



Memorandum | Department of Community School

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

General Updates

Hello Everyone,

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

Tish Jenkins received an email from Karl Koenig, Director of the Office of Community Schools, on August 16 informing GOAL Digital Academy 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.

GOAL Digital Academy is currently working on developing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to address the items identified in 2021 IDEA Monitoring Summary Report from the Office for Exceptional Children's onsite visit review conducted on March 15-19, 2021. The CAP developed by the school in conjunction with State Support Team #7 must include the following:

- Activities to address all areas identified in the summary report,
- Documentation, evidence of implementation of the activities,
- Individuals responsible for implementing the activities,
- Resources needed,
- Completion dates, and
- Continued Plan for Improvement and/or Compliance.

As part of this process, the Special Education staff are required to complete the Special Education Essentials training modules within the Learning Management System, all identified findings of noncompliance for individual students whose records were reviewed at the onsite visit are to be corrected, and GOAL Digital Academy will provide OEC with documentation verifying the completion

of the CAP and systemic corrections that were noted in the Summary Report. If you have any questions regarding the review, please contact Tish Jenkins.

As always, thank you for all you do to support the students and staff at GOAL Digital Academy.

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%2007%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%2006%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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