



# CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

August 2022

---

**Sheri Hughes**  
*Director of  
Community Schools*

---

## MISSION

Richland Academy of the Arts' authorizing mission is to provide the oversight, monitoring, technical assistance, resources and leadership needed and wanted by its sponsored schools for them to provide their students with superior academic opportunities while maintaining sound financial viability without violating their autonomy.

## VISION

Our authorizing vision is to be the sponsor of choice for community schools in Ohio. By not limiting imagination, we will honor developmental abilities and the growth of the whole child. We will cultivate communities who believe children need to grow up experiencing the arts and contributing back to their families and communities.

---

## *A message from the director*

It's been a busy summer at Richland Academy of the Arts – and it's flown by!

In June, RAA celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding, which included a tribute to retiring Executive Director Marianne Cooper. Students, community members, board members, family and friends gathered in celebration of RAA's dynamic first three decades and Marianne's dedication to the organization. She was honored with creation of a scholarship in her name, and dedication of the Marianne Cooper Performance Center in her honor.

We also welcomed our new executive director, Dr. Michael Benson, who has an extensive arts background and a deep passion for education and community collaboration.

You'll notice that we have a new logo – the result of a year-long rebranding initiative. We'll be launching a new website in the coming weeks and are excited about our new look as we continue our rewarding work into the next decade.

It's also been a summer of change at the Ohio Department of Education, which recently announced several staffing changes. Under the continued leadership of Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Stephanie Siddens, former ODE employee Colleen Grady will now oversee the Center for School Choice -- which includes the Office of Community Schools, the Office of School Sponsorship and the Office of Non-Public Education – as senior program manager. Karl Koenig, who previously served as ODE's director of the Office of Community Schools, is now manager of the department's Office of Grant Implementation.

We look forward to kicking off the new school year and working with board members and school leaders! I know you share my hope that our "new normal" will be free of disruptions to student learning experienced throughout the pandemic.

*Sheri Hughes*  
Director of Community Schools

## *Alternate Assessment scores set for graduation requirements*

In June, the State Board of Education voted to approve cut scores for students taking Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities related to long-term graduation requirements. A score of "basic" or higher will now be required to demonstrate competency on math and English language arts assessments. The same requirement also applies on social studies and science assessments to earn the Citizenship and Science seals.





## Approved assessments list now available

The Ohio Department of Education recently updated its list of approved assessments for the 2022-2023 school year in the following areas:

- Comparable Assessments to Ohio's 4-3 Diagnostic Assessment for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee;
- Alternative Standardized Assessment for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee;
- Alternative Standardized Assessment for Grades 3-8;
- Alternative High School Assessments for Graduation;
- High Quality Student Data; and,
- Gifted Prescreening and Identification.

[Click here](#) to access the full list.



## CBAN expands to meet growing demand

Despite the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021-2022 school year was successful in many ways for the team at the Columbus Bilingual Academy North (CBAN). The school was recognized within the ACCEL Network of schools for student enrollment, staff retention and student average daily attendance. Dr. Steve Fawcett was named Principal of the Year, and Kathy Orenge was honored as Office Manager of the Year.

But perhaps the best indicator of the school's strong performance is its steady annual growth of 12 percent since Dr. Fawcett assumed the principal position three years ago. More than half of students newly enrolled for the 2022-2023 school year were referred by a friend or family member.

"We've been planning for expansion to meet the steady growing demand," Dr. Fawcett said. "We're located in what was originally a strip mall in retrofitted space in the footprint of five to six storefronts. Our plan was to expand into adjacent space, but a better option presented itself."

A 30-second walk from the school's entrance at the other end of the strip mall was space used for special events prior to the COVID pandemic – open space with bathrooms and a kitchen already in place. It will now house eight new classrooms for the school's youngest students in kindergarten through second grade.

"The budget for our original expansion plan was about \$1 million," Dr. Fawcett said. "Our revised plan reduced costs by 40 percent. Thanks to financial support from ACCEL – and our efforts to pay off the loan on our original building a year early – we're able to expand without financial strain."

CBAN's culture is built around family and community. Its staff mirrors student demographics, which results in teachers identifying with the challenges many immigrant students and their families face. The school's mission extends beyond academics, helping families connect with organizations that provide strong social support.

"Our board members share our commitment to the community and our culture of family," Dr. Fawcett said. "They recognize the importance of providing support to families and providing a parent workroom – with access to a computer, scanner, printer and phones – was a priority. The new facility will also have a laundry room that families who don't have access are welcome to use."

Although the project is set for completion a few weeks ahead of schedule, the new facility won't be ready for the first day of school. As a short-term solution, the school's fifth grade students will utilize space that's located less than a ten-minute drive away.

Dr. Fawcett has acknowledged to students' families and staff that the expansion means the kick-off to the new school year won't be without challenges, but he's also reassured them that it will be worth it when the new facility opens about three weeks later.

"We have a lot of work yet to do before we open on September 15, which appropriately kicks off National Hispanic Heritage Month," Dr. Fawcett said. "We're all so excited and eager to begin another year of service to our students, their families and the community. We anticipate enrollment of about 475 students this year which is such a great place to be just 12 months after establishing and maintaining waitlists at every grade level."

