



CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

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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.

ODE overhaul bill reintroduced in 135th General Assembly

As previously reported, a bill aimed at overhauling the structure of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the responsibilities of the State Board of Education failed to pass both legislative chambers by year-end 2022.

Given the fact that its passage is a high priority for Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima), it comes as no surprise that the proposal has already been reintroduced in the new General Assembly as S.B. 1.

Key provisions of the legislation remain unchanged: restructuring ODE as the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) with two divisions – Primary and Secondary Education and Career-Technical Education – which would be a part of the governor's cabinet; and, transferring most of the power and duties of the State Board of Education and the superintendent of public instruction to DEW.



The bill now also includes provisions giving the legislature the power to invalidate rules adopted by the new department's director and barring the director or deputy directors from holding office for more than 45 days without Senate approval.

Some have raised concerns that the bill may violate the Ohio Constitution which establishes the State Board and gives it the responsibility to appoint a state superintendent and tasks the legislature with establishing additional duties for both.

The Senate Education Committee has already held a hearing on S.B. 1 and Chair Andy Brenner (R-Delaware) has indicated that hearings will be held on a weekly basis starting February 7, continuing through late February or early March.

The Senate majority plans to pass the proposal as a stand-alone bill rather than amending its provisions into the budget bill, which often address a large number of public policy issues.

State biennial budget process begins

Every two years, passing a two-year state operating budget by the June 30 deadline becomes a top priority at the Statehouse. In addition to providing funding for the next two fiscal years, the soon-to-be introduced bill will likely include a number of public policy provisions.

Throughout the five-month process, legislators will deliberate over a wide range of priorities including K-12 education funding and continued implementation of the "Cupp-Patterson" formula introduced in 2020.

Proponents of the current funding formula acknowledge that the additional cost – estimated at \$2 billion in spending each year – could increase even more as studies called for in the last state budget are completed and information on costs associated with serving targeted groups of students, including English learners and those with disabilities, becomes

Continued on pg. 2

LaRue to lead State Board

At its January meeting, the State Board of Education chose Paul LaRue to serve as president, replacing Charlotte McGuire who did not seek the nomination. Martha Manchester was elected to continue to serve as vice president.

LaRue is a retired social studies teacher and wrestling coach who highlighted his classroom experience and reputation as a team player in seeking support for the leadership role.

He earned a bachelor's degree in social studies from The Ohio State University and a master's degree in history education from Xavier University.

LaRue was appointed to serve on the State Board by Governor Mike DeWine in 2020.



State biennial budget – continued

available. Expanded access to private school vouchers is likely to be a priority given strong support by the Senate president and other members of the majority caucuses in the House and Senate.

Governor Mike DeWine's two-year state budget proposal, soon to be introduced as legislation in the Ohio House of Representatives, will include a "comprehensive approach" to mental health prevention and will include a "significant amount" of funding for schools. Governor DeWine aspires to make Ohio the best state in the country for mental health treatment, research and prevention, and prioritizes growth of the mental health workforce to meet demand.



Studies recommend funding increases

Senate Bill 310 passed by the 133rd General Assembly at the end of 2020 called for a series of studies which are a byproduct of the legislative process that led to Ohio's new K-12 education funding formula commonly referred to as the Cupp-Patterson plan. The result of two studies were recently released: one addressing costs associated with educating students with disabilities and another focused on English learners.

The American Institutes for Research study reveals that Ohio needs to increase funding to implement best practices for teaching students with disabilities and recommends additional reviews of funding levels every five years.

"Findings from this study show that the current funding weights are lower than the funding weights that would be necessary to cover the estimated per-student cost of implementing best practices for all disability classifications," the report states.

"Furthermore, the current funding categories are misaligned with the estimated per-student cost of implementing best practices and that a regrouping of disability classifications may more closely represent the variation in costs of serving students in each disability classification," it continues.

An analysis of costs associated with educating English learners, conducted by Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, and WestEd, suggests that funding be increased and differentiated based on proficiency. "Emerging" students should be allocated about \$10,000 more than the current state average of about \$7,350, while "Progressing" students should benefit from an additional \$4,800.

"It should also be noted that the panel recommended the funds for Emerging students with the intent that these students would as a result move more quickly to Progressing and ultimately exit English learner status," the report states.

The study calls for additional research on: effects of the scale of English learner programs on costs; utility of data collection and maintenance; standards for English learner teaching training; and, expansion of state and regional guidance on such programs.



Bring STEM careers to the classroom

The You Make I.T. Better program invites high school students to explore various STEM career paths through hands-on, skill-building activities and mentorships with employees at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. Educators who register for this program have access to class career mentors, classroom visits, field trips and other resources.

[Click here](#) to access the form to register classes for mentors and classroom visits.

Tap into OCALI resources

OCALI offers a diverse selection of resources to help educators who work with students with disabilities. Offerings include:

- OCALI's newest audio episode of Inspiring Change, *There is Strength in Every Community: A Conversation about Special Education in Rural and Urban Settings*;
- The *Grab-N-Go Resource Gallery Kit*, available through OCALI's Lending Library, offers a variety of interventions with how-to explanations to support all learners, including those with autism spectrum disorder; and,
- Books to use with children in preschool through high school to learn more about autism from OCALI's Autism Center.

[Click here](#) to access the resources online.



ACE funding doubled to encourage increased participation

As previously reported, participation in the Afterschool Child Enrichment (ACE) Educational Savings Account program created nearly two years ago is extremely low – less than 20,000 economically-disadvantaged students, despite funding provided for 250,000.

In response, legislation (H.B. 45) including ACE modification provisions was passed during the year-end “lame duck” General Assembly session and signed into law with an effective date of April 7, 2023, by Governor Mike DeWine.

The ACE program was created in the budget bill passed by the legislature in 2021, providing federal relief funding of up to \$500 – which is doubled to \$1,000 through the passage of H.B. 45 -- per student over a two-year period. The funds can be used for:

- Before- or after-school educational programs;
- Day camps, including those for academics, music and arts;
- Fees for learning extension centers;
- The purchase of curriculum and materials for home-school families;
- Educational, learning or study skills services;
- Field trips to historical landmarks, museums, science centers and theaters, including admission, exhibit and program fees;
- Language classes;
- Musical instrument lessons; and,
- Tutoring.

House Bill 45 also extends the program through fiscal year 2024 and increases the family income limit to qualify for an account from 300 percent of the federal poverty level to 400 percent, and uses the family's adjusted gross income to determine eligibility. Parents/guardians may certify income eligibility by submitting: an affidavit affirming that the student's family income meets the income requirement; proof of income eligibility under another state or federal program; or, other evidence determined appropriate by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

Unless funds are misused or the student graduates from high school, ODE and providers participating in the program (which includes schools) are prohibited from reclaiming any funds credited to a student's account.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Afterschool Child Enrichment Educational Savings Account program online.

In addition to the ACE modification changes, H.B. 45 addresses a variety of policy issues, including several specific to K-12 education. The new law will:

- Allow districts and schools to conduct raffles to raise money;
- Increase the phase-in percentage for disadvantaged pupil impact aide from 14 percent to 33.33 percent; and,
- Prohibit the Board of Building Standards from requiring storm shelters in school buildings.

Ohio to receive Kindergarten readiness grant

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) recently announced that it will receive \$48 million in federal funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the Buckeye State's youngest learners.



Richland Academy of the Arts is an ACE qualified education service provider.

Continued on pg. 4

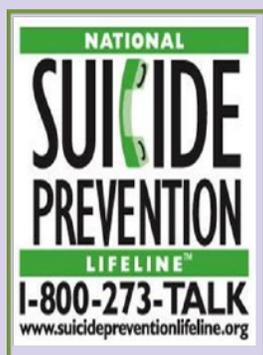
Free suicide prevention modules available

The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation and Kognito are providing free mental health and suicide prevention training for educators, staff and students.

Kognito uses virtual, interactive and role-play simulations to prepare participants for real-life conversations on topics like mental health, bullying and suicide.

Modules target specific audiences: *At-Risk for Educators, Coping with Loss at School and Step In, Speak Up* for educators and staff; and *Friend2Friend: Emotional & Mental Wellness* for students.

[Click here](#) to learn more.



Kindergarten readiness grant – continued

As its name suggests, the Preschool Development Grant provides funding to promote learning for children from birth to five years of age. Ohio’s grant proposal outlines a broad vision – that each child will engage in quality early learning and healthy development experiences that prepare that child for school and build a solid foundation for lifelong success -- to advance three goals:

- All of Ohio’s children, especially those from low-income and disadvantaged families, have access to quality early childhood care and education programs and are ready for kindergarten;
- Ohio’s families understand the importance of early childhood care and education, and have the necessary resources and information to make an informed choice about their child’s early childhood care and education setting; and,
- Ohio’s early childhood delivery system increases the participation of children in quality settings through more efficient alignment of resources and better outreach coordination among state and local agencies.



ODJFS will work to administer grant-funded programs with the Ohio departments of: Education; Health, Mental Health and Addiction Services; Medicaid; and Developmental Disabilities.

“The plans for this grant are expansive,” ODJFS Director Matt Damschroder said. “It will fund a needs assessment to determine the best way to provide safe and enriching early childcare and education for young children with physical disabilities and emotional needs. It will address workforce needs, family engagement, and the impact of trauma on the mental health of children, all to help them achieve their God-given potential.”

AG K-12 safety grants available

Schools are invited to apply for a portion of nearly \$12 million in safety grant funds for the 2023-2024 school year through the Ohio General Attorney’s office, including a limited number of Innovation Grants up to \$20,000 for equipment connecting schools with law enforcement agencies.

The new Innovation Grants may be used for: systems giving law enforcement immediate security camera access; silent alarms; shot-detection technology; and, license plate reader, protection order and wanted person alert systems.

Traditional safety grants are available for \$2,500 or \$5.50 per student, whichever amount is greater. The funds can be used for active-shooter training, educational resources and other security-related expenditures.

[Click here](#) to access the grant applications through the Ohio Grants Portal. Select “funding opportunities,” then select “Ohio Attorney General’s FY23 School Safety Grant,” or “Ohio Attorney General’s School/Law Enforcement Technology Linking Safety Grant.” The deadline is March 31.



Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students deadline approaches

In December, the Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials (AT&AEM) Center at OCALI emailed the annual Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students to districts and charter schools throughout the state on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education. The deadline for electronically registering all legally blind students is February 17. The Quota generates supplemental funds for registered students that the AT&AEM Center uses to purchase accessible educational materials from the American Printing House for the Blind. [Click here](#) to learn more.