

Legislative Update

April 14, 2025

Budget bill activity

The Ohio House of Representatives on April 9 passed House Bill 96, the biennial budget bill, by a vote of 60-39. The bill now advances to the Ohio Senate for consideration where lawmakers have already begun informal hearings on the bill. Hearings on the bill in the Senate will resume the week of April 28, and a Senate version of the budget is expected to be released in early June. The bill must be signed into law by June 30. A summary of the House's changes to the bill in the higher education policy area can be accessed here:

<https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/legislation/136/hb96/ph/files/hb96-bor-comparison-document-as-passed-by-the-house-136th-general-assembly.pdf>. Meanwhile, the change in the K-12 education area can be accessed here:

<https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/legislation/136/hb96/ph/files/hb96-edu-comparison-document-as-passed-by-the-house-136th-general-assembly.pdf>. Finally, the changes in the State Board of Education area can be accessed here:

<https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/legislation/136/hb96/ph/files/hb96-sbe-comparison-document-as-passed-by-the-house-136th-general-assembly.pdf>.

Key provisions in the House's budget include:

- Granting the board of trustees of state institutions of higher education "unilateral and ultimate authority" to establish new programs, schools, colleges, institutes, departments, and centers at the institution.
- Requiring each educator preparation program (EPP) to ensure that educators and other school personnel are adequately prepared and trained in social studies, and requires the Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education (ODHE) to complete a review and evaluation process to assess the degree to which every EPP is teaching social studies in alignment with the standards adopted by the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW).
- Creates the Accelerated College and Career Pathways Program, under which each state university must create a 90-credit hour degree program aligned to an in-demand career field.
- Creates the Ohio Military Veterans Educator Fellowship Pilot Program, supported by up to \$1.6 million, to help veterans and military individuals to enter educator preparation programs.
- Creates the Higher Education Public Policy Research Consortium, supported by \$1 million, to develop and maintain a biennial statewide research agenda that identifies key policy challenges and research priorities crucial to the state's future, drawing on input from policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders.

- Provides, under the consortium, competitive grants of up to \$10,000 to faculty and post-graduate students whose research aligns with the biennial research agenda
- Reduces the size of the State Board of Education from 19 members to five members, all appointed by the governor.
- Maintains the executive budget proposal's elimination of the Resident Educator Summative Assessment.
- Maintains the executive budget proposal's creation of the Principal Apprenticeship Program.
- Maintains the executive budget proposal's requirement for K-12 schools to assign teachers based on "best interest of the students" and prohibition on using seniority as primary factor in determining assignments.
- Requires DEW to maintain an introductory training course on the Science of Reading for licensed educators and to develop a competency-based training course.
- Requires all educators and most school staff to complete Science of Reading training every five years.
- Eliminates the kindergarten readiness assessment.
- Removes the executive budget proposal's provisions that would have created new diagnostic assessments in math that would be administered by schools and would have required schools administer the same diagnostic assessments in the elementary grades.
- Adds high school courses aligned to ODHE's Career-Technical Assurance Guides (CTAG) to the list of programs that may be considered an "advanced standing program," and requires schools with students in CTAG-aligned courses to implement a policy for grading and calculating class standings for those courses in a similar fashion to College Credit Plus, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or honors courses.

Other legislative activity

Gov. Mike DeWine on March 28 signed into Senate Bill 1. A group of faculty with Youngstown State University have reportedly begun collecting signatures to initiative a referendum effort to recall the legislation at the November 4 general election.

There has been no hearing on Senate Bill 144, which would restore the three grade bands, since its first hearing on March 25. The soonest the bill could receive another hearing would be April 29. A committee notice announcing the agenda for the Senate Education Committee will likely be published on April 24 or 25.

House Bill 62, which originally focused on textbook costs under the College Credit Plus program, was amended on April 8 to require a comprehensive review of the program, including eligibility, program goals, and funding. The bill is likely to pass the House.