



Week of June 24, 2024

Lawmakers send 16 bills to DeWine for his signature

After passing a combined 52 bills, 16 of which are now pending on the desk of Gov. **Mike DeWine**, the Ohio House and Senate are now in recess for the summer. No schedule for the second half of 2024 has been released yet. Among those bills pending on DeWine's desk are:

- [Senate Bill \(SB\) 168](#) – education deregulation and flexibilities
- [House Bill \(HB\) 2](#) – the \$4.2 billion capital appropriations bill, which contains \$600 million in OFCC funding
- [SB 29](#) – student technology records and access to information on school-issued devices
- [HB 147](#) – cash payments at school events and athletic transfer eligibility
- [HB 214](#) – political speech protections for school staff and three religious expression days
- [SB 112](#) – required update of protective door assemblies
- [HB 47](#) – required AED placement in schools and at school events and required AED training
- [SB 98](#) – property tax abatements and exemptions

Soon-to-be new laws – what changed?

Many bills on Gov. DeWine's desk underwent significant changes in the past week, and below are key changes from some of those bills.

SB 168

- allows schools to develop new, alternative teacher and principal evaluation frameworks;
- modifies the upper-level grade band from 6-12 to become 7-12;
- requires the issuance of an alternative resident educator license to an individual who (1) holds at least a master's degree in and has successfully completed an exam prescribed by the State Board for the subject area in which the individual will teach, and (2) completes a pedagogical training institute to renew that license;
- prohibits a district from being eligible for state transportation fines if it provides supervised academic services to affected students promptly after school for no more than 60 minutes after the end of the school day;
- creates a new pathway to access the high-performing exemptions for districts who (1) received five stars on their Progress component, (2) have a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of at least 93%, and (3) have a five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of at least 95%; and
- increases the competitive bidding threshold to \$75,000.

A full summary of the House's changes to SB 168 are accessible here:

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=23225&format=pdf>.

HB 147

- requires ticket prices at school events for students to be a lesser price than the adult price;
- prohibits different ticket prices based on the payment method;
- applies these provisions to OHSAA events;
- permits students who have been victims of bullying or other specified crimes or offenses to participate in interscholastic athletics at a different school, subject to the approval of the receiving school's superintendent;
- requires public schools to pay a pre-K teacher a \$1,200 stipend for completing the required Science of

Reading professional development;

- corrects a funding overpayment in the school-funding formula, beginning with fiscal year 2025;
- permits a student subjected to certain qualifying offenses to participate in interscholastic athletics at a different school.

HB 214

- requires districts to adopt a policy that reasonably accommodates the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of students, which includes three excused absences for religious expression days;

SB 29

- permits schools to monitor or access a school-issued device to prevent or respond to any threat to life or safety, rather than permitting such access to respond to imminent threats to life or safety;
- requires that, when a school elects to monitor a school-issued device for an allowable purpose, the school must provide annual notice of that fact to its students' parent and provide notice to parents within 72 hours if permitted access occurs.

Bathroom bill clears House as State Board fails to secure funding

Approaching midnight on Wednesday, House lawmakers passed [SB 104](#) to (1) require public and private K-12 schools and public and private colleges and universities to designate multi-occupancy bathrooms, locker rooms, and other areas for the exclusive use of biological males or biological females, and (2) prohibit multi-occupancy bathrooms that are designated as “nongendered, multigendered, or open to all genders.” Originally focused on College Credit Plus, the bill was amended on the floor to include the provisions from [HB 183](#), commonly known as “the bathroom bill,” which cleared a House committee in April but has languished since then. During the floor debate on [SB 104](#), Rep. **Adam Bird**, a joint sponsor of [HB 183](#), successfully amended his bill into the larger bill by a vote of 59-32 with three Republicans voting “no,” including House Speaker **Jason Stephens**. The Senate, which adjourned before these events, is unlikely to concur with the House’s changes to SB 104.

Meanwhile, funding that would have filled the multi-million-dollar budget hole for the State Board of Education failed to clear the final legislative hurdle this week. House lawmakers passed [SB 117](#), which appropriated \$4.7 million to the panel, but the Senate adjourned without voting on the measure, leaving it in limbo until Senate lawmakers return in the fall. [SB 117](#) also includes \$2 million to support the Regional Partnership Program, an initiative from the Montgomery County delegation and the Montgomery County ESC.

Senate President **Matt Huffman** told reporters the funding could be secured at a July 17 meeting of the state Controlling Board and it didn’t need to be sourced from legislation. He also expressed concerns about the licensing agency’s expenses and whether those could be reduced rather than raising fees or appropriating state funds to support the panel.

House activity

The following bills saw action this week in the House:

- [HB 349](#), which qualifies pipelines for a reduced property value 25% to 75% in locally designated areas, passed by the House by a 63-33 vote. The bill now advances to the Senate.
- [HB 211](#), which requires boards of education and other public bodies to hold a public comment period at their public meetings, received a first hearing in a House committee;
- [HB 518](#), which enacts school bus safety measures, received a first hearing in a House committee;
- [HB 525](#), which increases the penalty for assaulting any school employee or volunteer to fifth degree felony, received a first hearing in a House committee;

- [HB 571](#), which requires public and private schools and public and private colleges and universities to include the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline telephone number, 988, on student identification cards, student planners, and electronic portals, received a first hearing in a House committee.

Senate activity

The following bills saw action this week in the Senate:

- [HB 8](#), which enacts the Parents Bill of Rights, was revised with a substitute bill. Action on the bill will not take place until early fall at the soonest.
- [SB 244](#), which creates “Residential Stability Zones” where partial property tax exemptions may be granted but schools and local governments are not reimbursed for the lost revenue, received a second hearing for proponent testimony in a Senate committee;
- [SB 271](#), which creates a property tax circuit breaker for income-eligible Ohioans that would be claimed via an income tax credit or direct rebate of up to \$1,000 annually, received a second hearing for proponent testimony in a Senate committee;
- [HB 432](#), which creates licensure flexibility for career-technical education teachers, received a first hearing for sponsor testimony in a Senate committee;
- [SB 259](#), which allows students who have been the victim of certain offenses or have been bullied, harassed, or intimidated to participate in interscholastic athletics at a different school, received a second hearing for proponent testimony. This bill on Wednesday was inserted into [HB 147](#), which is on its way to the governor.
- [SB 182](#), which creates the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program to award qualifying students college scholarships and requires the Department of Education and Workforce to hire a foster care liaison, received a first hearing in a Senate committee. A companion bill – [HB 164](#) – passed the House on June 12 and is currently pending in the Senate.

Heard around the Statehouse

“Superintendents and school boards, they need clarity on this issue. We are the legislative body in the state of Ohio. We should not be sitting on the sideline waiting for the federal executive branch to make decisions. We should not be sitting on the sideline waiting for the judicial branch to make decisions when it comes to this issue.” - Rep. **Adam Bird**, in a floor speech urging his colleagues to support his amendment to include the bathroom bill in SB 104.

“Our superintendents and school boards have asked us for this legislation. They’ve widely broadcasted their support and encouragement. [A superintendent from my district](#) provided in-person proponent testimony and was [one of 40 Ohio superintendents who signed their name to advocate to support and for passage of this bill](#). I’ll vote yes tonight to answer their request and to protect boys and girls and young men and women in private spaces.” - Rep. **Angie King**, in a floor speech urging her colleagues to support the bathroom bill floor amendment during the debate on SB 104.

“We can’t seem to get property tax relief where it’s really needed ... but we’re going to prime the pump more for these large utility companies.” - Rep. **Dan Troy**, in a floor speech decrying HB 349, which would provide property tax breaks to pipeline companies.

“Ohio needs higher education reform and the time to display leadership in the House on this bill has come and gone.” - Sen. **Jerry Cirino**, referring to House Speaker **Jason Stephens’** repeated refusal to place Cirino’s higher education reform legislation, SB 83, on the House floor for a vote.