



Week of Feb. 19, 2024

DEW releases approved professional development courses for Science of Reading

As part of the legal requirements from House Bill (HB) 33, the Department of Education and Workforce this week announced the first rollout of approved professional development courses for the Science of Reading. Under HB 33, all teachers and administrators must complete a DEW-approved professional development course in the Science of Reading by June 30, 2025, except for any teacher or administrator who has previously completed similar training.

DEW on Tuesday announced it has approved [multiple professional development courses](https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/The-Science-of-Reading/Professional-Development-in-the-Science-of-Reading) based on teachers' primary role, grade band served, and previously completed trainings. DEW recommends districts work with staff to identify the course pathway that is the best fit for their role. More information on the professional development requirements, including stipend amounts and reimbursements, is accessible here: <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/The-Science-of-Reading/Professional-Development-in-the-Science-of-Reading>.

Study commission on online gaming meets for first time

The first meeting of the Study Commission on the Future of Gaming in Ohio was held this week as committee members heard testimony from the Ohio Casino Control Commission and various representatives of the gaming industry. The commission was established by HB 33 to monitor the implementation of sports gaming and potentially report recommendations to the legislature.

During the hearing, a representative of the Sports Betting Alliance told committee members that Ohio could generate between \$205 million and \$410 million per year in new tax revenue from legalizing online poker, slots and other games. Depending on the tax structure, the sizeable majority of those revenues could benefit the school-funding formula and other education issues.

OFCC announces new executive director

Joy DeMarco will become the next executive director of the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) in March, due to a vote of OFCC members. DeMarco, who has been with OFCC for five months, also spent more than a decade in a variety of roles for the Office of Budget and Management. DeMarco replaces the outgoing executive director, **Cheryl Lyman**, who retires at the end of this month.

Joint property tax committee to meet next week

The Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform will meet on Wednesday next week at 10:30 a.m. to hear testimony from Zaino, Hall & Farrin LLC, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Council on State Taxation. The next meeting is expected to occur in April and will feature representatives from school districts.

Heard around the Statehouse

"At the top righthand corner are the largest Ohio districts for which I coded contract data (Columbus City, Cleveland Metropolitan, Cincinnati Public, and Toledo Public). They have by far the most restrictive

contracts. But some smaller districts (Mansfield City and New Albany-Plain Local) also jump out for having especially restrictive contracts.” - **Stéphane Lavertu**, a Senior Research Fellow at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute and an Ohio State University Professor, [who argues in a recent article](#) that such districts are “burdened” by “oppressive” union contracts.