

# CMSD SponsorShip

A newsletter for CMSD-sponsored community schools



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## Welcome back!

Hello, welcome back, and congratulations to CMSD-sponsored community schools on a successful start to the 2017-2018 school year! We hope everyone had a relaxing and engaging summer break, although we know for many of our educators, summer can be even busier than the school year.

CMSD's first edition of *SponsorShip*, our newsletter to share important information from our office and to help foster connections among CMSD, our family of sponsored schools, and the larger community, appeared this past spring. This year, one of CMSD's goals is to improve communication with community schools and their governing boards. To that end, we plan to issue



## Other CMSD contacts

In addition to Ms. Klupinski, please continue to contact other key CMSD staff members on these specific matters:

### Special education, ADA, ELL:

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*More information on CMSD's community school sponsorship and other collaborative initiatives related to community schools in Cleveland is available on the CMSD website, [www.clevelandmetroschools.org](http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org), by clicking on the "Schools" tab on the main menu and then on "CMSD/Charter School Collaboration."*

*SponsorShip* monthly. Each edition will include a legislative update, monthly information about upcoming events and deadlines, and a profile of one of our sponsored schools. This month, we are thrilled to profile Cleveland Entrepreneurship Preparatory School (a.k.a. "E Prep Cliffs"), the first school CMSD ever sponsored.

We also want you to get to know the various CMSD staff and consultants who support our sponsorship efforts, so each month, we will profile a different staff member. This month, we introduce you to independent consultant Tom Hutton, who helps CMSD all the way from Honolulu.

Thanks to each school for sending for board members and staff representatives to our July 20 meeting. This edition also provides a recap of that meeting. Many of the materials covered at that meeting, including the roles and responsibilities of the sponsor and school, are also available on our website [at this link](#).

For those of you who attended the public records/open meetings training on July 20, CMSD has your certificates on file and will upload them to Epicenter. Please remember that state law requires all board members and certain school staff administrators to complete this training annually.

Our next all-schools meeting will be in December. We will finalize the date and location soon.

We hope you enjoy *SponsorShip*, and we encourage you to let us know how we can improve it! Please send your thoughts and comments (along with good news from your schools!) to me at [stephanie.klupinski@clevelandmetroschools.org](mailto:stephanie.klupinski@clevelandmetroschools.org).

Have a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend!

*-Stephanie*

Stephanie Klupinski  
Executive Director of Charter Schools  
CMSD





## Dates to remember

*This list is not comprehensive but highlights some upcoming events, opportunities, deadlines, and other dates. Schools should continue to rely on other tools as well, especially Epicenter.*

**Sept. 4:** [11th Congressional District Community Caucus Labor Day Parade](#), 11:00 a.m.; Parade begins at E. 146th. and ends at Kinsman Festival at Luke Easter Park; parade line-up at the level of Saves-a-lot parking area completed by 10:00 a.m.

**September:** School governing boards must adopt charter contract changes this month.

**Oct. 5:** First of School Performance Institute's "[Study the Network](#)" workshop series, at Columbus Collegiate Academy - Main Street; immersive learning enabling participants, through close observation and discussion, to identify "key levers that can be utilized to drive improvement at their own schools."

**Oct. 9:** CMSD [Blue in the Middle Institute](#), 8:30 a.m.-3:40 p.m., DoubleTree by Hilton in Beachwood; professional development on transitioning middle schoolers to high school, open to CMSD-sponsored schools. Do not register online; email Director of the CMSD Professional Development Center [Jacquienne Brown](#).

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## Recap: Annual Kick-Off Meeting for CMSD-Sponsored Schools

Board members and administrators from all CMSD-sponsored schools gathered with CMSD staff members and other presenters at Promise Academy on July 20, 2017 for some important training and informational gearing-up for the new school year. Here are some of the key highlights from our gathering:

**Introductions and Review** - The meeting started with a review of the roles of sponsors, schools, operators, and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE); a big picture update on charter oversight and some of the related politics in the state (see next article); and CMSD's mission and vision when it comes to community school engagement. Stephanie Klupinski also introduced some of her colleagues from CMSD who help with sponsorship work or issues that impact community schools, as well as some of the outside consultants who support that work.

**Sponsorship goals** - Klupinski explained her key sponsorship objectives for this school year.

First, she wants her office to evolve from one primarily focused on compliance to more of a strategic partner. As part of this, CMSD will be working to identify the technical assistance and professional development needs of schools and their governing boards and will provide greater clarity about CMSD can help provide it. CMSD's revisions to the financial and organizational frameworks are intended, among other things, to provide more meaningful and actionable information to CMSD, governing boards, and the public.

Second, she wants CMSD to understand better each school's academic model and what success means to the school. She noted a recent cautionary report found that "student-centered" schools are more likely to struggle academically but acknowledged that much education policy discussion nationally, including among sponsors, is focused on understanding success in student-centered models that goes beyond test scores.

**Site visits** - Klupinski also reviewed what schools should expect from their Fall and Spring site visits by CMSD. The Fall visit will focus on classroom observations, while the Spring visit will involve diverse focus groups to gather feedback. More details can be found in CSMD's [Site Visit Protocol](#).

**Data support** - CMSD Executive Director of Portfolio Planning Melissa Skelly reviewed some of the powerful new data

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## Dates to remember (cont.)

**Oct. 11-13:** 2017

[Independent Charter Schools Symposium](#), New York City, convening to “articulate a vision for the charter movement in the age of Trump and DeVos.”

**Oct. 18-22:** [Council of the Great City School 61st Annual Fall Conference](#), Hilton Cleveland Downtown.

**Oct. 31:** School annual reports due.

## Kick-Off Meeting (cont.)

systems, tools, and analysis that CMSSD can bring to bear on school performance, student residential distribution, school siting, community demographics, and neighborhood need for high-quality school options. Among other things, her office can help charter school leaders and operators with academic and market analysis to help them support the Cleveland Plan’s vision of providing high-quality schools choices to every Cleveland family. For an overview of methods and recently updated data and maps , check out CMSSD’s 2017 [Strategic Regional Analysis Summary](#).

**Public Records/Open Meeting Training** - All community school governing board members and administrators are required to be trained in state sunshine requirements every year. CMSSD Legal Counsel Jonathan Decker provided the opportunity for attendees to fulfill this requirement at the outset of the fiscal year. Again, participants’ certificates of completion will be uploaded to Epicenter.

**Organizational framework** - A breakout session with Klupinski and compliance consultant Matt Rado allowed schools to provide

feedback on the revisions to compliance and other organizational performance measures in the organizational framework and the how school performance on those measures will be evaluated.

**Financial framework** - Consultant Matt Shaw led a session with schools to get feedback on revisions to the financial performance framework.

**Governance** - Consultants Rachel Costanzo and Tom Hutton provided governance training for administrators and for governing board members, respectively, in separate breakout sessions. The board member session built off of survey results collected from governing board members in the weeks leading up to the conference, and we are grateful for those who took the time to respond and provide CMSSD with a better sense of how board members see their work and the challenges before them. The administrator session focused on how school leaders can work effectively with and for governing bodies to advance school goals.

**More information** - Again, many of the materials from the meeting can be accessed [on this page](#) of the CMSSD website.

## Latest on CMSSD Sponsor Status

In our last issue, we updated you on CMSSD’s sponsorship status under the sponsor evaluation process adopted by ODE. Under that process, CMSSD was rated “Ineffective” for 2015-2016 but has been vigorously implementing its quality improvement plan and expects to post significant gains in this year’s rating. The evaluation process for this year has been arduous, entailing significant development and revision of important sponsorship processes and tools and a great deal of reporting to ODE. If CMSSD succeeds in achieving a rating of “Effective” or “Exemplary” this year, it will once again be able to solicit and consider applications for new community schools. and to renew contracts to continue sponsoring existing schools. The new sponsors ratings must be issued by November 15.

**Legislative Update**

During the first six months of the current two-year 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, members of the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives were primarily focused on crafting, deliberating over, and approving a two-year state budget.

Following the passage of the budget bill, [H.B. 49](#), in June, both legislative chambers recessed for the summer, so things have been quiet at the Statehouse in recent weeks. But legislators will resume their work when they return after the Labor Day holiday and will remain active throughout the remainder of 2017.

Historically, state budget bills have addressed a variety of policy issues, including those specific to K-12 public education and charter schools. In light of the fact that major charter legislation was approved in 2015 (H.B. 2), relatively few charter school policy issues were included this year in H.B. 49. Highlights of the budget provisions of likely interest to charter school stakeholders include:

**Funding** - The state formula funding remains almost flat, set at \$6,010 per pupil for the 2017-2018 school year (an increase of just \$10 over the 2016-2017 funding level) and \$6,020 for the 2018-2019 school year. The bill continues to provide very modest facilities funding, set at up to \$200 per pupil in each of the two school years.

**Sponsors** - The Ohio Association of Charter School Authorizers (OACSA) sought changes to improve the sponsor evaluation system recently implemented by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). OACSA's highest priority was addressing concerns over ODE automatically disqualifying a sponsor from attaining a rating higher than "ineffective" if the sponsor received a score of zero in any one of the three evaluation components (sponsor quality practices, sponsor and school compliance, and school academic performance). Although H.B. 49 included language to address this concern, this provision [was vetoed](#) by Gov. John Kasich on the grounds that changing ODE's rule would amount to "exempting community schools from complying" with standards set by the legislature.

Under previous law, only sponsors rated "poor" and subject to ODE revocation of their sponsorship authority could appeal their scores. H.B. 49 provides a process for all sponsors—regardless of ratings—to request adjustments to their ratings based on supporting documentary evidence.

Additionally, sponsors will have the opportunity to review preliminary ratings at least 10 business days prior to publication (similar to the practice of allowing districts to review data prior to release of state report cards).

**Licensure** - H.B. 49 called for elimination of the Ohio Teacher Residency Program; however, the provision was

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*Legislative Update (cont.)*

vetoed by Gov. Kasich. The new law requires ODE to obtain fingerprints from licensed educators and applicants for licensure who are not enrolled in the Retained Applicant Fingerprint Database and to enroll them. ODE is required to inactivate a license or reject the application of any educator who fails to comply.

**Assessments** - H.B. 49 eliminates the fourth- and sixth-grade statewide achievement assessments (which are not required under federal law) in social studies. Districts and schools must still teach and administer assessments in social studies in at least the fourth and sixth grades, but the results of the assessments are not reportable to ODE. Language that would have permitted districts and schools to administer state achievement assessments in paper format, rather than electronic, was subject vetoed by the governor.

**Graduation** - The bill creates alternative graduation pathways exclusively for students who are enrolled in a district or school and entered ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2014 but before July 1, 2015. Under continuing law, students are expected to meet one of three pathways to graduation; however, the legislature provided greater flexibility to students in the class of 2018 who have had too little time to adjust to the many changes recently made to Ohio’s academic standards and assessments. Under H.B. 49, students must take and pass courses that constitute the curriculum requirements and must take all seven end-of-course exams. Learn more [at this link](#).

The new law also requires ODE to develop a framework for districts and schools to use in granting units of high school credit to students who demonstrate subject area competency through work-based learning experiences, internships, or cooperative education, and it requires districts and schools to comply with the framework beginning with the 2018-2019 school year.

**Transformation Alliance** - The legislation extends the authority of Cleveland’s mayor to maintain the Cleveland Transformation Alliance, which had been subject to a sunset clause.

**What’s next?**

A number of other bills of interest to education and charter school stakeholders have been introduced so far in 2017:

- H.B. 21 would require charter schools—rather than school districts—to verify charter school students’ resident districts.

**School happenings**

**Stonebrook Montessori grade expansion**

Fourth grade students at [Stonebrook Montessori](#) have opened the school's first Upper Elementary classroom. This Upper Elementary classroom will grow along with the children, adding a grade each year until the class serves children in grades four through six. Here, fourth graders practice long division with hands-on Montessori materials.



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### *Legislative Update (cont.)*

- H.B. 58 would require handwriting instruction in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- H.B. 108 would require one-half unit of financial literacy in high school.
- H.B. 170 would require the State Board of Education to adopt academic content standards and a model curriculum for computer science.
- H.B. 220 specifies that funds paid to charter schools are public dollars subject to the same requirements related to permissible expenditures and to audit by the Auditor of State.
- S.B. 34 would require all schools to delay the start of the school year until after the Labor Day holiday (with an opt-out provision).
- S.B. 82 would modify the proposed requirement that schools notify parents of a student's unexcused absences within one hour of discovery.

CMSD will continue to monitor Statehouse activities and provide updates on key pieces of legislation potentially impacting its sponsored schools and its sponsorship.

### **CMSD's Sponsorship Team**

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Community school sponsorship is a complex undertaking under any circumstances, but even more so in a place like Ohio, where the State is in the process of significantly raising the bar for entities to continue in, or enter into, this challenging but critically important endeavor. For organizations that are not single-purpose sponsoring entities, like school districts, educational service centers, universities, and some other not-for-profit entities, many of the responsibilities of quality authorizing may fall in part to staff members who have significant other responsibilities, some of them much more central to their positions.

Fortunately, there is a lot of quality support available to sponsors from organizations and independent consultants. After all, there is an inherently entrepreneurial aspect of charter schooling, and it is an area known for outside-the-box thinking. CMSD has been efficiently leveraging its in-house expertise with a range of such strategic partners. This month we introduce you to one of them, consultant Tom Hutton, owner of Honolulu-based Education Adjuncts LLC.

School board members who attended our 2017 Kick-Off Meeting got to meet Hutton in the session he led on effective governance. To that and his other work for sponsors, school districts, funders, policy-makers, and other clients nationally, Tom brings experience as a charter school co-founder, board member, and interim board chair, an in-house lawyer for the National School Boards Association, a school lawyer in private practice, the first executive director of the Hawaii State Public Charter School Commission, and a graduate of, and now coach for, the leaders program of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA).



Hutton has been helping CMSD with everything from high-level strategic thinking about its multi-faceted engagement with charter schools to detailed help reviewing and revising its sponsorship practices in response to the ODE sponsor evaluation process. He says he is impressed with the range of high-capacity thought partners with which the City of Cleveland is blessed in public education and charter schooling and is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to our collective efforts. We are grateful for his help!

# SCHOOL PROFILE: E PREP CLIFFS

This month we feature the first school CMSD ever sponsored, 12 years ago: the Cleveland Entrepreneurship Preparatory School, or "E Prep Cliffs," a middle school serving grades 5-8 that with the Village Prep Cliffs elementary school comprises the [E Prep and Village Prep Cliffs Campus](#), one of three Prep School campuses in Cleveland.

E Prep Cliffs was the first of the Prep Schools and was founded by John Zitzner, co-founder of [Breakthrough Schools](#) and President of Friends of Breakthrough Schools. The Prep Schools "seek to provide a high quality, academically rigorous education for the college bound scholar." Their vision is that "children in every neighborhood in Cleveland have access to at least one outstanding preparatory school," with the goal of expanding to eight such schools to by 2020.

E Prep Cliffs now serves some 320 students in the Tyler Village development in a former elevator factory on East 36th Street in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood. The school is led by Principal Randy Yates and governed by a board of directors that also serves as the governing body for the other Prep Schools, one of three school models operated by Breakthrough Schools.



The school's college prep focus is reflected in everything from high expectations for students—referred to as "scholars"—and staff to the fact that classrooms are named after and decorated as specific colleges. John McBride, Breakthrough Schools' Model Education Leader for the Prep Schools, says the school strives to maintain its academic focus in a structured environment that at the same time doesn't neglect the need for a warm and fun-filled experience. It features an entrepreneurship curriculum and mandatory Saturday school for 6<sup>th</sup> graders who need help.

That approach has gotten results. E Prep Cliffs has consistently been among the top-performing public schools in Cleveland and has been the top-rated school in Ohio for student growth.

McBride says one challenge for the school is teacher retention, as well as the need for a faculty that reflects the demographics of the school's population. Student diversity is limited by geography, residential patterns, and the school's commitment to meet the greatest needs, he says. All Breakthrough Schools teachers and leaders are getting training in cultural competency.

Of course, the other big challenge is a familiar one to everyone in public schools, especially charter schools: how to do more with less. But E Prep Cliffs is one school that is showing how much can be done with what's available—and providing a hint of what could be done with more.

