



Week of May 13, 2024

DeWine signs school smartphone policy bill

Hosted by Alliance member Dublin City Schools, Gov. **Mike DeWine** on Wednesday signed into law [House Bill \(HB\) 250](#), a bill that requires school districts to adopt a policy governing student smartphone use by July 1, 2025.



The bill also (1) specifies that license holders who renew their license can have a license under the former three-grade-band system or the current two-grade band system, provided the new license includes at least one of the grades they were previously authorized to teach, (2) ensures teachers who teach outside their current licensure grade band by up to two grade levels – a recent flexibility from [HB 33](#) – are considered to be “properly certified or licensed” teachers, (3) specifies that the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), and not the State Board of Education, will be responsible for adopting standards and curriculum to incorporate capitalism into the financial literacy standards, as recently enacted by [Senate Bill \(SB\) 17](#), and (4) modifies the ESC transportation pilot programs.

DEW Deputy Director Nominated

A 15-year education veteran from Iowa was nominated this week to become the deputy director of career-technical education and workforce at the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW). DEW Director **Steve Dackin** on Wednesday announced his recommendation of **Jeremy B. Varner**. A Senate confirmation hearing will take place on June 11 followed by a confirmation vote on June 12.

A current employee with the Iowa Department of Education, Varner has served as administrator of the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation, acting administrator of the Division of Learning and Results, and as a consultant for the Division of Community Colleges.

Legislative review of Science of Reading implementation begins

The House Higher Education Committee held two hearings this week on the Science of Reading. Invited witnesses included DEW Director Dackin, Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education **Mike Duffey**, the Fordham Institute, National Council on Teacher Quality, ExcelinEd, and other organizations.

It is expected that higher education institutions will be invited to testify in the coming weeks.

DeWine Creates Vision Strike Force

Gov. **Mike DeWine** on Wednesday announced the creation of the Children’s Vision Strike Force to assist schools with providing vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses to students in high-need communities and provide schools with the technical assistance they need to implement those programs. Members of the strike force and more information about the initiative are [accessible here](#).

Heard around the Statehouse

“We are seeing a lot of money in refunds. And frankly, a lot of this is a direct result of a cut in taxes.” - Gov. **Mike DeWine**, speaking to reporters about the state’s repeated budget revenues missing estimates.