# GCESC Quarterly



**Spring/Summer 2025 Newsletter** 



As we wrap up another incredible school year, we're excited to share the final edition of the Greene County ESC Quarterly Newsletter! This issue is a celebration of all we've accomplished together—from a heartfelt year-in-review message from our Superintendent to snapshots of the joyful, meaningful moments that filled our halls over the past few months. As always, we are deeply grateful for our dedicated staff, committed educators, and invaluable community partners. Your support and collaboration make our work possible and impactful. Thank you for being an essential part of our success—here's to a strong finish and a hopeful look ahead!

#### IN THIS ISSUE:













## 2024-25 Year in Review..



Reflecting on the end of the 2024-2025 School Year and a decade of Service at Greene County Educational Service Center as Superintendent:



Looking back at the 2024–2025 school year, what are you most proud of accomplishing as an organization?

Ham really happy with the solid Leadership Team we have in place. This team brings in many talented, expert staff who contribute greatly to our GCESC mission. With a great team, even greater work can be done. As our Directors have implemented new programs and ideas in each of their departments, I'm proud to say that the growth this school year has been noticeable. The work each department does independently—and in collaboration with others, which we refer to as 'cross-pollination'—makes a significant impact. We have many experts who work at GCESC, and they are excellent at sharing their knowledge across schools, programs and departments. At the ESC, we say that 'service is our middle name', and our team does demonstrate that. Our GCESC motto is

Educate. Support. Collaborate. – something this team also models every day."

### 2024-25 Year in Review.. (continued)

This marked your 10th year as superintendent— notably, as the first woman to lead the GCESC as superintendent since it was founded in 1914. What inspired you to take on this leadership role a decade ago and how has that motivation evolved over time?

A "About 16 years ago, three colleagues approached me with something I hadn't considered for myself: becoming a superintendent. At the time, I was serving as a Special Education Director and deeply committed to that work. But their encouragement planted a seed. They saw leadership potential in me that I hadn't fully recognized, and their support led me to pursue my Superintendent License and begin imagining what that future might look like.

Over the next few years, I transitioned into new roles—first as Director of Operations, then as Assistant Superintendent—each one giving me a broader perspective on how to support students, staff, and districts. When I stepped into the superintendent role a decade ago, my motivation was rooted in service: to strengthen collaboration, to find ways to improve within each department, and lead with integrity.

That motivation has only deepened. Over the years, I've witnessed how adaptable, creative, and resilient our various staff members and teams can be. It continues to inspire me daily. While I never imagined this path when I first started out, I am grateful for those who believed in me early on—and for the opportunity to lead GCESC into its next chapter."

## Over the past decade, what would you say has been the most significant change or growth at GCESC?

In the first five years of my Superintendency, we had gone through two strategic planning processes and were gaining momentum around the work we were doing. Then, the latter half of the past decade brought unexpected challenges, as we navigated the pandemic and its lasting impact—challenges that were felt not only by us, but by schools nationwide. Though the recovery process has taken time, it has also served as a catalyst for significant growth in our mental health programming.

### 2024-25 Year in Review.. (continued)

Simultaneously, with the new requirements in literacy/reading instruction, GCESC has added instructional support services so that districts have what they need to implement solid reading programs for all of their students. I'm proud to say that we are on track here at the GCESC."

#### Can you highlight a program, initiative, or partnership from your tenure that you feel has made a lasting impact?

"The Disconnect2Connect Coalition started about  $4 \frac{1}{2}$  years ago with an idea to share pertinent information with the community, with parents, with educators and students regarding the impact of screen-time/cell phone usage on children's health—mental, physical, emotional and social. The coalition includes six local agencies: Greene County Public Health, Greene County Family & Children First, Greene County Libraries, the Mental Health & Recovery Board (of Clark, Greene & Madison Counties), Greene County Jobs & Family Services, and us—the Greene Co ESC. Collectively, this group has been able to make a much greater impact than if the work were done alone. We're grateful to have so many passionate leaders at this table.

I also am happy with the rapport we have built with our district leaders and their teams. These relationships are so essential. We truly do try to provide services that the schools need and want. We work to develop programs they request. The communcation we have with each district we serve is of utmost importance to us and central to what we do."

"By working as a collective, we're steadily shaping a better future for our students."

How has your perspective on education, leadership, or community service changed over the past decade?

### 2024-25 Year in Review.. (continued)

A "I certainly believe that "it takes a village." It can be overwhelming for any one school district or agency to try to meet the needs of every child and family they serve. During my tenure, I've found that by working together towards a common goal, we make a more profound and lasting impact. By working as a collective, we're steadily shaping a better future for our students."

## What has been the most rewarding part of serving as superintendent of the Greene County ESC?

A "The depth of expertise and talent that we have within the GCESC is unbelievable to me. I believe in surrounding myself with smart, innovative people—and that's exactly what we've done here at the Greene County ESC. I'm a better leader and human being because of the incredible team around me."

As you look ahead, what hopes or visions do you have for the future of the ESC—even beyond your tenure?

"My plan for the future is to leave the GCESC in a better place than when I took the "helm". This includes having strong staffing, strong financial positioning, plans for facilities, and passionate, dedicated leadership. It's also my goal to leave our programs and departments with potential for growth. This means both in expanding existing programs and services and in creating new ones, all while ensuring we have the space to support the growth. Having spent nearly 30 years at the GCESC, it is important to me to build on our potential and determine next steps for the time ahead."

>>>**>>>>>>>>>>>** 

## GCESC updates:

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On March 18, the Dor-Wood Optimist Club sponsored the first Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) in the Dayton Metro area. Six students in grades 7–12 from Greene County schools participated: Delano Boyd, 8th grade, Bellbrook Middle School; Talia Faile, 7th grade, Ankeney Middle School, Beavercreek; Tobiah Faile and Milo Barbian, both 9th grade, Ferguson Hall, Beavercreek; Lydia Barbian, 11th grade, Beavercreek High School; and William Shouse, 9th grade, Xenia High School.

Each student delivered a speech in spoken language or American Sign Language, sharing their journey with hearing loss and how they stay optimistic through challenges. Four professionals connected to the Deaf community served as judges, offering encouragement to students and their families. Every participant received a certificate and a coin of honor.



We are grateful for the work of Mike Higgins, Chairman, Dor-Wood Optimist Club CCDHH and Mike Zywien, Dor-Wood Optimist Club for their leadership and commitment in bringing this opportunity to our students in this area. The GCESC - AHA! All Hearing Abilities received a monetary contribution from the Dor-Wood Optimist Club in recognition of their efforts and participation." - Janet Boucher, GCESC Hearing Intervention Specialist

three students will advance to the

they will present their speeches later

district level in Columbus where

this school year.

# Learning Center educators secure valuable grant funding

GCESC Learning Center Teachers Sandra McIntosh and Heather Tabor were recently awarded grant funding from the Greene County Career Center that aimed to support educators with innovative ideas to inspire students in discovering potential career paths. Tabor secured a \$2,535 grant for fellow Learning Center Teacher Max Mullikin's classroom project titled, "Project Ignition." McIntosh's \$300 grant will support her classroom projected titled, "The Benefits of Growing Food using Hydroponics."

"Project Ignition" is a hands-on program that teaches students engine fundamentals and maintenance skills, preparing them for automotive careers or further training.

The project "The Benefits of Growing Food Using Hydroponics" teaches students plant-growing methods, starting with traditional techniques and expanding to hydroponics next year as a sustainable, space-saving solution.



## 28 Staff Complete Training



On April 10, in collaboration with the GCESC Mental Health Department, 28 Learning Center staff and other GCESC Educational staff completed a 10-week Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC) Training. This is a grant-funded training that the GCESC obtained through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The ARC framework is a flexible, components-based intervention developed for children and teens who have experienced complex trauma in their lives. The training will give staff even more tools and resources for students and families.



#### Bookmobile frequents Learning Center

Once a month, for the past 7 years, the Greene County Public Library Bookmobile makes a stop at the Learning Center to give students the opportunity to checkout some new books. Brad Kayata, GCESC Director of Education, said students look forward to the visit each month.



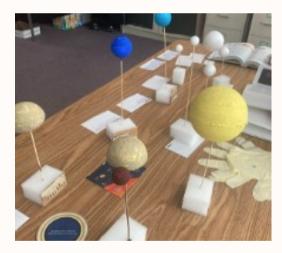
# Students Explore the Cosmos in Outdoor Advantage Classroom



About 4.5 billion years ago—or just this spring in the Outdoor Advantage classroom—a solar system was born! Inspired by recent celestial events and in alignment with 7th grade academic standards, students in the Greene County ESC's Outdoor Advantage program eagerly explored phenomena like solar and lunar eclipses, blood moons, and the northern lights. Hands-on learning took center stage as students created to-scale solar system models, conducted research, and shared their findings through engaging discussions.

Outdoor Advantage is a dynamic alternative program serving grades 6–8, offering a hands-on, experiential approach to learning. Referred primarily by Greene County districts, students thrive in smaller class sizes with personalized instruction, whether or not they have IEPs. Many come from traditional settings where their needs weren't fully met—but here, they find new paths to success. Alongside a rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum, students benefit from career exploration tools like Pathful Explore and regular visits from a transition careers coordinator.





Mental health support is also integrated into the school day, fostering emotional wellness and self-awareness. With a strong support system, Outdoor Advantage helps students grow academically and socially—preparing them to return to their home districts confident and capable.

#### **The Academy of Greene County**



The Academy of Greene County is an alternative high school program through the Greene County ESC, designed for students in grades 9–12 who face barriers in traditional school settings. Despite these obstacles, students work hard to meet Ohio's graduation requirements—and this year, five seniors will proudly earn their diplomas, prepared for life after high school, whether that means entering the workforce, military, further education, or earning advanced credentials.

It's been a busy and rewarding year. With support from new Academy Program Teacher Jennifer Brooks, Intervention Specialist Doris Lopez, and Program Assistant Jeff Burke, students have grown academically and personally. They've explored financial literacy through a trip to a local Bellbrook financial institution and took part in the "Real Money, Real World" budgeting simulation sponsored by The OSU Extension Office, learning how to navigate real-life expenses and financial decisions.

Career readiness has also been a focus. Students visited Ohio Means Jobs with Transitions Coordinator Kristin Brown and had the chance to pick out professional clothing for future interviews. They also earned CPR and "Stop the Bleed" certifications during a visit from Premier Health staff. These experiences have given students practical skills and confidence as they prepare for what's next—and we couldn't be prouder of their progress!



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#### **Intensive Needs Classrooms (INC)**





For April's Autism Awareness
Day, the children painted Tshirts they were provided,
incorporating practice with
colors into this enrichment art
celebration activity.



#### **Elementary INC**

The INC programs have been growing and thriving this year! A new elementary classroom was reinstituted at the ESC for the first time in several years in response to the needs/requests of the local school districts. The new elementary instructional team has worked all year to develop new curricular programming designed for younger students. It has been exciting to see how the older students encourage and model for the younger children. The younger students look up to these upperclassmen. They follow their example which stretches their social learning and strengthens their understanding of how to "do school."

# INC Staff tours local day programs

Special education provides a consistent support system from ages 3 to 21, but the transition after high school can bring uncertainty and overwhelm for families. To better support this phase, INC Middle and High School staff spent a professional development day touring four adult day service facilities in Greene County. These visits offered valuable insights and helped build connections with key service providers. Moving forward, INC teams are working on ways to better prepare students for life after school—efforts that will have a lasting impact on their futures.

#### **Intensive Needs Classrooms (INC)**



# Middle School/ Intermediate INC



The Middle School INC students are learning skills for independence—work and daily living skills, self-regulation and reading basics through content around the season of spring and current events. Along with utilizing the library room to choose and enjoy books, INC students learn employability skills such as sorting books by label, stocking shelves, and shredding documents.

Extending positive feelings outward, Middle School INC students demonstrated their sense of caring by making Valentine's Day cards for family members and giving cards to each other. MS INC students also joined the HS class in the school kitchen to make personal pizzas together.

#### **High School INC**

The HS INC class has been branching out this year! They are tackling more age-appropriate, relevant life skills. Students are working to master a broad variety of vocational and daily living competencies that includes collecting recycling products, cleaning, collecting, doing laundry, setting tables, and engaging with multiple staff and students when performing these tasks. This work supports and strengthens their independence and helps them to practice following directions to execute the job fully and properly to its completion.



MS students made Valentine's Day cards for their mothers and each other!

#### Intensive Needs Classrooms (INC)



**High School INC (cont.)** 



This year, the high schoolers are also part of the We Care Arts: Transition to Work program. Each semester the students receive a variety of projects and supplies to work on. The students have been enjoying the different projects, and are improving on their construction and completion of these enjoyable and varied activities.



High School INC students invited Middle School INC students to their cooking class!



#### AAC in Action at the INC!

AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) includes tools like gestures, sign language, communication boards, voice output devices, and speech-generating apps to support or replace spoken language. Many students in the Intensive Needs Classrooms (INC) use AAC as part of a Total Communication approach to express their needs, interact socially, and participate in academics. Access to AAC also helps reduce frustration and challenging behaviors by giving students a voice. This year, the INC teams—Intervention Specialists, Paraprofessionals, and Speech-Language Pathologists—have worked together to expand AAC access and use. An iPad with the LAMP-WFL app was added to the Elementary INC classroom, alongside tools like picture schedules and voice output buttons. The SLP team provided training and ongoing coaching to classroom staff, who have done an excellent job reinforcing AAC use throughout the day. Thanks to this collaboration,

students are showing steady growth in their communication skills.

# FRANKLIN B. WALTER

2025

"We are thrilled that Sam Morgan from Beavercreek High School has received this special award from the Greene County Educational Service Center. Sam was joined in Columbus by his mother, Jackie Morgan, his principal, Dale Wren, and me as he accepted the honor alongside students from across Ohio. It was a wonderful event.

-GCESC Superintendent Terry Graves-Strieter

and we are incredibly

proud of Sam."

On Monday, April 14th, the Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA) recognized Ohio's top students in each of the 88 counties statewide during the annual Franklin B. Walter All-Scholastic Awards in Columbus. This year's Greene County awardee is Sam Morgan from Beavercreek High School.

Nominated by their county's educational service center, eligible applicants are high school seniors that demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and community service as indicated by high school grades, test scores, school and community activities, and awards.

The award program, named in honor of Ohio's thirty-first State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Franklin B. Walter, was established by OESCA in 1989 to promote and recognize outstanding student leaders for their academic achievement and service to their schools and communities.



# Positive Parenting

Celebrating Achievements:
Big and Small

Free, informal, 30 minute virtual sessions



https://zoom.us/j/97049694203

No registration required

Tuesday May 13th at 8 pm Thursday May 15th at 1 pm Tuesday May 27th at 8 pm Thursday May 29th at 1 pm





#### VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS (PART 2)

Please join us for these free online sessions provided by our Early Childhood Mental Health Team. These sessions are designed for anyone who works directly with or supports those who work with children ages birth to eight. Participants are welcome to attend any and all sessions, but must register separately for each.

#### 2ND AND 4TH FRIDAY APRIL- JUNE 2025



\*Some dates have been changed from the original schedule

12:30 -2:30 PM



## OCCRRA REGISTRATION REQUIRED



#### **QUESTIONS? CONTACT**

khairston@greeneESC.org



To learn more about each Professional Development offering please visit OCCRRA's Training Search using the accompanying (ST number).

#### APRIL 7TH (ST #10151391) & 25TH (ST #10151392)

#### Introduction to HOPE

HOPE builds upon the recent explosion in strengths-based approaches, using this growing body of knowledge to better understand and support child health and development...

0.5 OA Contact hours

#### MAY 9TH (ST #10151393) & 23RD (ST #10151394)

#### Creating A Mentally Healthy Classroom

Does your learning environment meet the mental health needs of ALL children? Explore the components of a mentally healthy learning environment, including specific strategies...

1.5 OA Contact hours

#### JUNE 13TH (ST#10151396) \*ONLY ONE OFFERING IN JUNE\*

#### The Social Resilience Model

The Social Resiliency Model, founded by Dr. Laurie Leitch, Threshold Global Works, was created to accelerate leading-edge initiatives, informed by neuroscience, that amplify social resilience, health literacy, and human potential. SRM is based on four Core Concepts: Attachment, Safety, Attention, and Activation....

1.0 OA Contact hours



#### **LETRS Local Cohort Year 1**



Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling

Join the Greene Co.
ESC LETRS Local
Cohort!

- 2 Year Commitment
  - $\bigcirc$ Year 1/Volume 1  $\rightarrow$  2025-2026
  - $\bigcirc$ Year 2/Volume 2 → 2026-2027
- Required independent
   work & in-person training
   sessions

All meetings will be held at the Greene County ESC in "The Hub"

From 2:30-5:30 PM

Unit 1: October 27 & 29

Unit 2: December 8 & 10

Unit 3: March 2 & 4

Unit 4: May 4 & 6







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Online Learning Platform

Print Manual In-Person PD Sessions



Questions? To Join the Cohort, Contact:

Dr. Amy Baldridge: abaldridge@greeneesc.org



## **LETRS** Local Cohort Year 2



Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling

Join the Greene Co.
ESC LETRS Local
Cohort!

- Must have completed Year 1/Volume 1 of LETRS (Units 1-4) **prior** to the start of 2025-2026
- Required independent work & in-person training sessions

All meetings will be held at the Greene County ESC in

"The Hub"

From 2:30-5:30 PM

Unit 1: October 21 & 23

Unit 2: December 16 & 18

Unit 3: February 10 & 12

Unit 4: April 14 & 16







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Online Learning Platform

Print Manual In-Person PD Sessions

Questions? To Join the Cohort, Contact:



Dr. Amy Baldridge: abaldridge@greeneesc.org



# LETRS Local Cohort Early Childhood (EC)



Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling

Join the Greene County ESC LETRS Early Childhood Cohort!

- Designed for Preschool and Kindergarten teachers, aides, administrators, etc.
- Required independent work & in-person training sessions

All meetings will be held at the Greene County ESC in

"The Hub"

From 2:30-5:30 PM

Part 1: September 22

Part 2: December 17

Part 3: February 25

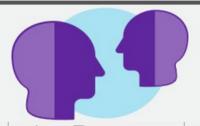
Part 4: April 22











Online Learning Platform

Print Manual In-Person PD Sessions



Questions? To Join this Local Cohort, Contact:

Dr. Amy Baldridge: <u>abaldridge@greeneesc.org</u>

Attention:
High School
& College
Students





#### √ Make meaningful connections

- ✓ Discover new possibilities
- √Gain valuable insights
- √Take the next step toward achieving your goals

# CAREERS IN EDUCATION FAIR

#### YOUR FUTURE STARTS HERE!

Whether you're exploring career paths, considering educational opportunities, preparing for your future, or researching potential employers, the Careers In Education Fair is for you!

June 4, 2025

10 AM - 12 PM - High School Students

1 PM - 3 PM - College Students



#### Come see all of the careers available at GCESC!

**Such as:** Treasurer

**Physical Therapist** 

**Speech Pathologist** 

**Vision & Hearing Specialist** 

**Mental Health Specialist** 

**Intervention Specialist** 

**Preschool Teacher** 

**School Administrator** 

**And More!!**