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Legislative Update – 3.14.25

House budget testimony continues; amendment deadline arrives

Testimony on the state operating budget bill continues as legislative committees hear testimony from individuals and organizations on the bill's provisions. The House Finance Committee held three days of public testimony this week on the budget bill and will take a two-week recess while the Finance Chairman and House leadership review thousands of budget amendments, which had a March 14 deadline for submission to the chairman's office. The committee will make its first round of changes to the budget bill on April 1, followed by a second round of changes on April 8, with a House vote on the budget on April 9. Meanwhile, informal hearings on the budget in the Senate are expected to take place around that same time.

Resources to review the bill are available from the Legislative Service Commission here: <https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/budget/136/main-operating-budget/as-introduced>. Readers can scroll read summaries and analyses of the bill by topic by accessing the "Bill Analysis" portion at the bottom and selecting the desired policy area. K-12 education is located under "EDU" and higher education is located under "BOR." Meanwhile, "Redbooks" are also available in a similar classification that review the respective state agency's budget requests, with a focus on revenues and expenditures. Meanwhile, all House and Senate committees allow for public testimony and individuals can sign up for committee notices that include hearing dates and bills that will be heard.

Passage of higher education reform bill draws near

Lawmakers in the Ohio House of Representatives are fast-tracking a Senate bill that would enact sweeping reforms to Ohio's colleges and universities, including enacting a ban on employees from striking. That bill – Senate Bill 1 – passed the Senate on Feb. 12 by a vote of 21-11 and is now under consideration in the House. A House committee is expected to vote amend and pass the bill on March 19, followed by a House vote later that day. It's also possible that the Senate could concur in the House's changes to the bill on the same day, sending it to the governor. If the House passes the bill with no changes, the bill advances to the governor

Bill introduced to restore three grade band levels

Sen. Catherine Ingram, a Cincinnati Democrat, introduced Senate Bill 144 on March 11. That bill, which will likely be referred to the Senate Education Committee for consideration, would reestablish grade band levels of preK-5, 4-9, and 7-12.