CHAGRIN FALLS
EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOLS

Chagrin Falls High School Seniors Serve Community Through Philanthropy Day

On October 13, Chagrin Falls High School senior class members volunteered at a variety of nearby organizations for the school's annual Philanthropy Day.

Service opportunities included helping clean up the gardens at Holden Arboretum, interacting with students at Gurney Elementary School and the Intermediate School. Other volunteer locations included Meals on Wheels, Life Act, Chagrin Falls Historical Society, and Santa's Hide-a-Way Hollow. Philanthropy Day has been growing each year since 2014, when that year's seniors ventured out beyond Chagrin Falls to volunteer in Ohio City.

"When I became the assistant principal, I wanted to use this as an opportunity to engage students in meaningful community service and to build on the school's relationships with community partners," said Assistant Principal Amanda Rassi, who organizes the day each year. "We believe that service work is a social responsibility and that a single person performing an act of kindness does have the power to make a difference. our students are making a difference."



Rocky River Middle School Takes Part in One Book, One Day

On September 9, students and staff at Rocky River Middle School (RRMS) took part in One Book, One Day. Designed for students in grades 4-8, the program uses the novel *All of the Above* by Cleveland author Shelley Pearsall, with interior illustrations by Caldecott Medalist Javaka Steptoe, and students read the entire book in one day.

The book weaves together stories of four children and their quest to build the world's largest tetrahedron with their math teacher, Mr. Collins, and the community that surrounds them in a story about math, life and the importance of friendship.

Organized by RRMS English teacher Therese Konrad, the day began with a video message from Pearsall and followed with guest readers that included teachers, staff and coaches from around the district, Rocky River Mayor Pamela Bobst, Rocky River Police Chief George Lichman, Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine and RRHS senior and football standout Tommy Bebie. Guest readers recorded their segment of the book and videos were played in classrooms throughout the day.



Students took part in discussions and activities, including a chance to build their own tetrahedron. The RRMS cafeteria staff donned aprons from Willy Q's Barbecue, which is a setting in the book, and put together a lunch menu that corresponded with the book. Many RRMS staff wore blue jeans and a tie to mirror the look of Mr. Collins.

“Our principal Megan Rose was unbelievable with her support from day one,” Konrad said. “And because she was so supportive, that trickled down to the staff who were there to read chapters, make signs, decorate hallways and help with technology. One of the themes of the book is that people help each other out in a community and our staff did a great job of modeling that.”

The event was funded by a grant from the Rocky River Education Foundation and all students received a copy of the book.





North Royalton Elementary School Opens its Doors to Learning

On Saturday, August 28, 2021, North Royalton City Schools held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the official opening of the new 148,000 square-foot North Royalton Elementary School. The school is located at 16400 State Road adjacent to the Cleveland Metroparks Valley Parkway.

Fourth-grade students sang the National Anthem to kick off the festivities. Standing outside the main entrance of the new building with a long, purple ribbon stretched from pillar to pillar, Superintendent Michael Laub welcomed everyone to the joyous occasion. “We are very thankful to our community,” said Laub. “The building is very flexible and will allow our staff to be creative in the manner in which they engage our students.”

Board President Heidi Dolezal thanked the residents and cities of North Royalton and Broadview Heights for their support of this project. Much thanks went to the District’s Community Engagement Task Force, numerous support organizations, parents, teachers and staff, as well as the Committee For Royalton Schools Future who all played a key role allowing this project to become a reality. ThenDesign Architecture and Hammond Construction were the team who designed and constructed the new school. Assistant Superintendent Jim Presot served as project manager. “Our students of this District are the inspiration for this Board of Education,” said Dolezal. “On behalf of my fellow Board members, thank you. We are so very proud of this School District.”

Also present at the ribbon cutting ceremony was former superintendent, Greg Gurka. During the ceremony he said, “It truly is amazing to think that almost exactly two years ago we stood on a dirt laden field and broke ground to prepare for this magnificent structure,” said Gurka. “I wish the entire community, especially our students and staff, all the best as learning officially begins within these walls on Monday morning.”

Lead Principal Kirk Pavelich shared his excitement with the opening of the new building. “I cannot wait for the chance to work with such a wonderful group of people at this building, as we are beyond fortunate to combine the experience and expertise of the staff members from Albion, Royal View and Valley Vista Elementary Schools,” said Pavelich. “These former schools not only provided our community with years of memories and traditions, but they were also recognized at the national and state levels as Blue Ribbon and Hall of Fame award winners. We are eager to make that same impact at North Royalton Elementary School as we strive to enhance the educational opportunities for the preschool through grade four students in this District.”

Three fourth-grade students, Prachi Aswani, Anderson Kubec and Lyla Twardzik came to the podium to share what they are most excited for in their new school.

After the ribbon was cut and the doors were officially opened, the community enjoyed touring the new facility that is surrounded by the beauty of the



Cleveland Metroparks. The school is shaped like a flat capital letter “E” with two large outdoor courtyard areas facing north towards the woods. The District is excited to add a nature trail that will connect to the park in the near future.



Students and staff alike are in awe when they enter into the two-story main lobby that houses a huge carved bear, mounted television monitor, and purple and gold cushioned benches and seats with steps that lead to the second floor. Each grade has 12 teachers that are divided into three learning communities of approximately 100 students each.



The project was made possible through the passing of a \$89.9 million bond issue on May 2, 2017. Funds were used not only for this new elementary school project, but renovations and new construction at North Royalton High School as well as extensive renovations at North Royalton Middle School.



Kirtland Hornets Team up for Services

The Kirtland Hornets soccer team started off the 2021 season by winning in more ways than one. Following the girls' soccer game on August 13, both the boys' and girls' soccer teams partnered with their opponents from Eastlake North to host a soccer clinic as part of the Empower Sports program.



Empower Sports is a nonprofit organization that provides sports and exercise programs for children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities. Its mission is to enrich the lives of athletes of diverse challenges through exercise and sports while promoting kindness, character and tolerance.

Student athletes participated in the program as part of the Ohio High School Athletic Association's Friday Night Football Initiative. There were six different stations in the clinic available for Empower Sports participants to sharpen their skills. A Kirtland or North student athlete was paired with a participant while other students acted as coaches at each of the stations.

Kirtland Senior Macy McIntosh said in an Ohio Varsity article that it was a new opportunity for Kirtland athletes as they had run a children's camp before, but not for those with disabilities. "It was



super nice to have our teams come together to give back to those kids and it's definitely something I hope other people can see and want to take part in with the program they have at Empower. It's nice to know the love of the sport can bring us all together," said McIntosh.

The Kirtland girls' soccer Coach Ed Bradac said having the student athletes work with the Empower Sports participants fell in line with one of the team's core values, which states that the truly extraordinary do something every day.

"It was great to see our women's team interact with Empower athletes and the teams from North, it was fun to watch," said Bradac.

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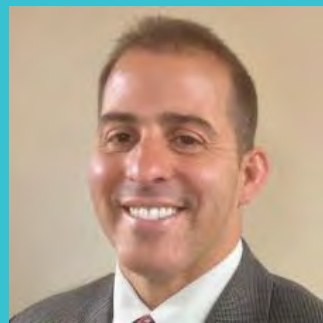


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