

SUMMER 2024

THE ESC CONNECTION

A DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER OF NORTHEAST OHIO



ESC HOSTS FIRST EVER HIGH SCHOOL
SENIOR HIRING FAIR

STORY ON PAGES 18-19



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Superintendent's MESSAGE

By Dr. Bob Mengerink, *Superintendent*

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I hope you are as excited about the work shared in this newsletter as I am. As we continue to expand our capacity and expertise across our staff, they have collaborated and created in so many unique ways. The synergy created within our ESC and across our partnerships continues to drive us as we find new ways to support the many needs of educators, administrators, students and families.

I am so inspired by the amazing things that are happening within your schools, in spite of some of the most significant challenges schools have ever faced. We talk a lot about the importance of teaching our youth resilience. I believe they only need to look towards school administrators and teachers to see resilience in action. Thank you for all you are doing and know that there are countless ways you are impacting the futures of children, often without even knowing it. I sincerely hope you get some quiet time this summer to relax, be with family and friends, and disconnect from the world a bit. I also hope you take the time to reflect on the great work you have done and look forward to what's ahead.

While there is so much happening at the ESC, we want to be sure you get what you need to move your district forward. Your feedback is crucial to us and we always welcome your ideas, questions or concerns. The contact information for our leadership team on the back of this newsletter and you should never hesitate to email, call or text us at any time.

Have a safe and wonderful summer.

Bob

ESC Superintendent Outlines Collaborative Initiatives at State of the Schools

The Educational Service Center (ESC) of Northeast Ohio has been actively expanding its services and partnerships to better support school districts and students in the region. During the Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of Commerce State of the Schools presentation this past May, Dr. Bob Mengerink, superintendent of the ESC, highlighted several key areas of focus for the 2024-25 academic year.

North Coast Shared Services Alliance

One major initiative is the growth of the North Coast Shared Services Alliance (NCSSA), which provides business and operational services to school districts, state associations, and community partners. The NCSSA team has taken on roles such as interim treasurers, payroll management, grant coordination, enrollment studies, staffing audits, and transportation reporting.

Legislative Breakfasts

The ESC has also hosted legislative breakfasts, bringing together superintendents from Northeast Ohio and state legislators to collaborate on priorities like school funding, safety, attendance, transportation, and parent engagement. These events aim to foster productive dialogue and include more legislators in the upcoming school year.

Workforce Development

Additionally, the ESC is expanding its Department of Workforce Development and Business Advisory Council to support career pathways, personalized learning options, and connections with regional employers in key sectors like manufacturing, IT, healthcare, and service industries. This positions the ESC to respond to anticipated changes from the new Department of Education and Workforce, with an increased focus on career development.

Cuyahoga County Partnerships

Partnerships with Cuyahoga County social service agencies have also been strengthened to support the needs of all students better. By increasing collaboration and coordination between schools and social services, the ESC hopes to move from intervention to prevention and address both academic and non-academic needs of at-risk youth.

School Leadership Development

Finally, the ESC has grown its services in supporting school leadership, including a professional development series for board members, superintendent/board retreats, strategic planning, transition planning, coaching, and mentoring. These efforts aim to address the higher rates of transition among superintendents and board members.

Through these various initiatives, the ESC of Northeast Ohio is expanding its reach and services to provide comprehensive support to school districts, educators, and students in the region.

*Matt Young, next superintendent of Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools;
Mike Janatovich, principal of Independence High School; David Mangas,
superintendent of Cuyahoga Valley Career Center; Dr. Bob Mengerink,
superintendent of the ESC of Northeast Ohio*

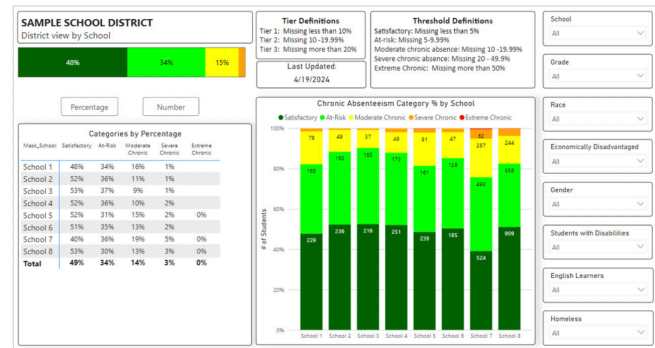


Reducing Chronic Absenteeism Through Collaboration

by Mindy Geshke, Consultant

The ESC of Northeast Ohio unites its Teaching & Learning, Wellness Departments, and State Support Team 3 (SST3) to tackle Chronic Absenteeism with a systemic strategy. Districts benefit from cross-departmental expertise through professional development sessions that impart practical strategies for enhancing attendance, data analysis for targeted interventions, and optimizing team efforts for streamlined initiatives.

A specialized Attendance Data Dashboard created by the Teaching & Learning Department equips districts with actionable insights to curb absenteeism, offering updated data for effective monitoring and intervention identification. SST3 propels districts forward using a school improvement framework that fosters collaborative learning among educators. This collective wisdom enriches attendance efforts at a systemic level. Prioritizing student health and safety, the Student Wellness Department leads Tier 2 and 3 support



implementations. Proactive early interventions are key to preventing absenteeism escalation. Together, we can safeguard every student's academic journey.

This collaboration will continue into the 2024-2025 school year with the inception of a new Professional Learning Community (PLC); the Attendance Leaders PLC. The sessions are strategically scheduled to inform and guide attendance decisions throughout the school year.

Consistent attendance is crucial for success, let's unite for our students' futures.



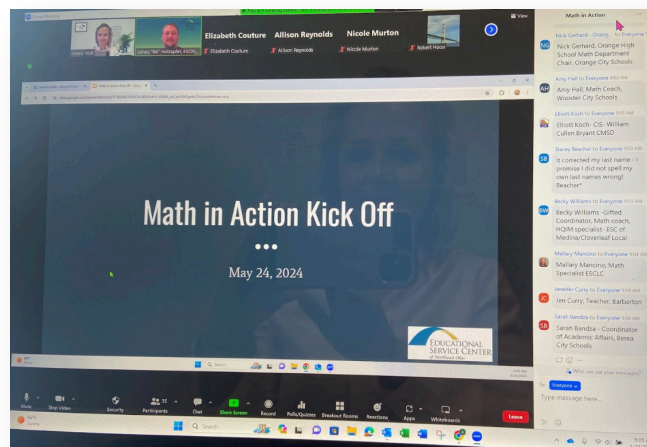
Math in Action Kick-Off

By Alexis Volk, Consultant

On May 24, 41 dedicated math leaders enthusiastically joined the ESC of Northeast Ohio's Math In Action Network Zoom Kick-Off. This network, launching in the 2024-2025 school year, aims to tackle crucial topics in mathematics education, such as Ohio's Math Plan, utilizing math data to inform instructional decisions, sound instructional math practices, and timely updates from ODEW on math education.

Each of the network's sessions are designed to provide legislative updates, professional learning opportunities, and actionable next steps for educators. During the inaugural meeting, there was a lively exchange of ideas in the chat as participants reflected on data from the spring state tests and discussed the importance of strong mathematics instruction as a means of supporting our students.

Attendees left the session equipped with up to date information on current Senate and House Bills and resources to lead data discussions with



their teachers. The Math In Action Network, Led by Bob Glavan, James “Ike” Holzapfel, and Alexis Volk, is committed to fostering a collaborative and supportive environment for leaders to enhance their practice and improve student outcomes in mathematics.

We look forward to the year ahead and the impactful work that will emerge from this vibrant community of educators. Check out the [ESC Calendar of Events](#) if you would like to join us at the next session on August 23!

Mental Health Symposium 2024 ... “The Power of Connection”

The Student Wellness Department (SWD), in partnership with MetroHealth and the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County, hosted the second annual Mental Health Awareness Symposium on May 6, 2024. The event was made possible due to the Project Prevent grant through the United States Department of Education. This year's theme, “The Power of Connection,” brought together educators, child serving agencies, mental health providers, hospital systems, and students to celebrate the progress in promoting and caring for mental health. Presenters and participants explored the impact of sharing our stories, connecting with others, creating resilience, and practicing self-care.

The symposium featured an array of speakers and topics exploring aspects of student and adult mental health with an emphasis on wellness. Connie Schultz, an educator, journalist, and Pulitzer prize winner emphasized the importance of telling stories, especially re-telling the successes and challenges of the students and communities educators and providers serve, during her keynote presentation. She shared personal experiences

and highlighted the importance of mentoring, role-modeling, and “finding your tribe” when supporting mental health.

In addition to the keynote address, attendees participated in a variety of workshops and a youth panel discussion. The workshops offered practical tools and resources for participants. Topics areas included:

- » Identifying and encouraging factors associated with resilience, including supportive relationships
- » Integrating school and community partnerships
- » Understanding data tools to support positive school climate and social-emotional learning
- » Organizing family engagement and connection with families, school personnel, and students
- » Developing skills and knowledge to promote healing-centered communication within the community and educational settings
- » Learning about the impact of trauma on caregivers and focusing on the importance of nurturing your own self-care

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View archived issues





One of the highlights of the symposium was the inclusion of student voices. Students from Northeast Ohio shared their personal experiences, insight about current mental health challenges and the impact of supportive relationships. Their stories were a powerful reminder of the importance of personal connections and mentoring. They ended their presentation by facilitating a fun game; resulting in friendly competition and lots of laughs. The symposium concluded with a sound bath, a meditative experience where participants were “bathed” in sound waves. The sound bath “re-calibrated” the energy of the audience and highlighted the critical role of promoting mental wellbeing.

Special thank you to all the speakers, organizers, and participants who made this event possible, including:

- » Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County
- » Art Therapy Studio
- » Bedford City Schools
- » Berea City Schools
- » Case Western Reserve University
- » Cleveland Heights - University Heights City Schools
- » Cleveland Rape Crisis Center
- » Connie Schultz
- » ESC of Central Ohio
- » ESCNEO
- » Euclid City Schools
- » Garfield Heights City Schools
- » MetroHealth
- » South Euclid Lyndhurst City Schools
- » SST Region 2
- » SST Region 3
- » With a Grateful Heart Wellness





SST3 Transition Enhancement Funds Support Innovative Work-Based Learning, Decision-Making, and Credentialing Programs



Each year, the State Support Team Region 3 (SST3) receives Transition Enhancement Funds from the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Career Tech Planning Districts (CTPDs) in implementing evidence-based practices as defined by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). Through a competitive mini-grant proposal process, funds were awarded to LEAs and CTPDs that developed innovative and student-centered programs that primarily focused on positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

Thanks to these funds and the hard work of our educational community, SST3 was able to support the following projects/initiatives:

Reduce The Barriers to Work-Based Learning Recipients

Work-Based Learning experiences provide students with the opportunity to connect academic professional behavior standards to an authentic work environment. It is also one of the graduation requirement demonstrations of competency.

- » **Bedford High School** Job Training Program students are working at the community food pantry located at the high school. Job tasks consist of restocking and rotating food, sorting, folding various pieces of clothes, and labeling clothing items
- » **Beachwood High School** Community-Based Learning Program is partnering with Ahuja Medical Center to provide job training for students who can be competitively employed.
- » **Cleveland Heights-University Heights High School** students work at the Tiger Shop which is a retail outlet and an opportunity for students to develop essential skills in customer service, inventory management, and sales.
- » **Heights Career Tech** started a program, Simulate to Elevate (S2E) Work-Based Learning Experience, an innovative plan, founded on the need for experiential learning to prepare students for the workforce through immersive "simternships."

Supported Decision Making (SDM) Projects

Supported Decision Making is about empowering individuals with disabilities to live, learn, and play with the natural support of who or what they need to maximize their independence.

- » Cuyahoga County Transition Collaborative SDM initiative
- » SDM Evening Parent Program
- » Four educators trained in the Ohio Innovation Network SDM Tools (Beachwood, Parma, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Orange)

Elder Care Industry Recognized Credential Training

This industry recognized credential will provide students with the skills to interact with senior citizens. The credential can be offered in both a career-tech and traditional LEA setting.

- » Ten educators became credentialed to offer the Elder Care Certificate (CEVEC, Bedford CTPD, Lincoln West Global Studies, East Cleveland CTPD, Frederick Douglass High School, North Shore High School, Flex High School, West Shore CTPD).



Bedford High School Job Training Program students getting Work-Based Learning experience at their community food pantry.

A man in a blue suit is standing on a small stage, gesturing with his hands while speaking. He is positioned next to a dark wooden podium that features a green and white logo for "Holiday Inn INDEPENDENCE". The background consists of a light-colored wall with a brick-patterned section and a green "EXIT" sign above a doorway. In the foreground, the blurred heads of an audience are visible. A large blue diagonal graphic element is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Educators Dive Deep into AI's Transformative Potential at Northeast Ohio Summit

The future of education was on full display at the 2024 Northeast Ohio AI Summit, where hundreds of K-12 teachers, administrators and technology leaders gathered to explore artificial intelligence's rapidly expanding role in the classroom. Held at the Holiday Inn in Independence on May 23, the Summit featured a tightly-packed schedule of keynotes, breakouts and hands-on workshops led by some of the region's top AI experts and visionaries.

Kicking off the day was a keynote from renowned edtech leader Ken Shelton entitled "Revolutionizing Education: Unleashing the Unprecedented Power and Potential of Artificial Intelligence Technology in Education." Shelton challenged educators to prioritize AI literacy and equity as these technologies go mainstream. Participants learned that AI is no longer some far-off fantasy - it's here, it's real, and it's rapidly evolving. They have an obligation to prepare all students, regardless of demographics, to ethically navigate and even create the AI technologies that will shape their futures. Two key quotes, be quick but don't hurry, and AI should move slow and fix things — resonated deeply with everyone.

Breakout sessions throughout the day allowed participants to dig deeper into emerging best practices. The "Unlocking Truly Personalized Learning" panel with Ian Zhu of SchoolJoy,



superintendents Dr. Patrick Ward and Jason Ondrus, as well as ESC Director of Leadership Services Russ Bennett explored frameworks for evaluating AI solutions to optimize equitable, cost-effective learning outcomes. "The focus needs to be on innovative practices that empower educational leaders to make informed decisions in this rapidly evolving AI landscape," said Bennett. "We have to ensure all students and families can truly benefit."

Other sessions provided boots-on-the-ground guidance for unleashing generative AI's potential. ESC's Teaching and Learning Consultant Ike Holzapfel's "Moving Beyond Cookie Cutter Generative AI Tools" helped teachers strategize applications beyond basic functions like essay-writing to enhance assessment, differentiation and Tier 1 instruction.

Perhaps most critically, Scholastic's Jimi Cannon's "Cultivating AI Literacy Through Media and Literacy Instruction" and AiEDU's Professional Development Leader Wren Hoffman's "Fundamentals of AI for Teaching and Learning" tackled equipping educators with strategies to cultivate true AI literacy across the curriculum.

Regional Personalized Learning Consultants Amy Harker and Jake Miller in "Leveraging AI to Make Personalized Learning Attainable" outlined



AI's potential to boost learner agency, variability, flexibility and real-world relevance.

With cybersecurity also top of mind, the "Xpel Security Suite" session with Denise Caccavari, Christopher Infante and Kehlan Rutan from Forward Edge equipped leaders to safeguard their AI-enhanced ecosystems.

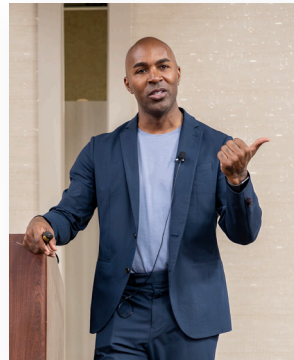
Wendy Hanasky's "Revolutionizing K-12 Education: The Role of AI" explored the transformative impact of AI on K-12 education. "Our students will be the designers, developers and deployers of the AI workforce revolution," Hanasky told her audience. "Preparing them for those roles is an urgent need starting today."

In the "Elevating Education" session, State Support Team Region 3 Consultant Brian Callahan

highlighted how AI platforms like ChatGPT and Claude can serve as invaluable workflow partners for education professionals.

As Northeast Ohio schools emerge as AI integration leaders, this year's summit made clear the region's educators are ready to meet that challenge head-on. By fusing artificial and human intelligence, they aim to revolutionize learning experiences to empower every student to truly soar.

This sold out summit was the third of four AI summits aiEDU.org is co-hosting with the Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA), in collaboration today with the ESC of Northeast Ohio. Special thanks also to Future Forward Ohio, QuizizzAI, ClassLink, Scholastic and Forward Edge.



High-Dosage Tutoring: Frequent, Personalized Academic Support for Student Success

High-dosage tutoring is a targeted educational intervention designed to provide intensive academic support to students, particularly those who are struggling or at risk of falling behind. One crucial aspect of high-dosage tutoring is its frequency. Unlike traditional tutoring models, which may occur sporadically, high-dosage tutoring involves regular, frequent sessions. These sessions typically occur at least three times per week for 30-60 minutes at a time to ensure sustained progress and mastery of the material.

Group size in high-dosage tutoring is often small, with a student to tutor ratio of no more than four to one, allowing for personalized attention and tailored instruction. With smaller groups, tutors can better address individual learning needs and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly. Personnel involved in high-dosage tutoring include highly trained educators or specialized instructors who possess expertise in the subject matter and effective teaching methodologies.

The focus of high-dosage tutoring is on specific academic areas where students require additional support. Whether it's mathematics, literacy, or other subjects, the curriculum is tailored to address students' needs and areas of weakness. Research shows that supplementing the currently used curriculum yields better results for students. Measurement of progress is integral to high-dosage tutoring, with regular assessments and evaluations used to track students' growth and identify areas for further improvement.



Strong relationships between tutors and students are a cornerstone of high-dosage tutoring. Building rapport and trust fosters a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and seeking help. Scheduling of tutoring sessions is coordinated to align with students' schedules and maximize instructional time. If possible, build the tutoring sessions into the school day as doing so can eliminate the necessity for additional transportation measures, especially for elementary aged students.

Delivery modes can vary but often include in-person sessions, virtual tutoring, or a combination of both to accommodate students' needs and preferences. Prioritization should be curriculum driven and provided at specific times when students tend to fall behind.

For more information about tutoring or consultation on building a high-dosage tutoring program, please contact:

Kory Jalowiec
Teaching and Learning Consultant
kory.jalowiec@escneo.org
(440) 610-4714

Literacy Cooperative and ESC of Northeast Ohio Join Forces for PD Day

On April 19, the Literacy Cooperative and the ESC of Northeast Ohio joined forces to create a professional development day that focused on critical topics and literacy for preschool staff. Several breakout sessions were offered throughout the day to over 150 preschool teachers and assistants from the greater Cleveland area.



The Learning Environment

Presenter: Elizabeth (Libby) Benton

Preschoolers are active, social, and curious! The early childhood environment directly influences the quality of children's behavior by sending messages about how to act and respond. In this session, participants will explore six practices for designing a high-quality supportive environment that promotes social and emotional development and reduces challenging behaviors.

Transitions

Presenter: Jennifer McNellie

Preschool classrooms are busy! Transitioning between various routines and activities can be stressful for young children, which causes challenging behaviors to surface. In this session, participants will explore effective practices for supporting children during transitions. Intentionally planning for transitions contributes to a predictable environment and reduces the occurrence of challenging behaviors.

Promoting Social-Emotional Development through Activities

Presenter: Kristen Panagiotou

Preschoolers are interested in exploring the world and interacting with others. Challenging behaviors occur as they are still learning to navigate their social worlds. In this session, participants will learn effective practices for supporting children's developing social and emotional skills during learning experiences.

Difficult Conversations Among Colleagues and Families

Presenters: Rosemary Helderman and Stephanie Moore

Conversations can be difficult for a variety of reasons, whether it's the topic or the dispositions and personalities of those involved. We'll discuss ways you will feel more confident by knowing what to say and how to say it.

For additional information, contact:

Tippi Foley, ESC Director of Early Childhood
tippi.foley@escneo.org

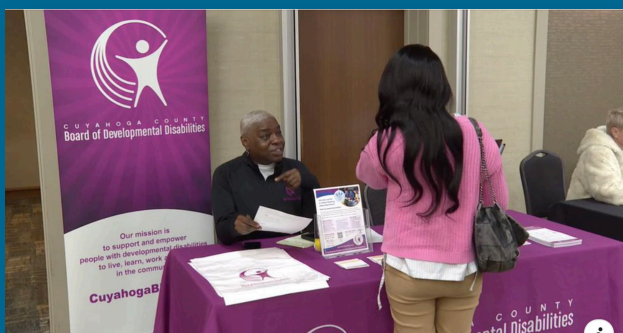


ESC Hosts First High School Senior Hiring Fair

On April 30, 2024, the ESC of Northeast Ohio hosted its first High School Senior Only Hiring Fair at the Holiday Inn-Independence. The hiring fair was designed for high school seniors who plan to go straight to the workforce after graduation. We invited seniors from all of our district partners and employers from five counties across northeast Ohio. Over 25 employers attended and were ready to engage in meaningful conversations with seniors who plan to enter the workforce immediately following graduation.

There was no cost for employers to participate and employers were able to interact with high school seniors who are seeking immediate employment.

[Click here](#) to watch the News5 Cleveland news segment on the fair.



NEWS5CLEVELAND.COM

When it comes to filling jobs Northeast Ohio, employers are casting a wider and younger net





2024 EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Recognizing students, peers & educators

On May 17, over 150 students, family members and educators from Cuyahoga County gathered for the 45th annual Excellence in Education Awards recognizing students with special needs, peers and educators. State Support Team 3 in partnership with the ESC of Northeast Ohio organized this annual event held at Corporate College East in Warrensville Heights.

Dr. Bob Mengerink, Superintendent of the ESC stated, “These individuals today stand out because of their teamwork and collaboration. By working together as educators, families, friends, teammates, or community members, we can all make the world a better place for each other and others. These individuals bring us all hope for the future despite the divisiveness we sometimes see in the world. Jesse Jackson said it most simply – ‘When everyone is included, everyone wins.’”

This year’s keynote speakers were twin sisters Sharita and Shaye Taylor. Both are active in their community through their jobs, athletics, social activities and advocacy for themselves and others. Shaye is a [Good Life Ambassador](#) speaking to community groups about self-advocacy and inclusion. Sharita is currently the president of [People First Cuyahoga](#), an advocacy group for people with disabilities.

Three types of awards were presented during this event:

- » **Outstanding Student Achievement Award** acknowledging achievements of school-age students with special needs.
- » **Outstanding Peer Achievement Award** recognizing students who have established positive relationships and who have assisted students with special needs, serving as exemplary role models.
- » **Outstanding Educator Achievement Award** honoring educators who are the exemplars in designing instructional strategies and programs.





AWARDS WERE PRESENTED TO 10 STUDENTS, 6 PEERS AND 14 EDUCATORS. IN ADDITION, TWO REGIONAL AWARDS WERE PRESENTED:



The 2024 R.A. Horn Outstanding Achievement Award recipient is [Katherine Anderson](#) from Bay Village High School in the Bay Village City School District. This award is presented

to one exemplary student with a disability from each of Ohio's 16 State Support Team regions. Established by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce in honor of the late Dr. Raymond A. Horn, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction, this award recognizes students' outstanding achievements.



The 2024 Franklin B. Walter Outstanding Educator Award recipient is [Patricia Volk](#) from Brooklyn School in the Brooklyn City School District. This award is given to an outstanding educator

from each of the 16 State Support Team regions in Ohio who has made extraordinary contributions to the education of students with disabilities. This award is given in honor of the late Franklin B. Walter, Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1977 until 1991, a post held longer than any other state superintendent in Ohio's history.

These two recipients will be recognized by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce - Office of Exceptional Children and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities on June 11, 2024 at an awards presentation.

The full list of recipients can be found on page 22. Click [here](#) to watch a video that highlights the 2024 event.

2024 EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Bay Village City Schools

- » Katherine Anderson, Student Award, Bay Village High School

Beachwood Schools

- » Juan Coz, Student Award, Beachwood Middle School
- » Mark Howdieshell, Educator Award, Beachwood High School

Broadway Academy at Willow

- » Chayse Alexander Powell, Student Award
- » LaDonna Foster-Settles, Educator Award

Brooklyn City Schools

- » Da'Mareon Coleman, Student Award, Brooklyn High School
- » David Colon, Peer Award, Brooklyn School
- » Patricia Volk, Educator Award, Brooklyn School

Cleveland Arts & Social Sciences Academy

- » Christal Kelley, Educator Award

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools

- » Colleen Young, Educator Award,
- » Gearity Elementary School

Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

- » Sofia Fullmer, Student Award, Cuyahoga Heights Middle School
- » Casey Conte, Peer Award, Cuyahoga Heights High School
- » Lyndsey Wisniewski, Educator Award, Cuyahoga Heights Middle School

Independence Local Schools

- » Cameron Dalrymple, Student Award, Independence Middle School
- » Julia Grzincic, Peer Award, Independence Middle School
- » Stephanie Roberts, Educator Award, Independence Primary School

Lakewood City Schools

- » Isaiah Caraballo, Student Award, Lakewood High School
- » Aniyah Franklin, Peer Award, Horace Mann Elementary School
- » Mandy Fleming, Educator Award, Lincoln Elementary School

Lincoln Park Academy

- » Elizabeth Turnage, Educator Award

Maple Heights City Schools

- » Perry Hale, Student Award, Maple Heights High School
- » Chamar Peterson, Educator Award, Barack Obama Elementary School

North Olmsted City Schools

- » Chris Stanton, Student Award, North Olmsted High School
- » Charlie Shuck, Peer Award, North Olmsted High School
- » Matt Murphy, Educator Award, Maple Elementary School

Olmsted Falls City Schools

- » Luke Largent, Student Award, Falls Lenox Primary School
- » Ella Atkins, Peer Award, Olmsted Falls High School
- » Haley Browning, Educator Award, Falls Lenox Primary School

STEAM Academy of Warrensville Heights

- » Jordan Pressman, Educator Award

Strongsville City Schools

- » Katie Hawk, Educator Award, Whitney Elementary School

Karen Mintzer Honored as Early Childhood Champion at Invest in Children's 25th Anniversary

Twenty-five years ago, Cuyahoga County created Invest in Children, a community wide public/private partnership administered by the County's Office of Early Childhood. Karen Mintzer had recently joined the ESC of Northeast Ohio's Bright Beginnings, at the time known as Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County, as Early Intervention Manager.

Invest in Children marked the anniversary at its annual meeting May 16th by releasing a new three-year strategic plan and, for the first time, presenting Early Childhood Awards recognizing team innovation (Canopy Child Advocacy Center and Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center) and an Early Childhood Champion, someone who has made outstanding and sustained contributions to early childhood development in Cuyahoga County. That inaugural award went to Karen Mintzer.

For more than two decades, Karen has established an incredible track record of success. As Invest in Children notes, she is known "for always approaching issues in a way that places greater emphasis on meeting the needs of the family, over the convenience of the service provider." In presenting the award, Invest in Children's Alyssa Swiatek, said the award recognizes outstanding



Congratulations to our Director, Karen Mintzer, who was presented with Invest in Children's 2024 **Early Childhood Champion Award**. Karen, we are so immensely proud of you!



and sustained contributions over a period of years that is recognized by peers as being truly worthy of merit. "Additionally, this work has been amplified through developing partnerships in the community to increase its effectiveness and impact," said Swiatek.

Congratulations to Karen, who every day demonstrates her dedication to helping children grow, learn, and develop to their fullest potential.

You can watch a video of the award presentation [here](#).



First Ring Schools Collaborative

Student Leadership **I N S T I T U T E**

Student voice is increasingly recognized in education as being critical to motivation, academic engagement and equity. This year, students in the First Ring Student Leadership Institute (FRSLI) are making their voices heard in new and exciting ways.

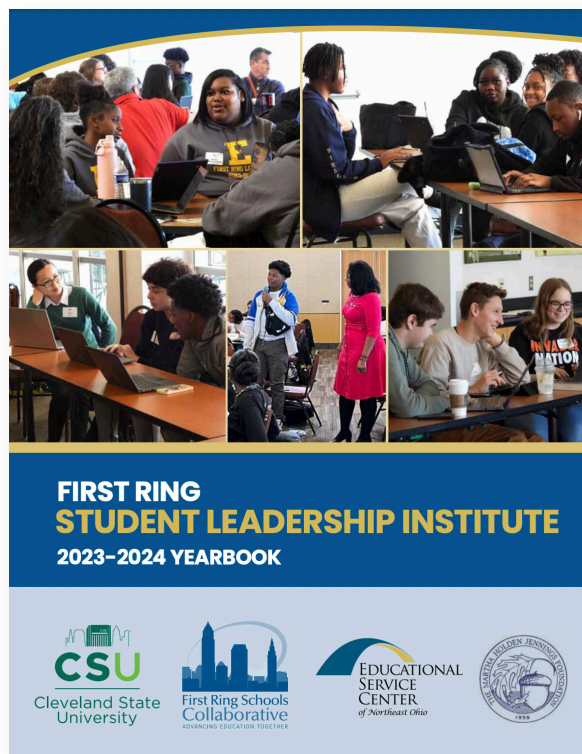
Nearly 80 students completed their first year in the program, investigating and attempting to solve issues in their schools on a range of important topics. Invited to research an issue they feel passionate about, students decided to tackle many of the same issues their administrators are focused on improving achievement, boosting engagement, enhancing safety, increasing attendance, fostering stronger peer relationships and preparing students for life after high school. Other projects focus on the concerns of students everywhere: the quality of school food, student parking and the dress code.

This year, more than 40 students returned for their second or third year in the program. These advanced “Year 2 & 3” students worked as a unit to investigate absenteeism state-wide. After conducting a literature review, students created an online survey, Students Solving Absent-teen-ism, to gain insights from high school students across Ohio. On May 6, they presented their findings to the superintendents and administrators from the first ring school districts. They had the opportunity to network and talk one-on-one during the Gallery Walk after their presentations.

In addition to their project work, several advanced students presented on student voice at the 2023 OSBA Capital Conference and three groups presented preliminary findings of their absenteeism research at the 7th Annual Campus Conference Youth Research Symposium in March.

When invited to the table, students bring the unique insight and perspective born of lived experience, a flair for out of the box thinking, and deep passion for making real change.

[Click here](#) to read the 2023-24 Yearbook. [Click here](#) to view pictures from the May 6 presentations.





First Ring Schools Collaborative

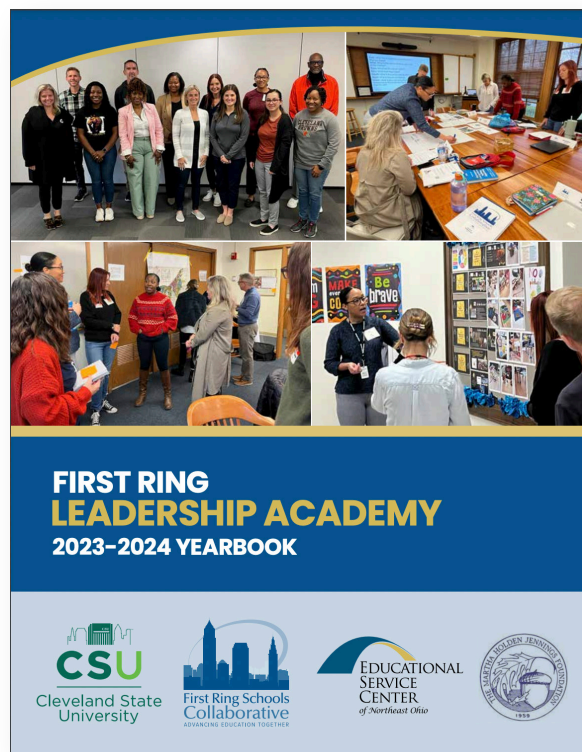
Teacher Leadership **ACADEMY**

The First Ring Leadership Academy (FRLA) is a year-long professional development and leadership training program for new and emerging leaders in the 16 districts contiguous to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Participants are nominated by their superintendents in the beginning of each school year to become part of the cohort. The FRLA provides participants with an expanded knowledge base and skill set foundation to prepare them to assume additional leadership roles within their districts and continue improving district and individual outcomes to serve all levels of students within Cuyahoga County.

The Academy meets for nine sessions throughout the academic year with a focus on building leadership skills and district capacity to address the unique challenges of first ring, urban schools. Participants engage in a variety of learning activities including leadership trait analyses, case studies, readings and reflections, and coordinating and mentoring a team of high school student leaders within their district. Sessions are held at either the ESC of Northeast Ohio or First Ring districts. The FRLA is a key “build from within” system of educational excellence and leadership development that supports and benefits the entire First Ring regional area.

This year, 14 district leaders participated in the program. Participants are able to earn up to five credit hours through Cleveland State University.

[Click here](#) to read the 2023-24 Yearbook.



2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENTS

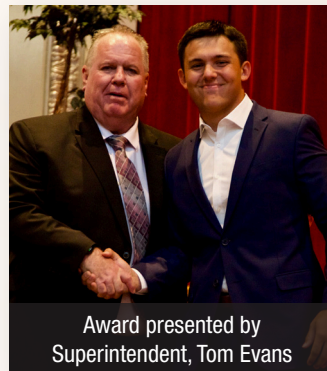
The ESC of Northeast Ohio named several students as recipients of their annual Humanitarian Awards. Recipients were nominated by administrators in their schools for showing leadership and community service as well as possessing great character. One student from each middle and high school in the communities of Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, and Richmond Heights Local Schools received scholarships and awards. In addition to a cash award, students receive a personalized plaque, starfish pin, and starfish bookmark. The starfish is the symbol of a story of the impact one person can make in a community.



**Cuyahoga Heights
Middle School**
**Sophia Birth,
8th grade**

Sophia Birth displays kindness on a daily basis throughout the middle school. She is a sincere and

considerate young person. Sophia is also a loyal friend. Several of Sophia's classmates seek her company throughout the school day. She has an easy rapport with her teachers, often asking, "How is your day going?". Sophia has responsibilities at home which she is able to manage along with her schoolwork completion. She is passionate about playing softball. Sophia's teachers are proud of her academic growth, the pride she displays at Cuyahoga Heights Middle School, and the loyal friendships she has created.



**Cuyahoga Heights
High School**
**Francis
Connors, Senior**

Francis Connors has consistently shown concern for the well-being of others, regardless

of their background or circumstances. Most recently, he assisted at the inclusive sports day field trip for students with special needs. The teacher who didn't have Francis in class reported, "Francis has been a genuine and loyal friend to my students based on the way their faces lit up every time they would talk about him. Francis has done everything from joining them at the lunch table, meeting them in the morning before convocation, supporting them on the sports fields, and giving high fives in the hallway." Francis has demonstrated acts of kindness like this throughout his time at Cuyahoga Heights and never expected anything in return.



Independence Middle School

Thomas Graham, 8th grade

Thomas Graham is a leader and works diligently in all of his academic classes. He

is involved in many activities including volunteering at his church for the local shelter, WEB (Where Everyone Belongs), tutoring, band, Drama Club, IMS newspaper, WIMS, Builder's Club, Hope Squad, Mock Trial, and is an officer of the Student Council. He is kind, compassionate, friendly, and caring to both peers and adults alike. He is respectful, loyal, and helpful to any adult or student in need. His conscientious and empathetic nature makes him wise beyond his years.



Independence High School

Wyatt Snyder, Senior

Do a good turn.
Do your best to help others. Leave things better than you found them. All

quotes here are based on scouting, all are related to acts of kindness, and all of these can be used to describe how Wyatt Snyder conducts himself. He gives of himself through time, attention and effort to teach young scouts the basics of survival and outdoor safety and fun, he serves at Kiwanis functions, volunteers at Stearns Farm with landscaping and other outdoor tasks that need done, and helps friends and classmates without hesitation. While these manual tasks take his energy, he is generous in spirit, and leads with the tenet that serving others is second nature and his first priority.



Richmond Heights Secondary School

Theodore Ginn III, 8th grade

Theodore Ginn III is an invaluable asset, displaying exceptional leadership as the Middle School Student

Council President. He organized bake sales, led concession stands, participated in community service, and assisted with the Junior Prom and sports banquet. Theodore's humility stands out. He prefers working behind the scenes, allowing others to shine. His thoughtfulness, hard work ethic, and mature approach make him a respected role model. Theodore's endless patience, kindness, and encouragement create an environment conducive to growth and success for all students at Richmond Heights.



Richmond Heights Secondary School

Dolceanna Crosby, Senior

Dolceanna Crosby has dedicated her time to extracurricular activities that help promote school

spirit and leadership. As president of Student Council, Crosby has had the opportunity to plan events and promote opportunities to her peers that allow them to be engaged within the school and community. She works hard to balance her academics with extracurricular engagement along with her family commitments. Her passion for the arts shines through, as she hopes to pursue a career in this creative field after graduation. With her well-rounded involvement and artistic talents, Dolceanna Crosby is sure to make a lasting impact wherever her path leads.

An Inside Look at ESC Student Programs

This past school year, the ESC of Northeast Ohio produced videos highlighting many of its student programs. We encourage you to take a moment to watch them. If your district would like more information about any of these programs, please call 216-524-3000 or contact Steve Rogaski at steve.rogaski@escneo.org.



Passport Program

Passport School Program serves students ages 5-22 with multiple disabilities and significant medical needs providing intensive educational, behavioral, and medical programming.

For information, contact:

Lisa Adler, Supervisor
lisa.adler@escneo.org

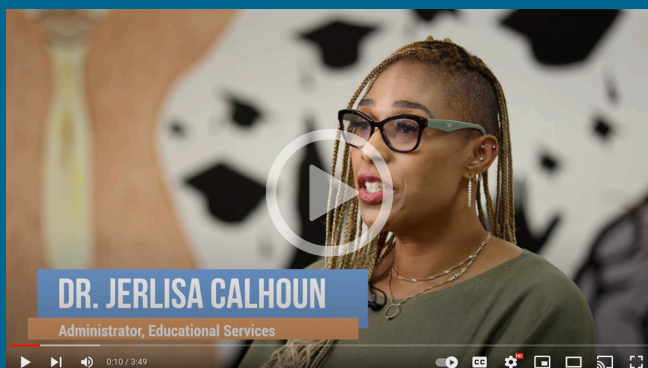


Crossroads Health

Crossroads Day Treatment Center provides therapy, instruction, and support services to stabilize and reintegrate K-12 students with emotional needs into public schools.

For information, contact:

Robin Kline, ESC Crossroads Program
robin.kline@escneo.org



Carrington School

Carrington School offers an on-site educational program with a curriculum widely accepted by home school districts to prevent the youth from being reported as truant.

For information, contact:

Dr. Jerlisa Calhoun, Principal of Carrington School
jerlisa.calhoun@escneo.org



Achievement Center for Children, Autism School

The Achievement Center for Children provides year-round, individualized instruction to students K-12 with autism or a similar disability category through a blended instructional model.

For information, contact:

Kimberly Allen, Ed.S, Director of Education
kimberly.allen@achievementctrs.org



Capstone Academy

Capstone Academy provides medical, therapeutic, and vocational services to children and adults with significant developmental and physical disabilities, as well as profound medically fragile conditions.

For information, contact:

Mary Wideman, Program Administrator
mary.wideman@escneo.org

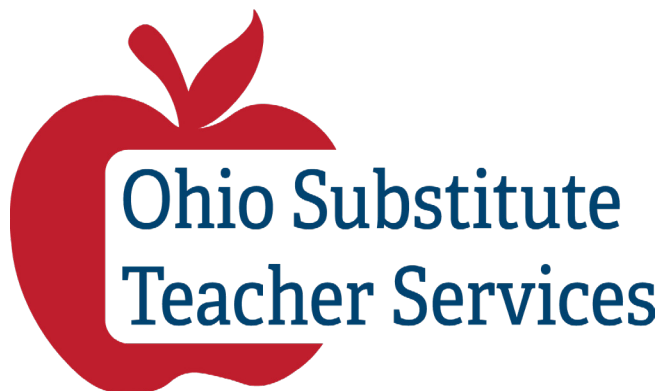


Serving Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Visually Impaired Students

Our ESC teaching and consulting staff provide direct instruction and technical/consultation services to children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf/hard of hearing.

For information, contact:

Dana Lambacher, Special Education Supervisor
dana.lambacher@escneo.org



Established in 2013, Ohio Substitute Teacher Services (OSTS), formally North Coast Shared Services Alliance, provides school districts in Ohio with quality substitute teachers. We are a collaboration of the Educational Service Centers of Northeast Ohio, Lorain County, and Medina County. Ohio Substitute Teacher Services expands into Southeast Ohio where our affiliate partners, the ESC of Columbiana County and the ESC of East Central Ohio, provide substitute services to school districts in their respective areas.

OSTS partners provide the following substitute management services:

- Recruitment and Screening
- Compliance
- Training
- Schedule Management
- State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) Management Services
- Payroll Services and Risk Management

Ohio Substitute Teacher Services represents approximately 52 school districts in 13 counties including Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Summit in Northeast Ohio and Belmont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Jefferson, and Tuscarawas in Southern Ohio.

OUR MISSION IS SIMPLE: To place substitute teachers in classrooms who provide consistent delivery of quality instruction in a safe and productive learning environment during the absence of a regular classroom teacher.

Contact Us

Please contact us at info@ohiosts.org to speak to a representative and learn how we can help your district.

Our Commitment

Ohio Substitute Teacher Services works to relieve your administrators' stress of teacher absences and place the highest quality substitute teachers in your classrooms.

RECRUITMENT & SCREENING

- Take care of applications, interviews, and reference checks.
- Local and regional job fairs
- On-Site recruiting in districts
- Large talent bank of available substitutes
- Custom-designed marketing materials for districts

COMPLIANCE

- Ensure all federal, state, and local employment requirements are met.

TRAINING

- Conduct employment orientations, classroom instruction for substitutes who are not educators by degree, online safety compliance and regulatory courses.

SCHEDULING

- Schedule your substitutes, both day-to-day and long-term.

PAYROLL & RETIREMENT

- Manage payroll and retirement (STRS).

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- Provide discipline and remediation if needed.

RISK MANAGEMENT/AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

- Manage unemployment and workers' compensation claims.
- Manage Affordable Care Act.

Two videos have been produced to help in the OSTS marketing efforts to not only recruit more qualified substitute teachers, but also share with school districts who are not using OSTS services yet. These videos are on the OSTS website, are played at job fairs and educational conferences, and also have been shared with OSTS districts for their own marketing efforts.

Marketing Video to Recruit Substitute Teachers for our Member School Districts



Marketing Video to Recruit Districts who are not Members of OSTS





**Shaker
Heights
Schools**

Shaker Heights Schools Take Education to the Global Stage Through International Travel

By Scott Stephens

Shakespeare once observed that all the world's a stage. For the Shaker Heights City School District, all the world is a classroom.

This spring, 21 Shaker students spent their spring break helping to pave a road in a Vietnamese village. At the same time, a couple of dozen students were visiting the Robben Island Prison near Cape Town, South Africa, where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for 18 years. A few weeks earlier, nearly 50 students traveled to Costa Rica to learn about the culture and ecosystems of that nation.



This semester alone, some 140 students and more than 30 teachers and administrators are making six trips around the globe for language study, service projects and cultural exchange programs. In addition to Vietnam, South Africa and Costa Rica, these trips include:

- » Ten students traveled to France for language immersion and cultural exchange with Shaker's sister school in Rouen.
- » In June, 20 students will go to Japan as an extension to the Asian Studies class which focused this year on Japanese culture and history. Asian Studies is offered each year and rotates among Japan, India, China and South Korea. Earlier this year, Japanese students from the Takatori-Kokusai High School visited Shaker Heights High School.
- » Also in June, 16 students will travel to Goslar, Germany, to meet with students at Shaker's sister school there. The exchange is in its 46th year – the longest-standing exchange between a U.S. and German school.

Global education and international travel have long been a part of the Shaker Heights Schools experience. For years, our marching band and orchestra have performed in venues around the world ranging from the Great Wall of China to the Eiffel Tower to the ancient ruins of Greece. Shaker students have helped repair a schoolhouse in a floating village in Cambodia, and have assisted residents of a small town in Morocco construct a community center and garden.

In Shaker Heights, all students are afforded the chance to participate in international travel. In keeping with the district's commitment to equity and inclusion, the Shaker Schools Foundation's International Travel Endowment Campaign helps remove barriers to participation. This

semester alone, 41 students were provided travel scholarships through the fund.

As an International Baccalaureate district, international travel is central to the district's mission to provide a global-minded education that emphasizes hands-on projects, inquiry-based learning and community service. Additionally, travel prepares students for the world we live in. The process of globalization is changing our lives. Climate change, conflict and energy dependence are a few examples of how global issues impact

all of us. Education plays a crucial role in making sense of such issues. Yet studies conducted by the National Geographic Society and others show that too many U.S. students lack an understanding and knowledge of different people, places and cultures – skills they need to be successful in the modern world.

“One can no longer make sense of everyday life unless it is set in the context of a global society,” said Dr. John Moore, Director of Curriculum and Instruction.



Kirtland Middle School Took a Break from Screens

In an effort to reduce excessive screen time and promote healthier habits, Kirtland Middle School went completely screen-free for one week from May 6-10. The "Screen Free Week" initiative was organized by the Student Leadership Council.

During this week, teachers modified lessons to avoid use of digital screens like Chromebooks, tablets, and projectors/TVs. Students also were encouraged to take a break from television, video games, and smartphones at home.

"Kids nowadays are always looking at a screen. This week showed them how to have fun and learn without screens," said Principal Bob Race, Kirtland Middle School. "Our students will be healthier and happier if they spend less time with television, video games and handheld devices. In the future, we hope to make this more of a community event including activities outside of the school day."

The school hoped the screen-free week raised awareness about the risks of excessive screen time, which can contribute to issues like obesity, sleep problems, attention issues, and social difficulties. Research shows reducing screen time can have significant benefits for children's health and academic performance.

Students and families were challenged to find alternative screen-free activities as well as sign a Screen Free Pledge Card. Each family decided what "screen-free" meant for them.

The school raised funds during the week for new fitness equipment and STEM supplies through student/family pledges to remain screen-free.

[Click here](#) to watch the News 5 Cleveland news story on the screen-free week.



South Euclid-Lyndhurst's Adrian Elementary School Hosts Inaugural Women's Walk

Adrian Elementary School in the South Euclid-Lyndhurst Schools celebrated the profound dedication, contributions, and impact of women at the inaugural Women's Walk event on Friday, May 10. Students were joined by their mothers and mother-figures before the start of school on a sunny and cool spring day to enjoy a series of memorable activities together.

After enjoying an assortment of delicious baked goods and other refreshments, students and guests listened to warm remarks from Principal Ken Lasky who thanked all mothers and mother-figures for fostering values, nurturing talents, as well as daily providing love, support, and wisdom for their children. Lasky then led the students and their guests on a celebratory walk through the neighborhood around the school.

Upon returning to the playground, students and guests listened to a reading of the book *Standing on Her Shoulders* which celebrates the contributions of everyday mothers and grandmothers as well as revered female historical figures. Assistant Superintendent Melissa Thompson delivered words of encouragement to those in attendance by emphasizing that they have profound value and worth, and to continue to make a difference in the lives of their students. The event concluded with all special guests reciting a pledge to be a positive role model, lead with integrity and compassion, as well as support and uplift others.





We build bridges for ...

Educators, Districts, Agencies, Organizations, Universities & Colleges,
Students, Adult Learners, Families & Communities, Businesses

CURRENT CLIENT DISTRICTS:

Akron Public Schools
Aurora City Schools
Barberton City Schools
Bay Village City Schools
Beachwood City Schools
Bedford City Schools
Berea City Schools
Berkshire Local Schools
Brecksville-Broadview Heights City Schools
Brooklyn City Schools
Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools
Chardon Local Schools
Cleveland Heights-University Heights
City Schools
Cleveland Metropolitan Schools
Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

East Cleveland City Schools
Euclid City Schools
Fairview Park City Schools
Garfield Heights City Schools
Independence Local Schools
James A. Garfield Local Schools
Kenston Local Schools
Kent City Schools
Kirtland Local Schools
Lakewood City Schools
Maple Heights City Schools
Mayfield City Schools
Mentor Exempted Village Schools
North Olmsted City Schools
North Royalton City Schools
Olmsted Falls City Schools

Orange City Schools
Parma City Schools
Ravenna City Schools
Revere Local Schools
Richmond Heights Local Schools
Rocky River City Schools
Shaker Heights City Schools
Solon City Schools
South Euclid-Lyndhurst City Schools
Streetsboro City Schools
Strongsville City Schools
Twinsburg City Schools
Warrensville Heights City Schools
Westlake City Schools
Wickliffe City Schools
Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools

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