



## Elijah Moore sees playing with Cooper as a dream come true

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MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023 | INDEONLINE.COM

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## DeWine launches audit on how schools teach reading

**Anna Staver**  
State Bureau  
USA TODAY NETWORK



DeWine

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine thinks some public school districts are teaching reading wrong, and he's directed the Ohio Department of Education to find out who is teaching what.

"Parents today in schools just don't really generally know whether their child is being given the best reading instruc-

tion possible," DeWine said. "Children have a right to have that, and parents have a right to know that."

The audit is part of a comprehensive push by the DeWine administration to improve Ohio's literacy rates by focusing on what he believes to be the best way to teach children to read: phonics.

"There is an actual science to reading, and certain things need to be taught," DeWine said.

About 40% of the state's third graders are not proficient in reading, according to the most recent data from the education department. And while some of that can be blamed on the COVID-19 pandemic, Ohio's rate was 33% prior to the pandemic.

See **READING**, Page 4A

## The push to expand voting rights to jail detainees

**Gary Fields and Michael Tarm**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO – The voting precinct could have been any one of hundreds throughout Chicago, except that these voters in the first round of the mayoral election were all wearing the same beige smocks. And the security at this polling place wasn't intended to keep disrupters and campaigners out, but the voters in.

When first-time voter Tykarri Skillon finished studying the list of nine candidates, looking for those who shared his priorities on jobs and affordable housing, he marked his ballot and then was escorted with other voters back to their cells in the Cook County Jail.

The 25-year-old, awaiting trial on a weapons charge, is part of a group not always mentioned in discussions about voting disenfranchisement. People serving sentences for felony convictions lose their right to vote. Detainees awaiting trial or serving misdemeanor sentences do retain that right, but face barriers to exercising it in many parts of the United States.

The Cook County Jail, with more than 5,500 inmates and detainees, is one of the largest such facilities in the nation. It is one of several lockups where voting rights advocates have worked with local election and jail officials to offer voting for those held there. The list includes jails in Denver; Harris County, Texas; Los Angeles County; and the District of Columbia.

Expanding jailhouse voting is one of the latest steps to combine voting rights with criminal justice changes.

"It feels good to have a voice," Skillon said after casting his ballot during early voting. The race now goes to an April 4 runoff. "We're going home someday, so we should have a voice in our community."

Candidates he chose from included the current mayor, Democrat Lori Lightfoot. Among the issues that damaged her politically was rising crime. She eventually came in third in the election, bumping her from the runoff between the two top vote-getters, also Democrats.

The most recent survey from the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, released last December, showed that 451,400 of the 636,300 people held in jails across the country had not been convicted and thus should retain their right to vote.

Voting rights for pretrial detainees and inmates serving sentences for misdemeanors were upheld in a U.S. Supreme Court decision from 1974, in a case from New York, O'Brien v. Skinner.

Despite that ruling, voting rights advocates say a "de facto disenfranchisement" exists because of mistakes over eligibility and the difficulties that detainees and prisoners face in registering or voting.

In a 2020 report, the Prison Policy Initiative focused on three main reasons: registration is difficult due to issues such as mail-in ballot deadlines and voter ID laws; detention does not meet the criteria for absentee voting in some jurisdictions; and the churn of the jail populations.

At least one state, Tennessee, had a bill introduced this year to address one of the barriers. Being in jail as a pretrial detainee is not one of the reasons con-

See **VOTING**, Page 4A



Stark State College opened its 17-booth Welding and Joining Center in Akron last fall. It plans to open a 13-booth Welding and Joining Center at its Jackson Township campus in August 2024. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY STARK STATE COLLEGE

## Five things to know about Stark State's welding center

**Kelli Weir**  
Canton Repository  
USA TODAY NETWORK

JACKSON TWP. – Stark State College welding students soon will have a lab of their own in Stark County.

After years of using high school welding facilities for student training, Stark State plans to open a Welding and Joining Center on its Jackson Township campus.

The center will allow Stark State to expand its welding program in Stark County, which now serves 20 students. College officials expect to serve between 50 and 100 students once the center opens.

The demand for welders continues to grow nationwide as older welders reach retirement age. According to the American Welding Society, more than 361,000 new welding professionals will be needed by 2027 to fill job openings.



Stark State College students use the welding equipment at the college's Welding and Joining Center in Akron, which opened last fall. Stark State plans to open a 13-booth Welding and Joining Center at its Jackson Township campus in August 2024.

See **CENTER**, Page 6A

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Volume 224 | No. 60  
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