



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.

Education department overhaul bill falls short of required votes

As previously reported, legislation (S.B. 178) was introduced last year prior to the General Assembly's summer recess to overhaul the structure of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the role of the State Board of Education. Key provisions of S.B. 178:

- ➊ Rename the Department of Education as the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW);
- ➋ Create the position of the director of education and workforce, who is appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and is the head of DEW;
- ➌ Establish within DEW the Division of Primary and Secondary Education and the Division of Career-Technical Education, each of which is headed by a deputy director;
- ➍ Transfer most of the powers and duties of the State Board of Education and the superintendent of public instruction to DEW; and,
- ➎ Retain the State Board's and state superintendent's powers and duties regarding educator licensure, licensee disciplinary actions, school district territory transfers, and certain other areas.



The Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee held several hearings on S.B. 178 which received mixed reviews from those testifying for and against it. Those who generally support the overhaul cite a lack of accountability under the current structure, while those who oppose it see value in Ohioans' interests being represented by elected board members.

On December 7, the Senate approved S.B. 178 by a near party line vote of 22-7. Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) made a rare floor speech in which he said that the current structure has failed. Lawmakers who voted against the bill generally agreed that changes are needed, but voiced concern that the debate is rushed and that stakeholders haven't had adequate time to weigh in on the proposed plan.

The bill was introduced in the House on December 12. Speaker Bob Cupp (R-Lima) voiced concern that the House was given very little time to consider such significant changes and noted that the issue remains under debate.

"There are many members that think it's worth giving it a try," Speaker Cupp said. "There are some who are concerned about not having everything overseen by an elected board, so there's obviously a different opinion there." Some members think that giving the governor more oversight "may be a way forward."

In an additional attempt to pass the provisions of S.B. 178 by year-end, the Senate amended its overhaul language into another piece of legislation – H.B. 151, a transgender high school women's sports ban – which was then approved by a party line vote and returned to the House.

On December 14, the House voted 46-41 not to concur with the Senate's changes, ending all chances for some form of the overhaul bill being approved by the end of the 134th General Assembly. Senate President Matt Huffman has indicated that the ODE overhaul plan will be a priority in 2023.

Three new courses supporting literacy available on Ohio's LMS

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) offers three new literacy-focused courses through Ohio's Learning Management System. The courses take five to seven hours to complete and earn participants certificates for contact hours. The new offerings include:

Leading Adolescent Literacy – for district/building leaders, literacy coaches and curriculum directors;

Peer Coaching for Literacy – district/building leaders, coaches, teacher leaders and others interested in developing or improving a peer coaching program; and,

Instructional Coaching for Literacy – for coaches, building leaders, teacher leaders and others interested in supporting educators to improve their practice.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the courses on ODE's LMS page.

Learning Management System for Ohio Education

January is School Board Recognition Month

January is designated as School Board Recognition Month celebrating school board members' hard and meaningful work – a thank you to board members, and an opportunity to inform the public about the important role board members play. [Click here](#) to read the proclamation issued by Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted.



State Board addresses LGBTQ resolution

As previously reported, the State Board of Education has struggled to achieve consensus on a proposed resolution in support of the Ohio Attorney General's lawsuit challenging proposed federal rules that would interpret Title IX as banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identify. The State Board voted 10-7 in favor of the resolution at its December meeting.

The State Board also took action regarding the ongoing search for a permanent state superintendent of public instruction, voting 11-4 to postpone the decision regarding the hiring of a search firm as legislators continue to debate a proposed plan which would significantly change the reporting structure and responsibilities of the position.

Legislature amends, approves bill initially focused on temporary licensure

The Ohio Senate amended legislation (H.B. 554) passed by the Ohio House initially focused on temporary licensure for former educators to include a variety of K-12 education priorities. On December 14, the House concurred with the Senate's changes. Key provisions of the bill include:

- A requirement that the State Board of Education, upon application, issue nonrenewable, two-year temporary educator licenses to individuals with expired professional teacher's certificates or professional educator licenses;
- A requirement that the State Board issue professional educator licenses to temporary license holders who complete specified continuing education coursework;
- Authorization for multiple charter school facilities to be located in counties adjacent to the county in which the school's primary facility is located;
- Authorization for certain charter schools to opt to report to the Department of Education the number of students enrolled in the school on a full-time equivalent basis based on credits earned for the 2022-2023 school year;
- Inclusion of all children identified as "developmentally delayed" into Category 2 of the special education funding formula (expanding beyond preschool children); and,
- Expansion of the definition of a "child with a disability" to include children ages three through nine who are experiencing a developmental delay (expanding beyond age five).

The bill will become law 90 days after being signed (or no action taken) by Governor Mike DeWine.

Attendance a priority despite winter challenges

Illnesses (including COVID-19) and inclement weather create challenges for students in getting to school in winter. Attendance Works encourages use of its tools and resources – including the *Stay the Course: Winter Messaging Toolkit* – helpful in building relationships between educators, parents, caregivers and community members. [Click here](#) to access the toolkit online.

Reading a top priority at Case Preparatory Academy

Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee – a state law aimed at helping to ensure that students "learn to read" in the early grades so they can "read to learn" throughout their K-12 academic careers – is an important priority in classrooms across the Buckeye State.

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School safety curriculum now available

The Ohio School Safety Center (OSSC) has finalized the state training requirements for school staff members authorized by their governing authorities to be armed on school grounds. OSSC's Armed School Staff Essential Training (ASSET) was developed to meet the requirements of H.B. 99 which authorizes Ohio school boards and governing bodies to opt to arm specific staff members who complete training on the curriculum developed by OSSC.

The new ASSET curriculum includes 24 hours of initial training and eight hours of annual recertification training, the maximum number permitted by law. The curriculum defines the subjects that instructors must cover, the amount of time spent on each topic, and the learning objectives that those taking the training must meet.

Mobile training officers with OSSC's Safety and Crisis Division will begin offering ASSET in 2023. Schools also have the option to select an alternative training provider whose courses meet the requirements of the new OSSC curriculum.

[Click here](#) to learn more on OSSC's website.

Case reading – continued

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on younger students during a period in which they learn fundamental reading skills that serve as the foundation for their continued growth. Statewide in the 2021-2022 school year, just 60.1 percent of third grade students scored proficient or higher in reading, with many schools earning just one star on the Early Literacy state report card component.

Case Preparatory Academy Principal James Burns is proud of the three-star Progress rating on the school's 2021-2022 report card but understands the importance of closing achievement gaps and helping all students develop strong reading skills.

"We improved our PI (performance index) score by nearly 12 points over the previous year," Burns said. "We're determined to achieve similar success in early literacy and are confident that our students will meet the challenge."

"'Case Prep Reads' is a building-wide initiative aimed at helping students achieve academic success by building a strong foundation in reading," Burns continued. "Every student must read a new book each month, and every classroom has sustained silent reading each day. Students – and staff – carry a book all day including at lunch and specials. We also offer Saturday school once a month and free after-school tutoring."

In addition to daily half-hour intervention blocks, "Blitz" tests are created by teachers to help students prepare for state assessments. There are weekly scrimmages focused on literacy. The school's library is an asset benefitting all students –nearly 100 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged – and book fairs are hosted twice a year.



But what really sets the school apart from so many others is its focus on, and approach to, assessments. The education community has, for many years, voiced concerns about the negative impact of the stress students experience as a result of such a strong emphasis on testing.

"We test, test and test," Burns said. "But our emphasis is on student growth and celebrating progress. We pump our students up – with pep rallies and competitions among classrooms – building their confidence and celebrating their achievements."

"Students are so excited to see clear evidence of improvement," he continued. "Our kids love the competition between classrooms on attendance – which is averaging at 87 percent this year – and academic achievement. They're smart and they're motivated. It makes me happy to see that they're so happy. Our ultimate goal, of course, is their academic growth and success."

Case Prep is managed by ACCEL Schools, Ohio's largest charter school operator which is part of a network of more than 50 schools throughout the country.

"There are clear benefits to being part of the ACCEL network," Burns said. "I feel well-supported, not micro-managed, and appreciate the resources ACCEL provides – from academic resources and sharing of best practices, to human resources, professional development and other shared services."

Now that COVID-19 poses less of a threat, Burns and his team are laser-focused on regaining academic ground lost as a result of the pandemic. Testing will remain a key strategy, as will maintaining a positive culture and consistency in staffing and expectations.

"Our kids are smart enough to compete against students throughout the community," Burns said. "That, along with a team of dedicated teachers, gives me confidence in our ability to close achievement gaps created by the pandemic. Our kids are resilient and have the drive to succeed."