

Legislative/System Improvements Committee

Zoom Meeting Summary
Friday, January 26, 2024
10:00 a.m.

In attendance on video conference: Tony Podojil, legislative consultant William Schwartz and member representatives from 45 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. MAJOR BILLS UNDER CONSIDERATION

a. HB 8 (Carruthers/Swearingen) Parents Bill of Rights

This bill was marked for a vote in December, which did not occur. It is anticipated the bill could be passed by the Senate during their February meeting.

b. HB 68 (Click) SAFE Act and Save Women's Sports Act

This bill was signed into law by Gov. DeWine in December and the House met on Jan. 10 to override his veto. The Senate meets today – Jan. 24 – and is expected to override the veto, making the bill become law effective in April. A lawsuit is expected to be filed challenging the constitutionality of the law.

c. HB 183 (Lear/Bird) Single-Sex Bathrooms

The bill is expected to receive a committee vote and a potential House floor vote. Doing so would allow House Republicans with primary election challengers to show voters their conservative credentials with a vote in support of the bill. Timing will be key as only one more House session is scheduled for February and then not again until April.

d. HB 187/SB 153 (Hall/Bird, Lang/Johnson) Property Tax Valuation Changes

The House has yet to bring up HB 187 for a final concurrence vote and is not expected to do so. The legislature appears to be focusing its attention on property taxes via the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform.

e. HB 206 (Click/Robb Blasdel) - Expulsion Policies

This bill passed committee, but Speaker Stephens has not placed the bill on the floor for a full vote of the House.

f. HB 214 (Holmes) – Professional Standards for School Staff

HB 214 passed the House in November and has since received one hearing in the Senate.

g. HB 216 (Lightbody/Williams) - Compliance on Bullying Laws

What was once expected to be seriously considered by the committee has yet to materialize. The bill has not received a first hearing despite having been introduced in June of 2023. This bill no longer appears to warrant serious consideration.

h. SB 29 (S. Huffman) - Student Technology Records

The House has not brought SB 29 up for a committee vote but it is expected some of the school prohibitions on monitoring student activities on school-issued devices will be modified to provide flexibility to schools.

i. SB 49 (Reynolds) - Religious Expression Days

This bill is on hold as the House, Senate, governor's office, and DEW have conversations about how to address chronic absenteeism policies.

j. SB 162 (Brenner) – Academic Intervention Plans

The bill passed the Senate in December and is expected to receive hearings in 2024 but receive larger scrutiny from the House.

k. SB 168 (Reynolds) – Deregulation and Flexibility

Like SB 162, the bill passed the Senate in December and is expected to be modified by the House in 2024.

II. RECENTLY INTRODUCED BILLS

a. HB 371 (Lorenz) - Homestead Exemption for Military Spouses

b. SB 208 (Roegner) - Open Enrollment for Military Children

III. DEW/STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

a. Dackin Invite to March Executive Committee Meeting

b. Reading and Math Literacy

c. DEW Attendance Proposal

III. OTHER ISSUES

a. Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform

The committee continues to hear testimony from invited groups, and schools are expected to be invited to testify in April. A report from the committee is due by December 31, 2024.

b. Social Media Parental Notification Act

A federal lawsuit has temporarily halted the implementation of the act.

c. Cell Phones in Schools

The administration is considering a bill to prohibit cell phones in schools and members are encouraged to report their cell phone policies to the Alliance.

d. OFCC + Capital Budget

The House is expected to unveil its capital budget proposal soon. The Senate will work on its capital budget in April and May, with a final package to be enacted in June.

V. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is March 1, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.