



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 11, 2023

The Ohio legislature has begun organizing for the new legislative session. Committees are still being formed and folks are beginning to announce their agendas. The Governor did sign the education bill (HB 554) that guts the Educator Standards Board and makes major changes in the Residency program for teachers. The actual effects will be clearer when the regulations are developed.

### **SB 178 Resurfaces: Look Out for Senate Bill 1**

As signaled in 2022, Senator Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware) announced plans to introduce another bill facilitating the state takeover of public education. During the January State Board of Education meeting this week, Senator Brenner told Board members he intends to introduce Senate Bill 1 in the Statehouse next week, and hold several interested party hearings and meetings. Brenner expects to pass SB 1 in the coming months as a standalone bill or by infusing it into the state budget in the spring.

Similar to last year's [Senate Bill 178](#), SB1 is another attempt to shift oversight of public education to the Ohio governor and strip the State Board of Education of significant roles and duties. In December, Senator Brenner tried to fast-track SB 178 through the Senate and House, but failed in the final hours of the lame duck session.

Preview of Senate Bill 1:

- Creates two divisions in the Ohio Department of Education: the Division of Primary and Secondary Education, and the Division of Career Technical Education
- Creates a director-level position overseeing the Department of Education; this person would be appointed by the governor
- Strips the State Board of Education of essential duties around the development of model curricula and academic standards
- Shifts some state superintendent responsibilities to the newly appointed director
- Accommodates regulatory concerns of the homeschooling community

During the announcement, Brenner continued to blame the State Board, teachers, and schools for the performance of Ohio's systematically underfunded and under-resourced school districts. He went further to acknowledge that many Board members did not support SB 178 last year and offered to meet with Board members, education stakeholders, and interested parties to hear their concerns. The bill is not publicly available.

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## Deregulatory Education Bill

Senator Brenner also previewed another upcoming education bill that would deregulate public education and expand local control in school districts. Brenner hopes to increase authority, decision-making, and control for local school boards and districts. Details to come.

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## Group Reviews Overhauled Report Card; Feds Propose Student Loan Changes...

The latest iteration of Ohio's accountability system for school districts and buildings is more transparent and "treats schools more evenhandedly," according to a new Thomas B. Fordham Institute report.

The analysis from Fordham Research Director Aaron Churchill states that the transition from a A-F grading system to star ratings was a positive step for the Ohio School Report Cards, although additional changes would benefit the system.

"Although letter grades remain the most widely understood grading system, school officials criticized them and pushed for their removal," he wrote. "Feeling pressured, lawmakers weighed several alternatives and ultimately decided to go with star ratings, a system that continues to offer a clear sense of school performance, perhaps without being as politically charged."

**Student Loans:** The Biden Administration on Tuesday unveiled proposed regulations aimed at significantly reducing undergraduate loan payments for certain borrowers.

The plan would revise the terms of the Revised Pay As You Earn program to eliminate monthly payments for individuals who make less than \$30,600 annually and borrowers in a family of four who make less than \$62,400.

## Capitol Scene: Imhoff to Lobby For BASA

The Buckeye Association of School Administrators on Tuesday announced the hiring of Paul Imhoff as director of governmental relations.

Mr. Imhoff most recently served as superintendent the Upper Arlington City School District and has 33 years of experience in the education field. The 2018 Ohio Superintendent of the Year and graduate of the University of Dayton and Miami University, served as the 2021-2022 president of the American Association of School Administrators.

"Paul is a leader and listener, and his experience at the local, state, and national levels will be crucial to guiding our association's advocacy efforts," BASA Executive Director David Axner said in a statement. "He has been a tireless advocate for students, and that passion and dedication will continue at the Ohio Statehouse. We are thrilled to have Paul on our team."