

FEBRUARY 2025

MID-OHIO ESC COMMUNITY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

REMINDERS

- Review OEDS and Ensure Information is Correct
- 2025 Ohio AI Summit
 - [Register](#)
- ED STEPS Training Webinar
 - 3/6/25
 - [Register](#)
- Principal Chat (Federal Programs)
 - 3/12/25
 - [Register](#)
- READ Ohio Policy Hour Webinar
 - 3/28/25
 - [Register](#)
- One Funding Application Webinar
 - 4/16/25
 - [Register](#)
- Sponsor Governing Board Survey
 - [Link](#)

Don't Forget to Review Epicenter regularly to stay current!

UPCOMING MOESC PD OPPORTUNITIES

- Principal Network
 - 3/6/25
- Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Network
 - 3/21/25
- Special Education Coordinator Network
 - 3/21/25
- CPI Initial
 - 3/25/25

To Register visit
www.moesc.net/register.

GENERAL UPDATES

Virtual Open Meetings Update

House Bill 257, effective April 9, 2025, allows community schools to conduct public meetings virtually under certain conditions. However, boards cannot begin meeting virtually until after April 9 and must adhere to the following restrictions:

- No virtual meetings if board members are compensated.
- No virtual meetings for votes on major expenditures or significant hiring decisions (as defined in policy).
- No virtual meetings for tax-related proposals, approvals, or votes.
- No virtual meetings if at least 10% (or two or more) of the board members request an in-person discussion on a specific agenda item.
- No virtual meetings if a party to a hearing does not consent to a virtual format.

Boards must approve a policy authorizing virtual meetings before implementation.

Additionally, it is recommended that boards adopt a policy stating that members will not be compensated for attending virtual meetings or training. Before making any decisions regarding virtual meetings, consult your board's legal counsel to ensure compliance with the new law.

School Safety Grant Funding Available

Ohio schools can now apply for nearly \$11 million in school safety grants for the 2024-2025 academic year. Funding, approved through House Bill 33, can support training, technology, and crisis response improvements. Eligible uses include:

- ✓ Active-shooter response training/equipment
- ✓ Alert systems & gunshot detection
- ✓ School resource officer certification
- ✓ Silent panic alarms & emergency camera access
- ✓ Mental health training for staff

Grant Options:

- ✦ Per-Pupil Grant – \$2,500 or \$4.50 per student (whichever is greater)
- ✦ Project-Based Grant – Up to \$40,000 per district
- ◆ Apply by May 30 – Grants are awarded first-come, first-served.
- ◆ Questions? Contact SchoolSafetyGrants@OhioAGO.gov.

Comprehensive Literacy Subgrant Deadline Extended

Ohio's K-12 Comprehensive Literacy State Development Subgrant application deadline has been extended to April 8. Schools interested in applying are encouraged to submit an intent to apply form by Feb. 26.

✦ Key Dates:

- ✓ Finalist Interviews – May 12-22
- ✓ Selection Notifications – Week of May 26
- ◆ Resources & Application: Visit the Comprehensive Literacy State Development website.
- ◆ Questions? Contact ComprehensiveLiteracy@education.ohio.gov.

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LEGAL AND POLICY

The 136th Ohio General Assembly, as of this writing, has been in session for not quite two months. During this time 225 bills have been introduced (111 in the Senate and 114 in the House) for consideration. Of these bills at least 21 (12 Senate bills and 9 House bills) relate directly to primary and secondary education. Arguably the most important bill currently under consideration by the House is **HB-96**, representing the Governor's biennial operating budget recommendations. HB-96 includes both funding items and policy items, however. The General Assembly has until June 30th to complete its work and send a budget to the Governor for his signature, although, on occasion, the General Assembly has needed to approve a short-term budget while the actual budget is finalized (this occurs far less frequently than the approval of Continuing Resolutions at the national level). Unlike the President and the federal budget, Ohio's Governor does have the power of the line-item veto.

The Governor has proposed small increases in the state's General Fund Operating budget to slightly more than \$30 billion in FY '26 and slightly less than \$31 billion in FY '27. The current (FY'25) budget is just over \$29.3 billion. Sales and use taxes generate between 47% -48% of General Fund revenue. The income tax, the second largest source of state funding, generates about 34% of GF revenue. Thirty-three percent of the General Fund is dedicated to Primary and Secondary Education.

State spending on primary and secondary education is now largely found in two agencies: the State Board of Education (SBoE) and the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). The proposed FY '26 funding for both agencies represent decreases in funding from FY '25 levels (1.7% and 3.3% respectively), however, both agencies would receive funding increases in FY '27 (3.1% and 1.5% respectively). Increases in funding are proposed for the line item funding Community Schools and the Ed. Choice program in both years of the biennial budget (3.3% followed by 1.8%),

SBoE's primary responsibilities relate to the issuing of licenses and deciding matters of professional conduct related to educators. It has been reported that recently the Board's Office of Professional Conduct has been involved in 22,000 conduct investigations. A major policy item contained in HB-96 that would impact SBoE seeks to require the agency to consult with Ohio's Department of Administrative Services regarding the use of Ohio's online Professional Licensing System (a.k.a. eLicense Ohio). HB-96 also seeks to encourage SBoE to consider reducing the number of licenses and types of certificates.

A DEW policy provision in HB-96, relating directly to internet schools, would codify the previously uncoded Internet School Facilities Fund and provide funding at the level of \$25/student. Of potential great importance, HB-96 seeks to define a Dropout Present/Credit Recovery School as:

". . . a community school that enrolls only students who are between the ages of 14 and 21, and who, at the time of their initial enrollment, are at least one grade level behind their cohort age groups or experience crises that significantly interfere with their academic progress such that they are prevented from continuing their traditional educational programs."

If this definition is approved schools would have until 7/1/27 to make adjustments.

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LEGAL AND POLICY CONTINUED

Broad DEW policy provisions impacting all schools include:

- a requirement that DEW develop Reading and Math assessments by June 30, 2026 and schools administer those assessments by Sept. 30, 2026
- changing the requirement to use CORE Curriculum and instruction materials from DEW's approved list to PK-5 only, except for Science of Reading materials which would apply K-12
- change the focus of the required evidence-based suicide prevention program from safety training/violence prevention to mental health using DEW approved instructional programs.
- prohibit the use of seniority and continuing contract status as the primary factor in making teacher assignments
- require DEW to maintain an introductory course in the Science of Reading and require educators to receive training updates every five years.
- require schools to develop their own suicide awareness/prevention and child abuse trainings.
- current law requires schools to have a policy regarding the use of cell phones during instructional time, HB-96 would require schools prohibit the use of cell phones during instructional time.

If approved as currently written, **HB-42** potentially creates a conflict for schools between federal and state expectations. HB-42 seeks to require a number of agencies, including schools, to report the number of citizens enrolled, non-citizen/foreign national students enrolled. and students who may be in the country illegally. In a related matter ICE recently removes schools from the list of sensitive locations where raids would not be conducted. While ICE may not conduct raids in the PreK-12 environment the National Association of Elementary School Principals suggests that administrators review district policies and discuss with district legal counsel as to what they should do should ICE come to the school,