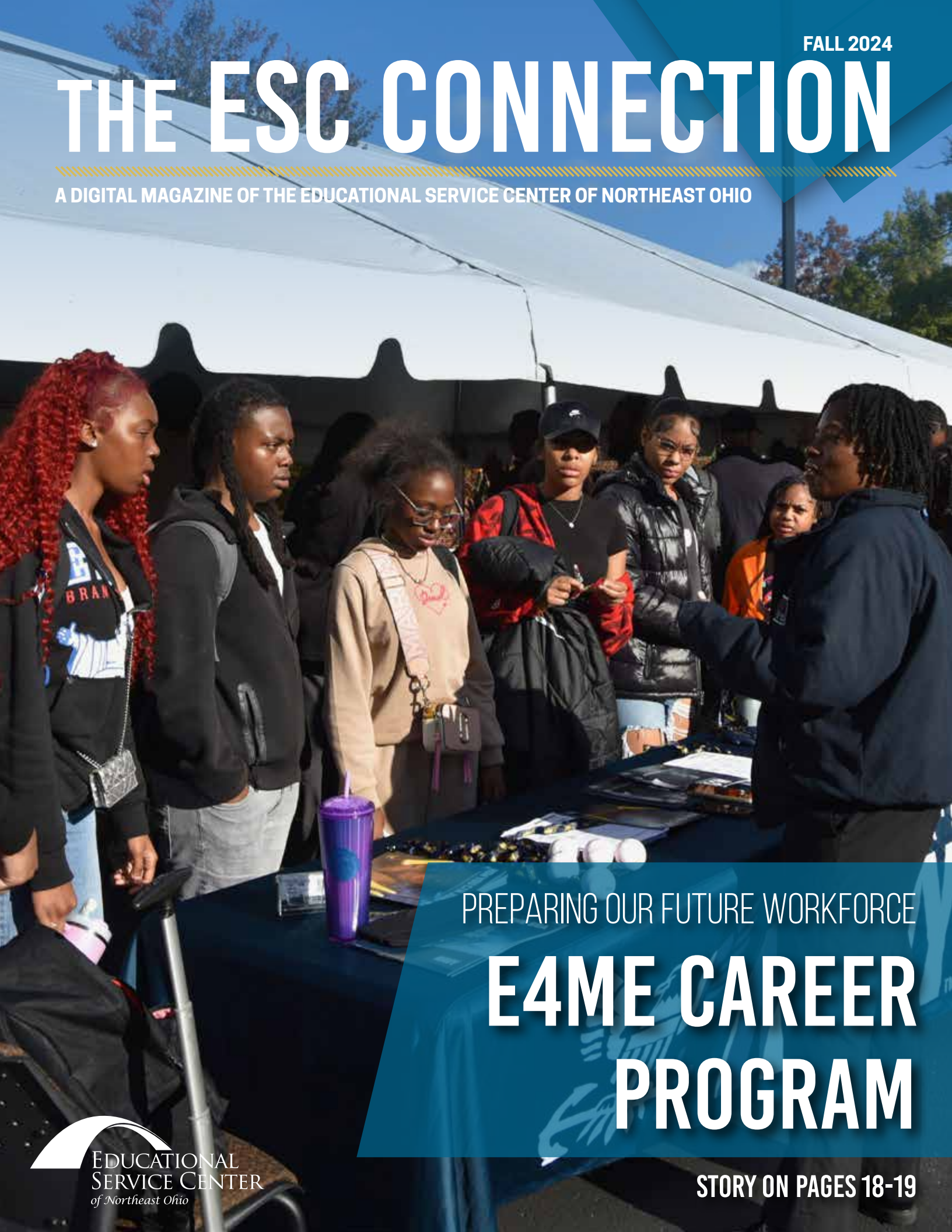


FALL 2024

THE ESC CONNECTION

A DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER OF NORTHEAST OHIO



PREPARING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

E4ME CAREER PROGRAM



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Superintendent's Message

By Dr. Bob Mengerink, *Superintendent*

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the Fall 2024 edition of our ESC Newsletter! As we move into the heart of the school year, I'm reminded of the incredible dedication and passion that educators across our region bring to their work. This year, like every year, presents its challenges, but it also brings tremendous opportunities for growth, collaboration, and impact.

We've been focused on expanding our services and increasing our capacity to meet the ever-evolving needs of our districts. Through innovative programs, professional development opportunities, and strategic partnerships, we continue to prioritize what's best for students and educators alike. From our Career Pathways initiatives to enhancing student wellness, we are excited about the strides we are making to ensure every student has the support they need to thrive.

As always, I encourage you to reach out to our team if you need assistance, have questions, or simply want to discuss ideas. Our mission remains to serve you, and together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of our students.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Bob

Cover photo: The ESC of Northeast Ohio and the First Ring Schools Collaborative hosted an E4Me Career Program on October 24 at the ESC of Northeast Ohio. More than 200 high school students from schools from Cleveland and inner ring suburbs learned about their employment, entrepreneurship, enlistment and education opportunities after high school graduation.



Pre-K Teachers Gathered for Fall Professional Development Academy

More than 150 local Pre-K educators came together for a day of professional learning and collaboration at the Fall 2024 Pre-K Teacher Academy on Friday, November 1. The event, held at the ESC of Northeast Ohio in Independence, offered educators valuable opportunities to explore best practices in early childhood education.

The full-day academy, which ran from 7:45 am to 2:45 pm, featured sessions focused on enhancing teaching strategies and strengthening classroom instruction for the district's youngest learners. Teachers participated in professional development activities designed to support their important work with pre-kindergarten students. They also engaged in a plenary on "Unpacking the Standards," networking, raffles, and two breakout sessions. "We were especially grateful for Diane



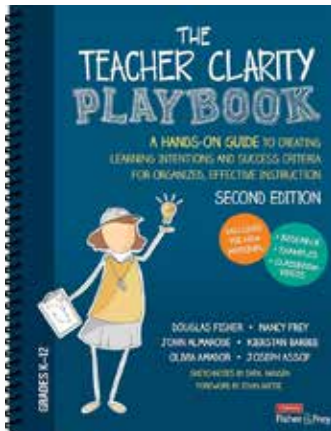
Fox, the Deputy Director for the Division of Training and Technical Assistance for opening the plenary and Kim Davis and Elizabeth Sailer Agnew from the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce for presenting," said Tippi Foley, Career Pathways & Early Childhood Consultant for the ESC of Northeast Ohio.

The successful event was made possible through the efforts of the organizing committee and generous support from sponsors, who helped create this valuable learning opportunity for early childhood educators. They include The Literacy Cooperative, Starting Point, The Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, East Cleveland Schools, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Invest in Children and the First Ring Schools Collaborative.

Teacher Clarity Bootcamp

By Jamie Smith and James “Ike” Holzapfel, Teaching and Learning Consultants, ESC of Northeast Ohio

As author and researcher, Brene Brown says, “Clear is Kind,” but Teacher Clarity is not just being clear. It is a four-part process for K-12 educators which includes analyzing the standards, sequencing learning progressions, elaborating on learning intentions, and creating success criteria.



The ESC of Northeast Ohio hosted nearly 70 educators in a full-day of learning called “Teacher Clarity Bootcamp.” The Teacher Clarity Playbook was the focus of the work where participants were led through the

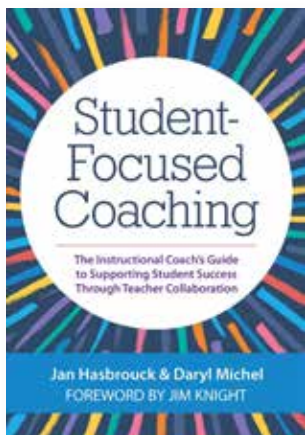
four-part process of Teacher Clarity to dive deeper into interpreting their Ohio Learning Standards.

Several districts brought teams of teachers to the training, including building administrators to join in the learning. One district brought several administrators and central office staff to ground their leadership team before launching into a district-wide focus on Teacher Clarity in their K-12 PLCs. Educators engaged in learning about the 4-part process of Teacher Clarity then worked through a standard using the Teacher Clarity process with a team. After some productive struggle and discussion, they used some of the AI tools that can help teachers with the Teacher

Clarity Process, including a customizable AI tool authored by School Joy. If you are interested in learning more about Teacher Clarity, this learning can also be brought to your district.

Teacher Clarity is not just another thing, it’s the main thing when it comes to improving outcomes for students. This one-day training or “Bootcamp” was an introduction to a process that can be applied to curriculum mapping and PLC work, and when paired with using data well to prioritize standards, is proving to have great results for student learning outcomes.





Student-Focused Coaching

By Julie Haluch, Teaching and Learning Consultant, ESC of Northeast Ohio

On June 4-5, 2024, approximately 100 educators gathered at the ESC of Northeast Ohio to learn more about Student-Focused Coaching from author Daryl Michel and

coaching expert Dawn Brookhart. “A widely used, highly effective approach to student success, Student-Focused Coaching helps instructional coaches and teachers work collaboratively to improve student outcomes using evidence-based practices” (Hasbrouck & Michel).

Michel emphasized that Student-Focused Coaching is cooperative, ideally collaborative. Before the work can begin, coaches need to build relationships with teachers. Coaches begin with

cooperation and hopefully collaboration follows. There is no judgment or evaluation in student-focused coaching. Together the teacher and coach make a plan and, over time, decide together if it is working and what changes may be needed.

Throughout the day, coaches and district leaders were engaged in active learning focused on the use of data to enhance student learning, working with administrative partners, and learning to be a collaborative problem-solver. Attendees walked away from the two days full of ideas to make coaching successful in their schools.

For more information about Student-Focused Coaching, see the book *Student-Focused Coaching* by Jan Hasbrouck and Daryl Michel, Brookes Publishing, 2022.

New Early Childhood Professional Learning Community (PLC)

The ESC of Northeast Ohio is facilitating a new network for district leaders who support early childhood education. The Early Childhood PLC provides an opportunity to network and learn from each other. There was a meeting on October 14 and then another one on November 18. The spring meetings are scheduled for February 10 and March 10, 2025. Participants will explore topics of interest to early childhood providers, learn about resources and best practices, consider problems of practice, and learn about Department of Children and Youth updates.

For information, contact:

Tippi Foley, ESC Early Childhood Director

tippi.foley@escneo.org

Project Prevent Marks Five Years of *Advancing Student Wellness in Northeast Ohio*

This fall, the ESC of Northeast Ohio's Student Wellness Department concludes its five-year Project Prevent grant (DOE-1894-0006), funded by the U.S. Department of Education to enhance the region's capacity to identify, assess, and support students exposed to violence. Through expert consultation, professional development, and technical assistance—and by building on Project AWARE's foundations to expand the ESC's Student Wellness Department (SWD)—the initiative strengthened infrastructure across Northeast Ohio to address school-based violence and foster partnerships with families and communities. Though Project Prevent focused primarily on seven priority districts in Cuyahoga County, its impact extended to over 150 schools and organizations.

Project Prevent offered expert consultation, professional development, and technical assistance to meet evolving needs, adapt to new legislation, and integrate emerging technologies. Longitudinal data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and Ohio Educational Management Information System (EMIS) indicate improvements in student safety and engagement within partner districts, contrasting national trends. Through the initiative, districts saw expanded access to mental health

support and strengthened early intervention strategies, creating a meaningful impact for students.

Project Prevent also strengthened system partnerships in Cuyahoga County through targeted programs like the attendance mediation program, Handle With Care initiative, and extensive professional development. Key violence prevention initiatives included CSTAG (Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines) training, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training, Restorative Practices training, and the Integrated Systems Framework (ISF). SWD staff played a pivotal role in supporting districts with a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, emphasizing data-driven decision-making. Additionally, the initiative provided templates and tools to help districts meet legislative requirements and align within a tiered framework. This work will continue in our SWD as well as many more options.

The ESC's work through Project Prevent has made a significant impact on student and staff well-being, safety, and engagement. Moving forward, the Student Wellness Department will continue

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE OUR STUDENT WELLNESS E-NEWSLETTER!

Contact Gina Woodward at gina.woodward@escneo.org to sign up.

[View archived issues](#)



these efforts, offering even more options to districts. This includes ongoing technical assistance and professional development to meet evolving needs, enhanced MTSS frameworks, and additional initiatives that build resilient communities and supportive school environments. We remain committed to helping schools navigate challenges and foster positive, inclusive learning conditions for all. Our goal is to help schools navigate ongoing challenges and build a stronger, more resilient community. Let's continue to work together to promote a healthier, more supportive learning environment for all.

The comprehensive Project Prevent report, prepared by the Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University, will be released this winter, highlighting the progress made in fostering resilience, community engagement, and school safety across Northeast Ohio.



State Support Team Region 3 (SST3) Hosts Community Collaborative Meeting



On September 18, 2024, State Support Team Region 3 (SST3) hosted the Community Collaborative Meeting, which brought together representatives from various local organizations and neighborhoods, including Mt. Pleasant, East Cleveland, and Garfield. These monthly meetings, held on the third Wednesday of each month, provide a space for community leaders, organizations, and neighborhood partners to discuss strategies for improving local services and addressing community needs.

The September 18 session was held in person, allowing participants to engage face-to-face and foster stronger collaboration. Topics of discussion included ongoing efforts to support neighborhood development, improve access to essential services, and address key challenges faced by residents.

SST3 provided an overview of the services provided to district and community schools in Cuyahoga County and the resources available on the [ESC website](#), emphasizing specific support for families of students with disabilities.

This collaborative is organized by Murtis Taylor Human Services System, a vital partner in the region, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and community needs are met. Future meetings will continue to alternate between virtual and in-person sessions, with the next meeting scheduled for October 16, 2024, via Microsoft Teams.

For more information or to join the upcoming meetings, community members can reach out to Alfrie Hudson at ahudson@murtistaylor.org.

For support with Family and Community Engagement within the SST3, community schools and districts in Cuyahoga County can reach out to Rhonda Reid at rhonda.reid@escneo.org.



COMMUNITY *Collaborative* MEETING

JOIN EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH

Representing:

Mt.Pleasant, East Cleveland, and Garfield Collaboratives

For more information email:

ahudson@murtistaylor.org or bleslie@murtistaylor.org



JOIN EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY



**SCAN CODE TO
JOIN MEETING**



MURTIS TAYLOR
HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM

- **January 17th 2024 Via Microsoft Teams**
- February 21st 2024 Via Microsoft Teams
- **March 20th In Person Location TBD**
- April 17th Via Microsoft Teams
- **May 15th Via Microsoft Teams**
- June 19th in Person Location TBD
- **August 21st Via Microsoft Teams**
- September 18th In Person Location TBD
- **October 16th Via Microsoft Teams**
- November 20th Via Microsoft Teams

College Now to Support Federal \$27 Million GEAR UP Partnership Projects with **ESC of Northeast Ohio and Cleveland Metropolitan School District**

The ESC of Northeast Ohio and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) will each partner with College Now Greater Cleveland to provide postsecondary education support services to more than 4,800 students.

The two GEAR UP partnership grants awarded to the ESC for the First Ring Schools Collaborative and CMSD are, respectively, \$3.6 million and \$204,000 per year through 2031. Organizations in only two other U.S. states received more than one GEAR UP grant. As a grant partner, College Now will substantially increase the number of students who are prepared for postsecondary education, who enroll in college and who graduate with a degree.

GEAR UP – or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs – partnership grants are awarded by the U.S. Department of Education with the sole purpose of increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

“These grants are game changers for College Now, as we already serve many of the 11 districts in the grants, primarily at the high school level. This opportunity allows us to reach more students and families earlier, starting with middle school students, so that by the time they begin high school, a college-going mindset will already be deeply rooted in them. Students will be even more

excited about the possibilities of their futures,” said Dr. Michele Scott Taylor, College Now president and incoming CEO.

There is currently a misalignment between employer demand and credentialed worker supply in Northeast Ohio. Economists estimate that 65% of the region’s jobs will require a 2-year degree, 4-year degree or high-value industry recognized certificate to maintain a competitive economy. Ohio currently falls short with only 51% of the state’s population meeting these qualifications. According to the Ohio Excels 2020 report, Ohio needs nearly 1 million more adults with high-value credentials and postsecondary degrees in order to keep up with employer needs and keep the state’s economy moving.

“Research purports that occupations that offer family-sustaining wages, including health benefits, paid time off, support for retirement and a promise for future employment and income almost all require postsecondary credentials — a degree or high-value certificate,” said Dr. Scott Taylor. “The work we do with students and families will continue to empower them to reach their full potential and positively contribute to society in Northeast Ohio and beyond.”

The ESC facilitates and supports the First Ring Schools Collaborative which represents 16 public school districts that surround the city of Cleveland. In 10 of the districts, GEAR UP will serve 4,600 middle school students in grades 6 and 7 through

high school graduation with college and career programs and services. At these partnering districts, 80% of students are from low-income backgrounds and will be among the first in their families to pursue a postsecondary education. The 10 districts include Brooklyn, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, East Cleveland, Euclid, Garfield Heights, Maple Heights, Parma, Richmond Heights, South Euclid-Lyndhurst and Warrensville Heights City Schools.

Similarly, CMSD's grant will serve 255 current middle school students in grades 5, 6 and 7 at Alfred Benesch, George Washington Carver and Marion-Sterling Schools. The grant will follow these students through their high school graduations, most from CMSD's East Technical High School.

Through year-round programming during the school day, after school and the summer months, College Now's college and career advisors will offer student cohorts academic and career advising and exploration, immersive college visits and test preparation support focused on postsecondary readiness, access, affordability and success. Through this process, College Now advisors will work with students to design their career goals and determine the best-fit education pathway needed to achieve them.

To support students and families in preparing for postsecondary education, this GEAR UP project includes partnerships with Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland State University, the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium and the Higher Education Compact.

After graduating from high school and the GEAR UP programming by 2031, many students will qualify for College Now scholarships. Eligible CMSD graduates will be able to attend postsecondary education with the Say Yes Cleveland scholarship. Scholarship recipients will then be matched one-to-one with a College Now mentor. Mentors help students navigate the college landscape and persist to completion as well as provide students with much-needed social capital that can help them reach their career goals.

About College Now Greater Cleveland

College Now Greater Cleveland is the oldest postsecondary education access organization in the U.S. with the mission to increase postsecondary education attainment in Northeast Ohio through college and career access advising, financial aid counseling and scholarship and retention services. Serving more than 30,000 people each year, College Now has helped students pursue educational opportunities that empower them to embark on rewarding careers, which in turn, strengthens our community's economy.

For more information, go to www.collegenowgc.org.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Awards \$1.8M to Transform Student Health Education Across Northeast Ohio



The ESC of Northeast Ohio is proud to announce a groundbreaking partnership between Case Western Reserve University and 15 Cuyahoga County school districts that has secured \$1.8 million in federal funding to revolutionize health education in our region.

The grant, awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through its ["What Works in Schools"](#) initiative, will support a comprehensive model designed to enhance academic achievement by promoting long-term student health and wellness across K-12 education.

"This collaborative effort represents a significant step forward in our mission to support the complete well-being of students across Northeast Ohio," said Dr. Bill Wagner, Director of the First Ring Schools Collaborative at the ESC of Northeast Ohio. "By bringing together educators, health experts, and community stakeholders, we're creating a unified approach to student health

that will serve as a model for districts nationwide."

The initiative unites Case Western Reserve's Prevention Research

Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (PRCHN) with the First Ring Schools Collaborative, supported by ESC of Northeast Ohio and the Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) Coalition of the Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau. Together, they will develop and implement evidence-based strategies focusing on nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and substance-use prevention.

Participating districts include: Beachwood, Bedford, Berea, Brooklyn, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, East Cleveland, Fairview Park,





Garfield Heights, Mayfield, Orange, Richmond Heights, Shaker Heights, Solon, South Euclid-Lyndhurst and Warrensville Heights.

“We believe all children are entitled to both resources and opportunities to build and foster a healthy life,” said Kristina Knight, project director at Case Western Reserve. “Schools are a vital setting for improving health outcomes, and, together, we will work to ensure that every child has the tools they need to thrive physically, mentally and emotionally.”

The program launched on October 28 with a kick-off event at the Prevention Research Center, marking the beginning of this transformative initiative. District leaders discussed questions such as What are we doing to support the health of our school communities? What could we be doing to



support the health of our school communities? What is the best way to work across districts to improve health? How do we engage youth as leaders, across districts, to support their collective

health? The Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University will provide academic expertise, research capabilities, and evaluation support, while the 15 local school districts will implement the program.

The initiative includes training for educators, workshops for families, and the integration of new curricula aligned with the CDC’s guidelines to foster healthier school environments.



Plans are already in place to expand the program to additional

Cuyahoga County districts in the coming year, with the goal of establishing a replicable model for school-based health initiatives nationwide.



Manufacturing Bootcamp for Teachers

The ESC of Northeast Ohio was pleased to partner with Ashland University to offer a summer Manufacturing Bootcamp for Teachers from June 10 through June 18, 2024. Bootcamps were offered around the state with support from Lt. Jon Husted's office to provide educators with opportunities to learn about manufacturing careers and to meet with business leaders during site visits to manufacturing facilities. Participating teachers earned three graduate credits as they deepened their understanding about high demand careers in Northeast Ohio to better prepare their students for existing and future careers.

The ESC hosted teachers from East Cleveland, Garfield Heights, Lakewood, and Twinsburg City Schools and from Auburn Career Center, who learned about the Northeast Ohio manufacturing sector from representatives of Manufacturing Works, Conxus NEO, MAGNET, and Geauga Growth Partnership. Panelists, who are now welders, machinists, and CNC routers at local manufacturing companies, talked about their pathways from high school to careers, job skills, education and training, and current apprenticeship programs.



Bootcamp participants had the opportunity to engage in hands-on application with manufacturing circuits and electronics, CNC software and routing lab equipment, as well as during site visits to Cuyahoga Valley Career Center,

Lakewood Waste Water Treatment Plant, MAGNET, Great Lakes Growers, and Great Lakes Cheese manufacturers. Teachers

received classroom resources, articles and reports about Northeast Ohio's economy, and conducted their own personal research about area

manufacturers. As a result of the bootcamp, teachers are sharing new content knowledge and resources about regional manufacturing with their students.

Site Visit to Lakewood Waste Water Treatment Plant



Site Visit to Great Lakes Cheese



Site Visit to MAGNET





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Children & Youth**
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Visit: www.helpmegrow.org/ASQ

Screen today. Shape tomorrow.

Families can now track their child's developmental skills through the [Sparkler: Play for Parenting](#) app and its built-in Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Available through Ohio's Help Me Grow program, the app and screening are FREE to Ohio families with children through age 5. Use access code OH upon download, and learn more at www.helpmegrow.org/ASQ.

First Ring Leadership Academy Kicks Off 2024–25 Program with Focus on Educational Leadership

The First Ring Leadership Academy (FRLA) launched its 2024-25 program on October 23 at the ESC of Northeast Ohio, bringing together educational leaders for a day of professional development and collaborative learning.

The session combined leadership development activities with practical applications for first ring school districts. Participants engaged in various interactive exercises, including Human Bingo and assessment of their leadership strengths through Gallup CliftonStrengths 34 analysis.

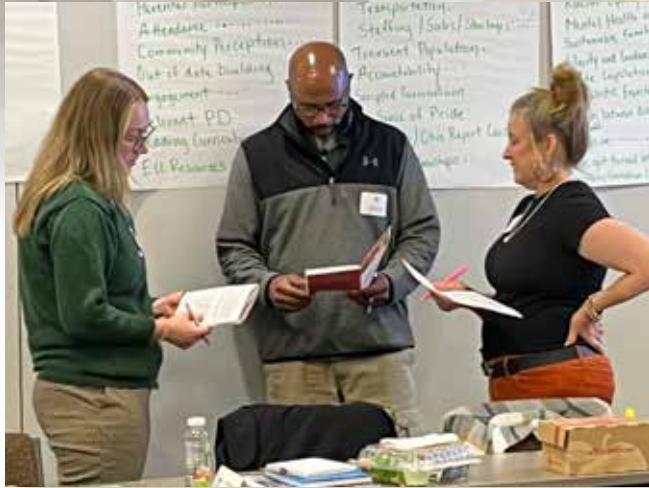
A key focus of the day was exploring what makes first ring school districts unique, with participants identifying both assets and challenges specific to their educational environments. The program also included examination of real-world case studies

and discussion of leadership principles from "Everyday People, Extraordinary Leadership" by Kouzes and Posner.

The academy, which will continue throughout the academic year, emphasizes practical leadership development while addressing the specific needs of first ring suburban school districts. The November session will explore the leadership principle "Model the Way."

The program demonstrates the ongoing commitment of first ring districts to develop strong educational leaders who understand and can address the unique challenges and opportunities in their communities. Academy participants are selected by their superintendents.







**EMPLOYMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
ENLISTMENT & EDUCATION**



The ESC of Northeast Ohio and the First Ring Schools Collaborative hosted An E4Me Career Program on October 24 at the ESC of Northeast Ohio. More than 200 high school students from schools from Berea, Brooklyn, Bedford, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Cuyahoga Heights, Maple Heights, Richmond Heights, East Cleveland, Warrensville, and Garfield Heights learned about their employment, entrepreneurship, enlistment and education opportunities after high school graduation.

There were 40+ panelists/presenters that work in different fields as well as all branches of the United States military who had the opportunity to interact with the students. One of the most common pieces of advice from the panelists was the importance of young adults developing soft skills... having a good work ethic, integrity, responsibility, being on time, having good communication skills and showing proper manners.

"We hope this day has inspired these students to think about their future in a new light and now have insight into making decisions on their next pathway," said Tippi Foley, Career Pathways & Early Childhood Consultant for the ESC of Northeast Ohio.



students said...

.... This career fair really opened my eyes to how many opportunities there are at different types of businesses.

... I was surprised at how many different jobs and branches there are within the military.

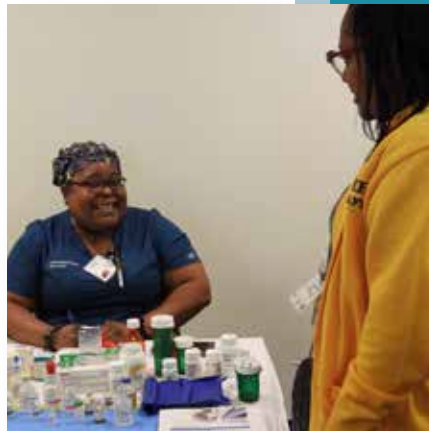
... Talking to the firefighters and seeing the truck and equipment locked in my choice to join the fire/EMS program.

... I received a great contact with a trade job, cement masonry, and even got the phone number of the representative who was at the career fair.

... This was a great trip that offered so many different options for post high school work.

special thanks

to our presenters and panelists:



- » Cuyahoga Valley Career Center Adult Education
- » Matrix Institute (auto tech training)
- » Baldwin Wallace University
- » John Carroll University
- » Kent State University
- » MAGNET
- » ComCon (Computer/Entrepreneur)
- » Love my Hair School of Cosmetology
- » RichMentality (clothing line)
- » Student Panelist CTE Marketing Program
- » Building Business Leaders of Tomorrow Today
- » Epicenter ABA Therapy
- » US Marshal Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force
- » FBI Cleveland
- » Metroparks
- » Richmond Heights Police
- » Federal Homeland Security
- » Ohio Dept of Natural Resources
- » Howley ASPIRE Nurse Scholars Program CCF
- » Metro Vet Academy
- » Brickworks
- » Cement Masons
- » Cleveland Builds
- » Tremco
- » Finishing Trades
- » Cement Masons
- » Sheet Metal Workers - Smart Local 33
- » Cleveland Builds
- » Cleveland Clinic Program Manager | Center for Youth & College Education
- » Greater Cleveland Partnership
- » Community Care Ambulance
- » BBL0TT Building Business Leaders of Tomorrow Today
- » Department of Natural Resources
- » Rust Belt Recruiting
- » US Army
- » US Navy
- » US Marines
- » Ohio Army National Guard
- » US Coast Guard
- » US AIR FORCE/Space Force
- » Euclid Fire Department



Twinsburg City Schools Educator Named *2025 Ohio Teacher of the Year*

The State Board of Education of Ohio named Daneé Pinckney, a high school English teacher at Twinsburg High School in the Twinsburg City School District, the 2025 Ohio Teacher of the Year.

“Ohio’s students interact every day with amazing teachers, so the challenge of selecting just one educator to represent those tens of thousands of wonderful educators around our state is daunting,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paul Craft. “Each year the selection committees at the regional and state levels do an amazing job of finding a candidate who reflects the excellence of the profession and their colleagues, and this year is no exception.”

Pinckney currently teaches 11th and 12th-grade English at Twinsburg High School. Her commitment to challenge herself professionally and personally led to the creation of a senior-level course on African American literature, addressing a need for representation sought by both students and community members. She obtained grant funding to support its implementation, and her efforts have enriched educational experiences for all students and staff. Additionally, her dedication to pursuing personal growth as an educator has earned her recognition as a Master Teacher Finalist by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and accolades such as the 2023 Twinsburg City Schools Teacher of the Year and a 2023 Fund for Teachers Fellow.

“Daneé Pinckney represents the best of what every educator should aspire to be; dedicated and passionate with a perfect balance of high

expectations for all students coupled with the will to provide whatever support those students need to be successful,” Mr. Craft said. “I couldn’t be more excited, on behalf of the State Board of Education, to congratulate her on this incredible achievement.”

Using literature as the anchor, Pinckney also works to encourage students’ engagement in community service and activism projects instilling in them a sense of social responsibility and civic engagement. Her students most recently collaborated with students in Ghana and led a schoolwide project building global community and empathy.

“I feel honored to have been able to see Daneé show her passion for her students and teaching through the Ohio Teacher of the Year process. It is a reminder of how lucky Ohio is to have talented teachers like Daneé,” State Board of Education President Paul LaRue said.

Daneé Pinckney started her teaching career in Columbus, Ohio after graduating from The Ohio State University. There she earned her Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Middle Childhood Education. Later, she realized her passions were more suited to high school, and she received her Ohio English K-12 Certification and went on to earn a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction: Educational Technology from Ashland University.



PASSPORT School Program

Guiding Extraordinary Individuals Toward a Future of Hope

For information, contact:

Lisa Adler, Supervisor

lisa.adler@escneo.org

440-688-1280

The school year started with a new teacher, Audrey. Audrey is teaching students in grades 1-6 and has been a great addition to the staff at Passport School.



Melissa, Passport's new Speech Language Pathologist, is working with their new student, Sophia, as she chooses between "more" and "all done" on the 2-location device.



Annual fall curriculum includes Julie teaching about apples and the class making a delicious applesauce to enhance the learning experience.



Connor and Brian and Clayton and Audrey use adapted bikes for exercising during leisure recreation time.



Dressed in character are Audrey (Barbaloot Bear from Lorax) and Bryson (Sam I Am from Green Eggs & Ham).



Virtual music time with Ms. Carol while Mary and Audrey help Clayton on the keyboard.



Ayden in the tree house at Orchard Hills Park.



Rob's class went to Patterson's Fruit Farm in Geauga County. The field trip was a culmination of the class studying apples and fruit in the fall horticulture unit. After making a purchase, Cody and Ayden listen to Johnny Ap-pleseed telling his story.



Izzy, Cody, Dae'Shon, Pete (volunteer) and Emily on the grounds of the farm.

CAPSTONE ACADEMY

For information, contact:

Mary Wideman, Program Administrator

mary.wideman@escneo.org

330-732-8249

Capstone Academy collaborates with 26 school districts to serve students in grades PK-12 (ages 3-22) with the most profound multiple disabilities and medically-complex needs. Through individualized learning plans and instruction, as well as attention to adaptive, therapeutic, and vocational needs, Capstone Academy provides students with an opportunity to experience success throughout their educational career. The curriculum incorporates content, concepts, and activities that foster cognitive, language, physical, and social-emotional development through the integration of multiple disciplines that allow students to experience personal and academic success.

This year promises to be filled with new opportunities and growth. Capstone's dedicated team of teachers, therapists, and paraprofessionals are committed to creating a positive and supportive learning environment where every child can thrive. Students take part in multisensory activities and engaging lessons to stimulate independence and learning.

The school week includes instruction in the core academic areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The high school students also participate in classes to meet the Ohio graduation requirements. All Ohio schools are required to teach academic standards called the Ohio Learning Standards (OLS). These standards provide the guidelines for what students are to learn in each subject and grade by the end of a school year. To accommodate the needs of the students, Capstone uses a modified set of standards. The Ohio Learning Standards – Extended (OLS-E) are commonly known as "the extended standards." These extended standards help to ensure students with significant intellectual disabilities are provided with multiple ways to learn and demonstrate knowledge. Students also participate in non-academic classes, such as Adapted Physical Activity (gym class), Integrated Arts, Snoezelen (multi-sensory activities), and vocational classes.



Crossroads Day *Treatment Center*

For information, contact:
Robin Kline
ESC Crossroads Program
robin.kline@escneo.org

Crossroads Day Treatment Center held their annual evening fall open house in October with a high turnout of families and district/community members stopping in to meet staff, enjoy food and games and even enter into a raffle. Also on hand were other service providers within the Crossroads Health organization to assist parents with resources, contacts and services. In addition, prior to the start of the open house, there was a meet and greet to introduce the program's new program manager, Jessica Ward. A great time was had by all.





EDUCATION IN NORTHEAST OHIO

| CELEBRATING THE SUCCESSES
| OF OUR STUDENTS & DISTRICTS



Cover Picture: North Royalton Schools Embrace “Start with Hello” Initiative Across All Grade Levels (story on p.30-31)



Students Explore the Lake Erie Watershed Through Community Partnership

This fall, Beachwood High School partnered with Friends of Euclid Creek and the City of Beachwood's Department of Public Works to offer a unique learning opportunity for students in Marquiza Russell's AP Environmental Science and newly introduced Watershed-based Environmental Science classes.

The activities and lessons focused on the importance of Beachwood as a hub for six watersheds within the Lake Erie watershed. Students explored the city's rich history, its park system, and the diversity of native and invasive species.

The experience began with a two-day lesson on native, non-native, and invasive species led by Brandon Weeber, education chair for Friends of Euclid Creek. Students used the "Picture this" app to identify plants and trees around their school.

The highlight of the program was the Beachwood Park field trip led by Chris Vild, environmental manager of the City of Beachwood. Students conducted fieldwork, observed various species, and participated in a hands-on water quality testing activity to learn about the importance of maintaining water quality. Mr. Vild's knowledge about the area and the city services provided an important glimpse on how taking care of our environment is a community effort.

The Beachwood Park walk fostered students' appreciation and sense of responsibility towards the natural world. "By actively participating in environmental science activities, students are becoming stewards of the environment, equipped with the knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on their community," said Mrs. Russell.

This collaboration between Beachwood High School, the Department of Public Works, and Friends of Euclid Creek demonstrates how education and community engagement can work together to inspire the next generation of environmental leaders.





Garfield Heights City Schools Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for New High School Football Field

The Cleveland Browns and Garfield Heights City Schools hosted a field dedication ceremony for the new ForeverLawn high-quality synthetic turf field in association with Ohio Cat at Garfield Heights High School on October 1.

The new field marks the 15th field surface provided to Ohio schools and communities by the Browns, courtesy of the Haslam and Johnson families as well as Browns Give Back, since the team's long-term field initiative launched eight years ago in May 2016. A primary focus of the Browns' field project is to offer youth educational tools through outdoor classrooms, which offer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities that support attendance, school engagement, and overall personal growth. Garfield Heights City School District has been a partner of the Stay in the Game! Attendance Network since 2021 and is committed to improving school attendance. Student engagement is a driver of student attendance, and through the installation of the new turf field at Garfield Heights High School, the district aims to create engagement opportunities to help students get excited to attend school every day.

"This is an exciting day for the Garfield Heights City Schools, one that many have awaited for a long time," said Superintendent Dr. Richard D. Reynolds. "We'd like to thank the Cleveland Browns, Haslam and Johnson Families, and everyone else for transforming our complex, and brightening our futures!"





English Classes Restructured at Cuyahoga Heights High School

Students taking English at Cuyahoga Heights High School (CHHS) will be more engaged with the restructuring of courses and the addition of four semester-long classes at the junior and senior levels.

Beginning this school year, freshmen and sophomores will still take the traditional English 1 and 2 courses (now named English Foundations 1 and 2). Then as juniors and seniors, they can take a one-semester class called Fiction Perspectives (a blend of the previous English 4 and Advanced Placement {AP} Literature classes) and another called Nonfiction Perspectives (a blend of the previous English 3 and AP Language classes).

Finally, they can now choose two of the four new electives: Sci-Fi and Superheroes, Fiction to Film, World Mythology, and Sports Literature. All of the new courses incorporate Ohio's learning standards for English language arts.

"We are thrilled to offer these courses to our students!" said Megan Neville, CHHS English language arts department coordinator. The department brainstormed ideas to inject some life back into required English 3 (junior) and English 4 (senior) courses. Both were yearlong courses for students who did not choose the AP track or take off-campus College Credit Plus for English. "Teachers were mindful that some students were

not engaging with course material, and the idea came up to make junior and senior year more like college, where students could take semester-long electives to earn their English credits,” explained Neville. “These new electives are more focused, more intensive, and more tailored to their interests, and they are only one-semester long – which to our students sounds more doable,” said Neville. “My Sports Literature class doesn’t even start until January, but I’ve already met several students who are excited to be enrolled and are eager to share their love of sports with me!” she noted. Several students have inquired about taking one or more of the new classes for elective credit.

“The new choices contribute to academic success by helping students realize that they may love reading or can master the finer elements of writing,” said Neville. “They just needed an opportunity to read and write about subjects that matter to them to find that out.”

Neville thanked the Guidance Department, administrators, and Board members for working with the English Department to keep the students’ educational experiences at the forefront of their priorities.



NEW ENGLISH COURSES AT CHHS

SCI-FI AND SUPERHEROES

In this course, students will explore literature as they study classic and contemporary science fiction, graphic novels, comic books, and superheroes.

FICTION TO FILM

This course uses fiction, nonfiction, historical fiction, and nonfiction/memoir to explore the relationship between literature and cinema.

WORLD MYTHOLOGY

This course provides an understanding of myths, legends, and folklore from cultures and regions around the world. Students will learn to identify recurring themes and understand the influence of mythology on human history and contemporary society.

SPORTS LITERATURE

Students will study classic and contemporary novels, short stories, essays, poems, and memoirs to broaden their appreciation of sports, including its cultural significance, effects on personal development, and influence on history and society.



North Royalton Schools Embrace “Start with Hello” Initiative Across All Grade Levels

North Royalton City Schools have united to promote a culture of inclusivity, empathy, and student connection through the “Start with Hello” initiative, a program developed by the Sandy Hook Promise. This comprehensive approach spans from the elementary level to high school, aiming to foster a supportive and connected school community district-wide.

Elementary School Embraces Inclusivity

At North Royalton Elementary School (NRES), the “Start with Hello” program is seamlessly integrated into the students’ daily routine. Building on the school’s morning pledge, Principal Kirk Pavelich emphasizes the program’s alignment with the Bear Way values, which champion positive peer interactions. The program focuses on three core principles: recognizing loneliness, reaching out to help, and starting conversations. Students engage with interactive storybooks, videos, and activities led by school counselors and media tech staff throughout the school year. School Counselor Jennifer Nemeth highlights the program’s positive reception, noting that it empowers students to connect and support one another. The initiative’s impact was celebrated during the NRES Start with Hello Spirit Week from October 7-11.

Middle School Champions Empathy and Connection

North Royalton Middle School’s implementation of the “Start with Hello” initiative began the first week

of school, August 26-30. Principal Erin Calabrese is enthusiastic about the program’s alignment with the school’s values, known as the Bear Way. The middle school version of the program included watching a social inclusion video, participating in a “Hello Buddy” icebreaker activity, and a “Wear Green Challenge” to visually reinforce the message of inclusivity. The school cafeteria was adorned with “hello” messages to create a welcoming atmosphere. The program will continue to be a focal point throughout the year, with a refresher planned for the second semester.

High School Focuses on Building Connections

North Royalton High School launched its version of the “Hello Buddy” program on August 26, aimed at enhancing student communication skills and overall attendance. This initiative is part of the broader “Start with Hello” campaign, which was established following the Sandy Hook tragedy and aligns with Ohio’s House Bill 123 on student safety and well-being. The high school’s program involved a week of activities, including watching the “Start with Hello” video, participating in “Hello Buddy” exchanges, and signing the Hello Pledge. Students were encouraged to stay connected with their assigned buddies, particularly when either was absent. The week concluded with NoRo Spirit Day, celebrating school spirit through purple and gold attire. Staff and teachers are committed to reinforcing the importance of supporting one another and maintaining communication, ensuring that students feel seen and supported.

District-Wide Commitment

The “Start with Hello” initiative at North Royalton City Schools reflects a district-wide commitment to fostering a more inclusive, connected, and empathetic environment for students of all ages. By incorporating the program into daily routines and school activities, each level—from elementary to high school—works toward the shared goal of creating a supportive community where every student feels valued and connected.





Student Choice Drives Curriculum: Independence High School Personalizing Course Selection Process

Independence High School (IHS) has taken a step towards personalizing education, adjusting its course selection process for the current academic year. The results? A surge in student engagement, diversified class rosters, and a campus buzzing with excitement for learning.

In a departure from previous years, IHS opened its entire course catalog to students last spring, allowing them to request any class that piqued their interest. The only exceptions were courses naturally designed to run every other year.

“IHS has opened me up to many new interests and hobbies and that is due to the ability to take a variety of different classes,” said senior Sofia Smotek. “I have found myself interested in new subjects that I would not have thought about before, and I owe that to the unlimited possibilities I am exposed to here at Independence High School.”

“The array of opportunities and class variety has opened up so many doors for me at Independence High School,” said senior Alberta Moreal. “Student involvement has increased, while students now want to learn and expand their talents. Speaking from experience, the electives have been a rewarding way for me to branch out of my

comfort zone and challenge myself. I joined two woodshop classes last year, where I problem-solved, built multiple things like cutting boards and jewelry boxes while being artistically creative. This opportunity can help students like me and so many others to dive deep into new interests and develop more well-rounded character traits. It is a gift to have these choices and chances at Independence High School.”

As the school year progresses, the administration plans to gather data on student performance and satisfaction to refine the process for next year. “This is just the beginning,” said Principal Mike Janatovich. “We’re committed to continually improving how we serve our students’ educational needs and interests.”





Tackle Project Delivers 165 Cookie Kits to Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital

The first week of October, Chardon Hilltopper football players baked and then delivered 165 cookie decorating kits to Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital. The cookie kits were assembled in partnership with D is For Delicious.

Since 2019, Chardon High School football players have raised \$46,420 for various philanthropic initiatives, supporting several local organizations, through the Tackle Project.

"We do one project every month of the football season and added the Tim Tebow's Night to Shine Prom for special needs children held every year in February," Mrs. Kim Vujaklija, Tackle Project advisor, said. "We also got to hand out some boxes to patients leaving the hospital. Truly awesome!"



On top of delivering the cookie kits, Tackle Project members also got to hear from an art therapist and psychologist at the clinic, who spoke to them about mental health and life after sports.



"They emphasized the importance of finding a passion after sports are over. That hits home a lot with the senior boys and all the boys who are injured. Men's mental health is often not talked about, and I think they did a great job of shedding some light and inspiration in finding purpose after high school," Mrs. Vujaklija said.

Up next, the Tackle Project will collect canned foods to donate to the Geauga County Veteran Food Pantry.



Chagrin Falls Educational Foundation Brings Cutting-Edge Anatomage Table to District

Nearly a year since Chagrin Falls High School received an Anatomage Table through a generous donation from the Chagrin Falls Educational Foundation (CFEF), students and staff have become fully invested in using this cutting-edge device. The table has revolutionized the school's anatomy and physiology curriculum and is providing students with a deeply engaging learning experience.

The initiative to secure the grant was led by Lisa Salyers, a distinguished educator who has devoted 30 years to Chagrin Falls Schools and was honored as Ohio Teacher of the Year in 2022. "The Anatomage Table has shown to be a very impactful and effective tool for teaching and learning," said Salyers. "The table permits our students to interact with exceptional digital images in the classroom while being engaged in ways that have proven to be successful in high schools, colleges and universities around the country." In addition, Salyers says, "The Anatomage Table allows users to visualize anatomy in a very accurate three-dimensional way resulting in an unparalleled experience that offers an extraordinary level of the most accurate anatomy."

This past summer, Salyers attended the national Anatomage Conference in California, with partial funding from the Chagrin Falls PTO, to deepen her understanding of the Anatomage Table. She joined hundreds of high school teachers, career tech teachers, nursing educators, and medical professionals to learn ways to integrate the Anatomage Table in the classroom. She acquired

a complimentary one-year digital subscription for her students, featuring a variety of virtual lessons and activities, as well as access to Table on Cloud, a spinoff of the Anatomage Table accessible

on students' computers. Additionally, Anatomage has rolled out the latest upgrade that includes Anatomage's real time physiology which permits students to interact with and observe living body functions as they happen in real time. Examples of the upgrades include a 12-Lead ECG, developmental anatomy, glucose homeostasis, renal physiology, and respiration to name a few. All these updates are appreciated and will significantly enhance the anatomy experience in the classroom.

On September 24, Salyers brought anatomy and physiology students to John Carroll University to explore its health sciences programs. They were welcomed by Dr. Melissa Cole, the Dean of the College of Health and a 1998 graduate of Chagrin Falls High School. Dr. Cole discussed a variety of qualities that make people good for the healthcare industry, while her colleagues, Dr. Dawn Boettcher and Dr. Tara Jenner-Donaldson, presented the undergraduate offerings and guided the students through simulations in the new labs.



This trip further connected our students to careers in anatomy and strengthened their ties to the community.

With the generosity of the Chagrin Falls community, the Chagrin Falls Educational Foundation has been able to bring this innovative device to students.

“The foundation is deeply grateful to each and every individual who contributed to this project,” said Board Chair Ashley Maier, Chagrin Falls Educational Foundation.

The Anatomage Table represents a bold step towards transforming education in the Chagrin Falls School District. This technology is impacting the way students learn about anatomy and physiology.

This immersive learning experience not only helps inspire students who are interested in the pursuit of careers in science, medicine, and technology, but also fosters a greater appreciation for the complexity and beauty of life in a visual representation not

previously possible via traditional methods.

“The Chagrin Falls Educational Foundation exists to support innovative educational experiences in the Chagrin Falls School District,” says Maier. “The funding of the Anatomage Table is a prime example of how the foundation can make a difference.”

“The Anatomy Table has been a great addition to the class,” said Ryan Curtiss, senior and co-president of the Chagrin Falls Educational Foundation Student Board. “It’s a great tool for Mrs. Salyers to help us understand where

everything is in the body and how it all works. It can split the cadaver into different organ systems or regions based on what we’re learning. It also allows us to cut the cadaver to view the insides of organs, tissues, and bones. The website that comes with it is a great homework tool that makes learning much easier.”

“The Anatomy Table has been an amazing tool during our lessons,” said Sean McKee, senior and member of the Chagrin Falls Educational Student Board. “During class, we can use a real-life person’s cadaver to deepen our understanding of what we are learning that day. The table’s many features allow us to see the body from all angles and even in the separate organ systems. For

example, we can peel each layer of the body away, all the way from the skin to the nervous system. One of my favorite features is having the ability to select any part of the body and learn what the part is called and how it functions. Overall, having the Anatomage Table allows us to explore the human body in an interactive and

fun way.”



When asked what Salyers is most excited about with this Anatomage Table, she said, “What excites me most about having an Anatomage Table in the classroom is that students are able to study things that would otherwise be very difficult to visualize. It is very costly and extremely unlikely for a high school to have access to cadavers, so the table affords students the opportunity to be engaged in deeper learning with a more interactive exploration of the human body at their fingertips.”



Kirtland High School Features Trio of Business-Focused Courses for 9-12 Students

Kirtland High School (KHS) has recently expanded its curriculum with the introduction of two new courses (Introduction to Business and Marketing) and is now offering Financial Literacy in-person for the first time as students could previously take it online.

These classes, all taught by new Kirtland staff member Kim Ruggeri, aim to equip students with essential skills for their future personal and professional lives.

Financial Literacy is now a semester-long course required for all freshmen to graduate. The course focuses on teaching students the importance of financial planning and how to make informed decisions about money management. "I want students to understand the importance of their financial decisions," said Ruggeri. "We're teaching students the best way to use their money to have the quality of life they want."

The Financial Literacy curriculum covers a wide range of practical topics, including credit cards, bank loans, and insurance. Students engage in activities such as tracking expenses and comparing their spending habits to teen spending statistics. Real-life scenarios involving car prices, insurance costs, and gas expenses are incorporated to provide students with a realistic understanding of financial responsibilities. The course also explores career options, expected salaries, and lifestyle choices to help students plan for their futures.

Introduction to Business, a year-long elective open to students in grades 9-12, provides a comprehensive overview of the business world.

The course begins with an exploration of the U.S. business environment, global business, and business ethics. Later chapters introduce students to the various disciplines of business, including management, marketing, finance, and accounting.

Ruggeri plans to enhance the learning experience by inviting guest speakers within the community. "I really want students to hear from other people in the community about their jobs and receive career advice," said Ruggeri. The course combines lecture-style teaching with project-based work, including a planned collaboration with local businesses where students will conduct research and present ideas to business owners.

Marketing, another year-long elective for grades 9-12, delves deeper into specific aspects of marketing for businesses. Students are learning about product development, pricing strategies, promotion techniques, and customer outreach.

The highlight of the Marketing course is a year-long project to develop a spirit store at KHS. Students will soon begin conducting research on other school spirit stores, developing surveys, and gathering input on desired products, and learning about pricing. "We'll teach them the process of competitive and consumer research, and then start to make decisions," Ruggeri explains. The class will also collaborate with the school's design classes to create products and branding for the store.

With these new offerings, KHS is providing students with valuable opportunities to develop real-world skills and explore potential career paths.



Eighth Graders Get a Head Start in Career Planning at Mayer Middle School

Eighth graders at Lewis F. Mayer Middle School in the Fairview Park City Schools are not only learning about careers and the job market, but they're also getting a head start on navigating it. This year, the school introduced a new class called Career Explorations, an elective designed to introduce students to careers they may not have known about before. The class has three main components: a detailed look at 16 career clusters, the development of soft skills, and three service projects.

"We chose eighth grade because by the time they get to high school, where most schools use this program, they've already made decisions," Career Exploration Teacher Laura Ponsart explained. "We wanted to give kids the time to explore, introduce and learn about different careers, and then that would drive what they would be doing in high school."

Students interact with industry professionals from 16 different career clusters each week during the semester. Some career clusters students learn about include agriculture, business management, finance, health science, information technology, manufacturing, and more. Every five weeks, students then choose one career and present it to their peers in class.

In addition to learning about different careers each week, students also learn and work on improving important soft skills needed for success in any industry. Some of the soft skills discussed in Career Exploration include subjects like diplomacy and tact, active listening, becoming a continuous learner, and managing time.



In addition to career clusters and soft skills, students work on service projects as part of the Lead4Change initiative. This year's projects involve community-based initiatives, like creating care packages for Meals on Wheels and partnering with local nonprofits to address food insecurity. "Hopefully, it will open their eyes to partnering with a non-profit or a similar type of organization," Ponsart stated. "Then they would be able to see the different careers that are out there as well. Maybe the students didn't realize that additional need was out there."

The class is also closely connected to the Polaris Career Center and the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium, two additional resources for students to learn more about potential future careers.

"Something that I like about Career Exploration is how I get to learn about what careers I might want in the future," Lily, a student in the class, said.

"Career Exploration is an amazing class for eighth graders," Molly, another student, added. "It allows them to explore career clusters and explore different options for their future and can help them decide what they want to do in their lives."



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