



## **Memorandum** | Department of Community School

Date: September 30, 2021  
To: Tomorrow Center Administrative Team and Governing Board Members  
From: Jim Smith, Sponsor Liaison and Mid-Ohio ESC Sponsoring Staff  
Subject: September Newsletter

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### **General Updates**

Hello Everyone,

Mid-Ohio ESC, as the sponsor of the Tomorrow Center, will again this year create a monthly newsletter that will be shared with members of the Tomorrow Center's Governing Board and the school's administrative team. The newsletter will provide board members and administrators with general updates about the Tomorrow Center as well as policy updates on laws and rules in the state of Ohio pertaining to Community Schools.

Jamie Byrne received an email from Karl Koenig, Director of the Office of Community Schools, on August 17 informing the Tomorrow Center that the Ohio Department of Education had received their application to serve as a dropout prevention and recovery school for the 2021-2022 school year. The application has been approved pending an enrollment verification to ensure a majority of their students are between the ages of 16 and 21.

The school contracts with META Solutions for student information services involving PowerSchool such as: scheduling, grade reporting, report cards, transcripts, attendance, etc. The following members of the school's administrative team: Jamie Byrne, Kay Hines, Peggy Hubschman, and Chelsea Ulrey, have taken advantage of training opportunities available to them to become better acquainted with PowerSchool to overcome some discrepancies that occurred last school year with their student information system. Various personnel have been involved in weekly meetings with META Solutions and are attending monthly trainings offered by META Solutions to stay abreast of new features and updates to PowerSchool. Chelsea has been assigned as Attendance Officer this year and will be responsible for tracking student attendance and enforcing rules on truancy.

As always, thank you for all you do to support the students and staff at the Tomorrow Center.

## Policy Updates

### Ohio Department of Education

Summer 2021 presented unexpected challenges for the **State Board of Education**. In early July, State Superintendent, Paolo DeMaria, submitted his resignation for the purpose of retirement. Superintendent DeMaria's resignation was effective last week, September 24. By mid-July, the Board had selected Deputy Superintendent Dr. John Richard to serve as Interim State Superintendent, effective September 25 until a replacement for Superintendent DeMaria could be selected to assume the position. Dr. Richard's appointment was not without some drama, and by early August, Dr. Richard had submitted his resignation to accept another position. In late August, the Board approved Stephanie Siddens, Executive Director of the Department's Center for Student Supports, as the Interim Superintendent upon DeMaria's departure. Dr. Siddens employment also was not without controversy, although the controversy did not relate to her, but rather a provision in the employing resolution. The wording causing discussion relates to leading the Department of Education with "fidelity and consistency based on the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education . . ."

With the employment of an Interim Superintendent behind them, the Board turned its attention to other matters during its regularly scheduled September meeting. For instance, the Board considered resolutions to adjust rules around the enrollment of eligible adults in secondary education programs and pathways to graduation. Details of rule action considered by the Board can be found on the Ohio Department of Education's website at:

<http://public.education.ohio.gov/StateBoardBooks/September-2021/Voting%20Items/Item%20007%20-%203301-42-01%20-%20Public%20Secondary%20Education%20Programs%20-Backup%20Materials.pdf> (adult enrollment in secondary schools)

<http://public.education.ohio.gov/StateBoardBooks/September-2021/Voting%20Items/Item%20006%20-%203301-16%20-%20High%20School%20Graduation%20-Backup%20Materials.pdf> (pathways to graduation)

### Ohio General Assembly

In early September, the Ohio General Assembly returned to Columbus following its summer break. Although the General Assembly did not meet over the summer, and committee meetings were held to a minimum, individual legislators were still busy proposing new legislation for consideration. Two particularly controversial bills, **HB-322 and HB-327**, stem from discussions around Critical Race Theory. Both bills seek to restrict the teaching of "divisive concepts." HB-327 does permit the teaching of divisive concepts provided all conditions for instruction contained in the bill are met. For instance, the teaching needs to be objective, impartial, and without endorsement. HB-322 and HB-327 are being considered in tandem by the House State and Local Government Committee. On September 22, the Committee received considerable testimony from both proponents and opponents of

the bills. Written versions of the testimony received this past week can be found on the Committee's website at:

<http://public.education.ohio.gov/StateBoardBooks/September-2021/Voting%20Items/Item%2006%20-%203301-16%20-%20High%20School%20Graduation%20Backup%20Materials.pdf>. A vote has not been called for either bill as of this writing.

**HB-350 and HB-400** are two other related bills currently being considered by House committees. HB-350 seeks to restrict requirements for individuals to be vaccinated against COVID, while HB-400 seeks to prohibit schools from requiring students and/or teachers to wear a mask.

A final set of related bills currently being considered, **HB-370 and HB-373** (Sarah's Law), seek to require schools to develop plans for students with seizure disorders. In addition to requiring the development of plans addressing student needs, the proposals would require staff training and other steps to be implemented by schools. HB-370 and HB-373 have only recently been introduced so no committee hearings have been held as of this writing.

Sometimes teachers under a threat of investigation have been able to elect to retire, forestalling the investigation. **HB-403** seeks to close this loophole. As with HB-370 and HB-373, no hearings have yet been held on HB-403 due to its recent introduction.

Finally, another recently introduced House Bill, **HB-426**, seeks to require schools to deploy automatic external defibrillators.

On the Senate side, **SB-221**, seeking modifications to the summer school tax holiday, was recently introduced. If enacted, SB-221 would add computer laptops, netbooks, and tablets costing \$2,000 or less to the list of tax-exempt school supplies.

If you would like to view any of the bills in their entirety, or read the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) analysis of any of these bills visit:

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/search?generalAssemblies=134&pageSize=10&sort=Number&start=1>.

From this page, you can also view the full text of any bill currently under consideration by the Ohio House or Senate, or the LSC analysis of the bill.



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