Education

H.B. 43

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Fowler Arthur and D. Thomas

Effective date: Emergency: April 21, 2025

- Requires the Department of Education and Workforce to provide flexibility to the Ashtabula City School District (ACSD) in granting a high school diploma to a senior who attended Lakeside High School during the 2024-2025 school year, based on the student's demonstration of subject area competency.
- Requires the Department to waive up to 24 hours of the required minimum number of hours that Lakeside High School must be open with students in attendance during the 2024-2025 school year for the purposes of ACSD's eligibility to receive state funds.

H.B. 57

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Jarrells and Williams

Effective date: January 19, 2026

School policy on overdose reversal drugs

- Requires any public or nonpublic school that elects to keep a supply of an overdose reversal drug for an emergency situation to adopt and implement a policy regarding the supply's maintenance and drug's use.
- Permits a school to accept monetary donations for purchasing overdose reversal drugs.
- Requires a school superintendent to report any emergency use of an overdose reversal drug to the school's governing body and the parent or guardian of the student to whom the drug was administered as soon as practicable after that use.
- Requires a school superintendent to annually report emergency uses of an overdose reversal drug to the Department of Education and Workforce.
- Requires the Department, in consultation with the Department of Health, to develop a model policy on the maintenance and use of a supply of overdose reversal drugs by August 1, 2026.

Released time religious instruction

- Permits a school district board of education's released time religious instruction policy to set higher maximum time limits on student attendance in released time courses in religious instruction than the statutory limits otherwise established in law.

- Prohibits courts from awarding monetary damages for claims alleging violations of released time religious instruction law occurring between September 30, 2025, and the act's effective date.

H.B. 114

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Bird and Ritter

Effective date: March 20, 2026

Kindergarten admission; test scoring error

- Requires public schools to admit to kindergarten any child who will be five years old or, if the child has not completed first grade, six years old, by the first day of instruction of the school year of admittance.
- Requires the Department of Education and Workforce to address a scoring error on the 2024-2025 biology end-of-course exam, including by increasing the scores of students negatively affected by it.

S.B. 1

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Cirino

Effective date: June 27, 2025

DEI and intellectual diversity

Policy

- Requires state institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce a policy requiring the institution to:
  - Prohibit:
    - Any orientation or training course regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), unless the institution submits a written request for an exception;
    - The continuation of existing or establishment of new DEI offices or departments;
    - Using DEI in job descriptions;
    - Contracting with consultants or third parties whose role is to promote admissions, hiring, or promotion on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;
    - The establishment of any new institutional scholarships that use DEI and, if DEI requirements cannot be eliminated from an existing institutional scholarship, prohibits accepting additional funds to operate those scholarships.
  - Affirm and declare a primary function to the pursuit of knowledge;

- Affirm and declare that the institution will ensure full intellectual diversity;
- Demonstrate intellectual diversity for course approval, approval of general education courses, student course evaluations, common reading programs, annual reviews, strategic goals for each department, and student learning outcomes;
- Seek out invited speakers who have diverse ideological and political views;
- Post a complete list of all speaker fees, honoraria, and other emoluments in excess of $500 that are sponsored by the state institution prominently on its website.

- Requires each state institution's policy to affirm and declare that it will not:
  - Endorse or oppose any controversial beliefs or policies, except on matters that directly impact the institution's funding or mission of discovery, improvement, or dissemination of knowledge;
  - Influence or require students, faculty, or administrators to endorse or express a given ideology, political stance, or view of a social policy;
  - Require a student to endorse or express a given ideology, political stance, or view to obtain an undergraduate or post-graduate degree;
  - Use political and ideological litmus tests in any hiring, promotion, and admissions decisions, including diversity statements and other requirements that applicants describe commitment to any ideology, principle, concept, or formulation that requires commitment to a controversial belief or policy;
  - Influence or require students, faculty, or administrators to endorse or express a given ideology or political stance in any hiring, promotion, or admissions process or decision;
  - Use a diversity statement or any other assessment of an applicant's political or ideological views in any hiring, promotions, or admissions process or decision;
  - Influence or require students, faculty, or administrators to endorse or express a given ideology or political stance in any process or decision regulating conditions of work or study.
- Prohibits a state institution from replacing an orientation, training, office, or position designated for DEI with one under a different designation that serves the same or similar purposes, or that uses the same or similar means.
- Requires a state institution to endeavor, to the extent possible, to comply with the act's DEI prohibitions while retaining eligibility for a research grant and to seek an exception from the Chancellor of Higher Education if compliance while retaining grant eligibility is not possible.

Student and faculty policy complaints

- Requires each state institution to respond to complaints from any student, student group, or faculty member about an alleged violation of the requirements and prohibitions in the

policy on DEI, intellectual diversity, and other concepts using the same process as for free speech policy complaints under continuing law.

Withholding or reducing funds for noncompliance

- Permits the General Assembly to withhold or reduce any state operating subsidy payments, state capital improvement funds, or other state appropriation to a state institution if it determines the institution has failed to comply with the act's requirements related to the policy on DEI, intellectual diversity, and other concepts.

Intellectual diversity protections and disciplinary sanctions

- Requires each state institution to:
  - Respond to complaints regarding any administrator, faculty member, staff, or student who interferes with the intellectual diversity rights of another using the same process as for free speech policy complaints under continuing law;
  - Inform all students and employees of their intellectual diversity protections and any applicable policies adopted by the state institution to put the protections into practice;
  - Comply with reporting guidelines established by the Chancellor regarding violations of the intellectual diversity rights by any individual under the institution's jurisdiction and any consequent disciplinary sanctions issued.

Statements of commitment

- Requires each state institution to incorporate statements into a statement of commitment declaring commitment to free and open intellectual inquiry, independence of thought, tolerance of differing viewpoints, and equality of opportunity.

Affirmations and policies on equal opportunity

- Requires state institutions to do both of the following regarding every position, policy, program, and activity:
  - Treat all faculty, staff, and students as individuals, hold all individuals to equal standards, and provide every individual with equality of opportunity, with regard to those individuals' race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;
  - Provide no advantage or disadvantage to faculty, staff, or students on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in admissions, hiring, promotion, tenuring, or workplace conditions.

Prohibition on support and training for certain concepts

- Prohibits state institutions from providing or requiring training for any administrator, teacher, or staff member that advocates or promotes certain prescribed concepts regarding race and sex.

- Requires state institutions to implement a range of disciplinary sanctions for any administrator, teacher, staff member, or employee who authorizes or engages in a training that violates the above prohibitions.
- Requires state institutions to issue a report regarding violations of the above disciplinary sanctions and statistics on the academic qualifications of accepted and matriculating students, disaggregated by race and sex.

Segregation prohibition

- Requires state institutions to prohibit all policies designed explicitly to segregate faculty, staff, or students based on those individuals' race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in credit-earning classroom settings, formal orientation ceremonies, and formal graduation ceremonies.

Complaint process

- Requires state institutions to establish a process for a student, student group, or faculty member to submit a complaint about a violation by an institution employee of the prohibitions and requirements immediately above using the same process as for free speech policy complaints under continuing law.

Faculty evaluations

Student and peer evaluations

- Requires the Chancellor to develop a minimum set of standard questions to be used in student evaluations, including a question about whether a faculty member creates a classroom atmosphere free of bias.
- Requires each state institution to establish a written system of faculty evaluations completed by students that uses the minimum set of standard questions developed by the Chancellor.
- Requires state institutions to establish a written system of peer evaluations for faculty members with a focus on professional development regarding the faculty member's teaching responsibilities.

Faculty annual performance evaluations

- Requires state institutions to adopt and, every five years, submit to the Chancellor a faculty annual performance evaluation policy containing an appeals process for faculty to appeal the final evaluation.
- Requires state institutions to conduct an annual evaluation for each full-time faculty member directly compensated by the state institution.

Post-tenure review policies

- Requires state institutions with tenured faculty to adopt and, every five years, submit to the Chancellor (1) a post-tenure review policy containing an appeals process for faculty to appeal the final evaluation and (2) policies on tenure and retrenchment.

Collective bargaining

- Expands to include all state institutions of higher education, rather than only state universities, the prohibition against collectively bargaining faculty workload policies.
- Prohibits state institution employees from collectively bargaining with the institution regarding faculty evaluation policies and systems, post-tenure review policies, and policies on tenure.
- Allows a state institution with a collective bargaining agreement in effect on June 27, 2025 (the act's effective date), containing a provision on retrenchment to continue bargaining retrenchment policies, but only with respect to faculty with 30 to 35 years of service in a public retirement system at the time of a retrenchment determination.
- Prohibits full-time faculty members of a state institution from striking and instead requires them to submit unresolved collective bargaining disputes to a final offer settlement procedure.

Five-year institutional cost summaries

- Requires state institutions to submit, in accordance with guidelines established by the Chancellor, a rolling five-year summary of institutional costs to be considered by the General Assembly when evaluating operating and capital project funding for each biennial operating appropriations bill and capital appropriations bill.
- Requires the Chancellor to submit a report to the General Assembly including all state institutions' five-year institutional cost summaries.
- Requires the president of each state university and the Chancellor, upon the request of the chairperson of the Senate or House committee that considers higher education legislation, to present in the appropriate committee hearings regarding the universities' five-year summaries.
- Requires the Chancellor, prior to the enactment of each biennial operating appropriations and capital appropriations bill, to present a report to the General Assembly including the total institutional costs for state universities and community colleges separately.

Faculty workload policy

- Requires each state institution to take formal action to adopt a faculty workload policy consistent with standards adopted by the Chancellor, review and update its policy on faculty tenure, include multiple pathways to tenure to receive certain state funds, and update its faculty workload policy every five years.
- Requires each state institution to include in its faculty workload policy a teaching workload expectation based on credit hours, a definition of all faculty workload elements in terms of credit hours including a full-time minimum standard established by the board of trustees, justifiable credit hour equivalents, and any administrative action the institution may take if a faculty member fails to comply with the policy.

Elimination of undergraduate degree programs

- Requires a state institution to eliminate any undergraduate degree program it offers if it confers an average of fewer than five degrees in the program annually over any three-year period, excluding years prior to the year in which the program confers its first undergraduate degree.
- Permits the Chancellor to grant a waiver to continue an affected degree program pursuant to conditions set by the Chancellor.

American civic literacy course requirement

- Requires each state institution to develop a three-credit hour course in the subject of American civic literacy.
- Requires the course to include a study of the American economic system and capitalism and mandatory reading assignments.
- Requires each board of trustees to adopt a resolution approving a plan to offer the course, which must be submitted to, reviewed, and approved by the Chancellor.
- Permits the Chancellor to require an institution to revise the plan and the course before approval.
- Requires state institutions to require all students seeking a bachelor's degree to take the course, beginning with students who graduate in the spring of the 2029-2030 academic year.
- Permits state institutions to offer the course under the College Credit Plus (CCP) Program.
- Permits state institutions to require the course as part of their general education courses of study.
- Permits the president of a state institution to exempt a student from the course if the student completes one of the following:
  - A Chancellor-approved CCP course that satisfies the act's course content requirements;
  - A Chancellor-approved AP course and exam that satisfy the act's course content requirements, and the student receives a score of 3 or higher on the exam; or
  - At least three credit hours, or the equivalent, in an American history or government course.

Syllabus requirements

- Requires each state institution to create a syllabus, using specific requirements established in the act, for each course offered for undergraduate credit and to provide for the syllabus posting on its publicly accessible website in accordance with the act's website posting requirements.

- Requires each state institution and the Chancellor to prepare reports regarding state institution compliance with syllabus posting requirements.

Interactions with the People's Republic of China

- Prohibits state institutions, with certain exceptions, from accepting gifts, donations, or contributions from the People's Republic of China or any organization that the institution reasonably suspects is acting on behalf of the People's Republic of China.
- Requires state institutions to submit to the Chancellor a copy of the foreign gifts report it sends to the U.S. Department of Education.
- Requires state institutions to notify the Chancellor of any new or renewed academic partnership with an academic or research institution located in China.
- Prohibits state institutions from entering into new or renewed academic partnerships with an academic or research institution located in China unless the institution maintains sufficient structural safeguards to protect the institution's intellectual property, the security of Ohio, and national security interests.
- Requires the Auditor of State to audit state institutions' structural safeguards during the course of a normal audit.

Board of trustees training

- Requires the Chancellor to develop and provide annual training to the board of trustees of each state institution.
- Eliminates a requirement that the Chancellor, working with specified stakeholders, develop voluntary, model training for state institution board of trustee members.

Board of trustees terms of office

- Reduces the term of office from nine to six years for all nonstudent trustees at state universities who are appointed by the Governor on or after July 1, 2025.
- Eliminates a prohibition on state university trustees who served at least six years of a term being reappointed as a trustee before four years have elapsed since the trustee's previous term.

Ohio State University student trustees

- Eliminates the law that permitted student members of the Ohio State University Board of Trustees to have voting power and related privileges.

Northeast Ohio Medical University principal goals

- Removes language that establishes the principal goals of the Northeast Ohio Medical University to work in collaboration with area state universities.

Policy and report guidelines

- Requires the Chancellor to establish guidelines addressing the form and manner by which state institutions must submit various policies or reports to the Chancellor under the act.
- Requires the Chancellor to post each policy or report that is received on the Chancellor's publicly accessible website.

Website posting

- Generally provides that when the act requires something to be posted on a website, that posting must be (1) accessible from the main page of the state institution's website via no more than three links, (2) searchable by keywords and phrases, and (3) accessible to the public without requiring user registration.

Three-year bachelor's degree study

- Requires the Department of Higher Education to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing three-year bachelor's degree programs in Ohio.

Act title

- Entitles the act "The Advance Ohio Higher Education Act."