



Week of Nov. 28 – Dec. 2

Senators discuss education overhaul bill as DeWine lends support

The Ohio Senate this week held two hearings on [Senate Bill \(SB\) 178](#). After accepting a 2,144-page substitute bill ([text](#), [analysis](#)), committee members heard proponent and interested party testimony from a variety of individuals and groups, including superintendents, business owners, school board members, the Ohio Education Association, Fordham Institute, and Ohio Christian Educator Network, among others. [Click here to watch Tuesday's hearing](#) and [here for Wednesday's hearing](#).

Senate President **Matt Huffman** told reporters his chamber will pass the bill by Dec. 7, and Gov. **Mike DeWine** lent his support for the bill, telling reporters that, while the bill was not his idea, he supports the measure and its increased level of accountability.

Meanwhile, House Speaker **Bob Cupp** withheld his plans for the bill, telling reporters, “Nothing definite on (the bill). We'll see how it goes.” While SB 178 appears to have considerable support from rank-and-file House Republicans, veteran Republican legislators like Cupp and **Scott Oelslager**, for example, are rumored to be concerned with the sudden and last-minute proposal that implements such a seismic shift in policy, control, and governance.

Committee hearings are expected to resume Monday, Dec. 5, with additional hearings in the week. Tony will be providing testimony as an interested party next week, and the major associations (BASA, OASBO, OSBA) will be providing joint interested party testimony. Those wishing to testify should contact Aaron Riggins in Sen. **Andrew Brenner**'s office at aaron.riggins@ohiosenate.gov or contact Tony or Will for additional information.

Governor announces school safety grants

Gov. **Mike DeWine** on Monday announced the final round of grants for the K-12 School Safety Grant Program, totaling \$57.8 million. Supported by one-time federal COVID funds from [House Bill \(HB\) 687](#), the capital bill, this third round of funding will support schools and other education entities with physical security enhancements. [Click here to access the list of awardees](#).

Other legislative news

The Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee held hearings on a variety of bills, including [HB 497](#) (Third Grade Reading Guarantee retention), [HB 554](#) (two-year temporary educator licenses), and [HB 151](#) (Teacher Residency program changes and same-sex sports teams). While HB 497 appears unlikely to pass in its current form this year, HB 554 and 151 have emerged as the potential lame-duck legislative vehicles. Though it did not receive a hearing this week, [HB 606](#) may, too, pass this year, as the governor is in support of the measure. The controversial same-sex sports teams element of HB 151 is being discussed in caucus by Senate Republicans, which may retain those provisions with modifications.

No meaningful activity occurred in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, as the panel held mostly first hearings on bills with no chance for enactment this session.

Legislative leaders [tabled their major efforts](#) to further restrict abortion access this year, instead focusing their attention on clarifying Ohio's existing abortion laws. They also are mounting a late-stage effort through [House Joint Resolution 6](#) to increase the vote threshold needed to approve a state constitutional amendment from the current 50% to 60%. The resolution, which is expected to pass both chambers this month, would be placed on the May 2, 2023 primary election ballot, allowing Ohioans to approve or disapprove the legislature's proposed change to modify the state constitution.

The Senate has two session dates remaining (Dec. 7 and 14) compared to the House's lone Dec. 14 session. Both chambers have if-needed session dates scheduled for Dec. 21. The next two weeks will be exceptionally busy as lawmakers hurry to finalize legislative business before the Christmas holiday.