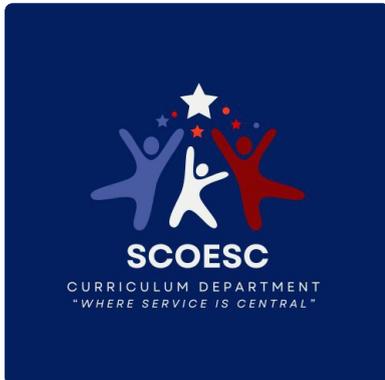# SCOESC Curriculum Connection

January, 2026

Jump into January with the SCOESC Curriculum Department!

As we begin 2026, the SCOESC Curriculum Department is ready to help your district start the new year with purpose and vision. Our Curriculum Specialists offer comprehensive support in areas critical to student success - from data analysis and instructional design to professional development and curriculum mapping. We understand each district's unique needs and challenges, staying true to our philosophy that "when we are in a district, we are that district." Let us partner with you to enhance teaching and learning outcomes this semester. To schedule support, reach out to our Curriculum Department Administrative Assistant (logan.baumgardner@scoesc.org) or any of the SCOESC Curriculum Specialists. Together, we can make 2026 a year of educational excellence for your students and staff.

ODEW Releases AI in Education Model Policy

Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Director Stephen D. Dackin today announced the release of a model policy on artificial intelligence (AI) in education. The model policy is designed to guide traditional public school districts, community schools, and STEM schools in the responsible and effective use of AI in education.

Under House Bill 96, all Ohio districts are required to adopt a formal AI policy by July 1, 2026. The newly released model policy provides a template that districts may adopt as written or customize to meet local needs.

"Ohio's AI in Education Model Policy demonstrates our commitment to preparing students to succeed in a technology-driven world that is increasingly being shaped by AI," said Director Dackin. "While we are supportive of schools using AI to strengthen instruction and expand learning opportunities, it is also incredibly important that these tools are used responsibly, and in a way that maintains academic integrity. This model policy provides school leaders and educators with clear, practical guidance to effectively and safely integrate AI into the classroom."

Developed in collaboration with [Ohio's AI in Education Coalition](#), the model policy reflects extensive feedback from educators, businesses, nonprofits, and government leaders. It addresses appropriate use of AI by students and staff, promotes ethical practices and academic integrity, and sets standards for data privacy and security. The policy also provides guidance for integrating AI into curriculum, evaluating third-party tools, and aligning with existing policies on bullying, academic integrity, and procurement.

The model policy builds on the success of the [AI Toolkit](#) launched in February 2024 by InnovateOhio in partnership with the AI Education Project (aiEDU). This toolkit equipped schools and families with resources to begin in-depth policy development. Recognizing the urgency of preparing students for an AI-driven future, U.S. Senator Jon Husted, then serving as Lt. Governor of Ohio, convened a statewide coalition of educators, businesses, nonprofits, and government leaders to create a comprehensive strategy for AI in education. Ohio's AI in Education Coalition released that strategy in November 2024, which outlines recommendations for districts to form AI workgroups, establish local AI policies, and provide professional development for educators.

In early December, Dr. Chris Woolard, the Department's Chief Integration Officer, attended the third [White House Artificial Intelligence Education Task Force meeting](#). During this meeting with cabinet officials, educators, and parents, discussion centered on the impact of AI in the classroom. Dr. Woolard highlighted Ohio's innovative efforts to implement AI policies across all public schools in the state and shared details regarding the model policy.

Districts are encouraged to review and adopt the model policy or develop a customized version, involving families and community stakeholders in the process. Additional resources are available on the Department's [AI in Education webpage](#).

AI in Education Model Policy Template

ESL Update

The Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) testing window will be open from February 2nd through March 27th, 2026.

I will be working directly with your building administrators, testing coordinators, and guidance counselors to schedule and conduct OELPA testing for all eligible

students. I'm pleased to report that all of our English Learners are currently properly coded in EMIS for this school year's testing.

As the year continues I will be working on the following with your team:

- Coordinating testing schedules with your buildings
- Administering the OELPA assessments
- Ensuring accurate score input
- Supporting the EMIS coding process for both current and upcoming school year
- Facilitating smooth transitions for student records

You can expect your building administrators to receive detailed testing schedules in the coming days. Rest assured that all assessments will be completed within the designated testing window, and I will work closely with your staff to minimize any disruption to daily instruction.

If you have any questions or specific concerns about the OELPA testing process, please don't hesitate to reach out at jd.emnett@scoesc.org or 740-464-8104.
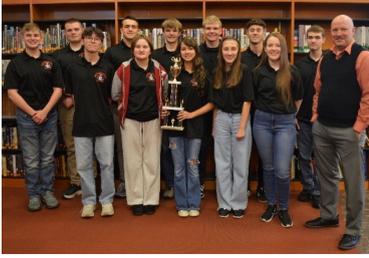
Gifted Services Department

The ESC High School Quiz Bowl League season concluded with Wheelersburg High School finishing undefeated and earning its third consecutive League Championship. South Webster claimed the Runner-Up title with only one loss. Wheelersburg now advances to the Regional Tournament this spring. The High School Academic Competition Tournament will be held Thursday, March 5, 2026, at Shawnee State University, featuring 16 teams across two divisions, and is open to the public. League and division winners will advance to the 2026 Ohio Academic Competition Regional Tournament in Lancaster on April 18, 2026.

The Youth MAX Leadership Conference, held December 11, 2025, at the ESC, was a big success, engaging students from 15 school districts alongside 10 community volunteer leaders. This collaborative event provided by the ESC Gifted Services and Curriculum Departments empowers high school juniors and seniors by familiarizing them with the teachings of John C. Maxwell, a New York Time's best-selling author and speaker, whose life's work has focused on mastering the art of leadership. Each student was provided a copy of Maxwell's Sometimes You Win, Sometimes You Learn for Teens and they participated in networking and teambuilding exercises related to the principles addressed in the book.

In December 2025, local high school art students participated in **The Memory Project** (a national initiative) by sending 35 hand-drawn and painted portraits to children in Armenia. Organized locally for the 19th consecutive year through the ESC Gifted Services Department, the project has produced 508 portraits impacting children in 17 countries. A video of the Armenian children receiving their portraits will be shared with students later this spring and will be featured at the 2026 Visually Literate High School Art Exhibition Reception on May 12, 2026, at Shawnee State University's Vern Riffe Center for the Arts. The juried exhibition of student work will be on display in the Appleton Gallery from April 29 through May 12.

Auditions for the **2026 Scioto County Honors Music Festival** will take place January 10 & 11 at

South Webster High School. The Honors Music Festival Concert is scheduled for Tuesday, March 3, at 7:00 PM at Shawnee State University's Vern Riffe Center for the Arts, featuring exceptionally talented student musicians and three outstanding guest conductors. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Superintendents will receive two complimentary tickets along with reservation details later this month.

Wheelersburg High School Quiz Bowl Champions

Youth Max Leadership Conference

The Memory Project

Gifted Curriculum Coordinator Services

Kara Copeland, SCOESC Gifted Curriculum Coordinator, is providing additional support to districts regarding gifted assessment plans, identification of gifted students, Written Education Plans, and services for gifted students. For example, she has recently worked in multiple districts to assist staff with review of gifted assessments, gifted identification, and the completion of WEPs. In addition, she is available to offer family engagement and community outreach activities specifically designed to raise awareness of gifted education.

If you would like to schedule additional Gifted identification, Coordinator, or Support Services (which are allowable expenditures according to Gifted funding guidelines), please contact Kara Copeland at kara.copeland@scoesc.org or 740-354-0254.

Fall 2026 3rd Grade Reading Scores

Fall 3rd grade reading scores for SCOESC districts have been compiled and can be accessed by clicking the button below.

As teachers continue to implement curriculum based on the Science of Reading, there may be challenges that arise from adjusting to new materials and resources. The SCOESC Curriculum Department can assist individual teachers and teacher teams by facilitating curriculum review and alignment sessions, completing vertical alignment with multiple grade levels, conducting Learning Walks based on vendor and Science of Reading criteria,

and providing [instructional coaching](#). Contact Tammy Hambrick at tammy.hambrick@scoesc.org for more information about providing support.

Fall 2025 3rd Grade Scores

Be On the Lookout!

As always, the SCOESC Curriculum Department is exploring ways to provide support and assistance to our member districts! Services we are working on to rollout in the Spring, Summer, and Fall include:

- College Credit for Educators (including OIP participation)
- Math Minutes and Meetups
- Lean Six Sigma Industry Recognized Credentials
- Google Gemini Training for Teachers
- Summer Learning Academy
- Fall Content Collaboration (Math)

If there is a specific professional development topic or curriculum service that our team is not currently offering, please contact Tammy Hambrick (tammy.hambrick@scoesc.org), or any Curriculum Specialist to let us know!

Meet the SCOESC Curriculum Team

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Contact Us!

The SCOESC Curriculum Department is ready to be your number one provider of educational services and support!