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This January 23, 2023, Legislative e-Update is provided by OESCA to Ohio's ESCs, their client school districts, and other key education stakeholders.

The e-Update provides information on the pending education bills of interest to Ohio's public education community introduced during the 135th Ohio General Assembly. Bills are organized in order by last action date. There are also links to the state bill page for users to download any bills, analyses, or fiscal notes.

The document concludes with the latest news from Capitol Square.

Legislative Tracking Report: 135th General Assembly

The following education bill of interest are monitored by OESCA on behalf of the membership and client districts.

SB1

REFORM OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (REINEKE W) To rename the Department of Education as the Department of Education and Workforce; to create the position of Director of Education and Workforce; and to reform the functions and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Current Status: 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Education

Recent Status: 1/17/2023 - Senate Education, (First Hearing)
1/11/2023 - Introduced

ORC Sections: 102.02, 109.57, 109.572, 109.64, 109.65, 109.71, 109.72, 109.746, 113.73, 117.46, 121.02, 121.03, 121.35, 121.37, 121.40, 121.95, 124.15, 124.382, 124.384, 125.05, 125.13, 133.06, 133.061, 135.142, 149.331, 175.30, 197.04, 2151.011, 2151.353, 2151.357, 2151.362, 2305.111, 2901.01, 2903.13, 2907.03, 2917.31, 2917.46, 2923.122, 2925.01, 2950.11, 2953.32, 319.301, 3301.01, ... 3375.01, 3701.507, 3701.78, 3705.36, 3707.58, 3707.59, 3734.62, 3737.22, 3742.32, 3745.21, 3781.106, 3781.11, 3798.01, 4109.01, 4109.06, 4109.07, 4109.22, 4112.04, 4112.12, 4117.10, 4117.102, 4141.01, 4141.47, 4506.09, 4506.10, 4507.21, 4508.01, 4511.21, 4511.75, 4511.76, 4709.07, 4709.10, 4713.02, 4732.10, 4732.22, 4735.09, 4742.02, 4742.03, 4742.05, 4742.06, 4742.07, 4743.03, 4747.10, 4757.41, 4758.61, 4779.13, 5.224, 5.281, 5101.061, 5101.34, 5103.02, 5103.08, 5103.13, 5103.55, 5104.01, 5104.015, 5104.02, 5104.053, 5104.08, 5104.29, 5104.30, 5107.281, 5107.287, 5107.40, 5107.62, 5120.031, 5120.07, 5120.091, 5123.022, 5123.023, 5123.025, 5123.026, 5123.0423, 5126.04, 5126.05, 5126.23, 5126.24, 5139.34, 5145.06, 5162.363, 5162.365, 5502.262, 5502.263, 5513.04, 5703.21, 5705.216, 5705.391, 5705.412, 5709.07, 5709.92, 5715.26, 5715.34, 5747.057, 5747.72, 5753.11, 6109.21, 6301.04, 6301.11, 6301.111, 6301.112, 6301.15, 6301.21, 6301.22, 6301.23, 9.231, 9.55, 901.71, 921.06

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-1>

- SB5** **WORKFORCE VOUCHER PROGRAM** (SCHURING K, MANNING N) To establish the Workforce Voucher Program, to terminate the provisions of the Voucher Program two years after the bill's effective date by repealing sections 122.157, 122.158, and 3313.473 of the Revised Code on that date, to authorize tax credits for graduates of the Voucher Program, and to make an appropriation.
- Current Status:** 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Workforce and Higher Education
- Recent Status:** 1/11/2023 - Introduced
- ORC Sections:** 122.157, 122.158, 122.159, 3313.473, 3314.03, 3326.11, 5747.08, 5747.82, 5747.98, 6301.11
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-5>
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- SB11** **PARENT EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM ACT** (O'BRIEN S) To enact the Parent Educational Freedom Act to expand eligibility for Educational Choice scholarships, to cease the operation of the Pilot Project Scholarship Program on July 1, 2023, and to increase the income tax credit for homeschooling expenses.
- Current Status:** 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Education
- Recent Status:** 1/11/2023 - Introduced
- ORC Sections:** 3310.03, 3310.031, 3310.032, 3310.033, 3310.034, 3310.035, 3310.036, 3310.05, 3310.07, 3313.975, 5747.72
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-11>
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- SB14** **VETERANS' ELIGIBILITY AS TEACHERS** (HOAGLAND F) To expand eligibility for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces to be employed as teachers without licenses.
- Current Status:** 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Education
- Recent Status:** 1/11/2023 - Introduced
- ORC Sections:** 3319.074, 3319.283
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-14>
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- SB17** **FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION-CAPITALISM** (WILSON S) To incorporate free market capitalism content into the high school financial literacy and entrepreneurship standards and model curriculum.
- Current Status:** 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Education
- Recent Status:** 1/11/2023 - Introduced
- ORC Sections:** 3301.079
- State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-17>
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- SB21** **APPEAL PROCESSES, LEGISLATIVE ACTION** (MCCOLLEY R, REYNOLDS M) To generally change the venue in which appeal from an agency order is proper to the local court of common pleas, to revise the law governing claim preclusion in zoning appeals, to revise the law governing the referral of cases to the Hamilton County Drug Court, to transfer Perry Township in Wood County from the territorial jurisdiction of the Tiffin-Fostoria Municipal Court to the territorial jurisdiction of the Bowling Green Municipal Court, to allow the General Assembly to intervene in certain actions, and to allow the General Assembly and the Governor to retain special counsel.
- Current Status:** 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary
- Recent Status:** 1/17/2023 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing)
1/11/2023 - Introduced

ORC Sections: 101.55, 107.13, 109.02, 119.12, 124.34, 1901.02, 1901.021, 1901.041, 2301.03, 303.65, 3794.09, 3901.321, 3913.13, 3913.23, 5101.35, 5164.38, 519.26, 713.16, 956.11, 956.15

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-21>

Latest News from Capital Square

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General (AG) Dave Yost announced recently that \$11.77 million in safety grants is available to Ohio schools through his office for the 2023-24 school year. New this year, a limited number of 'Innovation Grants' of up to \$20,000 will be awarded for technology that links schools with law enforcement agencies for improved safety, crime prevention and response. The new innovation grants can be used for one building or multiple buildings within a district. The money is expected to be used for crisis-response technology designed to alert law enforcement of potential safety breaches on school property.

The Ohio AG says all 88 counties are being provided a new Sexual Offender Registration and Notification (SORN) camera system, with roughly two thirds also receiving new computer hardware and software upgrades to track sex offenders. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is funding the SORN improvements with \$384,283 from its Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART).

BALLOT ISSUES

If a requirement for constitutional issues to get 60 percent of the vote in order to pass had been in place over the past 40 years, state bond issues paying for infrastructure, housing, and former Gov. Bob Taft's Third Frontier program would not have passed, according to former Rep. Mike Curtin. Curtin, who is a retired *Columbus Dispatch* editor, highlighted the impact the resolution formerly known as 134-HJR6 (Stewart) would have had on bond issues at a Thursday news conference. Sponsor Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) has resubmitted the proposal but it has not officially been introduced in resolution form. Curtin said over the many decades bond issues have been put before voters, they have been an indispensable way to pay for state projects, especially because of debt limits in the Ohio Constitution. He said given the historic skepticism of Ohio voters to new debt, getting one approved is already a tall task, requiring bipartisan agreement, cooperation between the business and labor communities, and no organized opposition.

FY22-23 BUDGET

Gov. Mike DeWine Tuesday announced Ohio's Rainy Day Fund (RDF) has reached a balance never seen before in the fund's history with a cash balance of nearly \$3.5 billion. The Ohio Office of Budget and Management (OBM) transferred \$727 million into the fund to reach the historic number. The fund, which is a reserve balance set aside to protect the state budget from cyclical changes in revenues and expenses that may occur during poor economic times, is capped at 8.5 percent of General Revenue Fund revenues. The transfer into the fund made Tuesday was authorized by the General Assembly in 134-HB45 (West-Roemer).

CORONAVIRUS/MONKEYPOX

The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld a lower court ruling that struck down a federal rule requiring all federal contractors to mandate employees wear facemasks at work and be vaccinated against COVID-19, a ruling praised by Attorney General Dave Yost. President Joe Biden had ordered the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue the rule in September 2021. After the mandate was issued, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and two Ohio sheriff's offices sued the Biden administration, seeking to prevent its enforcement, challenging the executive action on statutory, administrative and constitutional grounds. A district court granted the request in the

case, *Kentucky v. Biden*, enjoining the government from enforcing the mandate in the three plaintiff states. The Biden administration appealed to the Sixth Circuit, though the appeals court denied the motion to stay the injunction.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) reported the number of new COVID-19 cases continued to drop, falling from 10,188 in the seven days ending Jan. 12 to 7,961 Thursday. Hospitalizations also declined from 646 to 434, and ICU admissions fell from 49 to 27. Deaths ticked up slightly from 106 to 110. Since the pandemic began, there have been 3.34 million cases, 135,273 hospitalizations, 14,837 ICU admissions and 41,249 deaths.

EDUCATION

The Senate Education Committee kicked off Tuesday a series of hearings that will likely last through February to vet Republicans' plan to transfer much of the K-12 administrative and policymaking authority to the governor's cabinet. Sen. Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin), sponsor of SB1 and its predecessor, 134-SB178, made a similar pitch Tuesday as he had in the lame duck session, citing lagging test scores, delayed rollouts of key initiatives and a lack of alignment to workforce needs under the oversight of the State Board of Education and state superintendent. They would retain authority over realms like teacher licensure and discipline and school district territory transfers under SB1, but the new Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) he proposes would be run by an appointee of the governor. Reineke emphasized amendments to assuage the concerns of home school families and non-chartered, non-public schools, often referred to as "-08 schools" after the section of Ohio school operating standards under which they are governed. Under SB1, those standards would be codified rather than left to rule. Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware), chair of the committee, also noted that SB1 is a "clean bill," untethered from some controversial provisions paired with SB178 in lame duck, like restrictions on transgender athletes and on school vaccination policies. Brenner said the next hearing on SB1 will take place Tuesday, Feb. 7, and further hearings are likely each week of February, with the potential for a vote late that month or early in March.

More than two dozen education-workforce partnerships were honored by the state with the 2023 Business-Education Leader Awards for Excellent Business Advisory Councils (BACs), the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted's office announced. All Ohio school districts and educational service centers (ESCs) are required to have BACs, which bring education and business leaders together to collaborate on initiatives that connect education with regional workforce needs. Ohio rates BACs on a four-star scale, based on their implementation of quality practices on collaboration, delineation of key professional skills for future jobs and development of curriculum on those skills, and creation of environments for students to show proficiency in professional and workforce skills for future employment.

ODE is taking nominations for the Teachers of Ohio Representing Character and Heart (TORCH) award, which each year goes to five teachers who model strong personal character and concern for students, colleagues and communities. Information about the award and a link to nominate teachers is available at <https://tinyurl.com/j659s4rc>.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has been awarded \$48 million in federal grants over the next three years to support access to quality early childhood care and education, Gov. Mike DeWine said Wednesday. The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. DeWine noted that the largest group of Ohioans living in poverty are children aged five and under. ODJFS is partnering with the Ohio departments of education; health; mental health and addiction services; Medicaid; and developmental disabilities to administer the grant programs, which will focus on increasing access and family engagement in early childhood care and education and expanding child care for those with special needs, English language learners, and those experiencing homelessness, among other areas.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) announced a partnership with nonprofit organization Esports Ohio to support and promote its annual state tournament in May. There are currently 250 schools that have teams affiliated with Esports Ohio, according to OHSAA. Esports Ohio was created by teachers to "create a world where electronic sports are embraced as a positive educational and developmental change agent for all students." More information about Esports Ohio can be found at <https://www.esportsohio.org/>.

ELECTIONS 2024

Ohio Sen. Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) officially launched his campaign for U.S. Senate Tuesday, saying in a statement: "America's challenges demand the focus of experienced leaders who reject fictional grievances and are ready to do the hard work of getting results to make our future better than the past. The crises confronting our nation today are entirely self-made. The botched withdrawal from Afghanistan emboldened America's adversaries. A failure to adhere to the rule of law has resulted in humanitarian and security crises on our southern border that undermine our national sovereignty and strain law enforcement." □

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Three weeks after the surprise election of Rep. Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) as speaker upended the usual organizational routines of the House, the chamber is set to come back into session to handle "procedural resolutions." The House clerk's office announced a 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24 session for adoption of those resolutions, at the same time converting the planned Wednesday, Jan. 25 session to "if-needed" status.

Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) says he's not yet sure how he'll approach negotiations with members of the House during the 135th General Assembly. House Speaker Stephens had won his position with the votes of 22 Republicans and all 32 Democrats, while 43 Republicans voted for Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee). Merrin and his supporters have since formed a separate caucus, with Merrin as its leader. Following Tuesday's Senate Rules and Reference Committee meeting, Huffman was asked whether he would mainly negotiate with Stephens, Merrin or House Minority Leader Allison Russo (D-Columbus). "In this case, there's sort of this -- can I say 'three-headed monster?' Too late, I already did. ... I'm certainly going to be conversing with everybody, but the speaker -- and the speaker's office -- is a unique position, and I'm going to keep that in mind too," Huffman said. He hasn't met with Stephens as yet but plans to do so in the near future.

Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) and her caucus previewed work on health care, housing and criminal justice issues Tuesday as legislative activities begin to ramp up for the 135th General Assembly. While collective caucus priorities are yet to be finalized, senators shared the legislation and issues they'll be looking to tackle individually during a sit-down with Statehouse reporters. In many cases they'll be picking up work started in earlier General Assemblies. Antonio said she'll be taking up familiar legislative proposals, including the Fairness Act, which would add sexual orientation and gender identity to workplace and housing discrimination statutes; repeal of Ohio's death penalty; and elimination of the statute of limitations on rape and sexual assault.

Rep. Merrin Wednesday detailed legislation on ethics reform he'd planned to designate as HB1 before his ascent to the speakership was thwarted, saying restoring public trust in government is foundational to the rest of the House's work. Backed by several colleagues who were to serve on his House leadership team or had voted for him over Speaker Stephens, Merrin said ethics laws have been "mostly untouched" for decades. He outlined five major provisions of his proposal including requiring all lobbying income to be reported and sourced directly to clients; requiring nominees for appointment to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to disclose income and previous business relationships and ties to entities regulated by the commission, and that of their family members, with the information to be made available publicly before a nominee's name is submitted to the governor for consideration; and prohibiting state elected officials from receiving compensation from serving on corporate boards unless they held the board seat prior to taking office and have ownership in the corporation, and requiring the amounts of compensation to be disclosed, among other items.

In other matters, Merrin said they're still waiting to hear back from Stephens on their call for House rules that will "decentralize" power from the speaker's office. Merrin and Reps. Phil Plummer (R-Dayton) and Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) discussed the push for Stephens to adopt rules that would empower individual House members. Plummer said they have "options" if Stephens won't work with them -- options that Stewart said could include an open fight on the House floor over the rules package.

As someone who enjoys people and problem solving, Al Landis found he missed being a legislator after terming out of the House in 2019. "I continued to follow and be in contact, not just at the state level but the national level with our congressional reps and their liaisons ... I'd still get calls as a county commissioner asking me about things at the

state level," the Dover Republican told *Hannah News* during an interview in his office. "My interests really never left Columbus and the work ... it's demanding, and it's something that I felt really comfortable doing. The two things that drive me are the fact that I like people, and I like problem solving," he said. Landis returns to the Statehouse representing the 31st Senate District, encompassing his home county of Tuscarawas plus Muskingum and Wayne counties and parts of Guernsey and Stark counties.

As a self-described "addictive problem solver" with a background in state and local government and nonprofit leadership, Michele Reynolds sought a Senate seat because she felt she was positioned to get things done for her community. Reynolds helped her caucus expand on its already dominant share of seats, defeating first-term Sen. Tina Maharath (D-Canal Winchester), who four years earlier had pulled off a surprising upset against GOP Rep. Anne Gonzales. Reynolds credits the win to a lot of hard work, the ability to attract crossover votes from Democrats and Independents and an appeal to New American communities. Policies to support affordable and supportive housing are among her legislative priorities. Incentives for affordable housing, zoning changes to encourage more multi-family housing and more vertical development are some of her ideas.

GOVERNOR

With Senate Republicans set to launch hearings anew on a recently vetoed proposal to change where Ohioans can challenge state administrative actions in court, Gov. Mike DeWine said Friday he thinks it's possible to find compromise. DeWine used his veto pen sparingly after last month's lame duck session, but he did strike down 134-HB286 (Seitz), which would generally open the doors for Ohioans to challenge state agency actions in any common pleas court, rather than just in Franklin County, where most state government agencies are headquartered. He called the language "simply too broad" when announcing his veto. A modified version of the proposal is now back in SB21, sponsored by Sens. Robert McColley (R-Napoleon) and Michele Reynolds (R-Canal Winchester). In the bill's first hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, Democrats stood in for the DeWine administration to challenge the re-introduced version of the legislation. The minority questioned opening appeals of executive agency rulings to the precedent-setting power of 88 county courts rather than limiting administrative disputes to the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas. Reynolds commented that the current administrative appeals process gives Franklin County "outsized authority" over other county court jurisdictions.

Asked to elaborate on inaugural comments regarding mental health, Gov. DeWine said his forthcoming executive budget proposal will take a "comprehensive approach" that includes improving access, emphasizing the use of school wellness funding for mental health, and increasing the number of providers in the field.

DeWine declined to comment specifically on whether he views Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) or Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Monclova) as the main point of contact for legislative negotiations in the House this session. Merrin and the bulk of Republican legislators who backed his speakership bid proclaimed themselves the majority Republican caucus after a Statehouse gathering last week. "I try not to get involved in leadership decisions in regard to the Senate or the House, so I don't think I'm going to comment on that today," DeWine said.

DeWine Wednesday announced that Aimee Shadwick will become the new director of RecoveryOhio, the governor's initiative to prevent, reduce, treat and support long-term recovery from mental illness and substance use disorders. Shadwick has been with RecoveryOhio since 2019, including serving as interim director. Previously, she worked at the Franklin County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board. In addition, Felicia King becomes the new director of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. She is a long-time employee of DeWine's, serving in the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, most recently as interim director. Previously, she worked for DeWine both in the attorney general's office and in the U.S. Senate

HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

On a single night in January 2022, there were 10,654 people experiencing homelessness in Ohio, just a slight dip from 2020, when 10,655 people were homeless, according to a report released in late 2022 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The numbers were released as a part of HUD's 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress. The report found 46,213 people were experiencing homelessness on a single night in January 2022 in the Midwest, while there was a national total of 582,462 people homeless. Overall,

HUD said the number of people experiencing homelessness in the Midwest region, defined as Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin, dropped by 3.3 percent since 2020, while nationally there was a 0.3 percent increase.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The state of Ohio still ranks near the bottom of the U.S. for new unemployment claims, according to financial advisory website WalletHub. Ohio ranked 43 in states where jobless claims decreased the most week-over-week, with "1" being the best and "51" being the worst. Tennessee ranked 1, while Kentucky ranked 51. Michigan ranked the highest among Ohio's neighbors at 11, followed by Pennsylvania (25), Indiana (33) and West Virginia (34).

WORKFORCE

Lt. Gov. Jon Husted announced Friday the state's Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership will be supported with \$12 million in grant funding as it seeks to implement a workforce training strategy. That includes \$9 million in QUEST funding from the U.S. Department of Labor to create regional nodes using the JobsOhio six-region map of the state, providing local communities with resources. Husted added that more details will be made available when the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) posts an RFP on March 1 to select lead entities in the regions. The remaining \$3 million comes through the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Good Jobs Challenge program and will support partnership operations in 2024, including \$300,000 for equipment helping new programs.

actionTRACK - Hannah News Service, Inc.

This Legislative e-Update is a service of OESCA and is intended to provide updated information on the legislative issues of interest to Ohio's ESCs, OESCA members & interested parties and is made available by Hannah News Services.