

Legislative/System Improvements Committee

Zoom Meeting Summary

Friday, April 28, 2023

10:00 a.m.

In attendance on video conference: Tony Podojil, legislative consultant William Schwartz and member representatives from 40 school districts.

Tony Podojil convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The primary focus of the meeting was to update Alliance members regarding the most recent legislative activity listed below.

I. Budget Bill

- a. **Executive Budget Proposal**
- b. **House Budget Proposal (sub bill)**

II. Major Bills Under Consideration:

a. HB 1 (Mathews) - Revisions to property taxation and income tax rates

- Repeals the graduated income tax rates that apply to nonbusiness income (currently ranging from 2.765% to 3.99%), and instead levies a flat income tax rate of \$360.69 plus 2.75% on all income over \$26,050.
- Decreases the assessment rate, from 35% to 31.5%, and indexes the 31.5% rate so that it decreases in proportion to the increase in inflation.
- Repeals the 10% tax rollback on nonbusiness property.
- Modifies the 2.5% homestead tax rollback to equal a flat \$125 property tax credit for all owner-occupied homes.
- Establishes an enhanced homestead exemption for certain long-term homeowners who qualify for the general homestead exemption, and indexes for all homestead exemptions, the amount of the exemption so that the exemption, and resulting tax savings, increases in proportion to the increase in inflation.

b. HB 8 (Swearingen/Carruthers) Requires public schools to adopt a policy on parental notification on student health and well-being and instructional materials with sexually explicit content (Parent's Bill of Rights)

- Prohibits school personnel from encouraging a student to withhold from a parent information concerning the student's health or well-being, unless that disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect.
- Establishes a process under which the district or school must resolve written concerns submitted by parents about topics addressed in the bill.
- Requires a notice to parents about sexually explicit instructional materials, an opportunity to review them, and an opportunity to request alternative instruction.
- Requires a notice to parents about school-provided healthcare services and requires districts to create a healthcare plan for students.
- Requires a notice to parents about changes to the health services that provide a safe learning environment; and
- Titles the bill the Parents' Bill of Rights.

c. HB 11 (McClain/John) Creates the Backpack Scholarship Program (the Backpack Bill)

- House Bill 11 A third hearing on this bill is not yet scheduled. Tony expects to testify on HB11 focusing on fiscal accountability, academic accountability and accessibility and opportunity for students.
- Qualifies for a Backpack voucher every Ohio student, including existing non-voucher students already attending chartered nonpublic (private) schools and incoming kindergartners.

- Provides a state-paid voucher of \$5,500 or \$7,500 for private school tuition or for specified "educational goods and services" at non-chartered non-public schools and for homeschoolers.
- Reduces frequency of state test administration for grades 1-8 by requiring testing every other year on a school-selected test that is a nationally recognized measure of achievement; applies current high school testing and graduation requirements; and
- LSC estimates it will cost the state \$1.13 billion immediately and annually thereafter to pay for existing non-voucher private school students, homeschool students, and non-chartered non-public school students.

d. HB 12 (Jones/Dobos) Reform function, responsibilities, accountability of state education office to emphasize education, workforce development.

The House companion bill to Senate Bill 1.

e. Sub. HB 33 (Edwards) Main Operating Budget (Budget Bill)

House Bill 33, the biennial budget bill, has future hearing dates available for public testimony scheduled for March 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 22, and 23. Contact Will if you are interested in testifying.

f. SB1 (Reineke) - Reform function, responsibilities, accountability of state education office to emphasize education, workforce development

No action on SB 1. The bill is still pending in the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee. The bill is included in the Senate budget proposal and will be part of the conference committee negotiations.

g. SB11 (O'Brien) Universal eligibility of Ed Choice Scholarships (Parent Educational Freedom Act)

This is a universal voucher program sponsored by Sen. Sandra O'Brien. It would qualify all K-12 students and incoming kindergartners for an EdChoice voucher regardless of their income or residence. It also increases the amount of homeschooling expenses that a taxpayer can claim as an income tax credit each year, from \$250 to \$2,000. The nonpartisan Legislative Service Commission estimates the cost of universal vouchers at \$536.4 million annually and each year thereafter. With public school students transferring to a private school under a voucher, there may be a state savings effect depending upon the level of state funding that district receives, leaving the projected net annual expenditure at \$527.6 million. The tax credit changes will reduce state revenues by roughly \$40 million annually. The bill received a first hearing on Feb. 7.

III. Recently Introduced Bills:

- a.** HB 103 (Jones/Richardson) - Establish the Ohio Social Studies Standards Task Force
- b.** HB 117 (Manning/Robinson) - Eliminate retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee
- c.** HB 135 (Hall/ Stewart) – Grant excused absences for participation in 4-H and FFA
- d.** HB 139 (Roemer/J. Miller) – Increase penalties for assault against sports officials.
- e.** HB 140 (Brown) – Increase penalties for illegally passing a school bus and permit law enforcement to use school bus camera content to identify offenders.
- f.** HB 144 (Manchester) Allow an August special election for the purpose of submitting a statewide ballot issue to voters.
- g.** HB 146 (Bird) - Establish a contribution-based benefit cap in calculating retirement benefits for the School Employees Retirement System (SERS)
- h.** HB 147 (Fowler Arthur/A. Miller) - Alter teacher licensure revocation, hiring practices, and misconduct.
- i.** SB 66 (S. Huffman) – Prohibit public employers from providing paid leave or compensation for a public employee to engage in political and lobbying activities.
- j.** SB 92 (McColley/Gavarone) – Allow an August special election for a statewide ballot issue.
- k.** SB 99 (Ingram) - Require a seizure action plan for each student with a seizure disorder and training.
- l.** SB 104 (Cirino/Brenner) - College Credit Plus
- m.** SJR 2 (McColley/Gavarone) - Increase from 50% to 60% the threshold to approve a constitutional amendment.

IV. ODE/STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Search for intern superintendent of Public Instruction

V. NEXT STEPS

1. Lawmaker outreach – House and Senate

Ensure you are meeting with your lawmakers on the budget bill, the minimum floor amendment, and other legislative issues.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be May 26, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.