



## SPONSOR CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER 2025

*Latest News for St. Aloysius Sponsored Schools*

### Reminders

9/1: E-school Spec Ed Plan and Certification due to sponsor  
9/1: Safety Plan Annual Plan Certification deadline  
9/23-25: [Ohio Assessment Conference](#)  
10/10: 3 Year Forecast due to sponsor  
10/25: School Annual Reports due to sponsor  
10/25: School Annual Budget due to sponsor  
10/31: School Annual Reports due to Parents/Guardians



### FY25-26 Governing Authority and School Leader Timeline

Click the link below to access the the timeline.

[Governing Authority & School Leader Timeline 25-26](#)

### Charter School Specialists Revised Directory

Click on the link: [CSS Staff Directory](#)



Department of  
Education &  
Workforce

### Launching Ohio's Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce has released a new resource, [Ohio's Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#), to assist districts and schools in developing a local framework for meeting the academic and non-academic needs of all students.

### Updated List of Approved High-Quality Instructional Materials in English Language Arts

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce has released [an updated list of approved core curriculum and instructional materials in English language arts](#).



### River Gate High School Grand Opening of its Career Tech Education Facility

River Gate High School celebrated the grand opening of its new \$3.2 million dropout recovery and career-technical education facility, marking a major milestone in its 25-year history. The ribbon-cutting ceremony brought together the Board of Directors, the school's architects, and city officials, including Mayor Doug Franklin, to recognize the investment in the future of local youth. The state-of-the-art campus is designed to provide at-risk students with hands-on career training and academic support, equipping them with the skills and credentials necessary for success in both higher education and the workforce.

During the ceremony, Head of School, Jason Cooper delivered a heartfelt speech reflecting on River Gate's mission to serve students who have faced significant challenges. He spoke passionately about the school's role in offering second chances and opening doors to new opportunities, emphasizing that the work being done is not just about education, but about changing lives. Since its opening, River Gate High School has graduated more than 1,200 students and this new building is a sign that the mission is still going strong and looking ahead to help even more students in the years to come.

## Legal Department

### Timely Submission of Contract Modifications: Why It Matters

As a sponsor, Charter School Specialists emphasizes the importance of timely and accurate submission of contract modifications. Whether a school is changing its name, location, grade levels, or adding facilities, these changes must be formally documented and approved to remain compliant with ODEW regulations.

#### Common Contract Modifications and Required Documentation

According to ODEW guidelines, the following common changes require contract amendments:

- School Name Change: Requires a fully executed amendment, governing authority resolution, updated W-9, and Secretary of State certification.
- Change of Location: Must include a new facility addendum, resolutions, and updated sponsor assurances.
- Adding an Annex or Modular Unit: Requires a detailed property description, resolutions, a new sponsor assurance form, and a safety/threat assessment plan.
- Grade Level Changes: Must include revised education and financial plans, along with governing authority approvals.
- Enrollment Area Adjustments: Require updated educational and financial plans and formal resolutions.
- Change or Addition of Management Co.: Updated or new operator agreement, resolutions.

#### Why Timeliness Is Critical

Delays in submitting contract modifications can result in:

- Operational disruptions (e.g., inability to open new facilities or serve additional grades).
- Compliance issues with state reporting and funding mechanisms.
- Visibility concerns, as all amendments are publicly posted on the Department's website.

Charter School Specialists recommends initiating modification requests well in advance of implementation dates and maintaining open communication with us to ensure smooth processing. Contact Nate Tyler at [ntyler@charterschoolspec.com](mailto:ntyler@charterschoolspec.com) with any questions.

## Federal Programs

Federal Programs have had quite a unique start to our fiscal year! The changing process for submitting the consolidated applications resulted in

submitting the grant applications twice in both the One Funding Application and CCIP. Although ODEW returned to using CCIP for this year's grant applications, the One Funding Application will return in FY27.

#### Upcoming Professional Development Opportunity

The Fall Ohio Association of Administrators for State and Federal Programs Conference will be October 27-28th at the Hilton Columbus at Easton. This is an opportunity to learn about any updates in federal or state regulations. The registration link can be found here: [OAASFEP Fall Conference](#).

#### Compliance Reminder

The Final Expenditure Reports due date has been changed from 9/30 to 12/31 per CCIP Note #574.

Click [HERE](#) for a chart that shows flexibility options for the FY25 consolidated application processes.

#### Carryovers from FY25 to FY26

ODEW announced that they plan on allocating the FY25 carryover funds in January 2026 to coincide with the expected January federal reallocation of FY26 funds. Remember that schools can obtain a substantially approved date for anticipated carryover funds by entering a history log note in CCIP in the FY26 application. By establishing a substantially approved date, schools can allocate these funds prior to receiving the actual distribution of funds.

#### Project Cash Requests

Please remember that ODEW's expectation is that Project Cash Requests will be sent in at least quarterly. Schools that delay submitting PCR's may earn risk analysis points which can impact the likelihood of ODEW conducting a desk or onsite review of the school's federal funds.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding federal programs, please contact Nannette Sherman at [nsherman@charterschoolspec.com](mailto:nsherman@charterschoolspec.com) or 740-607-9174.

## Meet Our Newest Team Members!



**Lauren Shockley - Literacy Coordinator**

Lauren Shockley joined Charter School Specialists with 20 years of experience in education as a teacher, professional development designer, and school leader. She most recently served as Principal at IDEA Price Hill College Prep in Cincinnati, where she led the expansion of the campus to include high school grades and earned a 5-star Progress rating on the Ohio Report Card. Prior to that, Lauren was Principal at College Hill Academy in Cincinnati Public Schools, where she guided the school's transformation into an Expeditionary Learning Education model. Under her leadership, the school improved from a D to an A in Gap Closing on the state report card in one year. She has also served as a Managing Director of Design with Teach For America's National Teacher Preparation and Support Team, where she designed and facilitated professional learning focused on equity, culturally responsive instruction, and coaching.

Lauren holds a Master of Arts in Public School Building Leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Rice University. She lives in Cincinnati with her family in their beloved community of Northside.



**Bob Ross - Director of College and Career Readiness**

Bob has been an educator since 1986. Over the years, he has served in a variety of roles, including intervention specialist, work-study coordinator, assistant principal, director of career-technical education, director of pupil services, and most recently, career-technical education consultant at the State Support Team Region 3. He has also served on the boards of numerous state and national disability advocacy organizations.

In addition, Bob has been a long-time adjunct professor at Cleveland State University and is an Ohio Charting the LifeCourse Ambassador. Bob's "north star" is building systems that promote self-determined, college and career ready graduates. In his free time, he enjoys spending time outdoors and being with his three children.



**Nate Tyler - Paralegal**

We're excited to welcome a new team member to the Legal Department! Nate Tyler joined us last month as our Paralegal. Nate brings a diverse background to the role, having earned his law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and previously working in personal injury and workers' compensation law, as well as property management.

In his role, Nate is supporting our legal operations by handling contracts, contract modifications, interventions, and applications, just to name a few.

Outside of work, Nate is an avid hiker and athlete who enjoys hockey, golf, and soccer. He's also passionate about game nights with friends, expanding access to education, and raising awareness for wildfire firefighter issues.

Please join us in giving Nate a warm welcome!

## Special Education Reminders



Hello, I am Dr. Erica McMillon, the new Special Education Director. With over 20 years of experience in the education sector, I am proud to serve Ohio's charter school community as a dedicated advocate for students, families, and educators. My mission has always been to promote excellence, innovation, and diversity in education while empowering both students and educators to reach their fullest potential. Having served as a Director of Special Education, Safety & Security, and Tutoring, as well as a school principal, teacher, and instructional leader, I have seen firsthand the importance of balancing compliance with meaningful, inclusive practices that strengthen school communities. In my current role with Charter School Specialists, I am committed to ensuring our partner schools have the tools, guidance, and resources they need to thrive.

As we begin the 2025–2026 school year, it is critical that schools remain attentive to key special education compliance requirements. By **September 19, 2025**, all final systemic evidence documents related to indicators must be submitted, including updated policies, procedures, practices, analyses, and improvement plans. These documents must demonstrate alignment with Special Education Profile indicators such as disproportionality, evaluation timelines, discipline, and least restrictive environment. In addition, by **November 30, 2025**, all schools are required to adopt and submit the updated ODEW Model Special Education Policies and Procedures to ensure compliance with both IDEA and state law.

These submissions are more than just deadlines, they represent the state's accountability system and ensure schools remain eligible for continued funding and support. Systemic evidence should include documentation of practices in identification, placement, evaluation, and discipline, along with data analysis, improvement plans, and records of policy adoption. Accuracy in EMIS reporting must also be maintained throughout the year,

as this data directly informs compliance determinations.

To stay on track, I recommend schools establish internal checkpoints by completing draft evidence by mid-August, finalizing submissions by September 19, and preparing boards for timely adoption of updated model policies before the November 30 deadline. Charter School Specialists will continue to provide oversight and support, including training and document review, to ensure schools remain compliant.

**Professional Development:** In addition to compliance support, Charter School Specialists will offer a professional development session in **October 2025** on updates in Special Education. This training will provide schools with the latest information on IEP compliance and service delivery.

Helpful Reminders:

1. Virtual Services – IEPs must clearly document when services are being provided virtually when utilizing virtual intervention specialists.
2. Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) – Academic SDI must be provided by the certified intervention specialist. General education teachers may support, but they cannot replace the IS in delivering SDI.
3. Transition Services/Activities – When writing transition services, provide a clear description of what the school will do by using phrases such as “*will assist*” or “*will help*” to ensure accountability and clarity.

Together, with proactive planning and collaboration, we can not only meet these requirements but also continue to build equitable, inclusive, and high-quality special education programs for all students. Together, we can ensure strong compliance and high-quality special education services for all students. I am available to provide professional development on Special Education, related topics, and am happy to work with any schools that have been required to participate in CEIS.

As your sponsor, Charter School Specialists is here to support you in meeting these requirements. Please reach out to me ([emcmillon@charterschoolspec.com](mailto:emcmillon@charterschoolspec.com)) with any questions, and watch for additional resources and reminders as deadlines approach.

## College and Career Readiness Corner

When we think about student success, we often picture graduation and the achievement of earning an Ohio diploma. While that milestone is a significant indicator of success, graduation is not an end point—it is a launching pad. For each student, true success lies in being prepared for what comes next, whether that means entering the workforce, pursuing postsecondary education, enlisting in the military, starting an apprenticeship, or combining several of these pathways. Helping students realize their own definition of a “good life” begins long before graduation—it starts the moment they walk into kindergarten.

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce’s [Career Connections Framework](#) is an invaluable resource for K-12 educators, students, and families in supporting this vision. The framework scaffolds career development across grade levels—fostering career awareness in the early grades, career exploration in middle school, and career preparation in high school. With its tools, strategies, and instructional materials, Career Connections helps schools seamlessly embed developmentally appropriate career education throughout a student’s academic journey.

One powerful component of the Career Connections Framework is [INFOhio’s Open Space](#) platform, which houses a wide range of career-related lessons and activities designed for use across disciplines. Many of these resources are aligned with Ohio’s Learning Standards, making them easy to integrate into existing instruction. Educators are encouraged not only to explore and utilize these resources but also to join the Open Space Community—sharing their own career-focused lessons and activities to strengthen opportunities for all students.

## Ohio Classical Schools Conference



On Friday, August 1, 2025, The Ohio State University’s Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society, in partnership with Charter School Specialists, hosted the Ohio Classical Schools Conference at the OSU Fawcett Center.

The event welcomed more than 50 representatives from classical schools across the state, fostering meaningful dialogue between national thought leaders and university civics centers to strengthen and advance classical education in Ohio.

CSS’s Dave Cash, Rod Hale, Jennifer Heyman, Frank Stoy, and Molly Warmke were among the attendees. The conference opened with welcome remarks from Lee Strang and Dave Cash.

Keynote speakers included Rabbi Alec Goldstein, who explored *The Jewish Roots of Classical Education*; Jake Tawney, who presented on *The State of the Classical Movement*; and State Representative Elizabeth Leer, who delivered a lunch keynote highlighting *Ohio Legislative Updates and Classical Education*.

The afternoon featured three engaging panel discussions:

- *Leadership and Classical Education*, moderated by Frank Stoy
- *Classical School Culture and Mission*, moderated by Jake Tawney
- *Ohio Classical Schools and Higher Education*, moderated by Jonathan Spiegler

The event served as a valuable platform for collaboration and idea-sharing as classical education continues to grow across Ohio.