

FALL 2023

# THE ESC CONNECTION

A DIGITAL MAGAZINE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER OF NORTHEAST OHIO

PREPARING OUR  
FUTURE WORKFORCE

## E4ME CAREER PROGRAM

STORY ON PAGES 10-11



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## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dr. Bob Mengerink, *Superintendent*

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It's hard to believe we're already in the second quarter of this school year. As you will see in this newsletter, our team has been working hard at the ESC to create unique programs and learning opportunities for educators across Northeast Ohio. Northeast Ohio is home to the most diverse landscape of school districts and students in the state whose needs can vary significantly. The administrators and educators that serve these students deserve programs and services that genuinely meet these needs and our mission is to search for and create solutions for any need. We are not limited to any list of programs or services in a newsletter or brochure and we have the capacity to respond quickly to develop or scale up services customized to the diverse needs of districts throughout the region. Our team thrives on the opportunity to serve. Please know that you can reach out to any of us at any time for anything from a simple answer to a question to a more complex challenge you may be facing. As always, we truly look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Bob

Cover photo: The ESC of Northeast Ohio and the First Ring Schools Collaborative hosted an E4Me Career Program on October 11 at the ESC of Northeast Ohio. More than 200 high school students from schools from Cleveland and inner ring suburbs learned about their employment, entrepreneurship, enlistment and education opportunities after high school graduation.



# Award-Winning PBIS Buildings

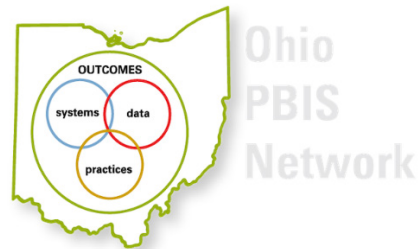
Each year, the Ohio Department of Education and the [Ohio PBIS Network](#) recognize schools and districts for their quality of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation. PBIS involves teaching students expected behaviors in a consistent and positive way, modeling and acknowledging those behaviors, and helping all students meet expectations and be successful. PBIS has been shown to improve student achievement, student behavior and school climate. In 2015, the Ohio PBIS Network first recognized schools that were model examples of effective PBIS implementation.

Schools are eligible to receive awards at the bronze, silver or gold levels of distinction. In 2023, 439 schools across Ohio received recognition. State Support Team Region 3 and the ESC of Northeast Ohio are excited to congratulate the 40 schools in Cuyahoga County that received recognition at these levels: Gold (4), Silver (8), or Bronze (28). [See the full list of schools and districts at this link](#). District level PBIS recognition will be awarded in November.

	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Total
<b>Number of awards</b>	28	8	4	40

These buildings and districts will be honored at the 2024 Ohio OLAC & PBIS Showcase, which is held annually in conjunction with the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC). This FREE virtual conference will take place on January 31, 2024 with the theme being Future Forward: Accelerating Leadership & Learning. More information about the showcase is available at [their website](#).

For information on professional development and support related to PBIS and student wellness, please visit our websites - [ESC-NEO Professional Development Calendar of Events](#), [ESC-NEO Student Wellness](#) and [SST3 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#).





## ESC and Berkshire Local Schools Design Summer Camp

The ESC of Northeast Ohio in collaboration with the Berkshire Local School District designed a summer camp for students in grades 1-8. The camp welcomed over 80 students who participated in four daily rotations which were designed to engage students in meaningful, but fun learning experiences.

In the English Language Arts rotation, students explored the human body and all of the systems that work together to keep the body moving, breathing, strong and healthy.

During the math rotation, the students engaged in age appropriate, real life math activities that encouraged critical thinking, communication and collaboration.

The Social Emotional Learning rotation allowed students to learn about emotions as well as how to treat themselves and others with respect, all while creating a number of fun craft activities the students were able to take home.

Last but not least, keeping the kids moving during the summer was important, and we did just that by having organized physical activities that promoted movement, health and sportsmanship.

This well rounded summer camp offered a mix of educational, emotional, and physical experiences to students. The ESC camp staff prioritized both fun and meaningful learning. Wishing all the students, teachers, staff, and families associated with the Berkshire Local Schools a successful and enjoyable school year ahead!

## Richmond Heights School District: Equitable Instruction for All

*By James "Ike" Holzapfel, Teaching and Learning Consultant, ESC of Northeast Ohio*

Last year, Richmond Heights Middle School began exploring the instructional design principles of Teacher Clarity. Teacher Clarity is a proven strategy of designing and delivering instruction so that all students are provided equitable access to grade level curriculum. Building off of the success of the middle school team, the district created a year-long plan to focus on Teacher Clarity for 2023-2024. The work began on August 10 when the faculty participated in a full-day professional development session focused on Teacher Clarity. During this session, teachers analyzed learning expectations for each of their content areas and discussed how

to communicate those expectations with students. After this initial session, teachers started to explore how this process could be most effectively applied to their particular area. In order to do this, teachers with Ohio State Testing data focused on applying the Teacher Clarity process to areas where opportunities for growth exist according to state testing data. The work was both intentional and purposeful. Knowing the power of the Teacher Clarity Process, the district has committed its professional development time and resources to this purpose throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

# Ohio Teacher Residency Program Prepares for Major Changes

Starting March of 2023, the Ohio Resident Educator Program switched from a 4 year to a 2 year program. With these changes came various questions from districts, program coordinators, mentors, and resident educators. These changes also brought autonomy to districts that allowed them to choose the program that best fit their beginning educators' needs.

The first year of the program puts an emphasis on instructional mentoring to help beginning educators learn to better plan, teach, assess, and revise their instruction. In the second program year, mentoring continues, but Resident Educators are also expected to submit their Resident Educator Summative Assessment, or RESA.

This past August, House Bill 33 brought sweeping changes to the Resident Educator Summative Assessment. In the past, Resident Educators were required to submit their RESA on or before a predetermined date. One of the biggest changes to submission is that now Resident Educators can submit anytime between October 3, 2023 and April 5, 2024. Another major change brought about by the House Bill is that Resident Educators now have unlimited opportunities to pass RESA. Previously, these educators had three opportunities to pass. Now, Resident Educators have the ability to submit multiple times throughout the submission window.

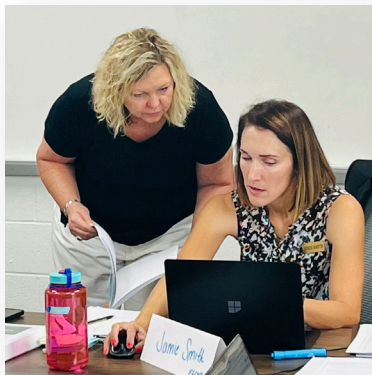
Of course the Resident Educator program would be nothing without the mentors, who are the heart of the program. As changes were made to the entire residency program, it was necessary to update the Mentor Academy training. In March of 2023, the Ohio Department of Education rolled out the changes to both in-person and virtual Mentor Academy training. The update puts a focus on the importance of instructional mentoring.



# ESC Provides Support to Independence Primary School for English Language Arts Materials

By Jamie Smith, Teaching and Learning Consultant, ESC of Northeast Ohio

At Independence Primary School, the staff is dedicated to helping every student become a proficient reader. Working with the ESC of Northeast Ohio Teaching and Learning consultants, they are currently in the process of selecting high quality English language arts (ELA) materials to provide the best possible instruction for their students.



According to the science of how the brain learns to read, proficient readers need both word recognition and language comprehension skills. Research

in the Science of Reading (a new phonics-based literacy curriculum) emphasizes that students benefit from clear, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction across all aspects of reading.

To kick off their learning in the spring of 2023, all teachers received training on the Science of Reading. Additionally, all kindergarten through third-grade teachers engaged in 18 hours of professional learning through the Ohio Department of Education Dyslexia Modules.

“Our IPS ELA adoption team had a great first session focusing on the science of reading, including Scarborough’s Reading Rope and what would be best for the students at the Primary School,” said Deb Klag, third-grade teacher.

The literacy team has joined forces with Jamie Smith, a teaching and learning consultant from the ESC. Together, they are guiding their adoption process, ensuring it aligns with the governor’s initiatives. This involves planning the adoption process, establishing a vision for new materials, reviewing current materials, and ultimately selecting the best ones.



Currently, the team is evaluating several vendors, with presentations scheduled for the team to review, along with samples of hard-copy materials and digital resources.

The selection of High Quality Instructional Materials follows the guidelines outlined by the Ohio Department of Education through the Ohio Materials Matters website, as well as recommendations from Curriculum Support Resources, EdReports, and the Reading League.

“The teachers at IPS have done an amazing job of embracing and implementing the Science of Reading in their classrooms,” said Lynn Metzger, literacy coach and reading tutor. “The ELA adoption committee consists of a group of educators who are very passionate about literacy, and I know this committee will work together to make sure that the curriculum that is adopted is one that continues to support all of the great work the teachers are doing in their classrooms.”

## Lake-Geauga Wellness Team

# Spreading Hope, Health, and Strength

The Student Wellness Department expanded its consultation and training services with two licensed Ohio Prevention Specialists and an independently licensed social worker currently serving Lake and Geauga counties. Holly Jacobson, Jennie Canganelli, and Karen Lackey are certified in Ohio Youth Led Programs, Question Persuade Refer (QPR), and Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training (SAPST) in addition to Sources of Strength, and Youth Led Prevention leadership training, available to all ESC of Northeast Ohio districts. Our team believes that youth voice and positive adult relationships are critical to the success of any Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programming.



Additionally, Holly, Jennie and Karen are assigned specifically to support Lake and Geauga County districts, offering consultation and support for Tier I wellness and prevention strategies, collective impact and

community engagement, and facilitation of the Lake Geauga Wellness Professional Learning Community (PLC).

The team recently had a blast training several local high schools in the Sources of Strength Peer Leader program. Sources is a HB 123 approved program for both suicide and violence prevention that takes a unique, upstream, and positive approach to a very difficult topic.

Sources is about building a community of strength, making connections and empowering



youth voice. It is one of the most rigorously evaluated and utilized prevention programs in North America. Sources is a beautifully integrated program for grades K-12 with both elementary and secondary components focusing on developing 8 key strengths: positive friends, mentors, generosity, family support, spirituality, physical health, mental health, and healthy activities.

For more information on accessing any of these programs or services, contact:

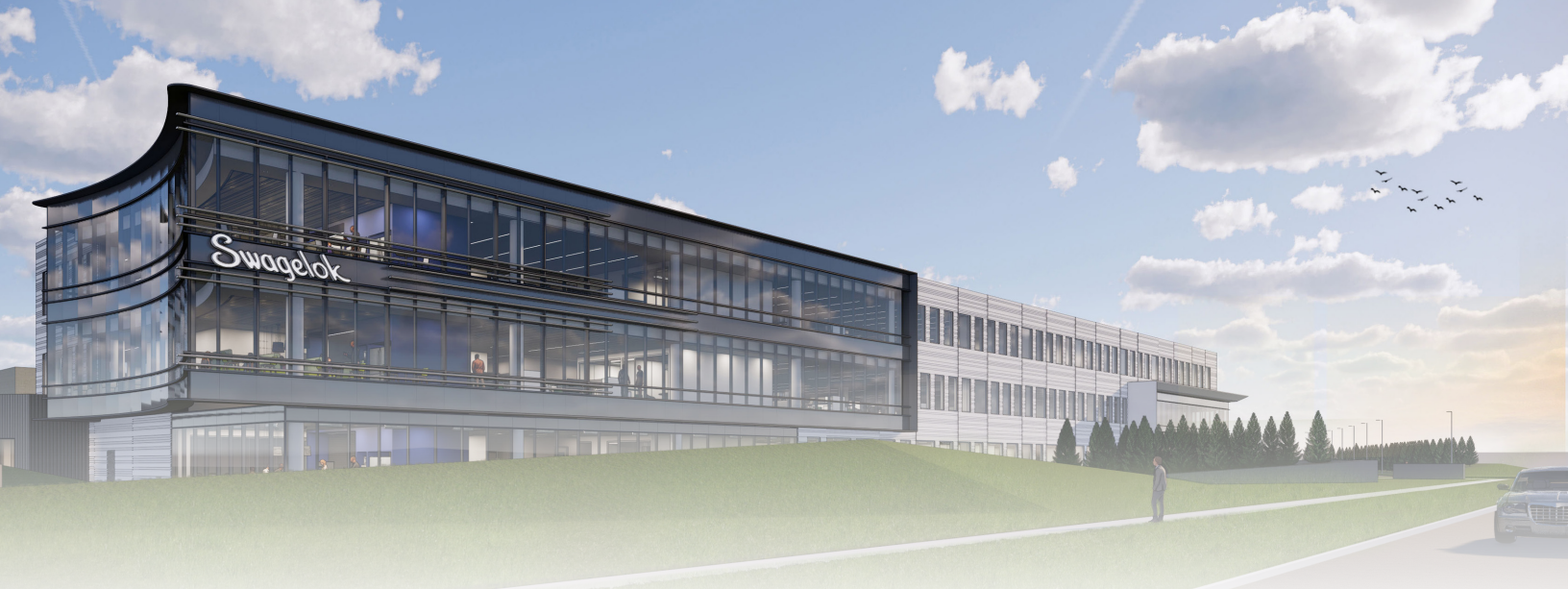
Anthony Pizzuti, Director of Student Wellness  
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## SIGN UP TO RECEIVE OUR STUDENT WELLNESS E-NEWSLETTER!

Contact Nyeshja Malone at [nyeshja.malone@escneo.org](mailto:nyeshja.malone@escneo.org) to sign up.

[View archived issues](#)





## ESC NEO Business Advisory Council Celebrates Manufacturing Day 2023

Members of the ESC of Northeast Ohio's Business Advisory Council visited Swagelok Global Headquarters in Solon, Ohio, on October 6—National Manufacturing Day 2023. Swagelok is a manufacturer of fluid systems products, assemblies, and services for the oil, gas, chemical, semiconductor industries with approximately 5,000 employees worldwide.

District administrators, business operations, principals, and career leaders learned about the company's 75 year history, its business values, and career opportunities. The company actively recruits veterans, college interns and graduates, high school graduates, and collaborates with K-12 districts and educators to prepare students for future careers in manufacturing.

During a tour of the manufacturing floor, BAC participants learned about the entry level, technical, and highly-skilled employment opportunities. Advanced manufacturing includes additive manufacturing, robotics, and state-of-the-art laboratory facilities. Swagelok staff shared that in 75 years of operation, there has not been a worker layoff. The private company provides outstanding benefits and seeks to build relationships with its employees.

The BAC network will meet at Cleveland Clinic on December 1, 2023.



*Bill Swan, Swagelok Program Specialist for Talent Acquisition and Community Engagement, speaks with ESC BAC members on Manufacturing Day 2023.*





# ESC of Northeast Ohio 2023 Summer Camp for High School Students: Traditional and Advanced Manufacturing

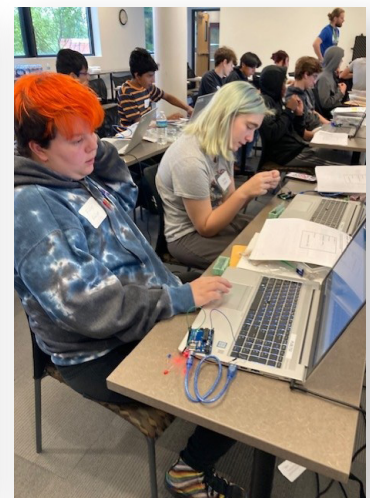
Twenty students from districts served by the ESC of Northeast Ohio attended the 2023 Summer Camp for High School Students to learn about manufacturing—one of the in-demand employment sectors in Northeast Ohio. None of the students attending the camp had any prior experience or knowledge about the manufacturing sector.

Through presentations, panel discussions, personal meetings, site visits to Swagelok Global Headquarters and Avery Dennison Performance Tapes, and hands-on activities with computer sensors and virtual reality technology, students learned about the differences between traditional and advanced manufacturing and the needs of employers.

Business leaders from Component Repair Technologies (CRT), GE Health Care, ManufacturingWorks Cleveland, Stripmatic

Products, and Precision Metalforming Association met with students to provide information about their companies and to discuss the knowledge and skills needed for entry-level employment. Students learned about pre-apprenticeship programs, entry-level pay and benefits, and opportunities for training, education, and advancement at the various companies.

Presenters shared that they had circuitous paths to their own current positions, including attending college, going straight into a job after high school, getting specific trade or on-the-job career training, joining the military, or taking an opportunity when it was offered by a friend or family member. As a result of the camp and site visits to companies, students expressed their intent to learn more about the manufacturing job opportunities and training available in Northeast Ohio.





**EMPLOYMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,  
ENLISTMENT & EDUCATION**

The ESC of Northeast Ohio and the First Ring Schools Collaborative hosted an [E4Me Career Program](#) on October 11 at the ESC. More than 200 high school students from schools from Cleveland and inner ring suburbs learned about their employment, entrepreneurship, enlistment and education opportunities after high school graduation.

There were 30+ panelists/presenters that work in different fields as well as all branches of the United States military who had the opportunity to interact with the students.

One of the most common pieces of advice from the panelists was the importance of young adults developing soft skills...having a good work ethic, integrity, responsibility, being on time, having good communication skills and showing proper manners.

Districts represented included: Berea, Bedford, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Cleveland Heights University Heights, Maple Heights, Richmond Heights, Shaker Heights, Warrensville Heights, South Euclid-Lyndhurst, Euclid, Garfield Heights, and Brooklyn.

“We hope this day has inspired these students to think about their future in a new light and now have insight into making decisions on their next pathway.”

- Tippi Foley, Career Pathways & Early Childhood Consultant for the ESC of Northeast Ohio





# Special thanks to our presenters and panelists:

Tri-C Workforce Development, MAGNET, John Carroll University, Baldwin Wallace University, Kent State University, Notre Dame College, Cleveland State University, FBI-Cleveland, Lakewood City Police, Compass Consulting Services, Swagelok, Cleveland Guardians, Greater Cleveland Partnership, Public Consulting Group, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Lincoln Electric, Component Repair Technologies, Cleveland Clinic-Center for Youth Ed, Cleveland Clinic-ASPIRE Program, Cleveland Clinic, Olympic Steel, US Army National Guard, US Army, US Navy, US Marines, US Coast Guard, Cleveland Public Power, Metropolitan Veterinary Academy, Metro Health, Dollar Bank, GE HealthCare, Iron Workers 17, Sheet Metal Workers - Smart Local 33, Cleveland Builds, Cement Masons, Ohio Operating Engineers, Carpenters





# PASSPORT

## School Program

Guiding Extraordinary Individuals Toward a Future of Hope

For information, contact:

Lisa Adler, Supervisor

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440-688-1280

Located at the Metzenbaum Center at 8200 Cedar Road in Chesterland, Passport School serves students ages 5-22 with multiple disabilities and significant medical needs in a separate facility providing intensive educational, behavioral, and medical programming.



The last event of this past school year ending on June 7, was Mark's graduating. He was a Warrensville Hts. School District student who came to our educational program in first grade. We wish him well in his new career in adult services.

On June 5, the school held a field day and picnic at the new Metzenbaum built adaptive playground in the back of the school building.



*Happy Retirement!*

And we said goodbye to Mary, retired after 31 years as a classroom aide at Passport (below with family) and Linda, Transition Coordinator for the ESC of Northeast Ohio who worked part time with Passport's graduating seniors (above). Good luck – Happy Retirement!

The 2023-24 school year got off to a great start with four new students and a new speech therapist. Three students are from Chardon and one from Richmond Heights Local Schools. Welcome Jessica, who will be working with the students one day a week.



Welcome Bryson from Richmond Heights.



Clayton (Chardon Local) on the keyboard during Music time.



Izzy (Chardon Local) is filling the bird feeder with her teacher, Rob.





For more information, contact:  
Kimberly Allen, Ed.S, Vice President of  
Education/Superintendent of Schools  
[kimberly.allen@achievementctrs.org](mailto:kimberly.allen@achievementctrs.org)

On a picture perfect day in May 2023, TavYon and Jacob, donned their caps and gowns as they prepared to be the first graduating class of the Achievement Centers for Children's Autism School. There they stood, diplomas in hand - family, district representatives and ACC staff all around, thrilled to celebrate this milestone event. While much smaller than the typical high school graduation, the ceremony included all the highlights...Pomp and Circumstance, caps and gowns, speeches and diplomas.

ACC's first graduates wrapped up their high school experience in grand fashion accompanied by

cheers and tears and all the hopes for a promising future. We couldn't be more proud about the success of these graduates. TavYon and Jacob are amazing young men who will forever be in the hearts of all who have had the privilege of teaching, learning and growing with them.



## NEW TOD AND TVI STAFF

We are pleased to welcome a new teacher of the deaf (TOD) to our team. Eileen Brankatelli moved to Hudson with her family from Illinois. She comes to us with 16 years of experience, one year as an ESL teacher for Korean students in Seoul, S Korea; six years teaching deaf/hard of hearing students in a school for the deaf; and nine years as an itinerant TOD in Illinois. We now have six full time TODs and one part time on our team.

We are also very proud of our newest addition to the teachers of the visually impaired (TVI), Derek Cook. Derek came to us fresh out of the Ohio State University masters program as a cum

laude graduate and recipient of the Presidential scholarship award. Last year was his first year with the ESC of Northeast Ohio and he has already distinguished himself as an excellent TVI and asset to our team. Eager to learn more, he completed coursework this summer for his orientation and mobility (O&M) certificate and is completing his practicum hours under our O&M teacher. We now have nine TVI and three O&M staff.

Dana Lambacher,  
ESC Special Education Supervisor  
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# CAPSTONE ACADEMY

For information, contact:

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330-732-8249

Capstone Academy collaborates with 26 school districts to serve students in grades PK-12 (ages 3-22) with the most profound multiple disabilities and medically-complex needs. Through individualized learning plans and instruction, as well as attention to adaptive, therapeutic, and vocational needs, Capstone Academy provides students with an opportunity to experience success throughout their educational career. The curriculum incorporates content, concepts, and activities that foster cognitive, language, physical, and social-emotional development through the integration of multiple disciplines that allow students to experience personal and academic success.

Integrated learning environments incorporate specialists from different disciplines within the classroom. Our therapy team consists of speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and massage therapy. They provide educationally relevant services and activities for students, develop meaningful IEP goals, and partners with Intervention Specialists to support

student success across the school environment. Therapists and teaching staff have a collaborative partnership in which they plan and adapt instructional activities to support student access and purposeful student participation throughout the educational day.

Capstone Academy students participate in special classes throughout the week. Our Adapted Physical Activity (APA) program supports the students' understanding of fundamental motor skills and movement patterns as well as provides opportunities to engage in physical activities. During class, students have been learning about locomotor skills, circulatory system, and physical activity. The Integrated Art program provides opportunities for students to explore a range of dance concepts, genres, and styles of movement. Students also learn about visual art concepts and produce art using a range of media. Additionally, students have opportunities to listen to music of various and contrasting styles, composers, and cultures.



# Crossroads Day Treatment Center

For information, contact:  
Robin Kline  
ESC Crossroads Program  
[robin.kline@escneo.org](mailto:robin.kline@escneo.org)

On October 3, Crossroads Day Treatment welcomed families, school districts, and community partners to an open house. Crossroads works with school districts in Lake and Geauga Counties to provide a setting that supports students with mental health issues to meet their individual needs using a trauma-informed approach.

Students and staff were on hand to provide tours, answer any questions, and share stories about their time at Crossroads. There were opportunities for attendees to learn more about the day treatment program and other programs that Crossroads offers. Information was provided about the different group therapies the Child Youth Specialists run as well as community outings the students attend. Examples of academic work and the curriculum were on display for parents and school districts to better understand what their students are learning.

Families that attended were able to participate in a raffle basket giveaway. The different classrooms created each basket to help promote family togetherness and make fun memories. This was an excellent opportunity for everyone to learn more about what Day Treatment does and the program's success.





**Rocky River**  
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Caring • Exceptional • Competitive

## Rocky River’s Kensington Intermediate School Named National Blue Ribbon School

Kensington Intermediate School (KIS) was one of 353 schools nationwide to earn the prestigious National Blue Ribbon Schools award. KIS, which is one of just 19 schools in Ohio to earn the award this year, was recognized as an Exemplary High Performing School as one of the state’s highest performing schools measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.

“I am extremely proud of our students, teachers, staff, parents/guardians and the entire Rocky River community for their hard work and commitment to excellence that helped Kensington earn this national award,” said Interim Principal Scott Raiff.

The coveted National Blue Ribbon Schools award affirms the hard work of educators, families, and

communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content. Now in its 40th year, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has bestowed approximately 10,000 awards to more than 9,700 schools.

This marks the sixth time a school from the Rocky River City School District has received a National Blue Ribbon Award, including the second time for KIS (2011, 2023). Rocky River High School was named a Blue Ribbon Award winner 1997-1998, 2012 and 2020, while Rocky River Middle School received the honor in 1997-1998. The 2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony will be held November 16-17.





# New Teacher Academy at Berea City School District Ignites Inspiration and Classroom Success

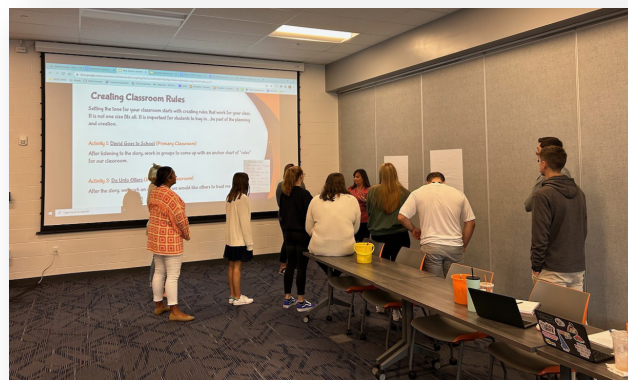
The purpose of the Berea City School District's New Teacher Academy is to help newly hired educators develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to effectively teach and manage a classroom.

This New Teacher Academy recently held a dynamic session on classroom management where experienced teacher leaders shared their invaluable insights and strategies with the district's newest elementary teachers. Effective classroom management is crucial to successful teaching. New teachers learned strategies to maintain discipline, create a positive learning environment, and keep students engaged.

Along with hosting additional academy sessions, Berea City School District teacher leaders will continue to provide guidance, answer questions, and offer ongoing support throughout each new teacher's initial years in the profession.

By learning from experienced teachers, new teachers are better prepared to create a wonderful learning experience for the students they teach.

It's all about creating the best learning environment and educational experience for students!





## LEAD with an IDEA Empowers Fairview High School Students to Create Positive Change

Sometimes, being a strong leader means having a strong idea and vision for the future. As a group of Fairview High School students recently discovered, leadership can mean much more than that. Last school year, approximately 40 students participated in LEAD with an IDEA, a training program provided to students at FHS in conjunction with the Effective Leadership Academy (ELA).

“LEAD with an IDEA was created to guide students through a series of interactive discussions focused on inclusivity, diversity and empowerment, leading to the development of a school-wide student lead plan for change,” expressed Jessica Vaughn, talent manager with ELA. “Empathetic leadership and empowering action are skill sets that will impact students now and follow them throughout stages of their lives in any environment and circle of influence they may have.

“The first five or six weeks, it was all pretty much leadership development,” explained Ben Stoessner, a senior in LEAD with an IDEA. “There were videos that would show us scenarios and lessons. We had activities with groups. They encouraged us to sit with different people every week so that we could get to know people more and find out what makes them different from you, or similar to you.”

Besides learning leadership skills, styles, and personality types as part of the LEAD with an IDEA program, students identified what areas of the school could use improvement. A lack of school spirit and a need to promote inclusivity stood out for students. “We want to eliminate any type of discrimination towards any group that is different

from your own group of people, trying to promote a new thought process and to empathize with people,” said Stoessner.

“I feel like LEAD was one of the best things that could have happened,” said Alex Brown, another FHS senior in LEAD with an IDEA. “The group really did want to make a change in the school, even if you didn’t expect them to. It was a lot of you can’t judge a book by its cover. People who wouldn’t necessarily talk with each other were talking, and getting along with each other.”

Students submitted their report to building and district leadership, including the superintendent, as part of making real organizational change.

“When you’re in Fairview, you’re kind of in this bubble, and you have this security blanket that you kind of know everyone here and have experiences with them,” said Stoessner. “In college, it feels like you’re going into pretty much a whole new map of the world. You have to find a way to connect with people that are different from you.

“It’s what I took away the most,” added Stoessner. “I’m getting prepared for the rest of my life, and all those next chapters, to collaborate with people in my life that are different from me.”





# Course Offerings Expanded at Cuyahoga Heights Middle School

Students at Cuyahoga Heights Middle School will have greater access to classes that speak to their unique interests. “We have created a schedule that allows us to give every student everything to provide them a well-rounded education and to prepare them for later coursework at the high school,” said high school/middle school principal Scot DeTray.

All eighth graders now take a course called “Robotics and Automation,” a course that, in the past, was only offered to high-achieving students. “There is an ever-increasing need to be able to understand and utilize technology in today’s world,” he said. “Today’s students need a sound foundation to become comfortable users of technology in order to live and work successfully in today’s world.” Also, eighth graders may now take French I or Spanish I as eighth graders. Previously these classes were only offered at the high school.

Seventh graders may now take a six-week technology design and modeling class to get them ready to take the new Robotics class in the eighth grade. In addition, they can take a six-week exploratory World Language class. This class gives them an introduction to Spanish or French and prepares them to take French I or Spanish I as eighth graders. “The new classes expand high school course offerings to eighth graders who previously could only take the high school-level Algebra I class,” noted DeTray. Currently 24 eighth graders are taking a World Language I class.

To make these classes available to students, DeTray reconstructed a school year so that some classes are in six-week cycles and some are in nine week

cycles. “It was just a matter of looking at and redesigning how courses were parsed. The only thing that changed was the rotation of the classes,” noted DeTray.

Whether they are taught as three six-week courses

or two nine-week courses, they all total 18 weeks of coursework needed to complete one semester. “Students are still getting the same instruction. It’s only parsed out differently,” DeTray explained. He noted that all of the classes were added without adding additional teachers.

DeTray saw the World Language offering as a real benefit to college-bound students. “This will allow our students to earn high school credit as eighth graders and to continue the World Language sequence as they advance through the grade levels. They will also have greater opportunity to take AP level World Language courses which will better position them for college and even enable some students to earn college credit while in high school.”

“We saw the new classes as a springboard preparing for high school,” said Assistant Superintendent Matt Young about the new middle school course rotation. “It allows students greater opportunity to open up their schedule to take other content electives in high school and better prepares them for life after graduation.”





## North Royalton High School Teacher Named 2023 Ohio History Teacher of the Year

Marilyn Orseno, a teacher at North Royalton High School (NRHS), was recently named the 2023 Ohio History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

After being nominated by her colleagues, a panel of Ohio teachers and administrators selected Orseno as the winner based on the following criteria: a commitment to teaching American history, a creative and imaginative classroom, and the use of documents, artifacts, historic sites, oral histories, and other primary sources to engage students. This award honors Orseno’s achievements and thanks her for her outstanding work and dedication to educating her students about American History.

“Mrs. Orseno does a fantastic job engaging her students in the analysis of history,” said Principal Sean Osborne. “She provides fun and interesting activities that push her students to delve deep into the content to reach an appreciation and useful understanding of how history has affected and will continue to affect their lives. Congratulations on this honor!”

As the 2023 Ohio History Teacher of the Year, Orseno will receive \$1,000, a certificate recognizing her achievement, an archive of books and historical resources, and ceremonial recognition. She is one of 53 finalists for the \$10,000 National History Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced in October.

“The study of history teaches so many lessons that inform the present,” said Orseno. “I love to reference the idea that 'history doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme' in the classroom. Also, historical moments and people of history are complex that require analytical and critical thinking skills that historians use in the profession. I love having the opportunity to equip students with the tools to peel back these complex layers - as some of my students will recall, 'history is an onion.' I am so grateful to be able to teach at North Royalton. I am surrounded by passionate educators in a great community with awesome students I have the opportunity to teach everyday.”



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## Mentor Elementary School First to Use New Story Walk

Ridge Elementary School in Mentor was the focus of a news story on News 5 Cleveland this past September. Mandi Morgan's second-grade class was the first to use the district's new Story Walk, a literacy project that displays a children's book outside on a number of different posts that they can walk along and read. They chose "National Read a Book Day" as the day to begin using this new opportunity. The book was called "The Cool Bean," and taught the students about kindness.

The school got the idea from the Mentor library who has something similar. Now, all seven elementary schools, along with the school for students with autism, will have a Story Walk.

Morgan told News 5 Cleveland, "Just getting them up and moving during a story was great because normally they are sitting and quiet. With the Story Walk, they got to be up and part of it, and they were excited to see what was going to happen next. Some of them couldn't wait, and they just went to the next to see."

The Story Walks were truly a community effort. Funds came from the Mentor Public Library, Friends of Mentor Public Library, Mentor Schools Foundation, and each of the building's PTAs donated. The Mentor Teacher Association and Mentor Classified raised money for the raffle prizes which are new books featured in the Story Walks that the kids can win for reading them by the end of the school year.

You can watch the News 5 Cleveland story by [clicking here](#).





## Utilizing Virtual Reality Headsets to Promote Spatial Learning and Abstract Reasoning

Independence Local Schools is one of nine area school districts who took the initiative to acquire virtual reality headsets and Prisms software to enable students to learn both mathematics and science using spatial thinking and abstract reasoning.

This journey began with Algebra 1 and Geometry teachers participating in training at Kalahari Resort in April 2021, contributing valuable feedback to Prisms during initial implementation of the software. The ESC of Northeast Ohio subsequently formed a regional network to support and expand usage of the educational software with the headsets, overseen by Bob Glavan, an ESC curriculum consultant and instructional coach. Several math educators from Independence are valuable core members of this network.

Since the release of the first modules for Algebra 1 and Geometry, Prisms has developed and uploaded additional content for both disciplines, and has added Advanced Math (Algebra 2 and Precalculus), Middle School Math, Biology, and Chemistry modules. Further expansion of the content line will include other Independence Middle School and High School math and science content.

Students are actively engaged during the virtual reality exercises and have demonstrated self-



directed learning and enthusiasm during the experiences. Deepening use of the virtual reality headsets will take place in both math and science classes in Grades 6-12 within the district moving forward.

“This is just one example of what we mean when we say our students are deeply engaged in learning and prepared for their futures,” said Superintendent Ben Hegedish, Independence Local Schools. “As educators, we have to know our content and also look ahead and see what types of skills and strengths our students will need to be great members of society and have every advantage possible in the workplace. By integrating real-world technology into our classrooms, we believe we are doing just that.”

“They say ‘Fortune favors the brave.’ We were so fortunate to get in on this opportunity at the early stages of development. The Prisms Group, headquartered in Silicon Valley, was started by an Ohio math teacher who was tired of not having enough real-world application to enrich the student experience in mathematics. This teacher created this program but wanted Ohio math teachers to help develop it and make it relatable to students in their classroom environment. We were so fortunate to have our superintendent ask if our math department had the courage and wanted to be brave and get in on it. We, of course, said yes. Our department met a few times a year with Prisms to inform them of the bugs and share with them our requests on how to make additions and edits to help make the student experience valuable and effective in learning and applying mathematics. It is exciting when you give a suggestion at one of these meetings and it is in their next update. Prisms is not made up of games, but real-world application where they get to make decisions at their pace and self-check their progress through five to six modules. Our students really enjoy the advanced technology and graphics and are not influenced by outside distractions or pressures as they are fully engaged into their own environment based on their mathematical thought processes.”

- Mark Corpuz, math teacher, Independence High School





## Bay Village Schools Launches Parent Ambassadors Team

Bay Village City School District rolled out a new Strategic Plan: Learn. Launch. Lead. at the start of the 2023-2024 school year. This five-year plan has Five Priorities – Learning, Culture, Instruction, Accountability and Community. Within the Community Priority a goal is to provide interactive, multi-source communication to enhance student, family and community engagement. To achieve this goal, Bay Village Schools recently launched a Parent Ambassadors Team (PAT) that will serve as a volunteer extension of the district’s communications department.

The Parent Ambassadors Team consists of about 25 parents and grandparents who will help monitor the overall feeling of families and residents within the district; increase communication between the district, families and residents; and share information with and answer questions for new and existing families and residents.

These volunteer Parent Ambassadors Team members were tapped by the director of communications with guidance from the

administration team to ensure all buildings are represented, from Pre-K through high school. The volunteers filled out a short survey to confirm their interest in serving on the team, and to select the area they have the most interest in. These specific tasks include: monitoring social media to answer questions about Bay Village Schools; assisting families new to the district; planning events, webinars and a speakers series; and sharing information with families and residents.

This new initiative kicked off with a one-time Zoom meeting to make introductions and group volunteers into their preferred areas of interest. Members will now go to work and check in with the director of communications on an as-needed basis.

Bay Village Schools Superintendent Scot T. Prebles is confident the new Parent Ambassadors Team will be an asset to the district.

“Our new strategic plan looks to strengthen two-way communication with our families and our community,” said Prebles. “This new initiative will



foster that engagement and create additional partnerships. It's a big win for our district, and I appreciate the parent and grandparent volunteers who have agreed to be a part of it."

With two elementary-aged students within the district, parent volunteer Jen Trolio Randel is excited to serve on the Parent Ambassadors Team.

"I can help point families in the right direction to find the information they need or get their concerns addressed," said Trolio Randel. "I can also help assess what families like and want to see more of in the district's communications, or where they think the district could improve."

This new initiative is meant to serve as one more touchpoint the district offers to families and residents to gain or share information quickly and accurately. From answering lunch menu questions to explaining Bay traditions to collecting feedback — both positive and negative — these volunteers will help promote two-way communication in a

digital world. The Parent Ambassadors Team is not meant to replace direct contact with building principals, district leadership or PTA/booster organizations; all personal and personnel matters will continue to be directed to the appropriate district administrator.

Bay Village Schools will hold its State of the District Board Meeting on November 20, and the new Parent Ambassadors Team will be officially introduced to the community at that time.





## Launching Knowledge: Middle School Students Catapult into Engineering Excellence with Trebuchet Project

In the heart of academic exploration, a group of middle school students is redefining the boundaries of traditional learning by embarking on an exhilarating journey into the realm of construction engineering. Picture this: a classroom bustling with excitement, drills turning, saws buzzing, and a sense of anticipation hanging thick in the air. What's unfolding is not your typical lesson plan, but a hands-on experience that combines history, physics, and mentorship in a way that leaves textbooks in the dust. This “classroom” is actually the office and workshop of Marous Brothers Construction in Willoughby, Ohio, which opened up its facilities for this special collaboration with seventh and eighth graders from Eastlake Middle School. Students have been meeting there for two hours after school, once a week for several weeks, to work on this special project.

Under the guidance of construction engineers, these young minds are taking charge of their education, one trebuchet at a time. As students delve into the intricacies of designing and building their own trebuchets, they are not only gaining a profound understanding of physics principles, but are also honing problem-solving skills that will serve them well in the future. The motivation of projecting their pumpkin further than anyone else in a fun competition cannot be discounted!

“Having the team at Marous Brothers Construction working with our students in a hands-on fashion and explaining to them the science and engineering

behind building a trebuchet is incredible. The students are excited about launching pumpkins and learning about STEM in the process,” shared Kirk Dressel, librarian and STEM Makerspace teacher.

Marous Brothers engineers, with a passion for fostering the next generation of innovators, are guiding the students through the maze of construction challenges. Students are not only learning to wield tools, but are also discovering the power of teamwork as they brainstorm ideas, utilize computer-aided design software, troubleshoot challenges, and refine their designs.

Superintendent Dr. Patrick Ward participated in one of the design sessions with the students, along with Marous Brothers Construction’s General Manager, Doug Hart, and plans to be there for the big competition. “What is most exciting about this partnership is fostering a sense of curiosity and a passion for learning in students. It was impressive to see the students thinking mathematically and strategically, working as a team to rally back after some designs failed, and to see their creations come to life,” said Dr. Ward.

Dr. Ward also noted, “The guidance and expertise from Marous Brothers in feeding the students’ thirst for knowledge and creativity is inspiring and appreciated. We want to build more community partnerships that support students and develop the future workforce for employers.”

# Marous Brothers CONSTRUCTION



In an educational landscape often defined by standardized tests and rigid curriculums, the trebuchet project stands as a testament to the transformative power of hands-on learning and mentorship. It is a story of construction engineers who are teaching and inspiring the next generation of builders, thinkers, and doers. As these middle schoolers launch projectiles into the sky, they are also launching themselves into a future where the boundaries of learning are as limitless as the imagination itself.





*We build bridges for ...*

Educators, Districts, Agencies, Organizations, Universities & Colleges,  
Students, Adult Learners, Families & Communities, Businesses

## CURRENT CLIENT DISTRICTS:

Akron Public Schools  
Aurora City Schools  
Barberton City Schools  
Bay Village City Schools  
Beachwood City Schools  
Bedford City Schools  
Berea City Schools  
Berkshire Local Schools  
Brecksville-Broadview Heights City Schools  
Brooklyn City Schools  
Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools  
Chardon Local Schools  
Cleveland Heights-University Heights  
City Schools  
Cleveland Metropolitan Schools  
Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools

East Cleveland City Schools  
Euclid City Schools  
Fairview Park City Schools  
Garfield Heights City Schools  
Independence Local Schools  
James A. Garfield Local Schools  
Kenston Local Schools  
Kent City Schools  
Kirtland Local Schools  
Lakewood City Schools  
Maple Heights City Schools  
Mayfield City Schools  
Mentor Exempted Village Schools  
North Olmsted City Schools  
North Royalton City Schools  
Olmsted Falls City Schools

Orange City Schools  
Parma City Schools  
Ravenna City Schools  
Revere Local Schools  
Richmond Heights Local Schools  
Rocky River City Schools  
Shaker Heights City Schools  
Solon City Schools  
South Euclid-Lyndhurst City Schools  
Streetsboro City Schools  
Strongsville City Schools  
Twinsburg City Schools  
Warrensville Heights City Schools  
Westlake City Schools  
Wickliffe City Schools  
Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools

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