

## **Legislative Update for OACTE, OAPCTE, and SUED**

July 1, 2024

### **Prior to summer recess, lawmakers send DeWine 16 bills for his signature**

After passing a combined 52 bills, 16 of which are now pending on the desk of Gov. Mike DeWine, the Ohio General Assembly is now in recess for the summer. The Ohio Senate is set to return five more times this year, beginning on November 13. A schedule for the House is not yet available. Among those bills pending on DeWine's desk are:

- Senate Bill (SB) 168, which revises grade bands and educator licensure, among other provisions;
- House Bill (HB) 2, which provides \$4.2 billion in capital appropriations for construction and renovation projects, including at colleges and universities; and
- SB 94, a higher education omnibus bill.

SB 83, which was rumored to be a potential candidate for passage out of the House, did not advance last week because it did not appear on the House's voting agenda, much to the chagrin of sponsor Sen. Jerry Cirino. Cirino held a press conference last week, telling reporters, "The time to display leadership in the House on this bill has come and gone." Cirino was referring to House Speaker Jason Stephens who, for months, has refused to place his bill on the House's voting agenda.

### **Senate Bill 168 heavily modified before clearing legislature**

A bill that revises grade bands and teacher licensure is on its way to Gov. Mike DeWine for his signature. SB 168 now modifies the upper-level teacher licensure grade band from grades 6-12 to become grades 7-12. It also allows an individual who holds a license on or before the bill's effective date to renew that license with either the 6-12 grade bands or with the new 7-12 bands established under SB 168.

The bill creates a new pathway for the state to license superintendents and principals. Specifically, it permits the Department of Education and Workforce to establish alternative pathways for the holder of a bachelor's degree to obtain an educator license to work as an administrator or superintendent. If the Department elects to establish one or more alternative pathways, the bill requires the State Board of Education to issue an educator license to work as an administrator or superintendent to an individual who completes the alternative pathway

The bill also removes the provision that lowered the educational attainment level from a master's degree for principals and administrators, but makes that change for senior professional educator license or lead professional educator license. On the same topic, the bill requires the State Board of Education to issue an alternative resident educator license to an individual who (1) holds at least a master's degree in the subject area in which the individual will teach, (2) has successfully completed an exam prescribed by the State Board in the area in which the individual will teach, and (3) completes a pedagogical training institute to renew that license.

Finally, the bill now requires institutions with an early childhood teacher preparation program that results in a credential or associate's degree or higher in early childhood education to allow students of that program to complete required student training as a paid employee of an early learning and development program.

A summary of the House's changes to SB 168 is accessible here:

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=23225&format=pdf>

### **Bathroom bill clears House as State Board fails to secure funding**

Approaching midnight on June 26, House lawmakers passed SB 104 to (1) require public and private K-12 schools and public and private colleges and universities to designate multi-occupancy bathrooms, locker rooms, and other areas for the exclusive use of biological males or biological females, and (2) prohibit multi-occupancy bathrooms that are designated as "nongendered, multigendered, or open to all genders." Originally focused on College Credit Plus, the bill was amended on the floor to include the provisions from HB 183, commonly known as "the bathroom bill," which cleared a House committee in April but has languished since then. During the floor debate on SB 104, Rep. Adam Bird, a joint sponsor of HB 183, successfully amended his bill into the larger bill by a vote of 59-32 with three Republicans voting "no," including House Speaker Jason Stephens. The Senate, which adjourned before the passage of SB 104, appears at the moment not to be keen with the House's changes to SB 104. However, Gov. Mike DeWine recently told reporters he would sign SB 104 should it reach his desk.

Meanwhile, funding that would have filled the multi-million-dollar budget hole for the State Board of Education failed to clear the final legislative hurdle this week. House lawmakers passed on June 26 passed SB 117, which appropriated \$4.7 million to the panel, but the Senate adjourned without voting on the measure, leaving it in limbo until Senate lawmakers return in the fall. Senate President Matt Huffman told reporters the funding could be secured at a July 17 meeting of the state Controlling Board, and it didn't need to be sourced from legislation. He also expressed concerns about the licensing agency's expenses and whether those could be reduced rather than raising fees or appropriating state funds to support the panel. Through a spokesperson, Gov. DeWine agreed that existing expenses of the panel are an issue of concern and the agency should right-size itself.

### **Higher education omnibus bill materializes and lands on DeWine's desk in just two days**

A once-unrelated bill became a major piece of legislation impacting colleges and universities in Ohio. Senate Bill 94, sponsored by Sens. Andrew Brenner and Al Landis, underwent significant changes in a House committee on June 25, followed the next day by passing votes in the House and Senate, sending the bill to Gov. Mike DeWine for his signature.

Now included in SB 94 are the following provisions:

- \$2 million to support the Ohio Department of Higher Education's current responsibilities related to auditing Ohio's teacher preparation programs to document the degree to which they are effectively teaching the science of reading to preservice teachers;
- a requirement for the Chancellor of Higher Education, in conjunction with the Department of Education and Workforce, to conduct a survey of the undergraduate and graduate educator preparation programs for teachers and administrators. The survey's purpose is to determine what instruction the programs are providing to students in mental and behavioral health, behavior management, and classroom management, including how they are incorporating education on adverse childhood experiences and trauma. This provision and the provision below are derived from HB 572, a recently introduced bill from Rep. Andrea White that also underwent changes in recent days.
- a requirement for the Chancellor and DEW to develop a report that analyzes the survey's findings to make recommendations for evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies, practices, and content to address identified needs and equip educators to support student academic success and well-being from early childhood education through grade 12.
- provisions from HB 606, also known as the CAMPUS Act, which requires colleges and universities to (1) adopt and enforce policies on racial, religious, and ethnic harassment and intimidation, (2) submit annual harassment and intimidation reports, and (3) publicize any time, place, or manner restrictions it places on their students' expressive activities. There also is \$4 million provided to support security measures and outreach among student groups.

### **House Higher Education Committee concludes SOR testimony**

The House Higher Education Committee met six times in June, with the four final meetings also featuring testimony from representatives of Ohio's public and private colleges and universities on the implementation of the Science of Reading in their teacher preparation programs. A recording of the hearings is accessible here: <https://ohiochannel.org/collections/ohio-house-higher-education-committee>. Among those who were invited and testified are:

- Dr. Nigamanth Sridhar and Dr. Laura Northrop – Cleveland State University;
- Dr. Jim Denniston and Betsy Crites – Wright State University;
- Dr. Anna DeJarnette – University of Cincinnati;
- Dr. Gay Lynn Shipley and Dr. Sandra Beam – Shawnee State University;
- Dr. Amity Noltemeyer – Miami University
- Dr. Scott Molitor and Dr. Rebecca Schneider – University of Toledo