

April 2023 Sponsor Update

Ohio's focus on literacy

A Governor Mike DeWine's state biennial budget proposal (introduced as H.B. 33 in February) prioritizes funding for literacy initiatives in an effort to address concerns regarding low proficiency rates, (with just 60.1 percent of third-grade students statewide scoring proficient or better in reading in the 2021-2022 school year).

Eager to begin to address literacy prior to H.B. 33, in some form, becoming state law, Governor DeWine signed an executive order creating the Governor's Children's Initiative to:



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

- Coordinate with interested parties to develop a program to recognize schools that are demonstrating strong implementation of best instructional practices aligned to the Science of Reading and where students are making significant progress in reading;
- Collaborate with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Ohio to develop recommendations for ongoing public-private partnership aimed at encouraging reading;
- Develop strategies for increasing parental and family involvement in teaching and encouraging reading; and,
- Work with all state agencies and interested parties to develop a strategy to contribute to the goal of improved reading, including measurable goals.

Read the full executive order [here](#).

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is focused on literacy initiatives. To facilitate the elevation of literacy achievement, ODE is creating a Literacy Achievement and Reading Success organizational unit. Additional funding and professional development

opportunities are outlined in the State of Literacy in Ohio as presented at the most recent State Board Meeting, as attached.

If H.B. 33 passes as written, all schools would have to ensure that their literacy curriculum aligns to the Science of Reading. OSS will provide updates as this bill progresses.

Interim Superintendent Siddens to leave ODE

Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Stephanie Siddens announced plans to leave the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) for employment as a deputy superintendent for Upper Arlington City Schools. She assumes her new position July 1.

Dr. Siddens did not reveal her reasons for leaving ODE, only that she has accepted the position of assistant superintendent at Upper Arlington School District to begin July 1. Siddens wrote "It is an honor to serve the students and schools of Ohio as interim superintendent and I stand ready to work on a successful transition."

The State Board of Education approved the following process to appoint a successor Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction:

- Board leadership will ask Dr. Siddens for recommendations of candidates for consideration.
- recommended candidates will be invited to interview during the May Board meeting.
- A resolution to appoint an Interim Superintendent will be included for a potential vote in May.

Several legislators, members of the State Board, and Governor DeWine's spokesman all expressed appreciation and respect for Dr. Siddens.

State Board opposes ODE overhaul bill

As previously reported, legislation (S.B. 1) to restructure and rename the Ohio Department of Education and assign most of the State Board of Education's responsibilities to the new cabinet agency was approved by the Ohio Senate on March 1.

Senate Bill 1 was sent to the House for its consideration, where it is assigned to the Economic and Workforce Development Committee. A companion bill (H.B. 12) has been referred to the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee.

Four members of the State Board testified in opposition to the legislative proposal with one characterizing the plan "a smokescreen that seeks to politicize our educational enterprise."

Generally, Republicans and members of Ohio's business community support the overhaul, while Democrats, teachers unions, the Ohio School Board Association and members of the State Board oppose it.

At its April meeting, the State Board passed a resolution by a vote of 13-6 stating that since the board includes elected members and has public meetings, it should retain its powers and be invited to engage with lawmakers on education issues.

House deliberates "Parents' bill of rights"

Legislation (H.B. 8) has been introduced to provide parents with notice of sexually explicit instruction materials, an opportunity to review them, and an opportunity to request alternative instruction. It would also require notification to parents about school-provided healthcare services. School personnel would be prohibited from encouraging a student to withhold from a parent information concerning the students' health or well-being, unless that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment or neglect.

According to one of the bill's co-sponsors, Representative D.J. Swearingen (R-Huron), the so-called 'Parents' Bill of Rights' "does not grant parents any authority that they do not already have, but rather statutorily protects their ability to direct the upbringing,

education, health care, and mental health of their minor child."

The bill targets sexually explicit materials used in classes other than health or science, as parents can already withdraw students from lessons on sex education.

New Title IX regulations on eligibility to participate on athletic teams proposed

Last month, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) released notice of a proposed rule on student athletic eligibility under Title IX.



The proposed rule would establish that policies violate Title IX when they categorically ban transgender students from participating on sports teams consistent with their gender identity. It also recognizes that in some instances, particularly in competitive high school and college athletic environments, some schools may adopt policies that limit transgender students' participation. The rule would provide schools with a framework for developing eligibility criteria that protects students from being denied equal athletic opportunity, while giving schools the flexibility to develop their own participation policies.

New language would be added to section 106.41(b)(2) of Title IX regulations: If a recipient adopts or applies sex-related criteria that would limit or deny a student's eligibility to participate on a male or female team consistent with their gender identity, such criteria must, for each sport, level of competition, and grade or education level: (i) be substantially related to the achievement of an important educational objective, and (ii) minimize harms to students whose opportunity to participate on a male or female team consistent with their gender identity would be limited or denied.

Access the USDOE's fact sheet about the proposed regulation online [here](#).

Financial Literacy educator licensure

As previously reported, Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3301-24-30 / Educator Licensure Validation in Financial

Literacy Instruction was open for public comment and revision. The rule was approved at this month's state board meeting and will now go to JCARR for hearing before becoming effective this summer. At present, the rule states that beginning with the students entering 9th grade this year (2022-2023) the financial literacy course must be taught by a properly licensed teacher. See attached memorandum to review the rule requirements as currently written.

Funds to address chronic absenteeism released

Late February, the Ohio Controlling Board approved the release of an additional \$1.2 million in CARES Act School Relief Funding to help re-engage students who are chronically absent or have dropped out of school. Originally launched in 2022 with an allocation of \$7 million, the initiative has not met the demand from schools and a wait list has been established. The program spearheads outreach to students via phone, email and text, with students who opt to participate being connected with an academic success coach to help address barriers to school attendance. According to the Ohio Department of Education, chronic absenteeism was around 15 percent prior to the pandemic. Report card data from the 2021-2022 school year show that the statewide chronic absenteeism has increased to 30 percent statewide.

ACE doubles grant funds and expands eligibility through 2024

Ohio's Afterschool Child Enrichment (ACE) Educational Savings Account program, offered through Merit International, Inc. and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), provides funds to students' parents or guardians to use for educational and enrichment activities.

As previously reported, the program maximum of \$500 per student has increased to \$1000 per student.



Because of the early challenges with account set up, eligibility and vendor approvals, the Ohio Department

of Education has revamped the login process and has communicated with schools and vendors on the simplified approval process. ODE has established a process to help schools inform parents and gain access to the funds. They are also working to approve additional vendors interested in providing beneficial student programming such as literacy, math or science tutoring, physical education, music and arts programs, or even educational field trip opportunities.

Learn more about how it works [here](#).

FLICS report review deadline: April 28

The Federal Low Income Count System (FLICS) EMIS Level 2 Report is now available for review of economically disadvantaged community school student data from the School Options Enrollment System (SOES). The report indicates which community school students have met the criteria necessary to be allocated funding from Title I-A, Title II-A, and IDEA-B. These funds are deducted from a student's 2021-2022 district of residence and reallocated to the community school in which the student is enrolled. Instructions and a timeline for reviewing the FLICS Report are available online [here](#).

Nominations sought for Ohio School Safety Stand Out Awards

The Ohio School Safety Center (OSSC) is accepting nominations through the end of May for the first Ohio School Safety Stand Out Awards. Two students and two school staff members -- who have made significant contributions to school safety and security through their commitment, efforts and leadership -- will receive awards. The contest is open to K-12 and higher education students and staff. Winners will be selected by the 2022-2023 Ohio Student Safety Advisory Council. Access the nomination form online [here](#).

Online session to feature leading school safety expert

The Ohio School Safety Center will present an online session – Lessons learned from a threat assessment that

failed – featuring Dr. Peter Langman on April 24, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Langman will discuss lessons learned from the school shooting that occurred on December 13, 2013, at Arapahoe High School in Centennial, Colorado, when a threat assessment failed. He will also discuss how training on the observation and reporting of behaviors by the community and staff, not just the threat assessment team, contributes to the threat assessment process.

He is a sought-after expert on the psychology of school shooters and other perpetrators of mass violence who conducts trainings on understanding the psychology of school shooters and identifying potential school shooters for professionals in mental health, education and law enforcement. Register online [here](#).

Participation encouraged in Principal Chats

The Ohio Department of Education – in collaboration with the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators (OAESA) and Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators (OASSA) – is hosting monthly Principal Chats addressing a wide range of important topics. Each is scheduled for 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Access a recorded kick-off meeting, explore topics scheduled through March 2024 and register for individual sessions online [here](#).

List of approved assessments available

The Ohio Department of Education has completed its review of vendor proposals submitted in response to a request for qualifications for third party assessments for the 2023-2024 school year. Inclusion on the list occurs through a noncompetitive procurement process. All vendor proposals that met minimum criteria for their assessment area(s) are included on the list including MAP and STAR. Access the list online [here](#).

Public comment sought

As required by state law, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is required to post many proposed new administrative rules for public comment as part of the

administrative rule-making process. A number of proposed rules – including those related to changes to EMIS – are currently available for public comment online [here](#).

ODE also seeks public comment on the current Student Interactions with Peace Officers Model Curriculum draft. Stakeholders are invited to provide suggestions for improving the draft model curriculum through a public comment survey by April 24 at 4 p.m. Access the model curriculum online [here](#).

Important updates and reminders

Applications for emergency medical waivers are due May 31! ODE grants waivers under rare circumstances in which students are unable to take assessments during the appropriate testing window because of medical emergencies. Learn more [here](#).



Deadlines and dates

- **4/20** | Register for “[All Students Can Read](#)” learning series
- **4/21** | Complete [career-technical education awareness campaign surveys](#)
- **4/26-28** | Register for [Ohio School Psychologists Association Virtual Spring Conference](#)
- **4/27** | Register for [Federal Programs Monthly Topic Session](#)
- **4/30** | Apply for Ohio Environmental Protection Agency’s [Encouraging Environmental Excellence in Education \(E4\) recognition](#)
- **5/1** | Complete [teacher evaluations](#)
- **5/1** | Submit [grade 3 paper testing resolution for 2023-2024](#)
- **5/1-5** | [In-Demand Jobs Week](#)
- **5/5** | Register for [Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators spring conference](#)
- **5/10** | Apply for [Innovative Education Pilot Program](#) waiver
- **5/10** | Register for [Principal Chat](#)
- **5/16-17** | Register for [10th Annual Trauma-Informed Care Summit](#)
- **5/25** | Register for [Federal Programs Monthly Topic Session](#)
- **5/26** | Second [Dropout Recovery Program Renaissance Star testing window](#) closes
- **5/31** | Submit nominations for [Ohio School Safety Stand Out Awards](#)