



### Week of Feb. 12, 2024

#### **House committee reviews SB 168 and HB 339**

House lawmakers this week took their first look at a Senate proposal that would enact deregulation and flexibility measures for schools and also reduce the educational attainment level for various educator license holders. [Senate Bill \(SB\) 168](#) received a first hearing in the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee on Tuesday, during which sponsor Sen. **Michele Reynolds** fielded questions and concerns from committee members who focused largely on the bill's two main licensure provisions.

The first licensure provision would reduce the required educational attainment level from a master's degree to a bachelor's degree for holders of a senior professional educator license, lead professional educator license, professional administrator license, and alternative superintendent license. The second change would allow districts to hire unlicensed individuals to teach if they have a master's degree and pass a subject area examination in the area in which they intend to teach. Both provisions are expected to undergo modifications or elimination while the bill is in the House.

Meanwhile, the committee heard nearly 30 in-person witnesses testify in support of [House Bill 339](#), which would create a new voucher system for [nonchartered nonpublic schools](#). The bill would provide \$7,418 to each student enrolled in such a school and deposit that money into an education savings account for that student to apply toward their school's tuition or to purchase educational goods and services. The state currently provides no funding for students in these schools. The nonpartisan Legislative Service Commission estimates the magnitude of the bill's cost to be \$238 million annually.

The next meeting of the committee will take place on April 10, preceded by a month-long recess in March during which lawmakers will campaign for the primary election. The Senate has one remaining session – February 28 – and will also recess in March and return on April 10.

#### **Update on DEW's implementation of the Science of Reading**

The Department of Education and Workforce this week released a bulletin outlining the timeline for the release of approved core instructional materials and intervention materials aligned to the Science of Reading. Information is accessible here:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/OHED/bulletins/38a7d23>. Below are key dates in the rollout of the materials.

January 31	The initial list ( <a href="#">linked here</a> ) of approved core instructional materials was posted.
February 9	The list of core instructional materials ( <a href="#">linked here</a> ) that are <b>currently under review</b> was posted.
March 1	The approved materials for the second phase will be posted. A two-week appeals process for unapproved vendors will begin at this point.

Sometime in April	The approved intervention materials for prekindergarten through grade 12 will be posted.
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### **State Board of Education activity**

Teacher licensure fees may be raised by 50% if the legislature does not provide additional funding to the State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction **Paul Craft** told members of the State Board of Education this week. A potential fee increase from \$200 to \$325 or \$350, for example, is in response to a multi-million-dollar budget deficit the panel now faces after most of its duties and other state funding were transferred to the newly created Department of Education and Workforce. In response, Craft and the board are requesting \$10 million from the legislature to cover the shortfall.

Sen. **Andrew Brenner**, an ex officio member of the board, had previously assured the panel in September that the legislature would help provide some stopgap funding. This week, however, he appeared to backtrack somewhat on fully funding the difference. “They may need some supplemental funding,” said Brenner. “It could be several million dollars, but I don’t believe it’s \$10 million.”

### **Preliminary injunction halts social media law**

A federal court judge on Monday [issued a preliminary injunction](#) this week halting the implementation of the Social Media Parental Notification Law that was set to go into effect in January. [That law](#), which was enacted by the state budget bill, requires social media companies to gain parental permission for all users under the age of 16.

### **AI Toolkit for schools unveiled**

Lt. Gov. **Jon Husted** on Thursday unveiled the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Toolkit, which features guidance and resources for teachers, parents, and policymakers on advancing AI readiness in schools. The toolkit is accessible here: <https://innovateohio.gov/aitoolkit/ai-toolkit>.

### **Heard around the Statehouse**

“We could take all (the state school board members’) hourly rates to zero and make you travel by donkey – we’re not going to balance the budget there.” - **Paul Craft**, superintendent of public instruction, speaking to members of the State Board of Education about the panel’s projected budget deficit and attempts to reduce costs.