



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

June 15, 2020

This has been a very busy and tense time in the Ohio House and Senate (as well as the federal level!). The business of the legislature has been interrupted by both the novel corona virus and civic unrest. The normal schedule of consideration of bills has been interrupted by special legislation proposed to meet the various crises that face us.

HB 164

EDUCATION LAWS ([GINTER, T.](#))

Regarding student religious expression, regarding retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee for the 2020-2021 school year, to make changes to education law for the 2020-2021 school year in response to implications of COVID-19, to require the Department of Education to make an additional payment in fiscal year 2020 or 2021 to certain city, local, exempted village, and joint vocational school districts that experience a decrease in the taxable value of the district's utility tangible personal property and have at least one power plant in their territories, to permit a person to serve on more than five community school governing authorities under certain conditions, to extend until November 30, 2022, the moratorium on the building code requirement for storm shelters for school construction projects, to make changes regarding the Quality Community School Support Program, to provide an additional payment for fiscal year 2020 to school districts that experience a specified reduction in funding, to entitle the act the "Ohio Student Religious Liberties Act of 2019," to make an appropriation, and to declare an emergency.

[House Concurs in Senate Amendments](#) (6/11/2020) Bill: 87-3 (Hicks-Hudson, Howse, Skindell) Emergency: 87-3 (Hicks-Hudson, Howse, Skindell)

The concurrence vote on a House-passed bill ([HB 164](#)) initially focused on student religious expression was 87-3, with [Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson](#) (D-Toledo), [Rep. Stephanie Howse](#) (D-Cleveland) and [Rep. Michael Skindell](#) (D-Lakewood) casting the lone "no" votes.

The Senate added most of a wide-ranging piece of legislation ([SB 319](#)) intended to give school officials flexibility as they prepare for a return to the classroom in the fall. The most controversial aspect of SB319, a provision allowing school districts to furlough employees instead of going through the reduction in force process enshrined in state law, was left out of the amendment.

"This bill is very important to the future of our students in the state of Ohio," sponsoring [Rep. Don Jones](#) (R-Freeport) said.



[Rep. Joe Miller](#) (D-Amherst) said the finalized bill is an example of the House, Senate and executive branch working in concert, adding that cooperation will be needed for other education issues, such as school funding, vouchers, report cards and academic distress commissions.

HB 683

SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS ([Perales, R.](#))

To establish scholarships for children of full-time United States military service members to attend chartered nonpublic schools and to make an appropriation.

HB 684

ACADEMIC CONTENT ([Hood, R.](#), [Brinkman, T.](#))

To revise the law with regard to the state academic content standards and primary and secondary education assessments and teacher evaluations, **to create the Legislative Office of Education Oversight**, and to make other changes regarding the operation of primary and secondary schools.

HB 686

SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS ([Sobecki, L.](#), [Crossman, J.](#))

To waive state testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year, to provide exemptions from state report cards and other provisions related to test results, and to declare an emergency.

SB 248

STORM SHELTERS ([Schaffer, T.](#))

To extend until November 30, 2022, the moratorium on the building code requirement for storm shelters for school construction projects.

HB 697

COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY GRANTS ([MANNING, G.](#))

To maintain a student's Ohio College Opportunity Grant award amount in the 2020-2021 academic year if that student enrolls in a state institution of higher education and to declare an emergency.



HB 322

TEACHER RESIDENCY ([Jones, D.](#), [Manning, D.](#)) To revise the Ohio Teacher Residency Program. CONTINUED-AMENDED (6th Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments)

The committee accepted an [amendment](#) offered by Chair [Rep. Don Jones](#) (R-Freeport) specifying that teachers who were in the process of finishing the Ohio Teacher Residency program receive credit for years they completed. The change also allows school districts to assign an additional mentor to a teacher via a peer assistance and review program. Linda Palombo-King, a resident educator teacher, said in opponent testimony that making such a major change in the wake of a pandemic that shuttered school buildings for months is the wrong move. "I believe strongly that the Resident Educator Program has a positive impact on new teachers just starting in the profession. Being a Mentor Teacher allows me to build trusting, confidential and nurturing relationships with my mentees," she said. "Along with this, I am able to help with giving opportunities for professional growth while assisting, coaching and consulting in a nonevaluative way." Rep. Jones said the goal of the legislation is to eliminate "unneeded and time-consuming tasks," and strengthen mentorship opportunities. Ms. Palombo-King said the current program is meant to ensure "high standards" among its beginning teachers. [Rep. John Patterson](#) (D-Jefferson) asked Ms. Palombo-King if her main problem with the bill is the requirement mentors have a classroom assignment. She said that is accurate because part-time mentors might not have "the time or flexibility" to guide new teachers successfully.

Senate Committee Hearings - Education

HB 164

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION ([Ginter, T.](#)) Regarding student religious expression and to entitle the act the "Ohio Student Religious Liberties Act of 2019." REPORTED-AMENDED (On Senate calendar for Wednesday) (4th Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments & vote)

The committee advanced the legislation unanimously after adopting a handful of amendments, including one incorporating several elements of SB319 into the measure. The full Senate went on to pass the bill Wednesday afternoon. (*See separate story*)

SB 288

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION ([Gavarone, T.](#)) Regarding student religious expression in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities REPORTED (2nd Hearing-Interested party-Possible amendments & vote)

The panel voted unanimously to report the measure after receiving proponent testimony from the person who inspired the bill. Noor Abukaram, a high school student from



Sylvania, said she was disqualified from a cross country race for wearing a hijab. "I felt confused, conflicted, angry, and misunderstood. But most of all, I felt humiliated," she said. "I was not told in advance that I would not be running to compete like everyone else ... and I had just run the best race of my life uninformed of my disqualification." Sponsor [Sen. Theresa Gavarone](#) (R-Bowling Green) asked the witness how the experience affected her life. Ms. Abukaram said it has made her "more aware" of discrimination athletes can face in organized sports.

SB 319

EDUCATION LAWS ([Huffman, M.](#)) To make changes to education law for the 2020-2021 school year in response to implications of COVID-19, to require the Department of Education to make an additional payment in fiscal year 2020 or 2021 to certain school districts that experience a decrease in the taxable value of the district's utility tangible personal property, to permit furloughing of certain school employees through June 30, 2021, and to declare an emergency. CONTINUED (2nd Hearing-Opponent& Interested party-Possible amendments & vote)

Sen. Lehner said discussion of the bill would largely be moot after the panel added many of its provisions to HB164, a bill approved by the full Senate later in the day. (See separate story)

Jeff Wensing, vice president of the Ohio Education Association, said the group backed many provisions in the measure but opposed provisions allowing school districts to furlough workers and affecting the contract status of certain teachers with incomplete evaluations.

Asked by Sen. Lehner if the changes the committee made when it amended SB319 into HB164 addressed the group's concerns, Mr. Wensing said they had.

SB 320

EDUCATION LAWS ([Huffman, M.](#)) To require public and private schools to decide whether to be open for instruction in the 2020-2021 school year, to permit parents providing home instruction to determine whether a building in which they provide instruction has adequate safety measures to address COVID-19, to prohibit other public officials from closing schools in that school year, and to declare an emergency. CONTINUED (See separate story) (1st Hearing-Sponsor-Pending referral)



House Activity for Wednesday, June 10, 2020

PASSED

HB 436

Tracked

DYSLEXIA (BALDRIDGE, B.)

With regard to screening and intervention for children with dyslexia.

87-5

HB 484

Track

ATHLETIC TRAINING (ABRAMS, C., CARFAGNA, R.)

Regarding the practice of athletic training.

89-5

REFERRED

Primary & Secondary Education

HB 696

Tracked

CAREER-TECH EDUCATION (SWEARINGEN, D.)

Regarding career information and career-technical education

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

FYI:

[Local Control At Center Of K-12 Reopening Discussions](#)

Debates on whether local education officials are best suited to decide whether schools will reopen in the fall are expected to continue among state policymakers in the coming months. The issue spurred discussions among members of the Senate Education Committee and the State Board of Education this week, although both groups held off on taking any action. Chair [Sen. Peggy Lehner](#) (R-Kettering) said the Senate panel will have additional hearings on a measure ([SB 320](#)) that would give local public and private school officials the power to determine whether school buildings reopen for the 2020-21 school year amid the coronavirus pandemic. Sponsor [Sen. Matt Huffman](#) (R-Lima) said the bill is necessary because Ohio's 600-plus school districts will likely need to



approach reopening decisions differently in the wake of a statewide closure of school buildings to end the 2019-20 school year. He said some might opt to return to the classroom at the typical time, while others might come back later in the fall or hold in-person classes on a handful of days per week. "All of these schools are getting an opportunity to do whatever they think is best for their populations," he said. Sen. Lehner has suggested the bill could be in line for an amendment giving local health officials some role in reopening discussions. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, June 10, 2020](#))

Fordham Foundation: Accountability Recommendations: The Thomas B. Fordham Institute has weighed in on how the state should resume assessments and report card ratings for schools and districts ahead of a potential return to the classroom this fall.

Suggestions in a policy briefing titled [Resetting School Accountability from the Bottom Up](#) for the 2020-21 school year include:

- Administering state tests and reporting the data, without issuing school ratings.
- Repealing the state's academic distress commission law.
- Eliminating automatic closure triggers for charter schools.
- Reviewing the state's school improvement efforts.

Recommendations for the 2021-22 school year include debuting an overhauled school report card system. "For too long, Ohio has viewed accountability as a hammer rather than a flashlight," said Chad Aldis, the group's vice president for Ohio policy and advocacy. "This top-down approach rife with sanctions on districts and schools has bred frustration, created pressure to weaken standards, and produced uneven results. As schools reopen this fall, Ohio should start fresh by pursuing a bottom-up accountability model, one based on providing honest information about school quality and empowering families with more educational options."



Ohio Association of Colleges for Teacher Education



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Every year, the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Initiative), Executive Office of the President and U.S. Department of Education look forward to hosting the nation's premiere gathering of students, stakeholders, supporters and stewards of America's historically black colleges and universities (HBCU). **Today, we are excited to announce the 2020 Virtual National HBCU Week and Conference, September 20-26.**

The **2020 Virtual National HBCU Week and Conference** experience is necessary due to uncertainty caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and national emergency, which make hosting the in-person conference untenable. Moreover, the Initiative is committed to continuing to leverage our platform to provide meaningful experiences for the HBCU field. Over the next two months, the Initiative will partner with our Federal and non-Federal allies to develop a calendar of online offerings, exploring webinars, conference calls, and other supplementary means, to engage, inform and deliver value to the HBCU community during the **2020 Virtual National HBCU Week and Conference**. Expect to hear from us again by mid-August.

Subscribe to our email listserv to stay connected with the latest at www.ed.gov/whhbcu.

Questions or concerns may be addressed to oswhi-hbcu@ed.gov.

Thank you for your understanding and we look forward to working with you to ensure a spectacular **2020 Virtual National HBCU Week and Conference!**