

2016 Education Legislation

In December, the Ohio General Assembly passed and enacted several significant bills of interest to the education community. A few key highlights from those bills are provided below. However, this is not an all-encompassing list. Please click the links provided for full details. Legal counsel should be consulted before implementation of any law.

Senate Bill 3 – Key Highlights

- Limits the amount of time a student takes state and district tests to 2% of the school year and limits the amount of time students spend on practice assessments to 1% of the school year
- Eliminates certain diagnostic assessment requirements
- Exempts certain students from the requirement to take the state-offered ACT/SAT
- Changes the requirements for the Alternative Resident Educator License
- Raises the competitive building threshold from \$25,000 to \$50,000
- Schools, identified as “exempt districts,” will be exempt from certain regulations if they meet specified requirements.
- Allows STEM designation for K-12 schools, instead of 6-12 as in current law
- Blizzard bag plans are no longer required to be approved by the Department of Education
- Creates a State Seal of Biliteracy, which may be attached to transcripts of qualified students
- Alters the membership of Joint Vocational School District boards

More information: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA131-SB-3>

House Bill 410 – Key Highlights

- Defines habitual truancy based on hours instead of days, using a 6-hour school day, and revises the related definitions of unruly child and delinquent child
- Beginning July 1, 2017, prohibits public schools from suspending or expelling a student solely because of unexcused absences
- Requires public schools, beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, to update their student absence policies to include certain intervention strategies
- Specifies that if absences constitute habitual truancy, the principal or district superintendent must assign the student to an absence intervention team, which must develop a plan to reduce further absences. School districts with less than 5% chronic absenteeism are exempt from the requirement.
- Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, requires public schools to report certain student attendance information to the Ohio Department of Education
- Reforms processes and procedures for the referral, hearing and adjudication of truant students in juvenile court

More Information: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA131-HB-410>

House Bill 438 – Key Highlights

- Designates the week prior to the week of Thanksgiving Day as "Ohio Public Education Appreciation Week."
- Permits a school district or school, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, to choose not to evaluate school counselors who were on leave for a majority of the school year or have submitted a notice of retirement
- Adds organ and tissue donation curriculum to high school health curricular requirements
- Modifies the timelines for the sale or lease of real property or unused facilities by a school district

More Information: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA131-HB-438>

House Bill 89 – Key Highlights

- Clarifies the practices of certain medical providers in schools, such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists and audiologists for the purpose of ensuring continued access to Medicaid funding

More Information: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA131-HB-438>

Senate Bill 252 – Key Highlights

- Establishes provisions for the monitoring of symptoms of cardiac arrest in athletic activities at most schools
- Prohibits participation in school athletic activities under certain circumstances
- Establishes certain requirements for coaching school athletic activities

More Information: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA131-SB-252>