

CMSD SponsorShip



A newsletter for CMSD-sponsored community schools

Contact CMSD

Please direct inquiries on CMSD sponsorship of community schools to:

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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, ClevelandMetroSchools.org, by clicking on the "Schools" tab on the main menu and then on "CMSD/Charter School Collaboration."



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Notes from the Executive Director

September always seems to be one of the busiest months of the year, as students and staff start settling in for the next year. Over here in the Charter Schools Office, the pace has also picked up considerably. We shared our revised organizational and financial frameworks with the CMSD board, which approved the changes at its September 26 meeting. Now we are getting ready to do fall site visits. CMSD has been in touch with appropriate people at the school to set up these visits, but we have also included the schedule in this newsletter for your convenience on [page 4](#). This fall, in addition to our review of special education, we will be focusing on enrollment and admission policies. We are excited to be using our new organizational framework to guide these visits, and we hope that the result is better, more useful information to our schools and our boards.

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.

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's [Blue in the Middle Institute](#), 8:30 am–3:40 pm, 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.

OCT. 11–13

2017 [Independent Charter Schools Symposium](#) in 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 Schools 61st Annual Fall Conference](#), Hilton Cleveland Downtown.

OCT. 31

School Annual Reports due in Epicenter. Each school must provide a copy of the annual report to the sponsor and to the parents of all students in the school.

OCT. 31

Five-year forecasts due in Epicenter. Please note that ODE, in conjunction with the Auditor, have updated the forecast template. Schools are required to use the updated format for the Oct. 31 submission. Go to [this page on ODE's website](#) for more information.

September also brought the release of the 2016–17 report cards. You can find a performance recap of all of CMSD's sponsored schools on [page 3](#). As you can see (and as you probably expected), there is much work to be done, but also much to celebrate amongst all of our schools.

As with every edition of *SponsorSHIP*, we also profile one of our sponsored schools and one of our staff members. This month, we showcase Promise Academy, which has proudly been sponsored by CMSD since 2008. Promise is unlike all of our other sponsored schools as it is a dropout recovery school serving ages 16–21. The story appears on [page 7](#).

This month's featured staff member ([pages 5–6](#)) is Nicholas D'Amico, the Executive Director of School Performance for CMSD. He has worked with all of our sponsored schools over the past few years as we developed and enhanced the academic accountability framework.

The legislative update ([pages 4–5](#)) features H.B. 58, which would require schools to offer cursive writing instruction.

As always, please let me know how *SponsorSHIP* could be more useful to you and your schools! Just send me an email. My contact info appears on the previous page.

—Stephanie

Stephanie Klupinski,
Executive Director of
Charter Schools,
CMSD



Report Card Recap

Both CMSD and our sponsored charters saw some promising results in the state report cards from 2016–17. As CMSD CEO Eric Gordon stated in his State of the Schools speech, “Despite a report card grade that shows our kids are still lagging far behind their peers, every single year under The Cleveland Plan we have seen evidence that the changed conditions we are creating are taking effect.” To name a few highlights, CMSD saw its literacy score increase by 13.7 percent, with the district grade improving from an F to a C; there were gains in English and math exams in nearly every grade from fourth through eighth; and CMSD’s graduation rate improved again to a new District record high of 71.9 percent.

CMSD staff is still pouring over the data for our charter schools. We will provide a more detailed analysis in the next edition of *SponsorSHIP*. The chart below summarizes select key indicators for each one of our sponsored schools. “Indicators Met” represents student performance on state tests and are based on proficiency results on tests across subject levels and grades. “Performance Index” measures achievement of every student. The higher a student’s score, the more points a school earns toward its index. “Value Add” looks at growth students are making compared to other students in the state. Ohio looks at

	INDICATORS MET GRADE	PERFORMANCE INDEX SCORE GRADE	OVERALL VALUE-ADDED GRADE	LOWEST 20% VALUE-ADDED GRADE	STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES VALUE-ADDED GRADE	K-3 LITERACY IMPROVEMENT GRADE
Citizens Academy	F	D	F	C	C	C
Citizens Academy East	F	D	F	F	NR	C
Citizens Academy Southeast	F	D	NR	NR	NR	C
Citizens Leadership Academy	F	D	A	A	A	NR
Cleveland Entrepreneurship Preparatory School	F	D	A	A	B	NR
Entrepreneurship Preparatory School – Woodland Hills Campus	F	D	A	A	B	NR
Near West Intergenerational School	F	C	C	NR	NR	D
Stonebrook Montessori	F	F	NR	NR	NR	F
Village Preparatory School	F	D	C	C	NR	C

growth overall but also looks at growth amongst three different subgroups: students with disabilities, students whose performance is in the lowest 20 percent of students statewide, and gifted students. Because none of our sponsored schools had enough students in the gifted subgroup to receive a rating, we did not include that information. The K–3 Literacy Improvement grade looks at the improvement schools make in moving students from not on track to on track.

“NR” in any column means not reported.

Please note we are not including information for Entrepreneurship Preparatory School: Willard, which just opened last year. Also note that Promise Academy is not included here because, as a dropout recovery high school, they are subject to a different accountability system. Promise narrowly missed receiving an overall grade of “meets standards.” They met standards in the five-year, six-year, and seven-year graduation rates but not in the four- or eight-year rates. They did not meet standards in growth but met standards in the number of students who passed all five state tests required for graduation.

Complete report card information can be found on the [Ohio Department of Education’s website](#).

Site Visit Schedule

CMSD will be conducting its fall site visits in September and October. Following the visit, we will prepare a summary report that will be presented to each school's governing board. The site visit will be conducted in accordance with the recently-adopted organizational framework, which is now available on [CMSD's website](#).

Monday, September 25

Classroom observations for all the Prep schools

Tuesday, September 26

Compliance visit for all the Prep schools

Tuesday, October 10

Compliance visit and observations for Promise Academy

Wednesday, October 11

Compliance visit for all the Citizens Academy schools

Monday, October 16

Classroom observation for Stonebrook Montessori and Citizens Academy

Thursday, October 19

Classroom observation for Near West Intergenerational

Monday, October 23

Classroom observations for Citizens Leadership Academy and Citizens Academy Southeast

Tuesday, October 24

Compliance visit for Near West Intergenerational, Stonebrook Montessori, and Citizens Leadership Academy



Legislative Update

Before adjourning for summer break, the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives were primarily focused on passage of the state biennial budget bill (H.B. 49).

However, hearings were also held on some of the many legislative proposals introduced since the first of the year, including H.B. 58, co-sponsored by House Education and Career Readiness Committee Chair Andy Brenner (R-Powell) and Rep. Marilyn Slaby (R-Akron), a former educator.

Under the bill, schools would be required to offer instruction in printed and cursive handwriting to K-5 students to ensure that they develop the ability to print letters and words legibly by third grade and to create readable documents using legible cursive handwriting by the end of fifth grade.

The Department of Education would be required to assist in identifying the most appropriate means for integrating the bill's handwriting requirements into existing curriculum and in identifying appropriate instructional materials.

"An unfortunate byproduct of 'teaching to the test' is that skills such as cursive handwriting have been slowly removed from our schools' curriculum," Brenner said in his sponsor testimony before the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee. "There is a host of academic literature and research that demonstrates that handwriting is closely tied to literacy, fine motor skills and other cognitive development. Cursive handwriting has been shown to help those with dyslexia recognize words and form sentences."

According to Brenner, 12 states require cursive writing instruction. Additionally, Ohio's State Board of Education has passed a resolution in support of adding cursive writing to state curriculum.

“Cursive writing is not an outdated form of communication,” Brenner told committee members. “We are not advocating for cursive writing to take the place of printing, texting and keyboarding. Those are equally important skills and should be taught in the classroom along with cursive.”

Among the proponents testifying before the committee was Dr. Virginia Berniger, a professor at the University of Wisconsin.

“In an era of limited financial resources, it is important to keep in mind that systematic handwriting and spelling instruction can reduce the number of children needing special education services,” she said. “With appropriate, systematic and sustained handwriting and spelling instruction K to five, many specific learning disabilities involving some aspect of writing can be prevented, reducing costs for more expensive special education services.”

Former teacher Diane Philips also offered compelling testimony to the committee.

“Cursive writing is not an outdated form of communication”

—Andrew Brenner (R),
Chair of the House Education Committee

“When my granddaughter called four years ago to tell me she could not read the hand-written birthday card I sent her, I was shocked,” she said. “She was in the third grade and should be able to write in cursive and read it. As a retired teacher, I felt sick. My first thought was that she could not read the United States Constitution in its original form, as well as many other documents. She could not sign a letter or a driver’s license or a petition or a check or a credit card. She had been robbed of something precious: her signature.”

The Ohio School Boards Association, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials voiced

opposition to “state and federal mandates that require school districts to devote limited resources and time” to such requirements and strong support of local control in joint written testimony.

The bill does not call for assessments of students’ cursive writing skills, and local school boards would have the authority to determine how best to implement the instruction into existing curriculum.

Approved by the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee by a vote of ten to three, the bill must now be passed by the full House of Representatives before being sent to the Senate for consideration.

Interview with Nicholas D’Amico, Executive Director of School Performance

How long have you been at CMSD?

I started here in June 2014.

What did you do beforehand?

I was completing my doctorate in political science at Indiana University – Bloomington.

What drew you to CMSD?

One was a geographic connection—my wife and I are both from Northeast Ohio and wanted to come back to the area. Also in graduate school, I always enjoyed teaching and interacting with students. But I have a strong skill set in data and research analysis. So this role really lets me use my skills in research and statistics while keeping a foot in the world of educating students.

And I truly believe education is a critical lever—that's how we get students into great careers and great jobs. The key to revitalizing the city is having a strong local economy powered by a pipeline of skilled workers that had a strong foundation laid during their time in our schools.

There have been so many changes to the statewide accountability system in recent years. Has it been worth it?

Finally the state report card has stabilized. We have a new baseline of where our students are at, and we are better positioned to make strategic decisions of how to improve schools city wide. The things we can learn from the report cards up to now is that many of our schools continue to show progress. They are not there when it comes to proficiency standards we want all students to meet. But we won't get there overnight. A continued emphasis on the reforms of The Cleveland Plan will be critical to accelerating the progress we have seen so far.

Most of our sponsored charter schools struggle greatly with the AMO measure. Why is that? And is this a useful measure?

Most of our schools, district and charter, struggle with AMO. I don't believe it's a very accurate way to measure how schools are doing. The AMOs look at how much you've closed the gap between a target proficiency rate and your proficiency rate last year.

Depending on how large that gap is though, you can have some schools that make tremendous progress but still receive an F according to the state grade scale. So it's not so much that the measure is not useful or that we should not look at it but the state should rethink how they grade us on it.

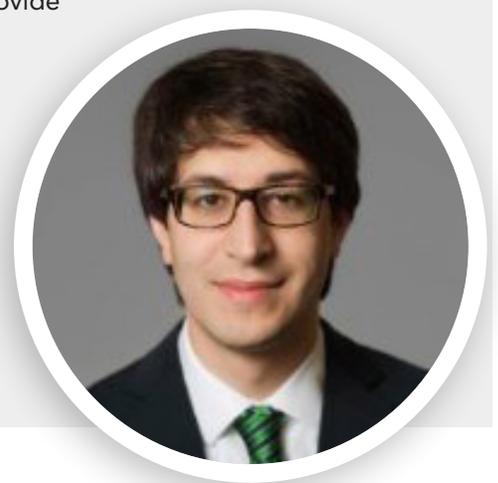
CMSD has its own school performance frameworks, and sponsored charter schools have their own. How are they similar? How are they different?

They are similar in that they both refer back to report card measures. We feel that is important so that we are not inundating schools with different ways to measure school performance. Also, they both try and compare a school's performance to that of other similar looking schools. We feel that is important to provide contextualization around how a school is serving the specific population of students it has.

They are different in that with CMSD's internal framework, we are able to include far more measures, at a greater level of detail and shorter time interval. With our sponsored and partnered schools, we are only able to update their data once a year, with the release of state report card grades.

What is your favorite thing about working for CMSD?

The people. There is a group of incredibly committed, hardworking people here who are both devoted to their jobs but provide great support to coworkers and are able to show humor in difficult situations. It makes difficult work easier to do.



School Profile

Promise Academy



Like other schools, Promise Academy prominently posts signs urging students to focus, persevere and never give up.

But here, the meaning may run a little deeper.

Promise, located at East 12th Street and Superior Avenue, is a dropout recovery program for 16- to 21-year-old students whose personal situations can make traditional school impractical. The Cleveland Metropolitan School District launched the charter with its teachers union in 2006 and serves as the sponsor.

Students—enrollment totaled 235 at last count—complete most of their work online at their own pace, at school and wherever they find Internet access. Teachers, who belong to the Cleveland Teachers Union, answer questions, provide guidance and assign outside work.

On its most recent report card, Promise met standards for the number of students passing state tests.

Staff, aided by social workers from the Murtis Taylor Human Services system, work to keep the students on track, but their parental responsibilities, jobs and other factors can pose a challenge. Promise averages about 60 graduates a year.

“There are some heart-wrenching stories,” said history teacher Craig Strom, who is in his seventh year with the charter. “We’ve had kids who live in homeless shelters. Just rough circumstances that have impacted their educational journey.”

Principal Marc Aden likens his students to pineapples—rough on the outside but sweet beneath that exterior.



The school assists by creating a caring, family atmosphere, said Aden, who is in his fifth year at Promise and his third as the principal.

Students go on field trips, attend Promise Academy’s prom and compete in sports with their neighborhood schools. And besides bringing in social workers, Promise partners with the Urban League of Greater Cleveland and Youth Opportunities Unlimited to assist them in finding employment.

Dianjana Qualls, 17, enrolled at Promise slightly more than a year ago. She said Promise was a fit because she can progress at her own pace and avoid distractions.

Dianjana has completed her coursework and is preparing for state tests. She plans to enroll in college and become a registered nurse.

“I like helping people,” she said. “My mom is an STNA (state-tested nursing assistant). I thought why not follow in her footsteps or go beyond.”

Aden has spent 36 years in education, including time with the Positive Education Program for troubled children. Leading Promise Academy fits well with his career interests.

“I enjoy working with students who have challenges in their lives,” said the principal, who is also an ordained Baptist minister. “It gives you a totally different perspective.”