



#SERVE

OVESC UPDATE

March 2026 - Vol. IV, Issue III

SPRINGING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

As we turn the page on February, I think we can all agree it is a relief to see winter in the rearview mirror. There is a renewed energy that comes with the arrival of spring, and I am thrilled to see that vibrancy reflected in our classrooms and offices.

I want to extend a sincere thank you for the incredible hard work you have poured into this school year. All stakeholders, including OVESC staff, member school districts, and our partners, have worked collaboratively with a shared commitment to improving outcomes for the students we serve. Dedication and service are what makes the Ohio Valley ESC a cornerstone of support for our region.

As we move into this final stretch, let's keep this momentum going. Our goal is to finish the 2025-2026 school year strong, ensuring our students and districts have everything they need to succeed. While we focus on a successful finish, our leadership team is already looking ahead; planning and preparing for the next school year.

Finally, I want to share how incredibly proud we are of our team. Every day, they embody what it means to #SERVE our member districts, their students, and communities.

Dafon Summers
Superintendent

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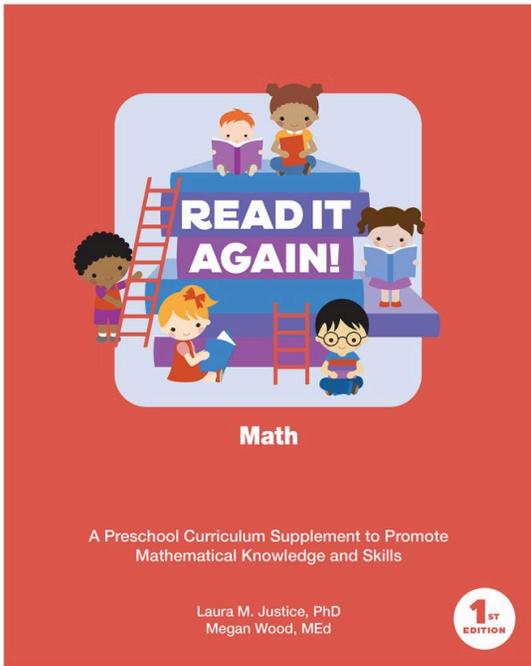
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Bright Beginnings Preschool

Bright Beginnings has implemented the READ IT AGAIN MATH supplemental literacy program out of OSU this year! Implementing Read It Again–Math from The Ohio State University will greatly strengthen our preschool program by building foundational math skills through intentional, research-based instruction. This curriculum uses interactive read-alouds to introduce key early numeracy concepts such as counting, number recognition, patterns, shapes, measurement, and spatial awareness. By embedding math instruction within engaging children’s literature, students develop mathematical vocabulary and conceptual understanding in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate way. The structured, repeated lessons support deeper comprehension and help ensure that all children—including dual language learners and those needing additional support—have multiple opportunities to grasp essential skills. In addition to strengthening early math knowledge, Read It Again–Math promotes language development, critical thinking, and active participation. Teachers are provided with clear guidance, purposeful questioning strategies, and scaffolded supports that encourage children to explain their thinking and engage in mathematical conversations. This approach builds confidence and fosters a positive attitude toward math at an early age. By incorporating this program into our preschool curriculum, we can enhance school readiness, support differentiated instruction, and create a strong foundation for long-term academic success.



A Sneak Peek at Preschool Activities in Bright Beginnings CLassrooms!

Enjoy some photos of our Bight Beginnings students as the play, learn, and discover. The smiles on their faces say it all! #SERVE



OVESC Celebrates Student and Staff at the 2026 Heart of Service and Heart of Influence Awards

The Ohio Valley Educational Service Center (OVESC) is proud to announce the upcoming Heart of Service and Heart of Influence Awards Ceremony, to be held on March 25, 2026, at Washington State College of Ohio. This celebration honors high school seniors from across the region who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to serving others through leadership, compassion, and integrity.

Each Heart of Service Award nominee will recognize one teacher or staff member from their district as a Heart of Influence Award winner; someone who has had a significant and lasting influence on their life. This unique element allows students to share the spotlight with educators who have inspired, guided, and supported their growth and success throughout their educational journey.

Honorees for the Heart of Service Award are recognized for excellence in four key areas:

Commitment to Service: Demonstrating an ongoing dedication to volunteering and making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Leadership and Initiative: Taking charge in identifying needs, organizing projects, and inspiring others to join in service efforts.

Character and Integrity: Modeling respect, empathy, and responsibility through everyday actions and commitments.

Impact and Involvement: Leaving a lasting mark through sustained service and meaningful contributions to school and community life.

Dr. Dave Hire, Executive Director at OVESC, shared his appreciation for the students and educators being honored: “It is always an honor to recognize students for their commitment and impact in their own schools and communities. Students from across our region are not only leaving a legacy for future classes, but they are modeling a servant’s heart for their peers. Empathy, character, integrity, and responsibility are, at times, lacking in society, but the actions from these students continue to shine brightly for all to see.”

Hire also expressed gratitude for the many school leaders and staff members who make this recognition possible, “We appreciate our building principals nominating these outstanding students and bringing well-deserved recognition to their many accomplishments and service activities. We also look forward to hearing about the many staff members who have been a crucial part of each student’s journey. Each student will recognize a staff member with the Heart of Influence Award.”

He concluded with thanks to Washington State College of Ohio for hosting the inaugural event.

The Heart of Service and Heart of Influence Awards celebrate the very best of education and community spirit by honoring students who lead with compassion and the educators who help shape them into tomorrow’s leaders.



OVESC Gifted Services

Spring is an exciting time in the world of gifted services.

Districts have the opportunity to nominate students for gifted identification in the visual and performing arts, including drama, music, and art. This process allows students to demonstrate their talents and creativity in non-academic areas. District nominations were due February 19, 2026, with performance-based assessments will take place during the week of March 9. In addition, teachers are actively completing required professional development hours in gifted education through both in-person sessions facilitated by Ally Trew and approved online offerings. Teachers who serve gifted learners are required to engage in ongoing professional development to continue strengthening instruction through the design of authentic, open-ended tasks that challenge students, promote creativity, and support deeper learning.

Contact Ally Trew for more information -
alexandra.trew@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.



TECH TIP

Google Chrome's built-in Reading Mode is a simple way to eliminate ads and on-screen distractions, making online articles easier to read and navigate. It also includes a helpful read-aloud feature for added accessibility and convenience.

To use it, simply right-click anywhere on a webpage and select Open in Reading Mode. Once open, you can customize fonts, colors, and spacing using the toolbar to match your preferences. To have the text read aloud, click the Play button.

This quick feature can make a noticeable difference in focus, accessibility, and overall reading comfort.

OVESC Offers Principal & Curriculum Collaboratives

Strong leadership is essential to the success of our schools, yet for many principals and curriculum leaders, the role can feel isolating. The weight of daily decisions, accountability measures, staff support, and student achievement often rests squarely on their shoulders. That's why the Ohio Valley ESC is committed to creating meaningful opportunities for school leaders to connect, collaborate, and grow together. Through Principal and Curriculum Collaboratives, the OVESC provides a structured space where leaders from across our member districts can come together. These gatherings are professional networks built on trust, shared experiences, and a common commitment to student success.

In these collaborative settings, principals and curriculum leaders exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and share best practices that are making a difference in their schools. Often, someone else has faced a similar challenge and their insight can save valuable time and resources.

Equally important, these sessions provide a supportive environment where leaders can both seek and offer assistance. Education is complex and ever-changing, and no one should have to navigate it alone. The professional relationships formed through OVESC collaborations help reduce that sense of isolation and foster a spirit of partnership across districts.

At OVESC, we believe leadership should never feel like a solitary journey. By bringing educational leaders together, we are building a collaborative culture that benefits schools, staff, and most importantly, the students we all serve.

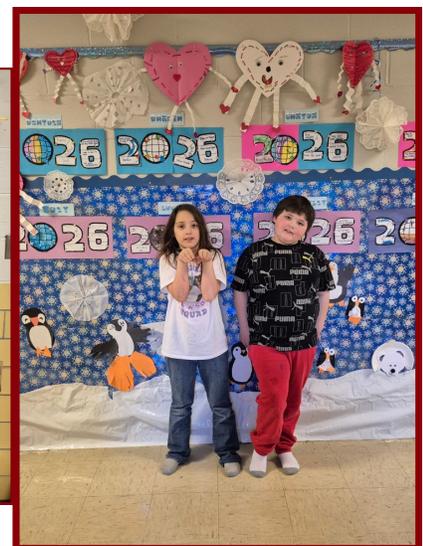
What's Happening at The OVESC Opportunity School

Winter has brought excitement and valuable learning experiences to the Opportunity School! As we begin 2026, our students are focusing on fresh starts and personal growth by setting goals for the new year. From improving reading skills and mastering math facts to building stronger friendships and practicing positive behaviors, students are learning that goal setting helps them stay motivated and confident. Classrooms are filled with thoughtful discussions about what students want to achieve and the steps they can take to reach their goals.

Of course, winter wouldn't be complete without a little talk about snow! Students have been making predictions about how much snow we might receive this season. By using weather reports, past snowfall data, and their own observations, they have been estimating totals and graphing their predictions. This engaging activity connects math, science, and real-world thinking while also building excitement for the snowy days ahead.

Most importantly, this winter our students are learning how to show they care for others. Through classroom discussions, role-playing, and daily practice, students are discovering simple yet powerful ways to demonstrate friendship such as inviting someone to join a game, giving compliments, offering assistance, and including others. We are proud to see students practicing kindness and building a supportive school community where everyone feels valued.

Winter at the Opportunity School is more than just cold weather; it is a season of growth, connection, and new beginnings. We look forward to seeing our students continue to set goals, learn together, and spread warmth through acts of friendship all year long.



Driver Education Update

The MOV ESC Driving School has been awarded an Instructor Development Grant from the Ohio Department of Public Safety. As a result of this grant initiative, five Training Centers have been established across the state to expand instructor capacity and address the growing demand for high-quality Driver Education and Training opportunities for students.

The MOV ESC Driving School operates as a consortium-based Driver Education program through the collaborative efforts of the Muskingum Valley and Ohio Valley Educational Service Centers. This partnership is one of five ESCs statewide selected to receive the grant. Through this designation, the MOV ESC Driving School will serve a 15-county region by providing comprehensive Instructor Training.

The primary goal of the Training Center is to help driving schools save time and resources while minimizing disruptions to student instruction. Each center is responsible for delivering the required instructional hours, training, and assessments necessary for instructor licensure.

According to Richard Hall, OVESC Director of Driver Education, the MOV ESC Driving School has established a strong reputation for excellence in instructor preparation. He noted that the program is supported by a highly qualified curriculum team and has successfully trained more than 80 instructors over the past three years, with consistently positive outcomes.

For additional information about Driver Education Instructor Training, contact Richard Hall at the Ohio Valley ESC at 740-439-3558 or via email at Richard.hall@ovesc.org



A Heartfelt Thank You to Our OVESC Board Members

While the state of Ohio officially observed School Board Recognition Month in January, at the Ohio Valley Educational Service Center, we believe the commitment shown by our Board of Education deserves to be celebrated year-round. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our board members for their unwavering dedication to our member districts, our students, and the diverse communities we serve. Being a board member is often a thankless job that requires countless hours of meetings, difficult decision-making, and a vision that looks far beyond the current school year. Our board members embody our mission to #SERVE.

INFOhio's Little Learners, Big Math Ideas



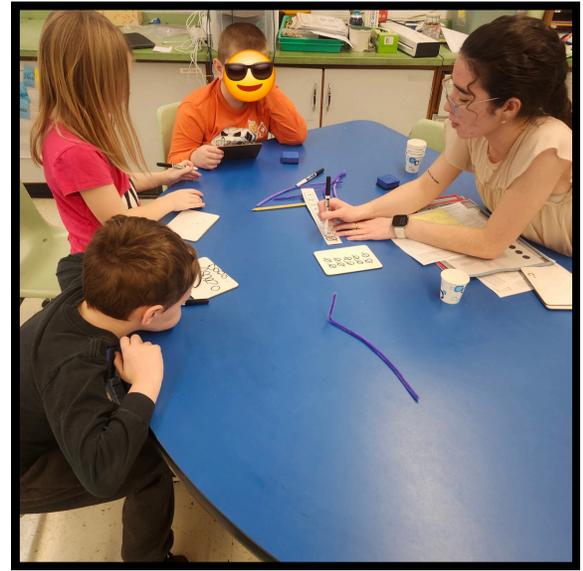
Check out ways to build strong early math foundations by integrating developmentally appropriate digital resources into everyday routines and playful learning. Interactive eBooks, videos, and games in INFOhio's Early Learning Portal support Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards math strands, helping young children strengthen number sense, geometry, measurement, and problem-solving through meaningful exploration.

Find out more here: <https://www.infohio.org/blog/item/little-learners-big-math-ideas-exploring-early-math-with-infohio>

Here's Looking at the Ohio Valley ESC



Shannon Leasure, OVESC Director of Mathematics and a group from Switzerland of Ohio attended the NCTM spring conference.



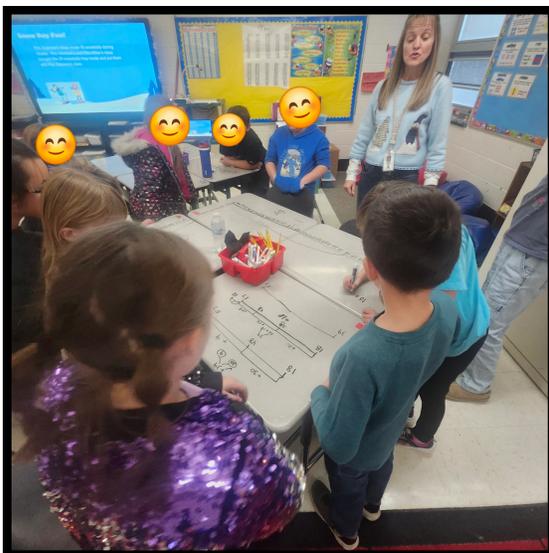
Students actively learning through engaging math instruction in the classroom.



Appreciation goes to Jane Irvine for her service on the OVESC Board (left) and welcome to Bob Caldwell who is the newest member of the OVESC Board (right).



Thank you to the teachers and administrators who attended our two-hour 'Snow Day' professional development series. With over 60 participants, we were able to provide more than 175 total contact and gifted credit hours.



Ohio Valley teachers have been intentionally facilitating learning opportunities which reengage students in mathematical practices- a cornerstone piece of Ohios math plan.



Dr. Dave Hire leading Principal Collaborative in February