

January 2023 Legislative Report

Happy New Year! May this one be better than the last, in education policy and otherwise. While students and educators dodged some terrible legislation in the lame duck, 2023 promises to be a [busy year in education](#) in Ohio.

January marks the start of Ohio's 135th General Assembly. You can find the directory for all members of the Ohio Senate [here](#). Information on members of the Ohio House can be found [here](#).

If you prefer to cut to the chase in your legislative contacts, the Senator representing the Elyria Schools is still [Nathan Manning](#), and our Representative is still [Gayle Manning](#). They should be your first stop in expressing interest or concern regarding education policy issues. Our new representation on the State School Board is former teacher and legislator, [Teresa Fedor](#).

Ohio's Speaker of the House: In something of an upset that Ohio Dems are framing as a win, moderate [Republican Jason Stephens was voted Speaker of the House](#). Because Stephens isn't as staunchly conservative as other alternatives, optimists believe that this could make for greater bipartisanship in Columbus, and less likelihood that Republicans move forward with the "Backpack Bill" voucher expansion and other anti-public education legislation.

State Board Rejects LGBTQ+ protections: [In early December](#), the Ohio State School Board voted to pass a resolution to encourage districts to reject the Biden administration's expansion of Title IX protections for LGBTQ+ children. The Ohio Republican Party has [also formally rejected](#) these protections with their own resolution.

Ohio's 'crippling' private school vouchers will see trial: More than 200 public school districts [challenging Ohio's school voucher program](#) can continue to trial, a Franklin County judge [ruled earlier this month](#).

Disenfranchisement: One would think that in a country that frames itself as the world's greatest democracy, the desire to strip citizens of their voting rights would not be an issue. However, the issue persists, and Ohio now has the most restrictive voter ID law in the nation since [Governor DeWine signed HB 458](#). Beyond tightening ID regulations, the bill limits ballot drop boxes, and shortens the window for submitting mail-in ballots, which critics argue disenfranchises the poor, elderly, and active duty members of the military. Limiting the ability of citizens to vote has the potential for increasing the difficulty in getting education funding passed locally.



*“Well, my friends, the time has come
To raise the roof and have some fun
Throw away the work to be done
Let the music play on...”*