



Northmor baseball heading to regionals

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The Marion Star

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Is Marion speeding more this year compared to 2025?

Abby Bammerlin
Marion Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Every year, the Ohio State Highway Patrol makes thousands of traffic stops across the state. From enforcing speed limits to checking for seatbelts, all stops get recorded by OSHP.

Enforcement stops are down slightly

compared to the same time last year, going from 180,205 stops to 176,408. Operating a vehicle impaired has slightly increased from this time in 2025, where OSHP recorded 6,229 incidents. This year, OHP has recorded 6,460 incidents.

Speed violations statewide are down compared to last year. OSHP recorded 94,223 violations in the first five months of 2025 compared to 88,674 violations

so far in 2026.

Here is how enforcement in Marion compares from Jan. 1 to May 31 to the same time in 2025:

- Enforcement stops 2,256 in 2025 and 2,502 in 2026
- Non-enforcement activity 4,919 in 2025 and 5,514 in 2026

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Students get off the bus at Whetstone High School for the first day of classes in August 2025. Columbus City Schools recently cut hundreds of jobs amid a growing financial crisis.

COLE BEHRENS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

'A lasting impact'

Garfield Principal Smith credits success to building relationships

Drew Bracken
Special to Marion Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

MARION – Jon Smith is part of something special.

"I've always had an outgoing and friendly disposition," Smith said. "But I was a goofy kid, always wanting to make people laugh and bring a light-hearted approach to most situations. As I got older, I developed a drive for success, and I often want to be the best at whatever I'm doing. These two things, I think, have allowed me to be successful thus far in my career."

Today, Smith is head principal at James A. Garfield Elementary School.

"If you'd have told me in early high school that I'd have been an elementary principal, that would have seemed such a foreign concept to me," he said. "I hadn't really given a career a thought yet, and certainly not being a principal."

"Now," he said, "I'm not sure I can really see myself doing too many other things. I love that I get to hang out with kids all day, and with a group of people who love coming to work. Getting better every year has been our goal."

Smith, now 35, grew up in Sunbury, graduated from Big Walnut High School in 2009, earned a teaching degree in high school English from Otterbein University in 2013, then graduated with a master's in educational leadership from the University of Cincinnati in 2017.

"It was about my junior year of high school I knew education was for me," he



Jon Smith is the head principal at Garfield Elementary School.

PROVIDED BY KARI BOWMAN OF KARIME PHOTOGRAPHY

said.

"When I was interviewing for my first teaching jobs back in 2013," he said, "Mr. Gary Barber just got the superintendent

job and passed my name along to the new principal at Harding, Kirk

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20% of Ohio districts face cash deficits

Cole Behrens
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

More than 120 Ohio public schools are projecting negative cash balances by 2029 – the worst rate since the Great Recession.

According to data compiled by Ohio State University professor Vlad Kogan, 124 of the 611 public schools in the state, around 20%, are projecting negative cash balances by fiscal year 2029, the highest rate of negative cash balance projections since 2012.

The data comes as Columbus City Schools, the state's largest school district, cut 300 teaching and staff positions along with dozens of administrative positions to chop \$50 million from its budget amid a growing financial crisis.

Other districts around the state also were forced to cut positions. In February, Elyria City Schools near Cleveland approved \$9 million in budget cuts – representing around 10% of its overall budget. Barberton City Schools, south of Akron, approved more than \$6.5 million in cuts. Other districts, ranging from large urban districts to the smallest rural districts, are also facing steep financial shortfalls.

Kogan said it's clear many of Ohio's public schools "are under tremendous stress right now."

"There's a statewide story which is obviously concerning, and then there's a district-specific story," Kogan said.

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