



SPONSOR CONNECTION OCTOBER 2026

Latest News for St. Aloysius Sponsored Schools

Reminders

October

- 10/15: Deadline to submit summary report on the immunization status of students to [ODH](#)
- 10/15: Fall Survey Due
- 10/26: School annual report due to sponsor for review
- 10/26: Spec Ed annual report & Expenditure for FY26 due to sponsor
- 10/26: School annual budget due to sponsor for review prior to submission deadline
- 10/31: School annual report deadline for board approval and sent to parents/guardians (must document delivery date & method)
- 10/31: Deadline for board to approve the Annual Budget
- 10/31: Deadline for school Rapback Authorized Representative to re-affirm any "Pending" drivers/non-licensed personnel who will be working during the 2026-2027 school year.



FY26-27 Governing Authority and School Leader Timeline

Click the link below to access the the timeline:
[Governing Authority & School Leader Timeline 26-27](#)

Charter School Specialists Staff Directory

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

2026-2027 Professional Development Catalog

Click on link to access the PD Catalog:
[2026-2027 Professional Development Catalog](#)

We encourage you to explore the catalog and share it with your teams. If you have any questions or would like to request customized professional development, please contact Molly Warmke at mwarmke@charterschoolspec.com.

Ohio Delegation Attends NAFTAE's Inaugural "Flood the Hill"

This September, Dr. Pamela Schreiner, Career Prep Schools' Director of Adult Workforce Diploma Programs (AWDP), had the privilege of joining fellow Ohio adult education advocates in Washington, D.C. for "Flood the Hill" — the inaugural advocacy event hosted by the newly formed [National Association for the Transformation of Adult Education](#) (NAFTAE). The delegation took part in advocacy training and legislative briefings, then carried that momentum directly to Capitol Hill for meetings with lawmakers.

A key priority Dr. Schreiner and the delegation advocated for is a bipartisan initiative, the Adult Education Works Act (S.1400, H.R. 2789), which would reauthorize Title II, WIOA and adult education programs with significant funding increases over the next five years. It was a proud moment when the delegation received a proclamation from an Ohio senator recognizing Adult Education and Family Literacy Week — a real acknowledgment of the work happening across our state.

The delegation also had the chance to spotlight Ohio's new Adult Workforce Diploma Program, which pairs industry credentialing with core academic competencies to build career focused pathways for learners' future attainment and growth. The AWDP demonstrates effective state level funding, leadership, and collaboration with federal initiatives for better educated, and better employed, Ohio citizens.

Dr. Schreiner said, "After 11 years building these programs in Ohio, moments like this remind me why this work matters. It was an honor to stand with colleagues from across the country as we advocate for the students and communities' adult education serves."



left to right- Raylena Hayes ExecDir Logan Co FCFC, Dr. Pam Schreiner Adult Ed Dir Fusion Ed, Bobbie Sin OAACE Pres., Sarah Quick- Aspire and Diploma Pathways Supervisor UVCC, Tyler Jones Staffer, Sara Betts Aspire Director UC

Grant Awardees Announced for Expansion of High-Performing Community Schools



Department of Education & Workforce

Congratulations to the four St. Aloysius-sponsored schools on being selected to receive funding through Ohio's latest round of community school grant awards!

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce recently announced \$20.7 million in grant funding to support the expansion and development of high-performing public community schools across Ohio. We are excited to celebrate Explorers Academy of Science and Technology, Towpath Trail High School, North Bend STEM Academy, and Patriot Preparatory Academy as recipients of these awards.

Explorers Academy of Science and Technology

Explorers Academy of Science and Technology will receive funding through both grant programs. The school plans to expand its grade offerings to K-12, with the goal of creating 200 additional seats over the next two years. The school will also receive funding to support facility improvements and expansion.

Towpath Trail High School

Towpath Trail High School will use its funding to establish a satellite campus in Youngstown. The new campus will provide students with opportunities to pursue workforce pathways in construction, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and business.

North Bend STEM Academy

North Bend STEM Academy will use its grant funding to establish a new K-5 community school centered on STEM education. The school plans to eventually expand its offerings to serve students through grade 8.

Patriot Preparatory Academy

Patriot Preparatory Academy is one of nine community schools receiving a Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant. The funding is intended to support facility improvements, expansion, and other capital needs at the school.

These awards represent exciting opportunities for each school to expand its reach, strengthen its programs and facilities, and provide additional opportunities for students and families.

Compliance - Fall Survey and Upcoming Compliance Deadlines

The Compliance Department has turned their attention to the Fall/Winter Review and beyond. As we enter the bulk of the compliance document collection process for the year, each compliance coordinator has communicated the following updates with their schools:

- On-site compliance reviews will be occurring in October and November for each school that has a 1st semester onsite compliance review.
- Each school has received information about their HubShare document submission portal that will be used for the collection of compliance documents.
- The Fall Compliance Survey has been sent and is due to be completed by October 15.
- The annual Special Education Expenditure report is due to the sponsor by October 26.
- School Annual Report is to be board approved and sent to sponsor and parent/guardians no later than October 31 (*we ask for the report to be submitted to the sponsor by October 26, so we have time to review for accuracy and completeness prior to being sent to parents/guardians. The school needs to document how and when it was distributed.*)
- School Annual Budget to be board

As we look later in the school year, we will again collect additional compliance information during the Spring Survey and send updates to each governing authority of any outstanding items that are needed in February and April. The February and April updates are simply to make sure everyone has the same understanding of the items that are still outstanding. The end of the compliance season will again be April 30. If a school still has outstanding compliance items due at the beginning of May, an Intervention Letter indicating outstanding items will be issued. Any items not submitted by the date indicated in the Intervention Letter will need to be addressed in a CAP response approved by the Governing Authority. The goal of this process is to ensure there are no surprises at the end of the year. In May, each school will receive their Annual Compilation Report which will include the Annual Compliance Report.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your compliance coordinator or Brian Dunbar (bdunbar@charterschoolspec.com) if you have any questions.

Special Education Updates and Reminders

Congratulations on successfully completing your first month of school! In the spirit of staying compliant and ahead of the game, please note the updates and reminders below for our sponsored community schools.

Special Education Ratio & Workload Collection

On Monday, September 14th each sponsored community should have received an email from Molly Warmke that included the Special Education Ratio/Workload Form for completion. One form should be completed per school and returned upon completion, or by Friday, November 13th. This annual collection assists both schools and the Sponsor in monitoring staffing levels and compliance with Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-09 regarding intervention specialist caseloads and service delivery requirements. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Stacey Swank at sswank@charterschoolspec.com.

Special Education Desk Review

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) held its overview of Desk Review Phase 1 (Establish Teams and Schedules) and Phase 2 (Professional Development and Processes) on September 3. For those who could not attend, all schools participating in a Desk Review for the 2026-2027 are to have all four phases completed by June 4, 2027. According to the OEC, the sponsor should be included in the Cross Functional Team, so please email Stacey Swank at sswank@charterschoolspec.com meeting information if you would like her to attend. For all things OEC Desk Review, please visit ODEW's website at this [LINK](#).

OEC Open Office Hours

The Support and Monitoring Information Session will be held on Thursday, October 1, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. This session, led by Andrea DiFrancesco, will explore the new Learning Management platform in Cornerstone to access free professional development for OHID holders. Please join at this [LINK](#).

ODEW STAR Review PLC

If you are participating in a STAR Review, join the Professional Learning Community (PLC) webinar where you will hear from educational agencies that participated in the pilot STAR review. The webinar will be held on Tuesday, October 6, 2026, from 12:30-2:00 p.m. Please join this [LINK](#).

ODEW Comprehensive Review PLC

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) webinar where you will hear from educational agencies about their preparation for an IDEA Comprehensive Monitoring Review will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2026, from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Registration is not required, just join at this [LINK](#).

Monthly Federal Programs and Special Education Professional Development Series

Dr. Erica McMillon and Nannette Sherman will be holding a one-hour professional development on October 13, from 12-1 p.m. They look forward to sharing their expertise on Parent and Community Involvement & Writing Defensible IEPs. Join at this [LINK](#).

CSS Open Office Hours with Stacey

Join Stacey for Special Education Open Office Hours on Wednesday, October 14, from 9:00-10:00 a.m. to get any of your special education questions answered, or to have the opportunity to network and share ideas with other special education leaders from our sponsored community schools. To help make the most of our time together, Stacey encourages participants to submit questions in advance by emailing her at sswank@charterschoolspec.com. This will allow her time to research questions or reach out to ODEW, when needed, so she can be prepared to provide the most helpful information during the meeting. Looking forward to joining you at this link: [Special Education Open Office Hours](#).

As always, Charter School Specialists remains committed to partnering with schools throughout the year by providing technical assistance, professional learning, and compliance support. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Dr. Erica McMillon at emcmillon@charterschoolspec.com and/or Stacey Swank at sswank@charterschoolspec.com. We truly appreciate your continued dedication to serving Ohio's students with disabilities and look forward to another successful school year together.

Federal Programs



As the leaves change colors and our weather cools down, it is a great time to reflect on federal funding and expenditures. No matter the type of federal grant your school receives, the intent is that the funds that were allocated in the current fiscal year be spent to benefit the current students in the current school year. This means that the expectation is that funds received this year are spent and not carried over into other fiscal years.

Federal entitlement grant funds are only available for a 27-month period. This means that from the July 1, allocation of FY27 funds, these funds expire on September 30, 2028. Any unused funds from FY27 will be swept/collected and sent back to ODEW and federal government. Besides the potential to lose expiring funds, schools also run the risk of unintentionally increasing expenditures in one year, by holding on to specific general funds. For example, some schools were receiving Student Wellness funds but did not spend them for several years. Then in FY25, ODEW mandated that schools either spend down the funds or risk losing the funds. Schools that had held back expending the funds, spent all the funds in FY25, thereby raising the baseline for general funds expenditures.

This increase in the general fund expenditures impacts the school's Maintenance of Effort (MOE). Federal law requires that schools spend the same amount of general funds within 10% each year to receive federal funds. When a school has held general funds as was done with Wellness funds, it causes the baseline for expenditures to increase greatly. Each fiscal year's general fund expenditures are compared to the prior year's expenditures. When the baseline is missed by more than 10%, the school fails MOE and ALL federal funds are reduced by the percentage that MOE was missed. For example, if a school fails to meet MOE by 20%, then 20% of all their federal funds are reduced! There are possible exemptions if a school has not failed MOE in the past five years; however, this doesn't change the baseline of increased expenditures. If a school cannot maintain the level of general fund expenditures, each year their federal funds will decrease. The only opportunity to revert to the previous baseline of expenditures, is for the school to seek an MOE Waiver from the US Department of Education. This is why it is so important to spend the funds in the fiscal year they are received.

If you have any questions about MOE or federal programs, please contact: Nannette Sherman at nsherman@charterschoolspec.com.

College and Career Readiness Corner



Fall is a good time to make sure that the required ([O.R.C. 3313.617](#)) Graduation Plans for students in grades 9 and above are reviewed and updated. It is important to remember that the plan needs to be developed with at minimum the student and his/her parent/guardian. The plan should employ a backwards planning approach, as one of the first areas on the [Graduation Plan](#) template provided by the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce is what is the student's post-high school goal and what supports are needed to achieve the goal. Each individual plan must be built upon the foundation of each student's interests, aptitudes, needs, and motivations.

In most cases, each student's post-high school goal will change over time. Goals for a student in 9th grade are typically broad and may lack some specificity. However, as students progress through high school, with effective and individualized career education and career/life experiences, they can move from career exploration to career preparation. As an example, a student in 9th grade may have a post-high school goal of entering post-secondary education training to seek a career in the medical field. This same student's post-high school goal in 12th grade may be that he/she will attend Cuyahoga Community College full-time and enroll in the two-year Medical Lab Technology program.

While the Graduation Plan is required for 9th grade and above, this does not mean that planning for post-high school starts in the 9th grade. In the September Sponsor Connection, information was shared about Ohio's revised [Career Connections Framework](#). In future Sponsor Connection articles, more will be shared about the K-12 framework. Charter School Specialists (CSS) offers tailored to each school's needs professional development on implementing the framework. Don't forget to check out the [CSS Professional Development Catalog](#) for more information.

Remember, every student's goal for his/her **Good Life** begins upon entering the kindergarten classroom!



Governor DeWine's Science of Reading Champions Award application opens Sept. 15 for 2026-2027 school year

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, in coordination with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, is pleased to announce the upcoming opening of the application period for the Governor's Science of Reading Champion's Award for the 2026-2027 school year.

Part of the ReadOhio initiative, this award program recognizes schools that are demonstrating strong implementation of evidence-based instructional practices aligned to the science of reading and where students are making significant progress.

PreK-12 schools, including public, community, and chartered nonpublic schools, are eligible to apply, and each must apply as an individual building. Schools awarded for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years should not reapply, as the recognition continues this year.

[Review the Application Guidelines and Instructions](#), which outline the requirements for recognition. This year's application period starts on Sept. 15 and ends at 5 p.m. on Oct. 6.

Visit the Department's [Science of Reading Champion Award program webpage](#) for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?



Charter School Specialists, a sponsor representative, offers federal programs support, fiscal services, and professional development to schools across Ohio.

- Guidance and Compliance Support
- Budget & fiscal expertise
- Training for educators and school leaders

Available statewide to all Ohio community schools

CSS@charterschoolspec.com