

Focus East News



OUR PURPOSE

Focus Schools provide safe, caring learning environments with self-paced, flexible, four-day weekly class schedules. These unique schools provide opportunities for students from all walks of life to earn their high school diplomas and industry recognized credentials, opening the door to fulfilling careers, college and post-secondary education opportunities.

OUR MOTTO

Your choice ...

DIRECTOR'S MID-YEAR UPDATE

Mr. Spann: We're growing and improving!

About half-way through the 2023-2024 school year, Mr. Spann is upbeat about the progress students and staff are making and the potential for even greater success in the coming months.

Enrollment is growing through word of mouth – thanks in part to Focus students – with four or five new students each day.

One of Mr. Spann's top priorities has been, and continues to be, motivating students to earn credits toward graduation. Prior to the year-end holiday break, Focus East students had earned about 250 credits!

"We remain focused on meeting students' individual needs, offering both one-on-one and group instruction," Mr. Spann said. "Our four corners of support – mental health, everyday struggles, relationships and academics – is essential to student success."

Building and nurturing student and staff morale is also high on Mr. Spann's list of priorities, as is creating a sense of "family" throughout the building.

He is proud of the school's 95 percent student participation rate during the recent testing window and continues to stress the importance of regular attendance.

"We want students to see our building as a safe haven, with talented staff dedicated to supporting them," Mr. Spann said. "Building relationships of trust and caring is what it's all about. We want students to recognize that we're here to help – not just with academics, but in every aspect of their lives."

"The key is to stay positive, each and every day," he continued. "We see potential in all our students and want to help them achieve success."



PROM IS COMING — SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, May 3rd, 7-10 p.m.
Sonesta Columbus Downtown
Details to come!



**FOCUS
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**FOCUS
SCHOOLS:**

**A network of 3
unique schools**

All with overall state
report card ratings of
"exceeds
expectations"

**Founded &
managed by
eSchool
Consultants**

One of just 2 (of 38)
operators to earn 4
points – the top 5%
– from the state for
school academics

**Sponsored by
Buckeye
Community Hope
Foundation**

Earning a state rating
of "Exemplary"

VISIT THE FAIRY GOODMOTHER

She has your perfect prom dress!

Need a dress for the upcoming prom?
You need look no further than the Fairy
Goodmothers' Cinderella's Closet
Boutique!

Ladies will soon have the opportunity to
sign up to visit the boutique and in the
meantime can make plans to find the
perfect dress February 17-18, March 2-3
or March 9-10.

Follow Fairy Goodmothers on Instagram
at @fairygoodmothers and/or "like" the
organization on Facebook to get the latest information, including when
registration will open for 2024.



WELCOME, MS. MONTGOMERY!

"I'm excited to be here!"

Focus East is pleased to welcome Ms.
Montgomery as the new office manager,
supporting both students and staff. Her first
day was January 18.

Ms. Montgomery describes herself as a poet
and artist, as well as a wife and mother. She's
been married to her husband, who is a
photographer, for 11 years. They have two
children – a ten-year-old daughter and an
eight-year-old son.

She grew up in Columbus and attended Fort
Hayes and Marion Franklin High School,
before moving to Virginia where she studied
business management at Hampton University.

She and her husband celebrate major holidays
throughout the year with Operation Joy –
coordinating family photo shoots featuring
seasonal characters. She poses as the Easter
bunny, with hubby as the photographer, and he
poses as the Grinch at Christmas with Ms. Montgomery behind the camera.

"I'm excited to be part of the Focus East team," she said on her very first day. "In addition
to supporting staff, I'm eager to engage with and encourage students!"



A FEW WORDS FROM STAFF ...

“Ms. Barkley: Reading and writing skills are essential!”

“I’m here to help students strengthen their reading and writing skills, providing one-on-one assistance to any student who needs it,” Ms. Barkley said. “Beyond fulfilling high school graduation requirements, English language arts courses help build strong reading and writing skills, which are essential in so many careers and business sectors.”

“I like to get to know students’ individual interests,” she continued. “I think it’s important that students have flexibility to explore subjects that appeal to them. It makes reading and writing so much easier when assignments center around topics they like.”

Ms. Barkley believes that every Focus student is full of potential. “Our students are smart,” she said. And so many are full of surprises. Take, for instance, Xavier C.J. who flexed his creative muscles writing a short story: *The Unknown Cabin* – a murder-mystery set in the 1800s, earning him a unit credit in English II.

Where will Xavier’s creativity take him in life? Who knows? Perhaps he’ll write a novel or poetry. Maybe he’ll author movie scripts. He may become an actor on Broadway. Or perhaps he’ll be an English teacher. Or maybe he’ll use his talents in a field outside of the arts. Regardless, hopefully he’ll take his experiences at Focus with him throughout life.



“Ms. Caldwell: We’re here to help!”

As an intervention specialist, Ms. Caldwell’s top priority is helping students succeed. Most students have at least one aspect of their studies that they find particularly challenging, and some find certain course packets a bit overwhelming.

“I’m always willing to work with students individually, breaking course packets down into smaller pieces and tackling them one-by-one,” she said. “Different resources appeal to and resonate with students ... a tool one student finds particularly helpful may not be so for another. We have a wealth of resources to help students experience that ‘aha’ moment of understanding a subject they find particularly challenging.”

“If you need help, just ask!,” she continued. “Any student can come to me – and other teachers and staff – at any time. In many cases, students know much more than they realize and simply need someone to work with them one-on-one to master their most challenging course work.”



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A FEW WORDS — continued

Ms. Cline: *I'm always looking for new ways to engage students!*

Ms. Cline is super excited about Focus East's Spring art show – to showcase the creative work of Focus' talented students – which is in the early development stage. Students participating in her art class are wrapping up their 3D house and garden projects. Using Palmer clay, which is Ms. Cline's favorite medium, students created holiday "cookies" so realistic that Mr. Spann almost ate one! Next up is embroidery, which her students selected as their next project.

"I've also been busy developing a combined English/history course that I hope students will really enjoy," Ms. Cline said. "The two subjects are a good combination, and we'll be focusing on Black history, which students have expressed an interest in studying. It covers three standards for English language arts and three for history, with students writing essays on Malcolm X."

The cross curricular course replaces one of four packets in English and one of five packets in history, earning students $\frac{1}{4}$ credit in English and $\frac{1}{4}$ credit in history. Ms. Cline just finished development of the course a few weeks ago and is eager to make it available to students.

"I hope it's a great experience for them," she said.

Ms. Warfield: *2024 is an exciting year!*

Everyone's excited about the April 8 total solar eclipse – the first in Ohio since 1806! While many portions of the state will have the opportunity to experience totality, even those outside the path of totality (including Columbus) will see 95 percent or more of the sun eclipsed.

Students are earning credits for reading about it and tapping into resources available thanks to Focus West's science teacher, Dr. Black-Clay, who is one of only 100 teachers from throughout the U.S. to participate in the National Science Teaching Association/Space Science Institute Eclipse Partners Program.

"Our students have also been excited about a recent assignment that will continue in the coming weeks," Ms. Warfield said. "They're watching the news on TV, then choosing a story to research and write about. They're interested in current affairs, and 2024 is sure to be an exciting year with the presidential election."

