



**Week of Jan. 22, 2024**

**School bus safety panel releases recommendations**

Gov. **Mike DeWine** on Thursday unveiled recommendations from the School Bus Safety Working Group, which was created by DeWine to identify ways to improve school safety in response to an August 2023 student fatality on an Ohio school bus. The report is [accessible here](#).

The report, which does not include a seat belt requirement, features 17 recommendations, including:

- creating a grant program to assist with purchasing school bus safety features, including seat belts;
- requiring six hours of annual bus driver training, resulting in 36 hours over six years, instead of the current 33 hours over six years;
- requiring school districts to offer school bus safety orientation to students and parents at the beginning of each school year;
- instituting enhanced penalties for drivers who violate traffic laws in school zones and around school buses;
- recommending that districts adopt policies that require a thorough evaluation of contracted commercial bus services; and
- creating public service announcements on school bus traffic safety laws and best driving practices.

**DEW releases initial list of approved curricula for Science of Reading**

The first major step in the rollout of the state's new literacy laws was unveiled on Wednesday as the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) released its initial approved vendor list of core curriculum and instructional materials. School districts, charter schools, and STEM schools are required by law to only use the DEW-approved core curricula, instructional materials, and intervention programs. Private schools are exempt from these requirements.

The list, [linked here](#), is just the first of several forthcoming lists in DEW's process of approving vendors. A second list is expected to be released in February, with a third and final list coming in March. The list of approved reading intervention programs will be published in April.

Please contact Tony and Will with feedback on the rollout so we can communicate effectively with DEW about your thoughts.

**Lawsuit to be filed against House Bill 68**

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio will soon file a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a new law that prohibits gender transitioning services and treatments for minors. That law, contained in [House Bill 68](#), takes effect on April 23. The ACLU of Ohio announced on Monday it would file the lawsuit prior to that date.

### **Private school student test data released**

Test data for students attending private schools with a state-paid voucher were released this week, pursuant to a law that requires that data to be published annually on February 1, nearly five months after public school report cards are published. Results are [accessible here](#).

Below are two tables showing (1) proficiency percentages for voucher students attending private schools, and (2) proficiency percentages for public school district students. [The law allows](#) private schools to administer a variety of alternative assessments rather than administering the Ohio State Tests that public school students must take.

### **Private School Voucher Proficiency Percentages, 2022-23 Assessment Results**

<b><u>Grades</u></b>	<b><u>Program</u></b>	<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>Proficient Percentage</u></b>	<b><u>Not Proficient Percentage</u></b>
Grades 3-8	Cleveland	English language arts	39.40%	60.60%
Grades 3-8	Cleveland	Mathematics	27.37%	72.63%
Grades 3-8	EdChoice	English language arts	57.61%	42.39%
Grades 3-8	EdChoice	Mathematics	49.05%	50.95%
High School	Cleveland	English language arts	41.61%	58.39%
High School	Cleveland	Mathematics	29.50%	70.50%
High School	EdChoice	English language arts	51.55%	48.45%
High School	EdChoice	Mathematics	38.39%	61.61%

### **Public School District Proficiency Percentages, 2022-23 Assessment Results**

<b><u>Grades</u></b>	<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>Proficient Percentage</u></b>	<b><u>Not Proficient Percentage</u></b>
Third Grade	English language arts	66.20%	33.80%
Third Grade	Mathematics	65.40%	34.60%
Fourth Grade	English language arts	61.90%	38.10%
Fourth Grade	Mathematics	70.40%	29.60%
Fifth Grade	English language arts	70.40%	29.60%
Fifth Grade	Mathematics	60.30%	39.70%
Sixth Grade	English language arts	58.10%	41.90%
Sixth Grade	Mathematics	53.80%	46.20%
Seventh Grade	English language arts	67.90%	32.10%
Seventh Grade	Mathematics	51.20%	48.80%
Eighth Grade	English language arts	60.60%	39.40%
Eighth Grade	Mathematics	50.00%	50.00%
High School	Algebra I	58.10%	41.90%
High School	English language arts II	65.20%	34.80%
High School	Geometry	45.50%	54.40%

### **Other news:**

- Gov. **Mike DeWine** signed into law [House Bill 101](#), which contains budget correction items, among other provisions. The new law subjects all school districts to the longer, 16-month time period (previously 13 months) during which voters must approve bonds and tax levies for a project granted conditional approval from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission. Another provision would clarify that the State Board of Education, rather than DEW, is responsible for criminal records checks and RAPBACK enrollment of holder of a Pre-Service Teaching Permits.
- The House Ways and Means Committee will meet next week to hold hearings on several bills, including [HB 263](#) (expanded homestead exemption) and [HB 344](#) (property tax complaints and replacement levies), the latter of which is expected to be amended.

### **Heard around the Statehouse**

“We can't afford to wait for incremental change, we need transformational change.” - Sen. **Jerry Cirino**, speaking at a higher education event where he urged the colleges and universities to prepare for change.

“There are simply too many boxes to check to get a house built in central Ohio.” - **Jon Melchi**, executive director of the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio, [who argued a solution](#) to that problem includes [creating a 15-year, 100% residential property tax abatement](#) without a requirement for school board approval.