

HB 96, the biennial budget
Summary of changes made by Senate

[Link to the legislative service commission comparison document](#)

School funding

- The Senate's school funding proposal continues years five and six of the Fair School Funding Plan phase-in with the guarantees, ensuring no district receives less state aid than it received in FY 21. The Senate did not increase the base cost inputs.
- Alters the House's per pupil growth supplement to be \$225 in FY 26 for districts whose enrollment grew by at least 5% and \$250 in FY 27 for districts whose enrollment grew by at least 3%.
- Provides a performance supplement in FY 26 and FY 27 to districts that received any of the following on the state report card for the 2023-2024 school year: (a) an overall performance rating of four or more stars, (b) a performance rating of three or more stars on the Progress component, or (c) a higher performance rating on the Progress component than the district received for that component on its 2022-2023 report card. Calculates the payment as equal to a district's current year enrollment times \$26 times the greater of the number of stars the district received for its overall performance rating or its Progress component rating on the state report card for the 2023-2024 school year.
- Creates an Education Demonstration Projects fund with \$15.0M over the biennium. Requires the fund to issue grants for primary education-related demonstration projects and requires the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) to solicit proposals from organizations with a demonstrated record of increased student achievement or improved test results. Requires ODEW to begin distributing the grants by January 1, 2026.
- Requires ODEW, for FY 26 and FY 27, to calculate a district's disadvantaged pupil impact aid (DPIA) by using a weighted number of economically disadvantaged students equal to the sum of (a) the number of economically disadvantaged students reported for the district for FY 25, as of June 1, 2025, multiplied by 75% for FY 26 and 65% for FY 27, and (b) the number of directly certified economically disadvantaged students for the fiscal year multiplied by 25% for FY 26 and 35% for FY 27.
 - o Omnibus clarifies this calculation uses the average daily membership of economically disadvantaged students, rather than the "number" of those students as in the Senate substitute version.

- Increases from 30% to 50% the threshold of carry-over balance allowed before a county budget commission must reduce a school district's property tax collections. Further, permits a district to adopt a resolution reserving an amount of carry-over balance for current or future permanent improvement expenses to be used within the next three years that will not count towards the 50% threshold. If not used for this purpose within three years, the money will be used to reduce property taxes.
 - Specifies that TAX is to treat the bill's property tax reductions due to a school district's excess carry-over balance as a reduction in the authorized rate, as opposed to a reduction in the effective rate.
 - Also restores county prosecutor as member of county budget commission.
- Allows a county budget commission to reduce millage on any voter-approved tax levy, aside from a debt levy, if the commission finds it reasonably necessary or prudent to avoid unnecessary, excessive, or unneeded property tax collections.
- Requires school districts to obtain approval from the county budget commission before adjusting inside millage in a manner that increases tax rates.

District financial reporting

- Requires school boards to submit appropriations, revenue and fund balance assumptions contained in the boards' budget for that fiscal year, in addition to three-year projections of operational revenues and expenditures.
- Requires each district board to submit its current budget information and three-year projections by August 31 of each fiscal year and updated information and projections by the last day of February of that fiscal year.
- For FY 2026, requires each school district to make the initial submission of current budget information and three-year projections by October 15, 2025.
- Requires ODEW and the Auditor of State (AOS) to jointly adopt rules governing the submission of current budget information and three-year projections.
- Requires the rules to specify the information required for the submissions and any additional financial and operating information necessary for the audits and analyses conducted by the auditor of state or the department, including special and federal funds expenditures, revenues, and balances.
- Adds current budget information to provisions of law where three-year forecasts are used or required.
- Requires ODEW and AOS to label projections regarding property tax allocation as "state reimbursement for property tax credits."

Property tax reform

- Requires that current emergency and substitute tax levies be included in the calculation of a school district's 20-mill floor or a joint vocational school district's 2-mill floor for property tax purposes.
- Eliminates the following types of levies: replacement property tax levy, fixed sum emergency levy, substitute levy, and combined school district income tax and fixed-sum property tax levy; generally beginning with elections held on or after January 1, 2026.
- Prohibits a school district from proposing a current expense levy if it has a general fund carry-over balance over 100%.
- Requires current expense levy ballot language to include the percentage and dollar amount of any general fund carry-over balances.
- Prohibits a school district or other education-related taxing authority from combining a renewal levy with an increase to an existing levy and makes other changes.
- Changes, beginning with elections held on or after January 1, 2026, the term employed in property tax ballot language and election notices to describe the true value of property from "the county auditor's appraised value" to "market value."
- Requires two-thirds of a school board or other governing authority of a school district, joint vocational school district, regional student education district, career-technical cooperative education district, or a qualifying school district partnership to approve submission of a tax levy to voters for all educational levies instead of only for certain types of education levies under current law.
- Increases the reduction amount of the standard property tax homestead exemption from \$28K to \$32K while increasing income threshold from \$40K to \$42,500. Also increases the enhanced homestead exemptions for disabled veterans and surviving spouses from \$56K to \$59K.
- Requires the creation of a statewide screening system to ensure that the owner-occupied property tax credit and homestead exemptions are properly applied.
- Reinserts provisions added by the House, but removed in the Senate substitute bill, that modify the requirements governing when political subdivisions can file property tax complaints and counter-complaints. The amendment does not reinsert a provision that would require subdivisions that fail to comply with property tax complaint filing requirements to pay the attorney's fees and costs incurred by the property owner in connection with the complaint.

- Restores a provision added by the House but removed in the Senate substitute bill that:
 - Allows a county, municipality, or home rule township to amend an existing community reinvestment area (CRA) agreement to extend the term of the CRA tax exemption to a total of 30 years for an existing building that is expected to be the site of a megaproject or owned or occupied by a megaproject supplier.
 - Allows a building to qualify for a CRA tax exemption as part of a megaproject so long as it is owned or occupied, as opposed to owned and occupied, by a megaproject operator or supplier.
 - Establishes that a political subdivision that does not own the property subject to a CRA exemption, with an obligation to pay property taxes on that building, is not a required party to an agreement required for commercial CRA property tax exemptions.

Income tax reform

- Reduces Ohio state income tax to a flat rate of 2.75% starting in Tax Year 2026. The plan maintains that Ohioans earning less than \$26,050 pay no state income tax. The marginal tax paid on income over \$26,050 begins to reduce (in Tax Year 2025 for those making less than \$100,000 and in Tax Year 2026 for all taxpayers.) Similarly, taxpayers with higher incomes will begin to phase out of eligibility for the joint filer credit and personal, dependent and spousal deductions.

Partisan school board races

- Requires candidates for the office of member of the State Board of Education (SBE), member of a school district board of education, and member of the governing board of an educational service center to be nominated by primary election or, in the case of an independent candidate, by nominating petition.
- Requires candidates for those offices to appear on the general election ballot with a political party designation along with other partisan offices.
- Requires those offices to be treated as partisan offices under the Election Law for all other purposes, such as filling vacancies on the ballot

State Board of Education

- Restores current law and removes provisions of the bill that do the following:
 - Reduces SBE membership from eight members appointed by the Governor and 11 elected members to a total of five members appointed by the Governor.
 - Abolishes the offices of the elected SBE members upon expiration of their current terms or a vacancy in their offices.
 - Abolishes the offices of the first three appointed SBE members whose terms expire or who vacate their offices.
 - Modifies the representation requirements for appointed SBE members to require at least one member to represent each of a rural, suburban, and urban school district, a community school, and a chartered nonpublic school.
 - Changes criteria for determining whether absences lead to a vacancy in SBE from two absences for reasons that are declared insufficient by a vote of 12 members to three absences for any reason.
 - Eliminates all requirements regarding the election of SBE members.

Transportation

- Requires the student transportation workgroup to monitor and review student transportation system during the 2025-2026 school year, conduct a study of and develop recommendations regarding the feasibility of a school district to transport students enrolled in a community school or nonpublic school on days that the community school or nonpublic school is open for operation with students in attendance but the school district is not, submit a one-time report, and disband following the report's submission, rather than generally monitoring and reviewing the system and issuing an annual report.
- Authorizes the Montgomery County Pupil Transportation Pilot Program to transport students to and from their place of employment in addition to the students' residence and extends the program to FY 26 only.
- Requires ODEW to create and administer a community school transportation pilot program for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years.
- Permits two or more community schools to enter into an agreement to provide or arrange transportation to and from school for students enrolled in participating schools.
 - Requires that each community school transportation consortium designate a fiscal agent and that the fiscal agent report, on behalf of schools

participating in the consortium, any combined data necessary for ODEW to make transportation payments.

- Removes provisions authorizing school boards to contract with a transportation network company (like Uber or Lyft) to transport unaccompanied students
- Removes language requiring certain districts that use mass transit systems to transport students to ensure transfers between routes do not occur at the central transfer hub.
- Eliminates the School Bus Safety Grants proposed by the governor and supported by the House.
- Eliminates the former School Bus Purchase Program that required ODEW to distribute bus purchasing grants to school districts for FY 22 and FY 23, authorizes the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) director to transfer the cash balance in the fund to the GRF.
 - Eliminates the associated reporting requirement that ODEW annually collect age, mileage, and vehicle condition data from districts through its transportation data collection system.
- Removes House language creating the rural transportation grant program, awarded each fiscal year to dropout prevention and recovery community schools meeting certain criteria.
- Authorizes school districts, chartered nonpublic schools, and community schools to use a multifunction school activity bus (i.e. a school bus without the stop-arms or typical school bus lights) to transport students between school and other school-related functions or activities.
 - Prohibits a multifunction school activity bus from being used for transporting students between school and home or a designated bus stop.
 - Requires drivers of multifunction school activity buses to meet all the same standards of a school bus driver.
 - Authorizes school district boards of education and governing authorities of educational service centers to purchase multifunction school activity buses in the same manner as other school buses.

Facilities

- Restores the executive proposal changing the definition of an unused school facility,
 - Modifies the definition as follows:

- Bases the definition partially on a building's student enrollment in the three most recent school years (a reduction from the governor's proposal of the last ten years enrollment data);
 - Removes from the definition a school building that, in the two most recent school years, had enrollment less than 60% of the maximum student enrollment established for the building in its architectural specifications or master design plan approved by OFCC;
 - Removes the clarification that the student enrollment of a building in the ten most recent school years includes the current school year.
- Exempts the following from the involuntary disposition law:
 - A facility is less than ten years old.
 - A building that, in the three most recent school years, had student enrollment that was less than 60% of the building's greatest student enrollment in the ten most recent school years if it is the only district building that serves one or more grade levels or the building's student enrollment decreased because it was undergoing repairs or renovations that caused a portion of the building's instructional space to be unusable; and
 - A school building that is primarily used to provide career-technical education or has specialized classroom facilities necessary for the district to operate its career technical education program.
 - Permits a school district, if it believes extraordinary circumstances should exempt it from the involuntary disposition law, to appeal the requirement to the ODEW Director, who must issue a decision within 60 days.
- Changes the sale method for an unused facility from an auction to a lottery if more than one high-performing community school or chartered nonpublic school located in the district notifies the district of its intent to purchase the property.
- Requires a district, if no high-performing community school or chartered nonpublic school located in the district offers to purchase or lease a property, to offer the property for sale or lease to high performing community school or chartered nonpublic school located outside of the district prior to offering to sell or lease the property to other start-up community schools, college-preparatory boarding schools, and STEM schools.
- Restores the executive proposed requirement that each district annually report to ODEW by November 30 information related to determining whether a school building operated by the district is an unused school facility.
- Modifies House language related to the disposal or demolition of school property to make the public auction permissive if the building is not initially purchased and

adds educational service centers that have territory in a school district to the list of qualifying schools to which school districts must offer property under the right of first refusal law.

- Eliminates the House requirement that community or chartered nonpublic schools pay the school district any profit they receive from a future sale of a property previously purchased from a school district.
- Expands the school district contract bidding process for planned construction projects that exceed the competitive bidding threshold amount from work on any "school building" to work on any "building or other property."
- Increases the \$1,000 FY 25 per student facilities payment for community and STEM schools to \$1,100 in FY 26 and \$1,200 in FY 27.
- Removes the ability for OFCC to biannually adjust for inflation the cost threshold for construction projects under the expedited proposal and selection process.
- Eliminates the creation of the Career-Technical Planning District Construction Study Committee.

School district territory transfers

- Requires the SBE to approve a proposed school district territory transfer if:
 1. The territory is being transferred to an adjacent school district;
 2. The district from which the territory is being transferred has received an overall performance rating of less than two stars for two or more consecutive school years; and
 3. No party opposing the proposed transfer has presented to the SBE clear and convincing evidence that any information used to facilitate the transfer is incorrect or inaccurate.

Career technical schools

- Decreases from \$10 to \$3 the amount multiplied by the enrollment for all districts and schools within a Career Technical Planning District (CTPD) to calculate the career awareness and exploration funds ODEW must pay to the lead district of each CTPD.
- OBM Requires tech prep expansion grants to be distributed to entities within the seven JobsOhio regions to align with ODEW's redesign of tech prep centers

- Provides \$5.6M each FY in support of competitive expansion grants to tech prep consortia.
- Maintains the Aim Higher Pilot Program that was added by the House.

Educational Regional Support Systems

- Returns to the Executive provision regarding the redesign of Ohio's State Support Teams and the requirement that they support state and regional workforce development initiatives.

Community school sponsor evaluations

- Excludes all community schools whose contracts were not renewed or terminated by the sponsor before the evaluation from the academic performance component of a community sponsor's evaluation.
- Eliminates peer review of a sponsor's adherence to quality practices for sponsors rated "effective" or "exemplary" on the most recent ratings.
- Prohibits ODEW from evaluating entities with an overall rating of "exemplary" for five full school years and entities with a rating of "effective" for three full school years after the rating was received, rather than requiring both to be evaluated once every three years.
- Qualifies a community school sponsor with an overall rating of "exemplary" for specified incentives under continuing law, rather than requiring the sponsor to receive an overall rating of "exemplary" for the two most recent years for which the sponsor was evaluated to qualify as under current law.
- Requires ODEW to annually publish academic performance data for each sponsor, regardless of whether the sponsor is being evaluated for that school year.
- Requires ODEW evaluate community school sponsors for the 2025-2026 school year and to use these ratings to determine the sponsor's evaluation cycle.
- Prohibits ODEW from including Alternative Education Academy (OHDELA) in the academic component calculation of the sponsor evaluation for the Office of Ohio School Sponsorship for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years but includes the school in that component if the Office continues to sponsor the school after the 2026-2027 school year.

Community schools of quality

- Qualifies as a Community School of Quality any community school that:
 1. Has a sponsor that was rated "exemplary" or "effective" on the sponsor's most recent sponsor evaluation;
 2. Received a higher performance index score than the school district in which the school is located on the most recent state report card;
 3. Received a performance rating of three stars or higher for the Progress component on the most recent state report card; and
 4. Received a performance rating of three stars or higher for the Achievement component on the most recent state report card.
- Restores a House provision designating a dropout prevention and recovery community school as a Community School of Quality, but modifies the eligibility requirements to include only the following:
 1. The school's sponsor was rated "exemplary" or "effective" on its most recent evaluation;
 2. The school received an "exceeds standards" on the High School Test Passage Rate Percentage performance indicator on the two most recent state report cards, rather than an overall exceeds standards as under the House version; and
 3. The school is not an internet- or computer-based community school.
- Requires that a school designated as a Community School of Quality under criteria for a community school either has a qualifying operator or is replicating a certain operational and instructional model maintain that designation for the four fiscal years following the fiscal year in which the school initially received that designation.

Autism scholarship provisions

- Makes effective immediately House passed provisions of the bill that:
 - Removes the definition of "parent" and instead defines "eligible applicant," which includes the natural or adoptive parents, the custodian, the guardian, the grandparent, or the surrogate parent of a qualified special education child and a qualified special education child, if the child does not have a custodian or guardian and the child is at least 18 and less than 22 years of age;
 - Clarifies a child is eligible under the Autism Scholarship Program if that child is at least 18 and less than 22 years of age.

- Qualifies a child to whom the following apply:
 1. The child is enrolled in a chartered or nonchartered nonpublic school, is home educated, or is older than compulsory school age and less than 22 years of age and received a home education and has not yet received a diploma from the child's parent or guardian;
 2. The child is still eligible to receive transition services under the child's IEP; and
 3. The child has an IEP developed that includes services related to autism.
- Permits multiple alternative public providers or registered private providers to be contracted to provide services to implement an IEP or education plan as the eligible applicant and providers determine are necessary and associated with educating the qualified special education child. Expressly states that a qualified special education child is not limited to receiving services from a single provider for any services identified in the IEP, including a single type of service;
- Permits intervention services, educational services, academic services, tutoring services, aide services, and other related special education services to be provided virtually;
- Permits a teacher or substitute teacher licensed by SBE to provide virtual services to a qualified special education child.

Other provisions on vouchers / schools of choice

- Eliminates the home school tax credit expansion.
- Provides additional increases to the categorical amounts for the Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship, increasing state support by \$3M each FY.
- Removes House language requiring ODEW to collect certain data regarding EdChoice voucher recipients.
- Removes House language creating Educational Savings Accounts for nonchartered, nonpublic school students.
- Reduces the set aside for the administration of state scholarship programs by \$2M each fiscal year.
- Requires ODEW to calculate FY 2026 and 2027 disadvantaged pupil impact aid for each community school that opens for the first time in fiscal year 2026 or 2027 using the number of students enrolled in the school who are certified as categorically eligible for free meals.

- Establishes a separate special education catastrophic aid cost pool for community and STEM schools and requires ODEW to withhold 5% of each school's special education funding to be added to the cost pool.
- Provides funding for Quality Community and Independent STEM schools of \$115M in FY 26 and \$125M in FY 27.

Online learning schools

- Permits school districts to employ teachers and nonteaching employees, or to contract with a nonprofit or for profit entity, to operate an online learning school.

Release Time for Religious Instruction

- Modifies a provision regarding religious instruction release time to require districts to permit students at least 33 periods per school year in release time. It further specifies that districts cannot prohibit students from bringing external educational materials into school.

Governor's Merit Scholarship

- Removes House provisions placing contingencies on private institutions' participation in the Governor's Merit Scholarship.
- Changes eligibility for Governor's Merit Scholarship to the top 2% of each graduating class with a minimum of one person per district and establishes requirement that recipients of scholarship must stay in Ohio for three years after graduation or repay scholarship funds.
- Revises the guaranteed admission provision such that each graduate in the top 5% of a high school graduating class—not just a recipient of the Governor's Merit Scholarship—is guaranteed admission to Ohio's public universities.
 - Conditions the entitlement of a graduate to admission to a state institution of higher education's main campus on meeting the application and acceptance deadlines for the main campus. Requires the Chancellor of Higher Education, in consultation with the ODEW Director, to identify a process to provide each state institution with a list of all students who are eligible for guaranteed admission.

Assessments and curriculum

- Modifies the provision requiring ODEW to adopt a universal diagnostic assessment to instead require ODEW to approve a list of up to five diagnostic assessments aligned with the academic standards for each of grades kindergarten through three for both reading and math.
 - Requires ODEW's list of approved diagnostic assessments for reading to include the three reading diagnostic assessments that were approved by DEW for use as comparable tools for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee as it existed prior to the amendment's effective date and are most widely used by public schools in the state
- Restores funding for the kindergarten readiness assessment at \$2.76M each fiscal year.
- Restores executive language to require schools to report their math core curriculum and instructional materials.
- Removes provisions from the Senate substitute bill that required universal dyslexia screening measures.
- Eliminates the requirement for ODEW to publicly release state assessment questions.
- Requires all public school districts to provide evidence-based academic intervention services, free of cost, to students who demonstrate a limited level of skill in state assessments in math or English language arts.
- Includes language from [Senate Bill 19](#), requiring districts and schools to develop a mathematics improvement and monitoring plan for each student who qualifies for math intervention services and a mathematics achievement improvement plan if 51% or less of the district or school's students who took the third grade math achievement assessment attained at least a proficient score on the assessment, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Requires ODEW to establish a list of high-quality math core curriculum and instructional materials and randomly survey 5% of districts to ensure compliance.
- Clarifies that a student may be enrolled in a math course that is two grade levels above the student's current grade level for purposes of automatic enrollment in advanced math placements.
- Returns to the executive provision requiring schools to report the number of school personnel who have completed Science of Reading training.
- Removes provisions from the Senate substitute bill that:
 - Require ODEW to include supplemental curriculum in the list of high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials that are aligned with the science

of reading and strategies for effective literacy instruction and requires the items on the list to follow the Reading League's Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines.

- o Revise exceptions from a public school's authority to request to use the three-cueing approach by eliminating current law regarding the exceptions and creating an exemption for a school from needing to apply for a waiver for a child if it has already received a waiver because the child is deaf or hard of hearing.
- o Eliminate the requirement that ODEW must identify vendors that provide professional development to educators on the use of high-quality core curriculum materials and reading intervention programs.

Graduation requirements

- Removes language that adds completion of 250 hours of work-based learning experience as a foundational option to demonstrate competency, restoring current law high school graduation requirements.
- Removes provisions that would broadly exempt students from the current financial literacy high school graduation requirement as well as the House-added Financial Literacy and Workforce Readiness Programming Initiative.
- Restores language requiring the industry-recognized credentials committee to establish alternate criteria for credentials, other than a point value system, under which a student may qualify for a high school diploma.
- Restores language requiring high school graduation plans to include post-graduation career goals but does not give ODEW rulemaking authority regarding the content of graduation and career plans.

Absences

- Removes House language requiring school districts to report causes of student absences by category.
- Removes a provision requiring school districts to provide excused absences for high school students to attend private driver education courses.

Competency-based adult education programs

- Revises the definition of "eligible provider" in the law regarding competency-based adult education programs to include the Buckeye United School District operated by DYS and the Ohio Central School System operated by DRC.
- Delays the elimination of the Adult Diploma Program and the Adult High School Diploma Program, and the effective date of the competency-based adult education programs, until July 1, 2026.
- Delays payments made from GRF ALI 200572, Adult Education Programs, for the new competency-based educational program until FY 2027.

Student health and wellness

- Expands a House-added provision regarding who may consent to a child receiving services in a school-based health center to include a legal guardian, grandparent acting as a caretaker, or other person authorized by law to consent to the child's medical care, in addition to a parent.
- Requires public schools to provide annual, age-appropriate instruction to K-12 students on the harmful effects of short-term and chronic substance use, and to include bullying and hazing in health education curriculum ([Senate Bill 7](#)).
- Decreases by \$7.5M each fiscal year for the Health Program Support line under the Ohio Department of Health. And decreases an earmark for school-based health centers by the same amount.
- Restores the executive provision providing greater flexibility for school districts regarding the development and offering of youth suicide awareness and prevention and child sexual abuse educator in-service trainings.
- Removes provisions that require ODEW to maintain a "universal" list of approved training programs in suicide awareness and violence prevention and qualifies a program using the success sequence curriculum provided by Ohio Adolescent Health Centers as an approved training program and as meeting the minimum requirements to teach risk prevention skills across the required subject areas to youth.
- Restores current law eliminated in the House version that requires both:
 - o The SBE to develop a mandatory training program on building and construction trades career pathways; and
 - o Each licensed school counselor serving students in grades 7-12 to complete four hours of that training every five years.

Education Technology Resources

- Eliminates funding to provide grants to educational television stations working with partner education technology centers to provide public schools with instructional resources and services aligned with state academic content standards. Requires that such resources and services be based upon the advice and approval of ODEW, based on a formula developed in consultation with educational television stations and educational technology centers.
- Eliminates funding to support the training, technical support, guidance, and assistance with compliance reporting to school districts and public libraries applying for federal E-Rate funds; for oversight and guidance of school district technology plans; for support to district technology personnel; and for support of the development, maintenance, and operation of a network of computer-based information and instructional systems.

Auditor of State

- Removes the authority of the AOS to (1) alter the formula used to calculate the amount a school district must deposit into their Capital and Maintenance Fund and (2) designate alternative sources of revenue a school district can deposit in the fund.
- Requires a school district, rather than AOS, to notify ODEW when the school district transfers the required deposit for certain projects.
- Removes the requirement that the AOS issue a finding for recovery against a school district when funds are overdue to the FCC. Instead, requires the FCC to certify the amount to the Attorney General's Office for collection.
- Removes the AOS or their representative as an alternate person responsible for counting all remaining money, bonds, and other securities of a library or board of education fiscal officer.
- Allows the AOS full discretion in selecting which school districts to audit for enrollment information.

Preschool special education funding

- Revises as follows the bill's conditions on school districts, educational service centers, county boards of developmental disabilities, and institutions that serve

preschool children with disabilities receiving preschool special education payments:

- o In the case of school districts, limits the conditions' application to those serving preschool education students and either receiving Early Childhood Education Grant Program funds or providing publicly funded child care;
- o Eliminates conditions requiring districts, centers, boards, and institutions to (1) adhere to Ohio's early learning program standards, (2) participate in and be rated through the Step Up to Quality Program, and (3) document and report child progress, and instead requires the entities to adhere to the Step Up to Quality Program.

The Education and Workforce Data Insights Board

- Establishes the Education and Workforce Data Insights Board ("Board") within the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation to make the state's education and workforce data more useful, applicable, and beneficial to the state's citizens. Outlines the functions and requirements of the board.

Miscellaneous policy provisions

- Excludes any person who is employed by a private employer that has contracted with a school district from School Employees Retirement System (SERS) membership.
- Prohibits a school district board of education from paying employee contributions to the State Teachers Retirement System on behalf of a superintendent employed by the school district or to SERS on behalf of a treasurer employed by the school district.
- Waives qualified immunity for a school district board of education or member if the board or member knowingly instructs the superintendent to violate any provision of the law.
- Clarifies the existing law that permits a student athlete who is a victim of bullying or harassment to participate in sports at a different school applies only to home school students.
- Reinstates language permitting ODEW to collect data from districts and schools on their use of artificial intelligence.

- Restores provision requiring ODEW to collect school district employment and vacancy data, extends the requirement to community and STEM schools, and requires data to be collected at the state, district and school level to the extent possible.
- Modifies the provision requiring schools to adopt a policy banning cell phone use to allow cell phone use for monitoring a health concern with a written statement from a student's physician. This further requires school administrators to include a protocol that addresses cell phone use during active threats or emergencies as part of their comprehensive emergency management plan.
 - Requires the policy to be adopted by October 6, 2025.
- Removes the requirement for ODEW to establish a principal apprenticeship program.
- Requires the legislative authority of a political subdivision to adopt a cybersecurity program that safeguards the political subdivision's data.
- Restores current law regarding notice of open meetings for public bodies by removing changes impacting how a reasonable method of providing notice is accomplished, specifying that advance notice of a meeting may be done by email to all email-list subscribers, and regarding use of self-addressed, stamped envelopes provided by a person requesting advanced notice.
- Repeals the requirement that the Chancellor of Higher Education establish and administer a statewide system of regional FAFSA support teams to support public schools with FAFSA completion and college access programming.
- Removes the governor's provisions regarding College Credit Plus Program engagement and model pathways.
- Removes the House's provision that required public schools, community schools, STEM schools, and private schools that serve elementary school students to provide a paper or electronic copy of the informational materials to each student's parent or guardian regarding Type 1 diabetes.
- Replaces a provision requiring rules adopted by ODEW to specify that supervision of a qualified, credentialed provider may be conducted virtually with one that outright permits that supervision to be conducted virtually.
- Permits a school district superintendent to allow a student enrolled in another school district the opportunity to participate in ice hockey as an interscholastic athletic activity at a school operated by the superintendent's district if:
 1. The district in which the student is enrolled does not offer ice hockey,
 2. The district in which the student is enrolled is located less than 20 miles from the superintendent's district, and

3. The superintendents of both districts enter into an agreement approving the student's participation.
 - o Prohibits requiring a student to enroll in, or be a resident of, the district that offers ice hockey to participate in ice hockey at that district.
 - o Requires a student participating in ice hockey at a school district other than the district in which the student is enrolled to be of the appropriate age and grade level as the school in which the student is participating in ice hockey and to fulfill and be subject to the same academic, nonacademic, and financial requirements as any other participant, including trying out for a position on the team.
- Exempts a student whose parent is an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in this state from any application deadline established in a school district's interdistrict open enrollment policy.
- Eliminates an obsolete provision in the interdistrict enrollment law that exempts a district that is receiving federal funding under a repealed federal law from the prohibition against adopting an enrollment policy that discourages or prohibits its native students from applying to enroll in the schools of an adjacent or any other district.
- Requires the SBE to approve a proposed school district territory transfer if:
 1. The territory is being transferred to an adjacent school district;
 2. The district from which the territory is being transferred has received an overall performance rating of less than two stars for two or more consecutive school years; and
 3. No party opposing the proposed transfer has presented to the SBE clear and convincing evidence that any information used to facilitate the transfer is incorrect or inaccurate.

Miscellaneous funding provisions

- Eliminates \$500K in FY 26 and the requirement for ODEW to contract with experts in civics education and social studies to develop an integrated model curriculum.
- Increases funding by \$10M each FY for the GRIT Program.
- Removes earmarked funds for duties and activities related to the establishment of academic distress commissions, to provide support and assistance to academic distress commissions, and to provide technical assistance and tools to support districts subject to academic distress commissions.

- Establishes GRF ALI 322510, Best Buddies Ohio, with appropriations of \$100,000 in each fiscal year, and earmarks that amount for the Best Buddies Ohio program to support the delivery and expansion of skills-building services throughout Ohio schools and communities.
- Increases Fund 5AO0 ALI 1956H2, Priority Projects, by \$200,000 in FY 2026 and \$250,000 in FY 2027 and earmarks the increases for the Mid-East Career and Technology Centers to purchase CDL training simulators.
- Increases GRF ALI 200576, Adaptive Sports Program, by \$50,000 in each fiscal year.
- Increases GRF ALI 200550, Foundation Funding - All Students, by \$500,000 in each fiscal year and increases the earmark for the College Credit Plus Program for students instructed at home by the same amounts, to \$3,500,000 in each fiscal year.
- Increases Fund 5DA1 ALI 2006B1, Education Demonstration Projects, by \$10,000,000 in FY 2026 and \$25,000,000 in FY 2027. Increases the cash transfer in FY 2026 from the GRF to the Education Demonstration Projects Fund (Fund 5DA1) from \$5,000,000 to \$50,000,000 and eliminates the cash transfer in FY 2027.