

## EEA Legislative Report, March 2023

Allow me to begin with a disclaimer. It is very difficult for me to keep up with the volume of bills related to education in Ohio, let alone report on them here. If I've missed something, I apologize. In an attempt to remedy this, I have included a link at the end to Honesty for Ohio Education's Legislation Tracker.

**Senate Bill 1** takes power from Ohio voters by transferring it from the largely elected state school board to the Governor, who appoints an education czar to lead a newly created Department of Education and Workforce. [The bill passed the Senate](#) and is currently being deliberated in the House.

If you're concerned, then contact Elyria's House [Rep. Gayle Manning](#) & tell her so.

**Voucher Expansion:** OEA encourages you to [let your elected officials know](#) that you oppose voucher expansion in Ohio.

90% of Ohio students attend public schools. Ohio officials have thus far been unwilling to equitably fund those schools according to its constitution, but are hell bent on expanding private school vouchers. [Governor DeWine's plan](#) would increase the income limit to receive vouchers, while other plans eliminate the limit entirely (the Backpack Bill), and/or raise the amount per pupil. Analysis of these bills indicates that they would largely siphon more public dollars into the hands of middle class families with kids already in private schools.

For those who suggest vouchers are necessary because economically disadvantaged kids need private schools because they do a better job educating kids, the [University of Virginia published a longitudinal study in 2018](#) that disproves this myth.

If the state does pass [HB11](#), the "Backpack Bill," opening up vouchers to all students, the Legislative Service Commission has said [it will cost the state \\$1.13 billion](#) in the first year depending on several factors. (See below) Needless to say, an increase in vouchers in any form could be catastrophic for the funding of public schools and their programs. It would also [pay \\$22,000 to the Nazi homeschoolers](#) we've heard so much about.

**Flat Tax:** House Bill 1 would eliminate a graduated income tax in favor of a 2.75% flat tax. The plan would provide a [massive tax cut for the wealthiest](#) Ohioans, and cut [\\$1.2 billion of funding for local governments and education](#). The fiscal ramifications of this plan could be terribly problematic for public education, as well as city services, especially in economically disadvantaged communities.

**Banning Transgender Athletes:** The culture wars are alive and well in Ohio, and a [new bill \(HB6\) targets transgender athletes](#), manufacturing a crisis where there is none at all. Just last week at the Avon-Avon Lake Republican Club, in a bout of unbridled nonsense, [Lt. Governor](#)

[John Husted suggested](#) that the Chinese are isolating children and leading them toward gender transformation via TikTok. Ohio's next Governor, my friends.

**But wait, there's more:** While the above issues are undoubtedly huge in their potential impact on education, there are still other bills on the books, being heard in committees, and/or waiting on votes. Check in with Honesty for Ohio Education's [Legislation Tracker](#) to get a quick overview and check on the progress of legislation related to education policy in the state.



## OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

<p>H.B. 11 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly</p>	<p><b>Fiscal Note &amp; Local Impact Statement</b></p> <p><a href="#">Click here for H.B. 11's Bill Analysis</a></p>
--	--

**Version:** As Introduced

**Primary Sponsor:** Reps. McClain and John

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** Yes

Andrew C. Ephlin, Budget Analyst

### Highlights

- The bill's Backpack Scholarship Program makes all public, nonpublic, and homeschool students in grades K-12 eligible for a state scholarship, funded through an education savings account (ESA), to attend a participating nonpublic school or receive home education beginning in FY 2025.
- State expenditures would increase by about \$1.13 billion in FY 2025 if all 185,400 newly eligible nonpublic students take a scholarship under the bill. However, it is likely that not all of these students will receive a Backpack scholarship for various reasons, meaning that the bill's actual costs will likely be lower than the \$1.13 billion estimate especially in the early years of the program. For every 1% of newly eligible nonpublic students that do not participate, program costs decrease by an estimated \$11.3 million annually.
- State aid for public school students taking a scholarship will follow students to nonpublic schools where students are educated. Because the state's school funding formula is based on enrollment, school districts and other public schools whose students take the scholarship are likely to lose state foundation aid. However, the formula's guarantee provision may partially offset the decreases in state aid.
- The bill appropriates \$5.0 million from the GRF in FY 2024 for the Treasurer of State to administer the Backpack Scholarship Program and oversee the ESAs.