



Week of June 19, 2023

Conference Committee begins review of budget bill

The Conference Committee on [House Bill 33](#) convened Thursday and received updated revenue projections indicating \$816 million in new revenue is available to lawmakers as they finalize the budget bill, including nearly \$252 million in underspending on Medicaid. The committee will meet next week to accept a compromise version of the budget, followed by House and Senate votes on the new version and line-item vetoes and a signature by Gov. **Mike DeWine**.

Conference committee members and House and Senate leadership have already begun private negotiations, which will continue daily and focus on items of disagreement between the budget proposals, including school funding, vouchers, [Senate Bill 1](#) (Department of Education and Workforce) and [Senate Bill 83](#) (higher education reform), early childhood education, tax cuts, and more. The creation of the committee was spurred by the House rejecting the Senate budget proposal by a vote of 23-71. Conferees consist of Reps. **Jay Edwards, Jeff LaRe, and Bride Rose Sweeney**, and Sens. **Matt Dolan, Jerry Cirino, and Vernon Sykes**.

This is the most crucial time to secure the increase in the state share percentage to 10%. All your advocacy hinges upon the next seven days. EVERY Alliance member needs to call their House and Senate member – and any contacts you have within the DeWine/Husted administration – urging them to include the increase to 10% in the final bill version and prevent it from being line-item vetoed.

House passes LGBTQ+, same-sex sports, parental rights, and TGRG bills

The House passed three education-related bills on Wednesday:

- [House Bill 68](#) (64-28), which prohibits gender reassignment surgery, cross-sex hormones, and puberty-blocking drugs for minors, and requires same-sex sports teams.
- [House Bill 8](#) (65-29), which (1) requires school sexuality content is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate; (2) requires notice to parents about materials that include sexuality content and offer alternatives; (3) requires notice to parents about changes to the children's health services or monitoring regarding their mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being; and (4) prohibits school employees from encouraging students to withhold from parents information about their health or well-being, unless that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect.
- [House Bill 117](#) (89-4), which eliminates the retention element of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee and institutes intervention requirements for students reading below grade level.

Analysis reveals vast disparities between House and Senate funding plans

[A report from the Ohio Education Policy Institute](#) revealed stark differences between the House and Senate budget proposals for K-12 education, including

- 37% of the Senate's increase for K-12 education is for private school vouchers.
- The Senate plan cuts funding for school districts by \$541 million and increases private school voucher spending by \$372 million, compared to the House.

- The Senate plan puts local property taxpayers on the hook for funding 61.5% of a school district's base funding while the state will now fund only 38.5%.
- The Senate plan increases spending on private school vouchers by 75%.
- The Senate plan proposes spending more than \$1.04 billion annually across all five private school voucher programs in FY 2025 (currently at \$595 million).

Auditor of State announces results of voucher lawsuit survey

A total of \$1.16 million has been spent in support of the voucher lawsuit litigation by school districts and other public school entities, a letter from Auditor of State **Keith Faber** revealed last week. Three separate survey requests were sent to schools and districts over the course of several weeks, followed by a subpoena to 17 entities, with only four responding to the subpoena.

Heard around the Statehouse

" Hope you don't have too many plans in July."- House Speaker **Jason Stephens**, speaking to reporters while referring to the potential for lawmakers to miss the June 30 budget deadline.