



GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC. & RH RESOURCES

Ohio Speech & Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition Legislative Activities Report March 2023

Ohio would put up enough state money to draw down the maximum federal match for services to help people with disabilities find and keep jobs for the first time in about 15 years under the executive budget proposal, HB33 (Edwards), Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) Director Kevin Miller told the House Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee. Miller said that Ohio gets \$3.69 in federal match for every dollar of state funding. OOD will "strategically expand" employment-related services with this additional money, building on partnerships in higher education, career centers and with hundreds of businesses. According to the OOD Redbook from the Legislative Service Commission (LSC), the agency is in for a substantial boost in General Revenue Fund (GRF) support over the biennium, from shy of \$20 million per year in the current budget to \$27.2 million in FY24 and \$32.4 million in FY25 under Gov. Mike DeWine's executive proposal. That represents GRF funding increases of 37.3 percent and 19.1 percent and total funding changes of 7.3 percent and 8.1 percent per fiscal year.

A new budget structure will support existing shared services efforts of the Ohio School for the Deaf and Ohio State School for the Blind while maintaining them as separate entities, the shared superintendent for both schools told a House budget subcommittee. In testimony to the House Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, Superintendent Lou Maynus said the schools already cooperate on afterschool programming, nursing, child nutrition, transportation and other administrative functions. The executive budget proposes \$33.35 million in FY24 and \$33.74 million in FY25, representing increases of 8.1 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively.

After years of planning, procurement, litigation, delays and the phased rollout of underlying technology and administrative infrastructure, new managed care plans for Ohioans enrolled in Medicaid finally launched Wednesday, Feb. 1. That's also the date when the state started to contact Ohioans who've stayed on the program under pandemic-era flexibility policies about their impending removal, now that Congress has untied the existence of a declared health emergency from Medicaid eligibility decisions. Seven managed care plans, some incumbents but all operating under a redesigned structure, will start serving enrollees four years almost to the day after Gov. Mike DeWine ordered the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) to re-bid managed care contracts. The new structure includes specialty contractors beyond the managed care plans for key functions, as well as centralization within ODM of some work.

Retired high school history teacher and wrestling coach Paul LaRue takes the helm of the State Board of Education (SBOE) in a time of transition, as the search for a new state superintendent lingers and the Senate considers whether to strip most powers from that post and the board. In an interview with *Hannah News* about his plans and goals for the board, he described himself as an optimist and said he's gratified to see the board, governor and lawmakers seemingly on the same page when it comes to priorities like literacy. "I'm basically a half-full kind of guy, I'm a positive guy, I come at things from a positive standpoint," he said. "I think I bring a certain positive factor that I think can be helpful."

The upper chamber once again passed a K-12 education overhaul bill, with Senate Republicans saying the systemic changes are needed to ensure policies are effectively implemented to improve student outcomes. The Senate voted 26-7 to pass SB1 (Reineke), with all Republicans voting in favor of the legislation and all Democrats voting against it. "For too long, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has operated free from effective oversight and accountability," Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) said. This followed action by the Senate Education Committee, which again advanced plans to overhaul K-12 governance and relegate the State Board of Education (SBOE) to a subset of its current powers, after making a handful of changes to the legislation. Under SB1 (Reineke), ODE would be renamed as the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) and would be led by a gubernatorial appointee. The new agency would assume most duties of the SBOE and state superintendent, which would maintain oversight of teacher licensure and discipline and school district territory transfers. The new DEW would have two deputy directors, overseeing general education and career-technical education, respectively.

State Board of Education (SBOE) members spent the bulk of their March meeting discussing legislation that would overhaul Ohio's education systems, debating the proposal with Sen. Andrew Brenner (R-Delaware) and hearing from Rep. Sean Brennan (D-Parma). SB1 (Reineke), and its companion bill HB12 (Jones-Dobos), would move most education policymaking authority into the governor's cabinet and away from the board. Brenner told members the General Assembly plans to act on SB1 or HB12 by June 30, and said that if that legislation hasn't passed by then, then "probably nothing will happen." Brennan, a freshman lawmaker who sits on the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, kicked off the Tuesday meeting by introducing himself to members and telling them he is their "advocate" in the debate over the legislation.



Below is a list of legislation we are currently tracking during the 135th Ohio General Assembly:

HB7 **LEGISLATIVE INTENT-STRONG FOUNDATIONS** (WHITE A, HUMPHREY L) To express the General Assembly's intent to support strong foundations for mothers and babies to address maternal and infant mortality and improve health and developmental outcomes, and to name this act the Strong Foundations Act.

Current Status: 2/16/2023 - Referred to Committee House Families and Aging

HB12 **REFORM OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION** (JONES D, DOBOS D) To rename the Department of Education as the Department of Education and Workforce; to create the position of Director of Education and Workforce; and to reform the functions and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Current Status: 3/21/2023 - House Primary and Secondary Education, (Fourth Hearing)



- HB68** **GENDER SERVICES FOR MINORS (CLICK G)** Regarding gender transition services for minors and to name this act the Ohio Saving Adolescents from Experimentation (SAFE) Act.
Current Status: 2/28/2023 - Referred to Committee House Public Health Policy
- SB1** **REFORM OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (REINEKE W)** To rename the Department of Education as the Department of Education and Workforce; to create the position of Director of Education and Workforce; and to reform the functions and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
Current Status: 3/21/2023 - House Economic and Workforce Development, (First Hearing)
- SB33** **MEDICAID ESTATE RECOVERY-INFORMED CONSENT (SCHAFFER T)** To require Medicaid applicants to certify that they have been notified about the Medicaid estate recovery program.
Current Status: 3/7/2023 - Senate Medicaid, (First Hearing)
- SB44** **ELECTRONIC LICENSING APPLICATION REQUIREMENT (BRENNER A)** To require a state occupational licensing agency to accept electronic license applications.
Current Status: 3/22/2023 - Senate Government Oversight, (Fourth Hearing)
- SB50** **911 SERVICE LAW CHANGES (WILSON S, SMITH K)** To make changes to the law governing 9-1-1 service and to repeal program requirements for emergency-service-telecommunicator training.
Current Status: 3/21/2023 - Senate Financial Institutions and Technology, (Second Hearing)

