

# HERE We Grow

MONTHLY HEADLINES FROM THE ESC OF LAKE ERIE  
WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CENTER



## DIRECTOR'S HEADLINES

### Recognizing Excellence: Best Charter Elementary Schools in Ohio

U.S. News & World Report recently released its rankings of the *Best Charter Elementary Schools in Ohio*, and we are pleased to see many of the schools we authorize recognized on this list. These rankings reflect the dedication and efforts of students, educators, and administrators in providing quality education. Below, we've listed the schools we authorize and their respective rankings.

Congratulations to all who have earned this distinction. A special nod to Menlo Park Academy and Constellation Schools: Westpark Community Elementary for being recognized as first and second. Way to go!

1. Menlo Park Academy

2. Constellation Schools: Westpark Community Elementary

10. Apex Academy

11. Pathway School of Discovery

16. North Dayton School of Discovery

20. Alliance Academy of Cincinnati

21. Emerson Academy

22. Constellation Schools: Puritas Community Elementary

31. Horizon Science Academy - Toledo

34. Horizon Science Academy - Cleveland Middle School

36. Constellation Schools: Lorain Community Elementary

39. Heir Force Community School

44. Horizon Science Academy - Springfield

50. Pinnacle Academy

63. Winterfield Venture Academy

64. Constellation Schools: Elyria Community

65. Constellation Schools: Parma Community

68. Buckeye On-Line School for Success

72. Orion Academy

93. Constellation Schools: Stockyard Community Elementary

### MORE INSPIRING READS THIS MONTH:

Governing Authority	2
Academic Services	3-4
Compliance	5
Special Education	6
Professional Learning	7
ESCLEW Staff	8

## OUR MISSION

"The ESCLEW Community Schools Center is a student-centered authorizer of charter schools, advancing quality educational opportunities throughout the state of Ohio"

# Governing Authority Headlines

Written by Julie Kadri

## **New Board Member Training/Board Training Basics**

ESCLEW is gathering feedback from current board members regarding the training process for new board members. ESCLEW's contract with the schools requires five (5) hours of board training, at least two (2) hours of which are on public records and open meetings law, within three (3) months of being elected or appointed to the Board. ESCLEW currently offers a list of training options from outside sources to generate the remaining two (2) hours of training. **Please complete this brief, optional survey** to share thoughts on how the process went for you, feedback for improvement, and whether you would be interested in optional board training around the basics of being a community school board member.

## **House Bill 8 – Released Time for Religious Instruction and Parents' Bill of Rights**

HB 8, which was passed by the Legislature on December 18, 2024, and signed by Governor DeWine on January 8, 2025, will become effective 90 days from the Governor's signature in early April. HB 8 addresses released time for religious instruction and creates a "Parents' Bill of Rights," both of which carry a variety of Board policy and procedural implications for schools. Please click here for more information from Weston Hurd LLP. ESCLEW will address legislative changes due to these new laws in the spring modification.

## **ESCLEW Compliance Updates**

In January, our office provided On-Time and Accuracy Compliance Updates to all sponsored school stakeholders. The data generated shows how school compliance representatives are doing on submitting compliance tasks. The percentages are included in the school's contract performance goals and factor into the high stakes review which informs contract renewal length terms.

## **Open Meetings and Public Records Training**

As a reminder, board members are required to complete annual Open Meetings and Public Records training by April 30, 2025. ESCLEW will accept training from the Attorney General, Auditor of State, and other sources (sponsors, legal counsel, etc.).

# Academic Services

# Headlines

Written by Kristi Hayward

## PBIS ALL-STARS

The ESCLEW Community Schools Center would like to congratulate the following schools on the PBIS recognition awards from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce for the 2023–24 school year.



**GOLD**

**Horizon Science Academy – Springfield**



**SILVER**

**Horizon Science Academy – Toledo**  
**Horizon Science Academy – Cleveland**  
**Middle School**



**BRONZE**

**Summit Academy Secondary School –**  
**Youngstown**  
**Summit Academy Community School for**  
**Alternative Learners – Canton**  
**Summit Academy Secondary School – Canton**

For more information on how your school can apply for PBIS recognition for the 2024–25 school year, please visit the [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce PBIS Recognition Awards](#).

# Academic Services

# Headlines

Written by Kristi Hayward

## NEED MORE TEACHERS? IT'S NOT TOO LATE ... TO GROW YOUR OWN

**Grow Your Own Teacher Scholarship** is a great opportunity for schools. Schools nominate candidates to receive a scholarship of up to \$7,500/year for four years toward initial teacher licensure. Candidates must commit to returning to the school and teaching for four years upon graduation/licensure. If the candidate is a current employee, they must remain employed at the school while they complete their coursework. If the student does not complete their coursework or does not fulfill their commitment to working at the school, the scholarship is converted to an interest-free loan.

Schools can nominate any employee or eligible high school senior to pursue an initial teaching license at **an Ohio school and approved program**. A high school senior is eligible as long as 25% of students from the school qualify as free and reduced. If this is not the case, eligibility is determined individually based on the FAFSA. The school does not have a limit on the number of nominees, and the Department wants to see as many nominations as possible.

"High needs" community schools are eligible. "High needs" is defined as a school that has difficulty attracting and retaining classroom teachers - even if it is just in specific licensure areas. When schools complete the nomination process, they write a narrative explaining how their school is eligible.

The deadline to nominate a candidate is **February 14th at 11:59 p.m.** For more information on this valuable opportunity for schools, please visit the following resources.

- **Grow Your Own Webpage:** [Grow Your Own Teacher Scholarship Program | The Ohio Department of Higher Education](#)
- **District Portal webpage:** [District – Grow Your Own Teacher Scholarship Portal](#)
- **FAQ:** [Grow Your Own Teacher Scholarship Program | FAQs | The Ohio Department of Higher Education](#)
- **Webinar link:** [Grow Your Own Teacher Scholarship Webinar-20250107\\_190329-Meeting\\_Recording.mp4](#)

# Compliance Headlines

## ITEMS OF NOTE - FEBRUARY 2025

As a reminder, **#667 Open Meetings & Public Records Training Affidavit** is due **April 30, 2025**. Board members, treasurer, chief administrative officer, other administrative employees, and all individuals performing supervisory or administrative services for the school under a contract with the operator of the school are required to complete an approved annual training on public records and open meetings law.

### Board Submissions

- **#522 Policies for Use of Credit Card Accounts - Policy** – If the school holds a credit card account, submit the governing authority adopted policy for the use of credit card accounts that address the requirements in ORC 3314.52(A). The name of the school must appear on cards and checks. If the school does not hold a credit card account, type N/A in the narrative box.
- **#523 Policies for Use of Credit Card Accounts – Compliance Officer** – If the designated fiscal officer of the community school does not retain general possession and control of the credit card account and presentation instruments related to the account including cards and checks, submit evidence of appointment of compliance officer. If this task does not apply, type N/A in the narrative box.
- **#526 Policies for Use of Credit Card Accounts - Rewards** – If the school holds a credit card account that earns rewards, an annual report must be submitted to the governing authority. If the school does not hold a credit card account OR if the credit card account does not earn rewards, please type N/A in the narrative box.
- **#764 Threat Assessment Team Training** – Please certify that the school has a certified team. Documentation should be uploaded in the school's emergency plan as required by DEW and made available upon request. As a reminder, team members must complete training upon appointment and every three years after.

## February 2025

Compliance Requirement	Due Date	Type	Responsibility
<b>Monthly Financial</b>			
Financial Reports - January	February 15	Submission	Linda
<b>Board Submissions</b>			
Approved Governing Authority Meeting Agenda	2 Weeks After Meeting	Submission	Regional Rep
Approved Governing Authority Meeting Minutes	2 Weeks After Approval	Submission	Regional Rep
#522 Policies for Use of Credit Card Accounts - Policy	February 28	Submission	Julie
#523 Policies for Use of Credit Card Accounts – Compliance Officer	February 28	Submission	Julie
#526 Policies for Use of Credit Card Accounts - Rewards	February 28	Submission	Julie
<b>School Submissions</b>			
#764 Threat Assessment Team Training	February 28	Submission	Julie

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Kadri.

# Special Education Headlines

Written by Jessica Bair and Heather Tester

## UPCOMING: PLOP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ESC of Lake Erie West invites you to participate in the “Present Level of Performance Virtual” PD

**Wednesday, February 12, 2025  
3:00pm-4:00pm**

- **Learn how to craft clear and effective PLOPs**
- **Understand how to align PLOPs with measurable goals**
- **Enhance compliance with state and federal requirements**

Free for ESCLEW-sponsored schools. Any non-sponsored school may attend for a \$25 per person fee. An invoice will be sent to the school after the session. Click [HERE](#) to access the flyer. [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

## OHIO'S ACCESSIBILITY MANUAL FOR OHIO'S STATE TESTS

[Click here](#) to access the 2024-2025 manual

Please take the time to review the Universal Tools (starting on page 11) and the Designated Supports outlined in the Ohio Accessibility Manual. It is essential for students to practice using these tools before the test—ensuring the testing environment is familiar and supportive.


Additionally, remember the IEP team must use the Decision-Making Tool (starting on page 67) during the annual IEP meeting to determine the appropriate tools and accommodations for each student. Preparing in advance ensures students receive the support they need for success.

## 2025 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS

Do you have students who have been identified as being blind? The 2025 Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students must be completed online through the Assistive Technology & Accessible Educational Materials Center's [web portal](#) and electronically signed by the superintendent by **Feb. 28, 2025**. For more information click [here](#).

# Professional Learning Headlines

Our Winter 2024 - 2025 Professional Learning Newsletter is now published. Please take a few moments to read about the upcoming professional learning available as well as consultation services that are always available and ongoing.



**ESC of Lake Erie West  
Community School  
Professional Learning  
Resources**

Please see our new curriculum page included in the Professional Learning Website to discover additional resources.

# ESCLEW Staff

## Superintendent

Sandra C. Frisch

## ESCLEW Governing Board

Jeff Bunck

Jared Lefevre

Brent Buehrer

Thomas Ilstrup

Joan Kuchcinski

## Treasurer

Richard A. Cox

## Director

Kurt A. Aey

## Administrative Offices

2275 Collingwood Blvd.  
Toledo, OH 43620  
(419) 245-4150

## Community Schools Center

4955 Seaman Rd.  
Oregon, OH 43616  
(419) 246-3137

[www.esclakeeriewest.org](http://www.esclakeeriewest.org)

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CENTER

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CENTER

Kurt Aey (419) 246-3142

#### TEAM LEADER, ACADEMIC SERVICES    TEAM LEADER, OPERATIONS

Kristi Hayward (419) 214-3893

Julie Kadri (419) 724-4288

#### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ACADEMIC SPECIALIST

Aimee Mendelsohn (419) 280-1661

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS

Jessica Bair (419) 367-3562 and Heather Tester (419) 260-4793

#### FINANCIAL CONSULTANT

Linda Moye (419) 724-4291

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Natalie Miller (419) 246-3137

## IN NEED OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

Contact your school's regional technical assistance educator (RTAE) for direct support related to on-site visits, governing authority updates, compliance, academics, and more.

**Brittany Beck**

(419) 461-5375

**DeAnna Hardwick**

(330) 591-0217

**Allison Lentz**

(419) 260-7708

**Joyce Lewis**

(419) 290-4759

**Jennifer Little**

(419) 360-8213