



Week of April 3, 2023

House unveils budget changes, full vote next week

The Ohio House of Representatives on Tuesday made its first of two revisions to the biennial budget bill, [House Bill 33](#). The substitute bill updates the school-funding formula's base cost inputs to fiscal year 2022 and continues the phase-in for years three and four of the six-year plan; increases EdChoice eligibility to 450% of the federal poverty level; and eliminates a middle-level income tax bracket while reducing the minimum tax amount paid for each bracket, among other changes.

The Finance Committee will accept a second round of changes next week – either Tuesday or Wednesday – based on amendments that are due today to Finance Committee Chair Rep. **Jay Edwards**. A House vote on the bill will occur Thursday. An overview of the House budget plan will be provided to Alliance members at the April 28 Legislative Committee meeting, with additional presentations thereafter. Funding formula spreadsheets are not yet published but will be shared when they become available.

An increase in the minimum state share percentage was not included in the substitute bill. While we await its potential inclusion in next week's round of additional House changes, we are working diligently to amend the provision into the Senate's budget proposal.

Other key changes made by the House to the bill include:

- requiring districts to provide K-8 students "substantially the same level of transportation service, route and schedule convenience, and pick-up and drop-off times" relative to their school's start and end times regardless of the student's school (public, charter, private);
- eliminating the \$388 million appropriation for school resource officers proposed by Gov. **Mike DeWine**;
- maintaining DeWine's literacy proposal to implement Science of Reading curriculum and professional development, but with \$111 million in spending instead of his proposed \$174 million;
- increasing the minimum teacher salary from \$30,000 to \$40,000 and increasing the other salary schedule elements by the same percentage increase;
- modifying the teacher licensure grade bands to be preK-8 and 6-12, rather than preK-5, 4-9, and 7-12; and
- eliminating the retention provision of the Third-Grade Reading Guarantee, among other provisions.

A document comparing the changes between the House version and DeWine's executive version is accessible here: <https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/legislation/135/hb33/phc/files/hb33-edu-comparison-document-as-pending-in-house-committee-135th-general-assembly.pdf>.

Committees review budget, other bills

Budget hearings in the Senate commenced this week with testimony from the Office of Budget and Management, LSC, the Ohio Department of Education, and others. Committee hearings will continue next week in various standing committees, including the Senate Education Committee, that will feature

testimony from the Ohio Department of Education, among other entities. Public testimony may begin as soon as May 2.

Meanwhile, the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee amended [House Bill \(HB\) 8](#), which requires public schools to adopt a policy on parental notification on student health and well-being and instructional materials with sexually explicit content. [The amendment](#) eliminates the bill's provision that allowed schools to withhold information from a parent if a "reasonably prudent" person would believe sharing information about the student's health or well-being would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect. It also eliminates the bill's requirement for schools to create a parent-approved health care plan for every student.

The committee also held a fifth hearing for all testimony on [HB 12](#), which creates the Department of Education and Workforce and revises the duties of the State Board of Education. A hearing on [Senate Bill 1](#) – the Senate companion to HB 12 – did not occur this week.

Finally, the committee held sponsor testimony on [HB 117](#), which eliminates the retention provision of the Third-Grade Reading Guarantee, among other provisions. The bill, which the House passed last year by a vote of 82-10, is also included in the House budget proposal.

Senate, House committee act on August special election and constitutional change

Facing a May 10 deadline, the Ohio Senate acted swiftly to pass [Senate Joint Resolution \(SJR\) 2](#) and [Senate Bill \(SB\) 92](#), helping tee up an August special election effort to increase the voting threshold to amend the state constitution from 50% to 60%. SJR 2 passed on a party-line vote, while SB 92 nearly did so too, except for Republican Sen. **Nathan Manning** who voted "no" on the measure.

The House companion to SJR 2 – [House Joint Resolution \(HJR\) 1](#) – was passed out of committee Wednesday amid shouts from witnesses, many of whom had been waiting to testify before the vote unexpectedly occurred and the bill passed.

Placement of HJR 1 on the floor for a vote is far from certain. Despite telling reporters he would vote for the resolution, House Speaker Rep. **Jason Stephens** expressed he may not possess the 60 votes needed to pass the resolution. A loss of seven votes from the 65 House Republicans would kill the measure. Two House session dates and one if-needed session date remain ahead of the May 10 deadline.

Heard around the Statehouse

"If I bring it to the floor, I'm going to vote for it." - House Speaker Rep. **Jason Stephens**, speaking to reporters about HJR1/SJR2, both of which would increase the voter approval threshold to amend the state constitution from the current 50% to 60%.

"I am just completely baffled that you would walk in here and have the guts to tell us that we have a mediocre budget, that you ask for school choice that's going to cost us billions of dollars, but then make a snarky comment that we're spending more money. Wouldn't we be better off taking some money in our budget to fix the schools? Because I'll tell you what, I really like my public schools. I really am proud that Carson and Connor – my sons – go to Kenton City Schools and get an education from there just like I did....It's pretty ballsy of you to say that we're spending a lot of money, but your pro-choice bill is going to cost us how much more in the state government, how many more billions of dollars is it going to cost us to make sure Carson can go to Hardin Northern Schools versus Kenton City Schools? Or are we going

to fix things? I'd like to know how your billion-dollar plan is going to fix bad schools versus taking Johnny out of the bad school and put him in a better school and not fixing the bad school. I'll let you answer that question while I take another meeting." - Rep. **Jon Cross**, [speaking to a representative of the Americans for Prosperity during a hearing](#) in the House Finance Committee hearing.

