Month of Board Meetings: August Update

Special Education Ratings for 2021

We would like to thank each of our schools for receiving a “Meets Requirements” rating this year! Every year, districts receive a rating on the performance of their special education program, known as their Special Education Rating.* The Ohio Department of Education uses final data that districts submit through the Education Management Information System (EMIS). These data result in one of four ratings — Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention or Needs Substantial Intervention.

Ohio COVID-19 Guidance for Schools

Masks, COVID-19 vaccinations, social distancing, and handwashing were all on the list of recommended practices for Ohio’s public schools ahead of the 2021-2022 academic year. The guidance — which is not a mandate — was released by the Ohio Department of Health.

United States Department of Education: Long COVID

To date, many students have contracted COVID-19 and are still experiencing its effects, in the form of what has come to be called “long COVID.” A new resource document from the U.S. Department of Education describes long COVID as a disability and clarifies that, for young children and students, long COVID can be a disability that gives rise to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) eligibility and may also be a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The resource document reminds all members of the education community that existing procedures and protections under IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA apply to students of all ages where long COVID is a disability.

Student Wellness and Success Annual Report will Open Aug. 1.

Schools and districts must complete a report detailing the planning and use of Student Wellness and Success Funds from the 2020-2021 school year. The reporting window is open August 1 – September 17, 2021. Reporting is required even if a school or district did not spend any wellness funds in fiscal year 2021. The survey is available in the Data Submission Forms application within the OH|ID web portal. The survey closes Friday, September 17, 2021.

New Appeal Date for FY21 Final Calendar Appeals

The FY21 Final Calendar Appeal window will now open Monday, August 9 and close Wednesday, August 18. The deadline to submit corrected data in EMIS for approved appeals is August 24 at 5 pm. Please see the data appeals webpage for more information.

Resource for American Rescue Plan “Local Use of Funds” Plans
Each local education agency (LEA) must submit a detailed ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) budget application and plan to the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) system by **August 20, 2021**.

The Ohio Department of Education posted new information to assist schools as they develop [American Rescue Plan “Local use of Funds” plans](https://www.education.ohio.gov). This information includes practical advice for plan development, as well as details for submitting plans. ODE also states: As required by the U.S. Department of Education, districts and community schools must provide a public-facing and transparent description of their uses of the federal emergency ARP ESSER funds on their website. The Ohio Department of Education recommends districts and community schools add a summary of the Local Use of Funds plan to the existing Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services plan.

Each district and community school should post the Local Use of Funds plan on its local website by August 20, 2021. The Local Use of Funds plan summaries can be added to the currently posted Continuity of Service plans. If the plan is posted at a different location, then the website address that links directly to the summary should be submitted to continuityplan@education.ohio.gov.

**Criminal background check system upgrade impacts the educator licensure process**

[Click here for additional information on the system upgrade](https://www.education.ohio.gov), including details about options schools and districts may consider in situations where an educator’s license or background check is delayed.

**Trainings and Events**

- **8/12** | Register for [3 Critical Insights on Accelerating Learning This School Year](https://www.education.ohio.gov)
- **8/13** | Register for [New School Nurse Orientation](https://www.education.ohio.gov)

**Compliance and Epicenter Requirements**

- Disclosure of Related Parties & Governing Authority Meeting Calendar (August 4)
- Certificate of Authority of Non-Profit Status; Certificate of Occupancy; School Improvement Plan (August 10)
- Roster of Staff, Faculty, and Administrators (August 17)
- Remote Learning Plan (August 21)
- Board Member Update Certification & Distributing Statement (August 24)
- Plans for completion of make-up days via web access (August 25)
- Significant Expansion forms (September 15)
- Special Education Expenditures for FY21 (October 15)
- Community School Annual Budget (October 31)

**Compliance refresher – Legislative Service Commission's [Laws from which Community Schools Are Not Exempt](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov)**.

**ORC 9.90** and **9.91** Provisions regarding insurance benefits for educational employees.
Community School Governing Authorities may purchase or procure insurance for educational employees and may make payments to a custodial account treated as an annuity under Internal Revenue Code 403 (b).

Community schools may employ or contract to employ teachers and non-teaching employees. Whether the governing authority directly hires school employees or the school’s operator or management company hires the school’s employees, the organization that hires the employees must make appropriate withholdings.

How we verify schools are in compliance:
1. We collect insurance benefit policies
2. Monthly financial review of payments and check register
3. Charter Management Organization (CMO) contracts which specify responsibilities of the CMO and any authority for personnel decisions

Other Resources

Understanding initial educational impacts of COVID-19 on communities of color, By Megan Kuhfeld, Erik Ruzek, Karyn Lewis, Jim Soland, Angela Johnson, Beth Tarasawa, Lindsay Dworkin

Thanks to state policymakers, charter schools can now open anywhere in Ohio, By Jessica Poiner

This is Our Chance to Pull Teenagers Out of the Smartphone Trap, By Jonathan Haidt and Jean M. Twenge