



CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

August 2025

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.

Withholding of federal education funds prompts lawsuit

The Trump Administration's decision to withhold billions of dollars in federal education funds has raised concerns, garnered criticism and resulted in lawsuits. But U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon recently told attendees at a National Governors Association summer meeting that the dollars will start flowing to states soon.

Late June, state education departments were informed that more than \$6 billion in funding – including more than \$2 billion in Title II-A professional development and nearly \$900 million in Title III-A support for English learners – would not be released by the traditional July 1 date due to a review to ensure that the dollars "are spent in accordance with the President's priorities."

In response, two lawsuits have been filed: one by a group of 23 Democratic attorneys general and two governors; and, one by Cincinnati Public Schools, the Ohio Federation of Teachers and others.



The plaintiffs argue that the withholding of funds violates the Administrative Procedure Act's prohibition on "arbitrary" and "capricious" actions by federal agencies, as well as the Impound Control Act which restricts the timeline in which the executive branch can withhold funds appropriated by Congress. The Ohio lawsuit also claims that withholding the funds "violates the constitutional separation of powers by unlawfully impounding funds in derogation of Congress' power of the purse, and in refusing to comply with Congress' mandates to make grants and allot funds."

Democracy Forward, which spearheaded the Ohio lawsuit, will "continue to monitor the situation and work in court to ensure the administration fully complies with the law."

Funds totaling an estimated \$185 million have been withheld from Ohio, putting Ohio schools in a "very difficult position," according to Cincinnati schools Deputy Superintendent Alesia Smith.

AI in schools a key priority

Artificial intelligence (AI) in schools was an important topic addressed at a recent AI summit hosted by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

The biennial budget bill (H.B. 96) recently passed by the Legislature and signed into state law by Governor Mike DeWine includes provisions requiring schools to adopt AI policies or a model policy developed by the Department of Education and Workforce by July 1, 2026.

DEW Chief Integration Officer Dr. Chris Wollard told summit attendees that there is "a lot of variation" among districts and schools. While some are reluctant to embrace AI, many others are eager to learn how it can help prepare students for a world reshaped by the technology.

DEW Director Stephen Dackin noted that the new law builds on the work of Ohio's *AI in Education Coalition: AI Strategy* which addresses definitions, fair use, academic honesty and other relevant topics.

Continued on pg. 2

Study suggests educational media can benefit students

Researchers at The Ohio State University recently released a report that suggests use of educational apps, games and videos may encourage students to read more.

Based on responses from 346 caregivers in central Ohio, the report reveals that use of educational media not only encourages reading but also results in less time overall in front of screens.

“We think it’s really important to understand because there is a lot of evidence that children can learn from high-quality educational media, and that using educational media can be more supportive of development and learning than using high levels of entertainment content,” said Rebecca Dore, the lead author and director of research at OSU’s Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy.

AI – con't

Senator Andy Brenner (R-Delaware), who chairs the Senate Education Committee, believes Ohio should be “at the forefront” of integrating AI into education, comparing a ban on AI in the classroom to banning calculators in math class.

“If you’re using it the right way, I think it actually could enhance student experience and learning, not the other way around,” he said. “Yes, you need to have checks and balances to ensure that AI is not substituting (for) learning.”

Ohio’s focus on AI policies in education is in alignment with that at the federal level and in post-secondary education.

Plans to embrace AI occurs as states, including Ohio, enact classroom bans on smartphones and other mobile devices



Study reveals challenge for economically disadvantaged families

The National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) recently released a report – *2025 Out of Reach* – that shines a light on a challenge to low-income families: housing vulnerability, which impacts student school attendance.

According to the study, the average renter cannot afford the cost of one- or two-bedroom apartments – a problem that has doubled since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Renter earnings of \$18.62 per hour falls short of the funds needed to afford an average apartment (\$22.51 per hour).

“The cost of rent is squeezing working Ohioans like never before,” said Amy Riegel, who serves as executive director for COHHIO. “Rent now consumes so much of the income that people need to survive.”

According to the report, Ohio is home to more than 1.5 million renter households. The problem is particularly challenging in urban counties including Franklin, Hamilton and Cuyahoga.



AG opinion: Auditor has authority to set charter school records, meeting training standards

Attorney General Dave Yost recently released an opinion on training requirements for charter schools. He determined that the state auditor has the authority to “set a reasonable standard” for training to ensure that charters know how to comply with public records and open meetings laws.

The opinion came as the result of a request for clarity from State Auditor Keith Faber, who questioned whether training completed by charter school board members, fiscal officers and administrators must be certified by the AG and conducted by the agency or a third party contracted by it.

Unlike elected officials, charter school personnel are not required to complete the trainings certified by the AG’s office.

“The auditor of state could, conceivably, specify the minimum qualifications of instructors or amount of training that would be sufficient to ensure community school officials and personnel are able to comply with open meeting and public record laws,” the AG wrote. “The content and length of such training certified by the attorney general, or some portions thereof, might serve as a model.”



Health department releases revised guidelines for school emergencies

Revised *Emergency and Health Guidelines for Schools* recently released by the Ohio Department of Health provides a general overview of the recommended steps schools should take in emergency situations and the safeguards that should be taken.

Information is provided on:

- Infection control;
- Planning for students with special needs;
- Injury reporting;
- School safety planning; and,
- Emergency preparedness.

[Click here](#) to access the guidelines.

Plan for high-quality, evidence-based high school math instruction released

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce recently published *Ohio's Plan for K-12 Mathematics* which establishes a common statewide vision of high-quality, research- and evidence-based mathematics instruction. The plan also provides guidance on the system-level conditions and structures needed to bring quality instruction to scale.

Authors of the report say the guidelines are needed, particularly given that no student groups have fully returned to pre-COVID 19 pandemic math achievement levels.

Expanding access to professional development for administrators and teachers, increasing the use of high-quality instructional materials and implementing research-based instruction are among the recommendations.

"The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce recognizes that mathematics is an increasingly important factor in determining access to a full range of career pathways and college options," the document states. "To address persistent learning gaps and accelerate the learning of all students in mathematics, Ohio schools must ensure all students have opportunities to advance their mathematical skills and understanding through a rigorous, grade-level curriculum."

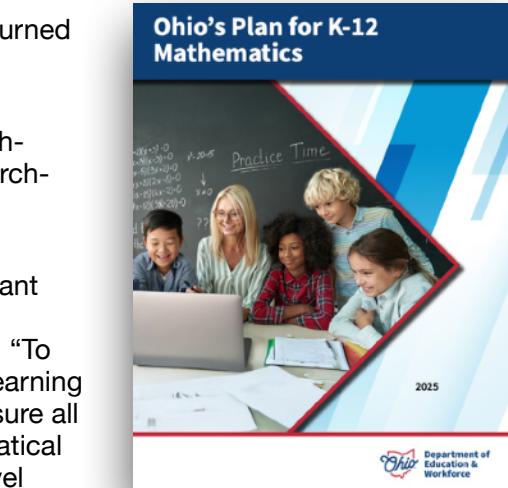
[Click here](#) to access DEW's mathematics webpage.

STEM grant applications open

The Ohio STEM Learning Network recently announced a new round of funding for STEM in K-12 classrooms. The goal of the grant program is to foster the creation of new STEM education programming in classrooms by investing directly in K-12 teachers and administrators.

With philanthropic funding from Battelle, educators can apply through the Ohio STEM Learning Network STEM Classroom Grant Program for up to \$5,000. The application deadline is September 2.

[Click here](#) to learn more.



Open office hours for school improvement grants scheduled

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce recently announced that it will offer a Q&A open office hours session on Thursday, August 12, 1 to 2 p.m. The session is designed to help grantees maximize the impact of their fiscal year 2026 Title I Non-Competitive Supplemental School Improvement and Expanding Opportunities for Each Child Non-Competitive grant funds.

The Q&A session will not include a presentation and will not be recorded.

[Click here](#) to register.

Celebrate Ohio's "tax holiday"

The Buckeye State's annual tax holiday, slated for August 1 to 14, allows Ohioans to save on school necessities and other items including electronics, books and clothing.

