

# SPONSOR UPDATE

## JUNE 2020

**Peggy Young,**  
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### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Education Division of Buckeye Community Hope Foundation is to establish strong public community schools by adhering to quality authorizing practices, ensuring responsible oversight, and setting high standards for school performance.

### OUR VISION

The Education Division's vision is strong communities of healthy, well-educated students, and a future in which all students have access to a high quality public education. Ohio thrives as increasing numbers of schools graduate students equipped to assume a positive role in society.

### *K-12 education hit hardest with state budget cuts*

Governor Mike DeWine's (R-Cedarville) call for state budget cuts for the current fiscal year hits K-12 education the hardest, with foundation payment reductions of \$300 million, representing about 39 percent of the total \$775 million in cuts.

The \$300 million is an overall foundation payment decrease of 3.7 percent, with reductions varying based on district wealth. Charters – like the poorest districts – will see a per pupil reduction of \$88 in June payments. Other Ohio Department of Education line-items are reduced by \$55 million.

Cuts of \$210 million to Medicaid, and \$110 million to higher education, represent about 27 and 14 percent of total cuts, respectively. All other state agencies combined will see total cuts of \$100 million.

Some have questioned DeWine's decision not to tap into the state's rainy day fund.

"This rain is not a passing spring shower," DeWine said. "It could be – we don't really know – it could be a long, cold, lingering storm. We should not use that rainy day funding until we have to."

Gov. DeWine isn't ruling out additional cuts to K-12 education but offered assurance of his intent to continue to provide funding for wraparound services for students.

The Ohio School Boards Association, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials said the funding cuts "will undoubtedly create challenges for many districts. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a negative effect on the economy, schools also will begin to suffer losses in local tax revenues in the coming months."

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## **BCHF ACCEPTING NEW, REPLICATION OF HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL APPLICATIONS**

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Buckeye Community Hope Foundation is currently accepting applications for new or replicating high quality community schools to open in the 2021-2022 school year.

Application requirements are posted online at: <http://buckeyehope.org/community-schools/>.

If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Schorr at [jschorr@buckeyehope.org](mailto:jschorr@buckeyehope.org) or (614) 942-2002.

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*Education Division*

### ***K-12 bit — continued***

The three associations are asking for additional federal funding to offset current and any future cuts to K-12 education.

### ***Graduation guidelines questioned, clarified***

Following the release of guidelines recommending that schools host virtual graduation ceremonies, Gov. Mike DeWine (R-Cedarville) offered clarification and suggested drive-up ceremonies as the next best choice.

He also indicated that he does not oppose more traditional approaches as long as participants adhere to social distancing and other safety recommendations.



The Governor may have been responding to a letter from State Senator Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City) who suggested that decisions about graduation ceremonies should be left to local officials.

“We will be letting businesses come up with a plan that will assure social distancing and maintaining a safe work environment. We need to do the same concerning schools’ graduation ceremonies,” Sen. Huffman wrote. “We have local superintendents and elected school boards that can come up with individual plans on how to do this and what is right for their specific community.”

In an online post, the Ohio Department of Education recommended that administrators and educators find ways to “come together and honor our students, especially our seniors, in a manner that doesn’t pose health risks to anyone.”

Access guidance on various options – virtual, drive-thru, structured and controlled in-person, and single family in-person – online at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Coronavirus/Graduation-and-Recognition-Ceremonies>

### ***New Kindergarten readiness assessment rolls out Fall 2020***

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, districts and schools will administer the new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Revised (KRA-R). The result of recommendations by a group of Ohio educators and stakeholders, the KRA-R is significantly shorter and comprised of items teachers already know and have used in previous years.

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## ADULT DIPLOMA DEADLINE EXTENDED

The Ohio Department of Education announced in a guidance document that additional flexibility has been extended to participants in Ohio's 22+ Adult High School Diploma Program. The deadline to complete required program assessments has been extended from June 30 to December 31. Program providers may also allow students to complete capstone projects in lieu of assessments.

"Extending the Adult Diploma Program completion date to Dec. 31, 2020, affords providers the flexibility to assist students in completing program requirements, including taking the WorkKeys or industry-recognized credential assessments," ODE said. "The ultimate goal is to ensure students have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and industry-recognized credentials."



## Kindergarten readiness — continued

New assessment kits will be shipped by the end of June. Schools and districts are instructed not to destroy kits used in previous years until receiving notification to do so.

KRA-R training is available using an online virtual format. All new kindergarten teachers (and other teachers who will score the assessments) must successfully complete the training prior to assessing children. Returning teachers may choose to complete a refresher training. Ohio Department of Education staff will offer trainings – posted in STARS – to new teachers. Technology training for data managers will begin in July.

Learn more online at:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/Ohios-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment>

## Statehouse relatively quiet

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted nearly every aspect of life, including the pace of the Legislature's work in the weeks leading up to the summer recess. Lobbyists and other policy advocates have generally opted to observe committee hearings through the Ohio Channel's video streams.

Both chambers have been in session, and the House approved legislation (H.B. 111) that requires that transferring students' records be transmitted within five school days after receiving the request from the school or district that the student seeks to attend. The bill has been sent to the Senate for its consideration.



Photo courtesy Capitol Square Review & Advisory Board

Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) said in an interview with Gongwer News Services that he expects to adhere to the session schedule set last fall, recessing for the summer mid-June.

## Determination paves graduate's path forward

*During this unusual graduation season, it's worth reflecting on what a difference charter schools make in the lives of the students they serve. Here's just one graduate's story ...*

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## STAYING CONNECTED

Constellation Schools: Old Brooklyn Community Middle teachers logged lots of miles driving to about 500 homes to post signs in students' yards that read "Your school family loves you and misses you." What a lovely way to stay connected!



## Determination — continued

If a person's character could be summed up in just one word, Savanna Caudill's would be grit. Her path in life hasn't been easy, but she's overcome every challenge she's faced through determination, tenacity and courage.

Savanna attended Marion Franklin High School until she dropped out her senior year in 2010. She knew that she needed to earn her diploma, so when a friend suggested she check out Focus Learning Academy of Southwestern Columbus (Focus SW), she did. But her heart just wasn't in it – she was much more focused on work than school.



Her home life was far from perfect.

After the overdose death of her stepfather, her mother's new boyfriend moved in and the drug abuse continued. Savanna stayed with family and friends, until eventually getting her own place and inviting her younger brother to live with her.

She worked various jobs as she continued to attend Focus SW, but academics simply wasn't her top priority.

"When my younger brother, and later a younger cousin, graduated, it hit me that something had to change," Savanna said. "And when I became pregnant with my first child, I realized that I needed to get serious about finishing school."

Savanna really struggled with math, but credits Ms. Kelly O'Donnell for going the extra mile to get her through the required courses.

Six years after enrolling at Focus, Savanna earned her high school diploma in 2016!

Her long-term goal is to become a nurse, like her beloved grandmother, who is no longer living but continues to have influence in her life. "She was my best friend," Savanna said.

She now serves as a receptionist/office coordinator at a medical facility, where she recently reconnected with Focus SW Director Mr. Kerry Hill, who was surprised to see her when he came in for an MRI of his knee.

Savanna loves her job as it gives her the opportunity to help others. Her warmth and friendliness put patients at ease, and her outgoing personality is a real asset in her role.

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## THIRD GRADE READING SCORE INCREASE DEBATED

Under current law, the State Board of Education is required to raise the third-grade English language arts promotion score annually until it reflects proficiency. But the Board's Teaching, Leading and Learning Committee has concerns about doing so this year in light of the loss of in-person instruction for students due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After much debate during an online meeting, committee members voted 7-1 in support of a resolution to increase the score by just one point (to 684) for the upcoming school year.

They questioned whether coronavirus-response legislation (H.B. 197) passed in March granted State Superintendent Paolo DeMaria authority to delay the increase but were told that the General Assembly was "very limiting" in the power granted to him.



## Determination — continued

Savanna and her boyfriend of 10 years – Charles -- live together with their two daughters, ages two and five. She also has custody of her three half-siblings, ages five, 11 and 12. It's not easy raising five kids, but Savanna is totally committed to her family and grateful for her boyfriend and the assistance he provides.

She offers advice to Focus students who face significant life challenges as she has. "You have to make the choice to do the hard work yourself," she said. "No one can do it for you. But in the end, it's worth it. A diploma puts you on the path to a brighter future."

## Parade salutes graduating seniors

Like other high schools throughout the state and the nation, Horizon Science Academy (HSA) Lorain is eager to celebrate its Class of 2020 while adhering to Ohio's social distancing guidelines. As they developed plans for a future graduation ceremony, the school's leaders implemented a plan to host a special parade to salute graduating seniors.

Described by local television station WOIO 19 as a "colorful and noisy caravan" of teachers and staff, the parade featured nearly 40 cars decorated with streamers and balloons that made scheduled stops at each graduate's house with a congratulations sign placed in their yards.



"Many of these students have been with us since kindergarten, so we were determined to identify a means to celebrate this journey with them and congratulate them on their accomplishments," said Assistant Principal Jayson Bendik.

"We are doing everything we can to make the end of their high school experience as normal as possible," he continued. "These students have worked hard. Many of them faced additional barriers to learning; yet, they persevered and are a testament of what hard work can produce. We are so happy that we are able to recognize them, even if it's not in a traditional manner."

The parade was also highlighted in the local newspaper, *The Morning Journal*.

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## **STATE BOARD TAKES ACTION TO REDUCE MEMBERS' PAY**

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As the Ohio Department of Education and K-12 schools across the state feel the sting of budget cuts, members of the State Board of Education took action to reduce their compensation from \$32.02 to \$25.62 per hour.

By a vote of 16-2, the Board approved an emergency resolution waiving 20 percent of members' pay. At their normal rate of pay, members generally receive – on average – about \$10,000 annually.

State Board members also reviewed a draft plan – labeled for discussion purposes only – for K-12 education when the 2020-2021 school year begins in August. It includes dozens of recommendations in four areas: health and safety; educational considerations; social-emotional concerns; and, operations.



## ***Pandemic impacts teaching strategies, but not commitment to students***

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed nearly every aspect of our lives. Given the short notice on the closure of school buildings, teachers and other staff have had to quickly adapt to ensure that student learning continues despite the unusual circumstances.

The team at L. Hollingworth School for the Talented and Gifted (LHSTG) has embraced the challenge, maintaining close contact with students and their families, as well as their commitment to student learning.

Kindergarten teachers Kristen Webb and Lauren O'Hair – who have taught at several other schools together and are new this year to LHSTG – have adapted their teaching styles in an attempt to overcome the disruption in students' structured school days.



“Kindergarteners thrive on structure, so that’s been an issue of concern,” Webb said. “But they are also visual and tactile learners, so we’ve gotten creative and come up with fun, educational activities that have also served to engage parents.”

Every other week since school buildings closed, Webb has delivered packets to each of her students' homes. In addition to standard kindergarten worksheets, engaging items – like a deck of cards – are included, with instructions for games that help her students learn about numbers.

She’s also videotaped the hatching of a praying mantis and posted it on her website, which links to that of the school. She reads a story to students every night, again using technology to bring the experience into students' homes. Zoom meetings are also a part of her game plan. She mails cute postcards – like one featuring the image of a pig and the message, “I miss you pig time!” – to her students to maintain a personal connection.

“Of course, I’m concerned about the summer slide,” Webb said. “But students are well supported at our school with just 18 kindergarteners in the classroom, and an aide to assist me. This year, my students are a half-year ahead of where my students were last year at my previous school.”

LHSTG also hosted a kindergarten graduation – a drive-by event at which each student was photographed and received a graduation cap,

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## SHOWCASE OHIO'S CREATIVITY AND ARTISTIC SPIRIT

Whether it's a passion to perform a porch concert or create in a visual arts medium, Ohioans are continuing to create and inspire despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Our favorite artists teach and learn in Ohio's schools, and their creative pursuits also are continuing throughout the ordered school-building closure. Ohioans want to make sure these artistic artifacts are chronicled and curated for all to see.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) joins other statewide organizations to introduce *Ohio Arts at Home*. This partnership between ODE, Ohio Alliance for Arts Education, Ohio Music Education Association, Ohio Art Education Association, Ohio Dance, Ohio Educational Theatre Association and Ohio Arts Council promotes the creativity, resiliency and social-emotional power that the arts continue to foster in the lives of every Ohioan.

Ohioans are invited to post pictures of their work or performance videos on social media using the hashtag #OhioArtsAtHome.

Learn more online at:  
<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Fine-Arts/OhioArtsAtHome>

### Commitment — continued

a certificate, sweet treats, a packet of summer assignments, and personal belongings left behind at the time of the abrupt building closure.

Second-grade teacher Jamie Bauer, also new to LHSTG this school year, has been equally committed to supporting student learning during this challenging time. But her approach has, of course, been a bit different since she works with older students who are more advanced.

“My students already had experience with MobyMax,” Bauer said. “I started using it for math instruction in December. So, that seemed to be a good fit for our new remote learning situation. Right away, I made learning more about it a priority.”

Her students are able to access resources through MobyMax on a daily basis, and Bauer has worked with College and Career Readiness Coordinator Rachel Gerwin, who also spearheads the school's technology initiatives, to address students' individual technology needs.

“MobyMax has a messaging feature, so I've been able to chat with individual students and their family members,” Bauer said. “I've also used Zoom meetings to re-connect students with one another and to do fun things like show and tell.”

Not every family is tech-savvy, so Bauer has done a lot of outreach, including a Zoom session with a student's grandmother, walking her step-by-step through the process of accessing a key reading application. She tells parents and caregivers who struggle with technology that what's most important is that students read for 60 minutes every day.

“Schoolwide, the language arts program – American Reading Company – is on the forefront of everything we do,” Bauer said. “We constantly stress the importance of reading – how key it is to learning in all subject areas.

Like Webb, Bauer is working to entertain, as well as educate, her young students. She set up an incubator with chicken eggs in her home, sharing the experience with her students through video. She knows the students will be excited to see the little chicks as they



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## **POLICY DEADLINE EXTENDED**

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Legislation (H.B. 197) passed by the Ohio General Assembly in March grants the state superintendent of public instruction the authority to extend or waive deadlines necessary to ensure the safety of students, families and communities while continuing to ensure the efficient operation of the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio's public and private schools.

State law requires schools and districts to adopt policies regarding students who are at risk of not qualifying for a high school diploma by June 30, 2020. That deadline has been extended by State Superintendent Paolo DeMaria to September 30, 2020.



## ***Commitment — continued***

hatch, as they were about observing another classroom's lesson on the transformation of caterpillars into monarch butterflies.

She encourages students – who are at an age at which their vocabulary and communication skills allow for self-expression – to record their observations in a journal. “I tell them: You are a scientist, and good scientists record their observations in writing,” Bauer said.

Bauer also sent a card – Flat Ms. Bauer, based on the book *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown – with a note to each student that included instructions for activities to do with her. She asked that students send a picture and write about what they do together.

Webb, O’Hair and Bauer demonstrate a passion for teaching, and a real appreciation for the culture LHSTG leadership has developed. They also share a love of their students, and a commitment to supporting them through this difficult time.

No one knows, at this point in time, what schools and students will face when summer comes to a close and the 2020-2021 school year begins, but one thing is certain: the LHSTG team’s commitment to students will be unchanged.

## ***What a colorful idea!***

Charter schools are known for their innovation and creativity, so it comes as no surprise that so many have risen to the challenges of providing students with fun, educational assignments despite school closures. Hats off to Noble Academy – Cleveland’s art teacher, Nicole Bozickovich, who challenged students to collect and assemble brightly colored household items to create color wheels! Parent feedback was very positive, with families getting involved in the “hunt” around their homes.



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## COMPLIANCE UPDATE

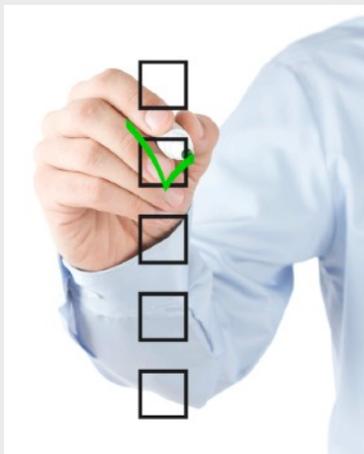
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### Graduation verification

Congratulations to the class of 2020! Please provide a list of this year's graduates to your sponsor representative or by uploading directly to SharePoint.

### Compliance review fiscal year 2020

Schools must be current and compliant with all SharePoint items by June 15. If you have any questions regarding which items are still outstanding, please contact your sponsor representative.



## UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

For your convenience during the COVID-19 shutdown, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation's (BCHF) current and upcoming professional development sessions are all being offered online through July 31, 2020. BCHF is also offering custom "virtual" sessions to meet the needs of individual schools based on submission of a professional development request form. With BCHF's School Leadership Summit coming up, June is a very important month! Here are the upcoming events:

### Understanding Zoom Technology - June 9, 4-5:30 p.m.

This webinar will review basic features and settings of synchronous Zoom meetings. Educational applications of the technology will also be discussed.

Register online at:

<https://understandzoom.eventarc.net/e/44235>

### Public Health Considerations in School Restart – June 10, 8:45-10 a.m.

This webinar, facilitated by BCHF, will feature presenter(s) from Columbus Public Health who will speak to the status of public health and considerations for schools in planning for Fall.

Register online at:

<https://publichealthconsiderations.eventarc.net/e/44237>

### School Leadership Summit: "Rebooting Education in a Time of Uncertainty" - June 11 & 12

**LAST CALL:** Join online sessions that range from legal considerations to curriculum planning for school in Fall 2020! The Summit is a unique time for school leaders to talk and collaborate. Informational sessions will be interspersed with time to plan with your school team.

Register online at:

<https://annualschoolleadershipsummit.eventarc.net/e/43145>

For more information about professional development opportunities or to fill out a request form, please contact Dr. Carol Young at [cyoung@buckeyehope.org](mailto:cyoung@buckeyehope.org)

Remember BCHF is here to assist you with questions about school programming or responses during the pandemic. Refer questions to [help@buckeyehope.org](mailto:help@buckeyehope.org).

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

## *The key to reading comprehension may be science and social studies*

By Carol S. Young, Ph.D., Department Lead, Accountability & School Improvement

When my twin nephews turned five last August, we decorated the birthday cake with the solar system, their latest obsession. No one could eat cake until the two little guys engaged in a complete critique. Mars was too large and “should be more orange than red.” Uranus and Neptune should be “almost the same size and color.” We were only able to get on with the party once we promised they could write a letter of complaint to the cake decorator.

As you might imagine, the twins were anxious to go to kindergarten to learn more! But after a few weeks they seemed discouraged. They loved their teachers but the only striking thing they had read so far was a story on wild ponies. “We only read one little thing about them,” one reported to me. I promptly sent them a non-fiction book about Assateague Island. In a couple of years, I promised we could read some great fiction about wild ponies, thinking of *Misty of Chincoteague*.

The twins noticed what I see so often in classrooms. Instruction in reading comprehension has become isolated skills practice. Teachers and textbooks flit from topic to topic, searching for skill identifications like main idea and key details. One non-fiction or literary selection is presented, then on to the next, much like a running band of wild ponies!

The lack of in-depth exposure to content defies what we know from psychology about how young children learn and uncover meaning. Reading comprehension grows out of listening comprehension, exposure to rich discussion, and vocabulary-building. Students need to be able to attach new learning to existing background knowledge. To do so, they need repeated exposure to the same or similar topics and ideas. In other

words, they need to acquire and deeply discuss interesting information to connect and comprehend.

The lack of rich content in reading instruction is confounded by de-emphasis in many schools on science and social studies. Neither subject is assessed annually through state assessments, shoving math and language arts into the forefront. Yet science and social studies topics present excellent opportunities for content-rich connections.

As she reports in her thought-provoking book, *The*

*Knowledge Gap*<sup>1</sup>, Natalie Wexner observed a group of inner-city second graders engaged in a different approach, a curriculum based on core-knowledge principles. The students were dismayed that Andrew Jackson, the hero of the Battle of New Orleans, was instrumental later in the painful relocation of Native American tribes. Was he a good person? A bad person? A person driven by fierce nationalism? Students were anxious to discuss and write about what they had learned from chronological readings. When content has many

layers, the skills of locating main idea and key details, comparing, contrasting, and drawing inferences are naturally called into service.

Earlier this year, I observed a first-grade classroom during an integrated language arts-social studies lesson. The class was making a book of holidays, a page of text and illustrations being devoted to each national celebration. My ears perked up when the teacher stated that the class would add Memorial Day to the book. The teacher asked the students to copy a sentence that read, “Memorial Day is when

*The lack of in-depth exposure to content defies what we know from psychology about how young children learn and uncover meaning.*

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## Key to reading comprehension— continued

we honor people who fought for our country.” After copying the sentence, students copied and colored a picture of two soldiers to illustrate their page (some referred to the soldiers as “cops”). Looking at the books, I noted nearly the same description for an earlier entry on Veteran’s Day. Recalling my grandfather who marched each year in his World War II uniform for “Decoration Day,” I felt like a slice of history had slipped away. I longed to discuss the rich history of this holiday and the differences between Memorial Day and Veteran’s Day in American culture.

Ohio learning standards emphasize rigor, relevance, and reasoning. But, if we are to expect deeper learning and reasoning from students, we should look critically at the depth of curriculum offered. Are we really giving students a chance to study carefully and delve into knowledge-rich topics, topics generally encountered in science, social studies, and even the arts? Or are we raising a generation of students who will struggle, even in college, to distinguish continents from countries?<sup>2</sup> If we skim over science and social studies content in elementary education, think of the knowledge deficits students face by high school.

As the twins entered kindergarten, I told them that they would likely read one of my favorite fiction

series about *Pete the Cat*. They did and I later asked them if they liked the books about Pete. Their comment was, “Yeah, Pete does a lot of funny things, but we just read some really great books about insects. Did you know why an earthworm is not an insect?” Children are ready for deep content; perhaps we should listen more to them.

<sup>1</sup>I heartily recommend Wexner’s book to school leaders who wish to take a critical look at curriculum quality. The reference is: Wexner, N. (2019). *The knowledge gap: The hidden cause of America’s broken education system, and how to fix it*. New York: Avery.

<sup>2</sup>In several studies, U.S. college students often confused basic geographical information such as the location of areas or countries in continents. This lack exists despite consensus that such information is important to understanding global affairs. See a work commissioned by the Council of Foreign Relations and National Geographic Foundation (2016): *What college-aged students know about the world*. Retrieved from [https://www.cfr.org/content/newsletter/files/CFR\\_NatGeo\\_ASurveyonGlobalLiteracy.pdf](https://www.cfr.org/content/newsletter/files/CFR_NatGeo_ASurveyonGlobalLiteracy.pdf)

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