



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.

Charter school board member ethics disclosure requirement on hold

After recently announcing that charter school governing board members must file ethics disclosures, the Ohio Ethics Commission voted to indefinitely stay the issue pending further review after concerns were raised by legislative leaders.

In addition to a joint letter of concern signed by House Speaker Matt Huffman (R-Lima) and Senate President Rob McColley (R-Napoleon), Speaker Huffman made a rare appearance at a meeting of the commission where he voiced his objections.

He encouraged commission members to hear testimony from legislators and charter school board members before making a final decision, warning that the Legislature could take action to address the issue if necessary.

"I'm not going to say we're going to change it," Speaker Huffman told reporters. "Regardless, I think we're going to study this."

"If, in fact, the attorney general (and) other lawyers say, 'Yeah, at any time the Ethics Commission can do this,' then I think we need to look at changing the law."

The filings would include names of family members and amounts of income and gifts, the names of businesses owned by the official and their family members, real estate, debts, investments and other information.

Richland Academy of the Arts will continue to follow the issue as a member of the Ohio Association of Charter School Authorizers (OACSA) which opposes the requirement.



Senate to resume work on school closure bill, K-12 DEI ban

Members of the Senate Education Committee will continue to review legislative proposals to close chronically low-performing public schools and to ban diversity, equity and inclusion at the K-12 level.

In an interview with *Gongwer News Service*, Senator Andy Brenner (R-Delaware), who chairs the Senate Education Committee, said hearings will continue on the bill (S.B. 127) to hold chronically low-performing traditional public schools to an automatic closure law, establishing parity with charter schools.

Three hearings were held on the legislation last year with mixed reviews from witnesses and committee members.

Senator Brenner said hearings will also continue on S.B. 113 which would ban diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in K-12 public schools – similar to the ban already in place for public institutions of higher education.

He anticipates testimony will be offered from a significant number of opponents.

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The Trump Administration's decision to drop its legal fight over federal guidance aimed at ending diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives does not prohibit state legislators from pursuing similar legislation.

Literacy resources

English Language Proficiency Assessment 21st Century (ELPA21) invites Ohio educators to join workshops on using data to support English learners. Receive resources for planning, delivering and assessing instruction based on students' English language proficiency levels. [Click here](#) to request workshop information.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Ohio – which mails enrolled infants, toddlers and young children one free book each month (until his or her fifth birthday) – offers books in English and Spanish. [Click here](#) to enroll, [here](#) to learn how to receive bilingual books and [here](#) to access the Ohio Reading Tips for Families website.



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School closure, DEI ban – continued

The Senate Education Committee will also likely consider an omnibus bill (S.B. 311) which addresses budget corrections and policy changes requested by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

It may also review the Ohio Ethics Committee's proposed disclosure requirement for charter school board members. (See lead story on pg. 1)

Important reminder!

State law requires all charter school board members and administrators to complete public records and open meetings trainings annually. Richland Academy of the Arts will host a live and virtual session that meets the legal requirements on April 16 at 6 p.m. A legislative update will also be included in the one-hour program. Details to come ...

State superintendent to resign

Superintendent of Public Instruction Paul Craft recently announced to the State Board of Education that he will resign no later than July 31.

In December 2023, Craft was chosen to serve in the position after legislation (H.B. 33 enacted in 2023) was passed separating (and renaming) the Department of Education and Workforce from the board and reducing the board's authority and responsibilities.

During his tenure as superintendent, Craft focused on improving relationships between the board and lawmakers, and overcoming funding challenges while fulfilling the board's responsibilities.

"Serving in this role has been the honor of my career, but I feel it's time to give the board the chance to get that next person in place to take this team and this organization through the next set of challenges," Craft said.

He also said the July 31 date is "subject to change based on emergent circumstances and the board's ability to find a capable replacement."

Craft's successor will continue to face changes and challenges as the board transitions from 19 elected and appointed members to five gubernatorial appointees.

"I think that the conversations between stakeholders – and by that, I mean higher ed, DEW, our state board team and legislators – they have vastly improved," Craft said. "I certainly will encourage the board to bring somebody in that can do nothing but continue that process."



Efforts to enhance career-tech education continue

Deputy Director Jeremy Varner reported on efforts to enhance career-tech education at the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) public meeting last month. Included among ongoing initiatives is a survey of providers and a redesign of the industry recognized credential system.

"The preliminary data shows that we've got thousands of students on waitlists, hundreds of programs that are at or near capacity," Varner said. "In manufacturing alone, there are nearly 1,200 students on waitlists," with less than half of those students receiving a spot in their second-choice program.

"That's just one sector, but it's a really important sector of our economy," he continued. "It kind of shows the challenge that we ultimately need to ameliorate when we're talking about giving our students the opportunity to pursue the American Dream here in Ohio."

He also reported on DEW's launch of career pathway support networks in seven JobsOhio economic development regions, which have focused on implementing a mandate in legislation (H.B. 96) enacted last year requiring all school districts to offer career-tech education to students in grades 7-8

Literacy resources — continued

Coming soon!

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) is currently developing “science of reading” refresher courses which must be taken by teachers, and speech and language pathologists, every five years under the requirements of legislation enacted in 2023.

There will be two modules: a basic review of the “science of reading” (one focused on grades K-5 and one on grades 6-12); and, another tailored to specific needs (including English language learners, gifted students and students with reading difficulties).

The first module and select options for the second are expected to be available by late Spring.

Individuals hired before July 1, 2025 must complete the refresher courses by June 30, 2030, and every five years after.



Math and English remediation rates increase

The departments of Education and Workforce (DEW) and Higher Education recently released a report showing remediation rates in math and English in Fall 2024 increased for new students at Ohio’s public higher education institutions over the previous year.

Students who needed remediation in English increased slightly (from 4.6 to 4.7 percent) as math remediation rates increased more significantly (from 10.8 to 11.9 percent). Students in need of remediation in both subjects also increased (from 12.9 to 13.9 percent).

According to the report, the declines “can largely be attributed to state higher education policy shifts,” including a multiyear phase-out of state subsidy funding for remedial coursework.

The report includes several recommendations, including implementation of plans developed by DEW to bolster math and literacy achievement statewide, and the creation of “customized pathways through graduation that provide meaning and application to a student’s learning.”

“Pathways can include career- and college-focused options such as Career-Tech, College Credit Plus, work-based learning, and industry-recognized credentials,” the report states. “Students with robust and up-to-date graduation plans will be better prepared to take advantage of their high school education.”

Indicator 14 targets tracking post-school outcomes for students with IEPs updated

Ohio recently updated Indicator 14 targets, which track post-school outcomes for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) including enrollment in higher education, training programs, or competitive employment one year after leaving high school.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to report progress on indicators for students with disabilities through a State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report. States are required to set measurable, rigorous indicator targets informed by stakeholder input and show improvement over baseline data.

[Click here](#) to access the updated Indicator 14 Technical Document in Ohio’s FY 2024 Annual Performance Report and [here](#) to access the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce’s Special Education Methodology and Target Setting webpage.



DEW publishes 2024-2025 Ohio Community Schools Annual Report

Each year, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce’s Office of Community Schools releases a report on the state’s public community (charter) schools. As required by state law, DEW provides this annual report to the governor, speaker of the Ohio House, president of the Ohio Senate, and House and Senate education committee chairs.

The report addresses the performance of Ohio’s community schools in five key areas:

- ◆ Effectiveness of academic programs;
- ◆ School operations;
- ◆ Performance of sponsors;
- ◆ Legal compliance; and,
- ◆ Financial condition.

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

2024-2025 Ohio Community Schools Annual Report

