

House set to release budget on Tuesday

The Ohio House Finance Committee will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1 to accept a substitute version of House Bill 96, the biennial budget bill. This will mark the first round of changes made by the House and will be followed by a second round of changes on April 8 via an omnibus amendment. The full House is expected to vote on the bill on April 9, sending the bill to the Senate for consideration. An analysis and summary of the bill's changes from the Legislative Service Commission will be provided upon its publishing.

Senate hears testimony on grade bands

The Senate Education Committee held a first hearing for sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 144, which would restore the three grade bands that were in effect prior to 2023. Sponsor Sen. Cathy Ingram testified on the measure, and her testimony is accessible here:

https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/api/v2/general_assembly_136/committees/cmte_s_education_1/meetings/cmte_s_education_1_2025-03-25-0300_290/testimony/4678/uploaded-doc/. Sen.

Andrew Brenner, chair of the committee, expressed interest in a compromise proposal that would focus on continuing education and training for K-12 teachers and allowing grade level-specific and grade band-specific credentialing. His comments can be viewed here: <https://ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-senate-education-committee-3-25-2025>.

Brenner also indicated the bill will receive additional hearings in the future, though the bill is not on next week's agenda.

The committee also included a provision in Senate Bill 19 that would require new applicants for a preK-8 license to be assessed in math proficiency. Under the bill, the Chancellor of Higher Education will define the level of proficiency at which individuals are prepared to provide high-quality math instruction. A licensure candidate is still eligible to receive a license if they do not attain a proficient score or better on the assessment. The State Board of Education must certify to the employing district or school whether the individual is proficient in math based on the State Board's assessment. If the individual has not demonstrated proficiency in math, the teacher cannot be assigned to teach math but can be assigned to teach in other subject areas.

Senate Bill 1 becomes law

Gov. Mike DeWine on March 28 signed into law Senate Bill 1, which includes sweeping changes to Ohio's higher education system, including a prohibition on university employees from striking. The bill will take effect 91 days upon its filing with the Secretary of State.

Other bills of interest

- Senate Bill 34 – Required Display of Historical Documents in Public Schools
 - The bill would require public schools to display in each of its classrooms at least one of historical educational document, which under the bill includes:
 - The Ten Commandments, the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the mottoes of the United States and Ohio, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the U.S. Constitution, or the Articles of Confederation.
 - The bill also permits a public school to erect a monument or other marker inscribed with one or more of the documents on any school ground or premise
 - Pending a fourth hearing on April 1 for all testimony
- Senate Bill 113 and House Bill 155 – Prohibit DEI at Public Schools
 - The bills would require school districts adopt a policy prohibiting the following:
 - Any orientation or training course regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI);
 - The continuation of existing or establishment of new DEI offices or departments;
 - Using DEI in job descriptions;
 - Contracting with consultants or third parties whose role is to promote admissions, hiring, or promotion on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and
 - Replacing any orientation, training, office, or position designated for DEI with one under a different designation that serves the same or similar purposes, or that uses the same or similar means
 - The bill also allows complaints to be submitted alleging a violation of the district policy, and requires an investigation into alleged violation with district-determined resolutions to address the violation
 - Both bills await a first hearing in their respective education committee
- SB 13 – Foster to College Scholarship Program
 - The bill requires the Department of Education and Workforce to hire a full-time school foster care liaison to work with public children services agencies, private child placing agencies, and the Department of Job and Family Services to facilitate services to foster children related to school placement.
 - The bill also creates the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program to award qualifying students scholarships based on a federal need analysis.

- The bill requires the hiring of four full-time at the Department of Higher Education to serve as foster care student navigators and assist prospective qualifying students in applying for and enrolling in institutions of higher education and the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program.
- The bill, which passed the House last session, awaits a first hearing in the Senate Finance Committee
- **SB 68** – Nonchartered Nonpublic School Education Savings Accounts
 - The bill creates an education savings account program for nonchartered nonpublic school students, qualifying them to receive up to \$7,418 annually to spend on school tuition and other educational goods and services
 - The bill awaits a first hearing in the Senate Finance Committee