



OVESC UPDATE

November 2025 - Vol. IV, Issue II

In this issue



Preschool
Page 2



Tech Tip
Page 4



Driver
Education
Page 6

A SUCCESSFUL START TO 2025–2026

As we move through the fall months, I want to take a moment to thank everyone for such a smooth and successful start to the 2025–2026 school year. Your hard work, collaboration, and commitment to our students and communities are what make the Ohio Valley ESC such a special organization.

We are truly excited about the direction the OVESC is headed. Our programs are growing, our partnerships are strengthening, and together we continue to make a meaningful difference for the schools and families we serve.

As we enter the holiday season, please take time to care for your students and your families, but most importantly, take care of yourself. Your well-being is vital.

Thank you for all that you do for the Ohio Valley ESC as well as the districts and the communities we proudly serve.

Datton Summers
Superintendent

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Bright Beginnings Preschool

Our preschoolers had a wonderful time exploring all the joys of fall! During our farm visits, across multiple preschool sites, we learned about how pumpkins and apples grow and the many ways farmers care for their crops. The children especially loved our hands-on activities; exploring pumpkins inside and out, comparing their sizes, and discovering seeds hidden within. We also enjoyed tasting different kinds of apples and talking about their colors, flavors, and shapes. To build math skills, we created an apple-tasting graph, where everyone voted for their favorite variety—red, green, or yellow! It was exciting to see the results and talk about which apples were the most popular. Our TREE study was filled with laughter, learning, and plenty of fall spirit. Our farm and fall activities helped the children connect with nature, practice counting and sorting, and celebrate the beauty of the season together!



Bright Beginnings on the Move

After a very successful open house, the Bright Beginnings staff at Rolling Hills welcomed students to their new location at Byesville Elementary on November 4th.



Fall Updates from the ESC Gifted Services Director

Fall is in full swing and gifted coordinators are hard at work! Districts are deep into whole-grade screenings for superior cognitive and subject-area abilities and we are busy supporting testing, data interpretation, and next steps in the identification process. It's also WEP season. Our educators are collaborating to write plans and set new annual goals that challenge gifted learners.

Along with screenings and WEPs, the ESC is providing professional learning, consultation support, and resources to make this busy season a little smoother. From refining identification practices to enhancing classroom differentiation, we're here to help make fall a productive and rewarding time for gifted education! As always, if your district has any questions about gifted services please reach out.

Kalee Gates kalee.gates@ovesc.org

OVESC's Joy Edgell Testifies in Support of Early Childhood Education Reforms

Ohio Valley Educational Service Center (OVESC) Executive Director of Preschool and Administrative Services Joy Edgell recently provided testimony before the Ohio House Education Committee in support of House Bill 455 (HB 455) — legislation focused on strengthening early childhood education (ECE) funding and expanding opportunities for families across Ohio.

Edgell joined Craig Burford, Executive Director of the Ohio Educational Service Center Association, and Sara Rice, Executive Director of the South Central Ohio ESC, in presenting testimony on behalf of ESCs statewide. Burford commended Representative Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville) and Representative Adam Bird (R-Cincinnati) for championing HB 455, which seeks to modernize Ohio's education code and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens on schools and districts.

In his remarks, Burford highlighted two key ECE changes in HB 455 that have received strong support from the education community:

Collaborative Eligibility Determination: The bill allows education professionals — those with direct knowledge of child development and family circumstances — to play a role in determining eligibility for the Early Childhood Education Grant Program.

Family Flexibility and Choice: Families would have the freedom to choose the educational setting that best meets their child's needs, rather than being limited to a single option or funding pathway.

In her testimony, Edgell emphasized that "child care" and "preschool education" are both vital but distinct services for Ohio families. She noted that public preschool programs operate under rigorous educational standards and curricula implemented by licensed educators in school settings. These programs often provide transportation, and many families choose them for their accessibility, familiarity, and alignment with their older children's schedules. Edgell also praised the recent rollback of restrictive ECE eligibility policies — reversed on October 7, 2025 — which had caused many families to receive denial letters earlier in the year. However, she cautioned that the long-term permanency of this policy change remains uncertain.

Rice echoed those concerns, expressing hope that HB 455 would restore the ability of school districts and local educational agencies to collaboratively qualify students, enabling faster and more equitable access to preschool services. She also described the current Job and Family Services eligibility process as overly burdensome, noting that it has caused delays and denials for many families — particularly those in rural Appalachian communities. OVESC is proud of the work and advocacy of Joy Edgell and the Ohio ESC network in ensuring that every child in Ohio has access to high-quality early learning opportunities.

Empowering Educators Through Data-Driven Collaboration

Shannon Leasure and Jenny Blattner Lead Regional Efforts to Strengthen Professional Learning and Student Outcomes

Director of Mathematics, Shannon Leasure, and Director of Literacy, Jenny Blattner, have continued to provide highly personalized, responsive professional development opportunities in-house for all districts across our service region. Much of their current work focuses on supporting districts in creating and refining data infrastructures to strengthen professional learning communities and help educators effectively determine student learning needs, instructional priorities, and next steps for improvement.

Together, they are fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous growth, ensuring that data-driven decision-making remains both meaningful and actionable across classrooms. Their work has empowered teachers and administrators alike to align instructional practices with student needs, ultimately improving outcomes for all learners.

If your district is interested in learning more about our data services or customized professional development support, please reach out to Shannon Leasure at shannon.leasure@ovesc.org



DID YOU KNOW?

Chrome Tab Groups are now synced and saved to your Google Account. That means you can open those tabs and keep working seamlessly on your phone, tablet, or desktop.



Ohio Valley
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER



TECH TIP

Organize the chaos! You can now get your tabs exactly where you left them, on any device you're signed into with Tab Groups! To get started, click the Tab Group icon on the far left of your Chrome Bookmarks Bar and create your first group!

Fall Special Education Update

On September 24th, OVESC Specialists held their first quarterly meeting of the year, bringing together Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs), Physical Therapists (PTs), Occupational Therapists (OTs), Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTAs), and School Psychologists. The team met with Connie Doran to review billing updates, while Regional Consultants Allison Hoffman (SLP) and Sarah Johnson (School Psychology) shared important state-level updates regarding special education. Specialists also had valuable time to collaborate and share best practices across disciplines.

OVESC is also excited to partner with Washington State College of Ohio's Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program. Students will gain hands-on experience alongside our OTs and COTAs across districts—an opportunity that will help prepare future OTAs for success while supporting our school communities.

Looking ahead, OVESC continues to seek dedicated professionals to join our growing team. We are currently hiring a part-time School Psychologist for this school year and an SLP for the 2026–2027 school year. Interested candidates can contact Lyndsey Staats at lyndsey.staats@ovesc.org for more information.

Exciting Fall Happenings at The Opportunity School

The Opportunity School students and staff have been busy learning, creating, and celebrating the fall season!

In Ms. Evans' class, students have been exploring fall-themed activities that make learning fun and hands-on. They enjoyed an outdoor Fall Scavenger Hunt, searching for colorful leaves and seasonal treasures, followed by writing in shaving cream and making fall crafts. Academically, the class has been focusing on long vowel sounds in reading and buddies of 10 in math, building strong foundational skills while having fun.

In Mr. Kenney's class, students have been developing essential life skills for young adults to prepare for independence. Lessons have focused on real-world topics such as opening a checking account, buying a first car, and renting an apartment. These activities help students develop financial literacy, problem-solving skills, and responsible decision-making abilities.

Ms. Josie and the teens have been busy planning a school mural that will brighten our building and showcase student creativity. They've also been engaging in fall STEM projects, exploring science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on activities that promote teamwork and curiosity.

Middle school and high school students in the SOCC Day Treatment Group have been learning valuable social and emotional skills. Their focus this season has been on effective communication and emotional regulation. Through guided discussions and interactive activities, students are building stronger relationships, self-awareness, and coping strategies that support their overall well-being and success both in and out of the classroom.

The Opportunity School is proud of all the hard work and growth happening across our programs this fall. We look forward to a wonderful winter season filled with continued learning, creativity, and a strong sense of community spirit!



Driver Education Updates

The MOV ESC Driving School has had a busy fall in continuing to meet the needs of students in the region and across the State of Ohio. Recently, Symmes Valley High School has become a part of the Driver Education consortium. To accomplish this, 7 new Class D Driving Instructors are participating in the training process.

Next, sustainability is an important piece to continue to offer high quality and cost Driver Education and Training opportunities to students. The Ohio Valley ESC has submitted a grant application to the Honda Foundation seeking nearly \$100,000 to expand Driver Education Training opportunities and promote Traffic Safety in the region. The grant would allow for the creation and distribution of Public Service announcements to promote safe driving. One component of the grant is to support the purchase of a training vehicle to serve students 18–20-year-olds who are not affiliated with any of the High Schools who are participating in the MOV ESC Driving School consortium. This is due to a recent change in Ohio Law that requires any individual under the age of 21 to successfully complete Driver Education and Training to be eligible to test for a driver's license.

Furthermore, with the MOV ESC Driving School being in existence for over three years, the time has come to plan for the replacement of Driver Education vehicles for the original districts who have been part of the program since its inception. As part of the Traffic Safety Grant, financial support is being sought for this purpose as well.

HALL ATTENDS SYMPOSIUM

Richard Hall, Director of Driver Education, recently attended the Driver Education Symposium sponsored by the Ohio Department of Public Safety in Columbus. As part of the Training, Hall served on a panel for the recruitment and retention of Class D Driving Instructors. The discussion focused on how to recruit and retain high quality instructors for extended periods of time. Various strategies were discussed on how to accomplish this goal.



MOV ESC DRIVING APPLIES TO BECOME TRAINING HUB

The MOV ESC Driving School has applied through the Ohio Public Safety to become a training hub. The purpose of the grant is to create a training center to train Class D Driver Instructors to work in Class D Driving Schools. The Training Hub would create centralized training centers across the State that would allow for Driving Schools to send perspective trainees to become certified and then become employed by the Driving School, who referred the instructor for training. According to Richard Hall, Director of Driver Education, "The MOV ESC Driving School has demonstrated the capacity to be an effective Training Hub. With having nearly 80 instructors on staff. We could successfully train a large number of instructors in a reasonable amount of time," Hall concluded.

Here's Looking at the Ohio Valley ESC



IMSE/OG+ training presented by Director of Literacy, Jennifer Blattner, in Cambridge with participants from as far away as North Carolina



Honoring Jane Irvine for her eight years of service to the Ohio Valley ESC board



Ohio School Board Association Southeast Region Fall Conference award winners: Outstanding Administrator Kyle Newton (left) and Outstanding Treasurer Melcie Wells (right)



OVESC Bright Beginnings represented today at the SST 12 Preschool Itinerant Network meeting



Teresa Schuerman and Jennifer Blattner providing PD at Wolf Creek



Red day in the Lowell K-Ready Bright Beginnings classroom with Mrs. Larissa and Mrs. Rebecca