



Week of November 11, 2024

Senate sends Bathroom Bill to DeWine

A proposal to require public and private schools, colleges, and universities to designate multi-occupancy bathroom and locker room facilities for the exclusive use of the female biological sex and the others for the male biological sex awaits the signature of Gov. Mike DeWine. The Ohio Senate on Wednesday passed [Senate Bill \(SB\) 104](#) on a 24-7, party-line vote. The bill also revises the College Credit Plus program. A legal challenge is likely to occur after the bill is signed.

“LifeWise bill” debated, passage likely to happen this year

This week also featured testimony on two companion bills to require, rather than permit, school districts adopt policies to allow students to be released from school for religious instruction during school hours. Those bills, [House Bill \(HB\) 445](#) and [SB 293](#), are still pending in their original chambers, but there appears to be strong momentum to insert the provisions of those bills into a bill further along in the legislative process, possibly HB 8 – the Parents Bill of Rights – which awaits a Senate committee vote.

Committees tee up bills for movement, others for one-and-done consideration

The following bills received hearings:

- HB 432 – career technical education licensure flexibility. A likely vehicle for other future changes
- HB 279 – school bus safety grant program and safety enhancements. A vote is scheduled for next week
- SB 208 – mandated open enrollment for military families
- SB 295 – school closure requirements for public schools and charter schools
- HB 70 – required policies for over-the-counter drugs for public and private schools
- HB 178 – anti-discrimination policies based on race, including hair types
- HB 506 – required school policies on overdose reversal drugs
- HB 470 – annual audit of state assessments
- HB 560 – required implicit bias training
- HB 411 – increase in the base teacher salary from \$35,000 to \$50,000
- HB 216 – process for DEW to investigate compliance with bullying policies

Alternative licensure pathway approved by State Board

The State Board of Education on Tuesday approved a new alternative license for educators. The new license, [accessible here](#), is called the Interim Resident Educator Teaching License and provides a pathway for superintendents to employ applicants who meet six criteria, including completion of an approved educator preparation program, a passing score on the Ohio Assessment for Educators, and a minimum score of 206 on the content assessment to be taught, among other requirements.

On tap for next week

- The private, nonbinding vote for Ohio’s House Speaker is set to take place in the evening on Nov. 20
- A potential SB 29 fix could be included in HB 432 at the Tuesday meeting of the Senate Education Committee
- Property tax caps, freezes, rebates, and more will be debated Tuesday in the House Ways and Means Committee as three bills – HJR 6, HB 402, and HB 572 – all receive first hearings for sponsor testimony

Overview of Ohio’s election results

Ohio Republicans continue to dominate their control of state legislature, though with slight changes

after the Nov. 5 general election. In the House, Republicans will hold a 65-34 majority (down from 67-32) when the 136th General Assembly convenes in January. Two Democrats flipped Republican seats in Franklin County (Crystal Lett and Mark Sigrist) and reduced the GOP margin, eliminating Republicans' ability to pass emergency clauses without Democrat votes (66 votes) but not enough to deny Republicans' the ability to override a governor's veto without Democrat votes (60 votes).

The Ohio Senate will stand at 24-9 (previously 26-7), following two flips by Democrats in Franklin County (Beth Liston) and Montgomery County (Willis Blackshear). All other incumbents running for reelection retained their seats. Ohio's Supreme Court will hold a significant Republican majority at 6-1, previously at 4-3.

Heard around the Statehouse

"Ohioans and Americans, quite frankly, across the country, don't want boys in girls' sports. They don't want boys in girls' locker rooms. They don't want boys in girls' bathrooms. It's for the safety of the kids. And this message was sent loud and clear last week during the national election. – Republican Sen.

Kristina Roegner, speaking in support of the Bathroom Bill on the Senate floor.

"Is it possible that this is going to end up in some litigation? Probably. But a lot of good legislation does sometimes end up in litigation, and maybe the courts will ultimately settle this." – Republican Sen.

Andrew Brenner, acknowledging in his Senate speech on the Bathroom Bill that courts may decide the fate of the legislation.