



Memorandum | Department of Community School

Date: October 27, 2021

To: Tomorrow Center Administrative Team and Governing Board Members

From: Jim Smith, Sponsor Liaison and Mid-Ohio ESC Sponsoring Staff

Subject: October Newsletter

General Updates

Hello Everyone,

The annual Ohio Department of Education's report card for school districts was recently released, and because of the coronavirus pandemic, the 2020-2021 report card does not have grades or ratings per Ohio law. One of the areas highlighted on last year's report card was the graduation rates. The Graduation Rate component looks at the percent of students who are successfully finishing high school with a diploma in four, five, six, seven, or eight years. When looking at last year's graduation rates among all Dropout Prevention and Recovery Schools (DOPR), the Tomorrow Center compares favorably. See the chart below.

Graduation Rates	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year	7 Year	8 Year	Combined Rates
Tomorrow Center	74.1%	63.4%	57.1%	76.5%	64.3%	66.7%
All DOPR Schools	37.8%	39.7%	40.6%	40.0%	37.2%	39.1%

Jamie Byrne received an email from Karl Koenig, Director of the Office of Community Schools, on August 17 informing the Tomorrow Center 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. The school will be notified in January 2022 if they meet the requirements to receive the dropout prevention and recovery report card designation.

As always, thank you for all you do to support the students and staff at the Tomorrow Center.

Policy Updates

The **State Board of Education** approved, during its July 2021 meeting, a resolution condemning racism and supporting the advancement of equity for Black students, Indigenous students, and Students of Color. The Board also requested an opinion from the Ohio Attorney General

regarding whether this resolution, as adopted, conforms with state and federal laws. The Board further requested the Attorney General to include in his opinion thoughts on whether the resolution was within the Board's authority. During the time, between the Board's July meeting and its October meeting, the Board "observed not only a growing national divide," but also "a troubling focus on the color of one's skin rather than on the content of one's character." In addition, during this time, the Attorney General issued his opinion indicating that the Board did not have the authority to require contractors working with the Department to complete implicit bias training. As a result, the Board approved a resolution during its October meeting rescinding the July resolution. The **October resolution** states, "that the Board condemns any standards, curriculum, or training programs for students, teachers, or staff that seek to divide or to ascribe circumstances or qualities, such as collective guilt, moral deficiency, or racial bias, to a whole race or group of people." The October resolution further condemns racism, hate speech, hate crimes, etc. An early draft of the resolution spoke to the appropriateness of Critical Race Theory as a component of standards and model curricula; however, this section of the resolution was removed. A complete copy of the October resolution can be found on ODE's website at:

<http://public.education.ohio.gov/StateBoardBooks/October-2021/Member%20Proposed%20Resolutions/Item%2013%20-%20Resolution%20to%20Promote%20Academic%20Excellence%20-%20Final%20-%20Certified.pdf>.

The Ohio Department of Education has been reviewing **Report Card** rules as these rules relate to Dropout Prevention and Recovery Schools. The current rules, which are being proposed for renewal without revision, may be viewed on ODE's website at:

<https://education.ohio.gov/About/Ohio-Administrative-Code-OAC-Rule-Comments#OAC%203301-102-10%20to%203301-102-12%20Drop%20out%20prevention%20and%20recovery%20report%20card%20rules>

The Ohio Department of Education will be accepting public comment on these rules through November 9, 2021. Interested parties may register their comments at: rulecomments@education.ohio.gov

The **General Assembly** has continued to work this fall on legislation of interest to schools. Recently introduced bills include **SB-251**, jointly sponsored by Senators Maharath and Schaffer, which seeks to extend how late persons under the age of 16 may work. Under current law an individual under the age of 16 is not permitted to work after 7:00 pm during the school year (September-May). If enacted, however, SB-251 would permit such individuals to work until 9:00 pm with the approval of his/her parent/guardian. Senator Maharath has also introduced legislation (**SB-214**) calling for students, K-12, to be provided instruction in Asian American History. In addition to instruction about the history of Asian Americans in Ohio and the Midwest, SB- 214 seeks to specifically require K-12 students to be taught about the:

- contributions of Asian American on the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the United States,
- internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and related legal challenges to internment, and

- military service of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II.

SB-248, recently introduced by Senator Antani, seeks to change current law that provides schools with permissive authority to conduct a moment of silence for prayer, reflection, or meditation, to requiring schools to offer a daily moment of silence. As with current law, a student could not be required to participate.

SB-240, introduced by Senator Peterson, is a proposal that may be of particular interest to community schools and their sponsors. If enacted, SB-240 would permit community schools to form networks. SB-240 defines a network as "a community school resulting from a merger between a network operator and two or more previously independent community schools to operate those schools as a group."

A brief update regarding proposed legislation discussed in previous reports:

- **HB-322 and 327** - both bills seek to place restrictions on the teaching of what the bills refer to as "divisive concepts." As one might suspect, the bills have become controversial themselves. Both bills were assigned to the House State and Local Government Committee for initial consideration. On September 22, 2021, the committee conducted a combined hearing on both bills to receive testimony from those in opposition to the bill. The committee received testimony from more than 250 individuals and organizations opposing passage of either bill. The committee has not held any additional hearings on either bill since September 22 nor has it conducted any votes on either bill.
- **HB-370 and 373** - these similar legislative proposals seek to require schools to create a seizure action plan for each student with a seizure disorder. Both bills were introduced in mid-September and assigned to the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee for initial consideration. The committee has yet to have an initial hearing on either bill. Although the committee is next scheduled to meet during the last week of October, neither bill appears on the publicly available committee schedule for a hearing.
- **HB-403** - this bill seeks to require school superintendents (or similar school officials) to report to ODE any teacher who retires under threat of termination, nonrenewal or a disciplinary investigation. HB-403 has been assigned to the Hours Primary and Secondary Education Committee for initial consideration. As with HB-370/373, the committee has not conducted any hearings on HB-403, nor is one scheduled for the next committee meeting.

To view these bills, or any legislation currently under consideration, visit the website of the Legislative Services Commission:

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/search?pageSize=10&start=1&keywords=hb+403&sort=Number&generalAssemblies=134>



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