

**The ESC BRIDGE**

**Bridging Resources, Information, and Data from**

**Government and Education**

**For the Weeks of March 5th, 2017**

**National, Federal, US Department of Education**

[**No, Congress Didn't Vote to Scrap ESSA: Answers to Your FAQs**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2017/03/no_congress_didnt_just_vote_to.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaignk-12)  **Education Week**

Lawmakers did NOT repeal the Every Student Succeeds Act, they just voted to repeal a particular set of regulations issued under that law, which is actually the latest version of a much older law, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. To repeat: ESSA is still the law of the land. Congress isn't supposed to even think about replacing it until around 2020 at the earliest. And a new law could take longer than that. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., an ESSA architect, thinks ESSA could be around for decades.

[**Congress Tossed Obama's ESSA Rules; How Could Betsy DeVos Redo Them?**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2017/03/congress_tossed_obamas_essa_ru.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaignk-12) **Education Week**

Now that Congress has gotten rid of the Obama administration's accountability regulations for the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Trump-controlled Education Department technically can start the regulation process from scratch, but it is prohibited from writing "substantially similar" rules until new legislation is passed.

[**Education Department Seeks Comment on Revised IDEA Website**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/speced/2017/03/education_department_seeks_coment_on_revised_IDEA_website.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=onspecialeducation) **Education Week**

Idea.ed.gov, the Education Department's official repository of special education information, has not been thoroughly revamped since the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was reauthorized in 2004. But even though the site was basic by current Internet standards, it was still used by many—when server issues took the special education site offline for several weeks earlier this year, the outage caused a stir among parents, advocates, and ultimately members of Congress.

[**With White House Backing, Senate Overturns ESSA Accountability Rules**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2017/03/senate_overturns_essa_accountability_white_house.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaignk-12) **Education Week**

Without the rules, the requirements for accountability and state plans will be found in the language of ESSA itself. The Obama-era accountability rules, finalized late last year, set ground rules for how schools must be rated for school-improvement purposes, specified the requirements of (and flexibility for) states dealing with high testing opt-out rates in individual schools, and outlined how states would have to handle the "school quality" indicator in accountability systems.

[**Federal Budget Knife Could Slash Into K-12 Programs**](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/03/08/federal-budget-knife-could-slash-into-k-12.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2-RM) **Education Week**

President Donald Trump's push to drastically reduce domestic spending as a way to boost defense spending could have a significant impact on programs at the U.S. Department of Education, where the biggest streams of funding go toward low-income students and those with special needs. But its precise effect on overall federal K-12 aid remains unclear, as do the prospects for Trump's budget plan in Congress.

[**State Chiefs Group Says Superintendents Have Final Say on State ESSA Plans**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/state_edwatch/2017/03/ccsso_sea_has_final_say_on_state_essa_plans.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=stateedwatch) **Education Week**

As the first deadline for the Every Student Succeeds Act arrives, there have been sharp disagreements between advocacy groups and state-level politicians on key policy decisions. Peter Zamora, director of federal relations for the Council of Chief State School Officers, reached out to me to provide some clarification on State Education Agencies' authority in the coming months.

**Ohio Legislation Update (recent bill action in red)**

**132nd General Assembly**

***House***

[**HB3**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-3)DATAOHIO BOARD CREATION (Rep. Mike Duffey, Rep. Christina Hagan) To create the DataOhio Board, to specify requirements for posting public records online, to require the Auditor of State to adopt rules regarding a uniform accounting system for public offices, to establish an online catalog of public data at data.Ohio.gov, to establish the Local Government Information Exchange Grant Program, and to make appropriations

**STATUS: Referred to House Finance Committee**

[**HB21**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-21)COMMUNITY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION (Rep. Steve Hambley) Regarding verification of community school enrollments

**STATUS: Referred to House Education & Career Readiness Committee**

[**HB37**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-37)SCHOOL SAFETY-STRUCTURES (Rep. Steve Arndt) To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Education & Career Readiness Committee**

[**HB47**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-47)STUDENTS IN MILITARY (Rep. John Boccieri) To enact the "Students to Soldiers Support Act (S3A)" regarding the participation of students who are serving in the uniformed services in extracurricular activities at public and nonpublic schools and public and private colleges

**STATUS: Referred to House Education & Career Readiness Committee**

[**HB49**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-49)OPERATING BUDGET (Rep. Ryan Smith) Creates FY 2018-2019 main operating budget

**STATUS: Referred to House Finance Committee**

[**HB53**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-53)PUBLIC EMPLOYEES-MEMBER DUES (Rep. John Becker) To remove any requirement under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Law that public employees join or pay dues to any employee organization, to prohibit public employers from requiring public employees to join or pay dues to any employee organization, to prohibit an employee organization from being required to represent public employees who are not members of the employee organization, and to make an appropriation

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Finance Committee**

[**HB58**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-58)CURSIVE HANDWRITING INSTRUCTION (Rep. Andrew Brenner, Rep. Marilyn Slaby) To require instruction in cursive handwriting

**STATUS: Referred to Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee**

[**HB66**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-66)TENURED TEACHING REQUIREMENTS (Rep. Ron Young) To require permanently tenured state university or college faculty members to teach at least three credit hours of undergraduate courses per semester

**STATUS: Referred to Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee**

[**HB74**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-74)INCREASE COLLEGE TAX DEDUCTION (Rep. Stephen Huffman, Rep. Theresa Gavarone) To increase the maximum income tax deduction for contributions to the state's 529 college savings program from $2,000 to $3,000 per beneficiary per year

**STATUS: Referred to House Ways & Means Committee**

[**HB77**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-77)SICK-CHILD CARE LICENSURE (Rep. Wes Retherford) To provide for the licensure of sick-child care centers

**STATUS: Referred to House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee**

[**HB80**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-80)SCHOOL FOOD-SUMMER INTERVENTION (Rep. Sarah LaTourette, Rep. Kent Smith) To require school districts to allow approved summer food service program sponsors to use school facilities to provide food service for summer intervention services under certain conditions

**STATUS: Referred to House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee**

[**HB87**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-87)COMMUNITY SCHOOL PUBLIC MONEYS (Rep. Kristina Roegner) Regarding public moneys returned to the state as a result of a finding for recovery issued pursuant to an audit of a community school

**STATUS: Referred to House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee**

[**HB89**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-89)AUGUST SALES TAX HOLIDAY (Rep. John Patterson, Rep. Brigid Kelly) To provide for a three-day sales tax "holiday" in August 2017 during which sales of clothing and school supplies are exempt from sales and use taxes

**STATUS: Referred to House Ways & Means Committee**

[**HB98**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-98)CAREER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS (Rep. Mike Duffey, Rep. Kristin Boggs) Regarding the presentation of career information to students

**STATUS: Referred to House Education & Career Readiness Committee**

[**HB102**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-102)SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM (Rep. Andrew Brenner) To replace locally levied school district property taxes with a statewide property tax and require recipients of certain tax exemptions to reimburse the state for such levy revenue lost due to those exemptions; to increase the state sales and use tax rates and allocate additional revenue to state education purposes; to repeal school district income taxes; to require the Treasurer of State to issue general obligation bonds to refund certain school district debt obligations; to create a new system of funding schools where the state pays a specified amount per student that each student may use to attend the public or chartered nonpublic school of the student's choice, without the requirement of a local contribution; to eliminate the School Facilities Commission; to eliminate the Educational Choice Scholarship Pilot Program, Pilot Project Scholarship Program, Autism Scholarship Program, and Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program; to eliminate interdistrict open enrollment; to require educational service centers to transport students on a countywide basis; and to permit school districts to enter into a memoranda of understanding for one district to manage another

**STATUS: Referred to House Finance Committee**

[**HB103**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-103)FISCAL EMERGENCY PROVISIONS (Rep. William Reineke) To modify the composition and powers of the financial planning and supervision commission of a political subdivision that is in a state of fiscal emergency and to clarify the duties of that political subdivision

**STATUS: Referred to House State & Local Government Committee**

[**HB108**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-108)INFORMED STUDENT DOCUMENT ACT (Rep. Christina Hagan, Rep. Robert McColley) To require one-half unit of financial literacy in the high school curriculum, to require the Chancellor of Higher Education to prepare an informed student document for each institution of higher education, to require the State Board of Education to include information on the informed student document in the standards and model curricula it creates for financial literacy and entrepreneurship, and to entitle the act the "Informed Student Document Act"

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**HB110**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-110)COLLEGE CREDIT APPRENTICESHIPS (Rep. Christina Hagan, Rep. Bill Dean) To create a subprogram of the College Credit Plus Program that permits students to participate in certified apprenticeship programs

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**HB118**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-118)TAX COMPLAINT DISMISSAL (Rep. Derek Merrin) To expressly prohibit the dismissal of a property tax complaint for failure to correctly identify the property owner

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**HB124**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-124)VOCATIONAL SCHOOL TAX LEVY (Rep. Andrew Brenner, Rep. Rick Carfagna) To authorize a joint vocational school district to submit the question of a renewal tax levy to voters who did not have an opportunity to vote on the levy at an election held in November of 2015 because the levy was only placed on the ballot in one of several counties in which the district has territory

**STATUS: Introduced**

***Senate***

[**SB3**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-3)WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (Sen. Bill Beagle, Sen. Troy Balderson) To revise the laws governing the state's workforce development system, programs that may be offered by primary and secondary schools, certificates of qualification for employment, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, and to designate the first week of May as In-Demand Jobs Week

**STATUS: Senate Transportation, Commerce & Workforce Committee**

[**SB5**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-5)INCREASING INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS (Sen. Jay Hottinger, Sen. John Eklund) To increase the maximum income tax deduction for contributions to college savings accounts and disability expense savings accounts to $10,000 annually for each beneficiary, to create the Joint Committee on Ohio College Affordability, and to declare an emergency

**STATUS: Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB8**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-8)SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (Sen. Randy Gardner, Sen. Louis Terhar) To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB9**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-9)AUGUST TAX HOLIDAY (Sen. Kevin Bacon) To provide for a three-day sales tax "holiday" in August 2017 during which sales of clothing and school supplies are exempt from sales and use taxes

**STATUS: (Passed by Senate) Referred to House Ways & Means Committee**

[**SB15**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-15)COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS (Sen. Charleta Tavares) To require community colleges, state community colleges, technical colleges, and university branches to comply with minority business enterprise set-aside requirements, and to require the Director of Administrative Services to establish guidelines for these entities, and the Northeast Ohio Medical University, to establish procurement goals for contracting with EDGE business enterprises

**STATUS: Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee**

[**SB17**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-17)LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND ALLOCATION (Sen. Charleta Tavares) To increase monthly allocations to the Local Government Fund from 1.66% to 3.68% of the total tax revenue credited to the General Revenue Fund each month

**STATUS: Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB34**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-34)SCHOOL YEARS (Sen. Gayle Manning) To generally require public and chartered nonpublic schools to open for instruction after Labor Day

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB39**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-39)COMMUNITY SCHOOL OPERATION (Sen. Joe Schiavoni) Regarding community school operator contracts, the operation of Internet- and computer-based community schools, and performance metrics for blended learning schools

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB39**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-39)COMMUNITY SCHOOL OPERATION (Sen. Joe Schiavoni) Regarding community school operator contracts, the operation of Internet- and computer-based community schools, and performance metrics for blended learning schools

**STATUS: Referred to Senate Education Committee**

[**SB54**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-54)SUMMER FOOD PROGRAMS (Sen. Edna Brown, Sen. Peggy Lehner) To require school districts to allow approved summer food service program sponsors to use school facilities to provide food service for summer intervention services under certain conditions

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee**

[**SB72**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-72)PREVAILING WAGE LAW (Sen. Matt Huffman) To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects

**STATUS: Referred to Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB82**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-82)SCHOOL ABSENCES-PARENTAL NOTIFICATION (Sen. Sandra Williams, Sen. Peggy Lehner) To require a public school to place a telephone call within one hour of the start of the school day to a parent whose child is absent without legitimate excuse

**STATUS: Referred to Senate Education Committee**

[**SB85**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-85)OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CREATION (Sen. Matt Huffman) To eliminate the Educational Choice Scholarship Pilot Program and Pilot Project Scholarship Program and to create the Opportunity Scholarship Program

**STATUS: Referred to Senate Education Committee**

[**SB88**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-88)SUBDIVISION COMMISSIONS-FISCAL EMERGENCY (Sen. Louis Terhar) To modify the composition and powers of the financial planning and supervision commission of a political subdivision that is in a state of fiscal emergency and to clarify the duties of that political subdivision

**STATUS: Referred to Senate Government Oversight & Reform Committee**

[**SB97**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-documents?id=GA132-SB-97)REGIONAL STUDY COMMITTEE CREATION (Sen. Frank LaRose, Sen. Kenny Yuko) To establish a Regional Economic Development Alliance Study Committee to study the benefits and challenges involved in creating regional economic development alliances

**STATUS: Introduced**

**Ohio Budget and Politics**

[**U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan won’t run for Ohio governor; others from Akron area still mulling race**](http://www.ohio.com/news/politics/2016/u-s-rep-tim-ryan-won-t-run-for-ohio-governor-others-from-akron-area-still-mulling-race-1.750272) **Akron Beacon Journal**

The Akron area may be well-represented in the 2018 Ohio governor’s race … or maybe not. U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Niles, announced Tuesday that he won’t run and will instead stay in Congress. Former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton, however, is still mulling a gubernatorial bid. Ryan and Sutton, who recently resigned her position with the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corp., are among numerous prominent Democrats considering entering into the crowded contest to replace Gov. John Kasich, a Republican who can’t run again because of term limits.

[**LSC Plumbs School Formula, Diversity of Districts for House Budget Subcommittee**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205712) **Hannah**

The House Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee prefaced its look at the Kasich administration's FY18-19 proposal with a review Wednesday of the ins and outs of Ohio's school funding formula, presented by the Legislative Service Commission (LSC). Jason Phillips, division chief for LSC's education fiscal group, spent more than two hours exploring the vagaries of how Ohio takes into account factors from local wealth to miles driven by buses to farmland as a proportion of property to classifications of student disabilities to ultimately determine how much money it will send to a given district.

[**School Officials, Teachers Urge JEOC to Require Less Testing in ESSA Plan**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205736) **Hannah**

Representatives of school districts around the state gave their thoughts on the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan to the Joint Education Oversight Committee (JEOC), saying they would like to see an accountability system that does not rely heavily on testing. The committee held a hearing Thursday seeking feedback on the state’s draft plan to implement the federal law, and plans another one for next week on Thursday, March 9.

[**School Budget Subcommittee Discusses Caps, Guarantees**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205725) **Hannah**

Budget Director Tim Keen and members of the House subcommittee focused on K-12 education funding discussed Thursday the dynamics of caps and guarantees in the school formula and how best to move away from them. The panel also questioned Superintendent Paolo DeMaria on policy details of the budget bill, HB49 (R. Smith), and heard from witnesses on other education topics. While Keen has been most vocal about the administration's desire for lower guarantee funding in districts with substantially fewer students, he told members of the House Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee he's come to view the funding caps as particularly "insidious."

[**Drug Prevention Committee Moves Forward on K-12 Education Recommendations**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205738) **Hannah**

Implementation was the question on everyone's mind Friday as the Ohio Joint Study Committee on Drug Use Prevention Education met for the first time since it released a formal report last month. In February, Attorney General (AG) Mike DeWine's office published the report, which included 15 recommendations for how to implement public education in classrooms and communities about the growing problem of drug addiction and overdoses. (See *The Hannah Report*, 2/10/17.) "We're not just going to let this report sit on the shelf and gather dust," said the AG's Director of Criminal Justice Initiatives Amy O'Grady.

[**Flat Per-Pupil Base Driving Expansion of Guarantees, School Funding Expert Says**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205780) **Hannah**

School leadership groups, teachers unions and Ohio's large urban districts weighed in Wednesday on the K-12 funding formula and proposed policy changes in the Kasich administration's budget during a daylong subcommittee hearing. Witnesses on HB49 (R.Smith) Wednesday included the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT), represented by Darold Johnson; Ohio Education Association (OEA), represented by Scott DiMauro; the Ohio 8 Coalition, represented by Canton Superintendent Adrian Allison; the Alliance for High Quality Education (AHQE), represented by Executive Director Anthony Podojil and administrators from Mason and Berea schools; and the trio of school management groups -- Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) and Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)-- accompanied by economist Howard Fleeter of the Ohio Education Policy Institute.

[**Senate Democrats Urge Delay in Filing ESSA Plan**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205782) **Hannah**

All nine Democrats in the Senate signed on to a letter Wednesday urging Superintendent Paolo DeMaria and the Ohio Department of Education to file the state's plan to comply with a new federal law in the fall instead of the spring. The letter says such a delay will allow more opportunity to solicit feedback and make changes related to concerns expressed so far, such as criticism that the plan to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) makes inadequate efforts to reduce testing.

[**Mayor Frank Jackson protests to state that budget plans would cost Cleveland millions**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2017/03/mayor_frank_jackson_protests_t.html#incart_river_index) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

The city of Cleveland would lose millions from its budget under proposals by Gov. John Kasich that would have Ohio take over processing of some local income tax collections and would redistribute local government funding under a new formula, Mayor Frank Jackson says.

[**Education groups hammer home problems with Kasich school-funding plan**](http://www.dispatch.com/news/20170308/education-groups-hammer-home-problems-with-kasich-school-funding-plan) **Columbus Dispatch**

The state budget doesn't provide enough money for school transportation and makes painful cuts to tangible personal property tax reimbursements. It caps funding to districts that need extra money to educate growing student populations, cuts districts that can't afford it, and leaves most career-technical schools and all educational service centers with less money.

[**Private, School Choice Groups Object to Budget Cap, Urge Scholarship Changes**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205793) **Hannah**

Advocates for choice programs and religious and secular private schools testified on their budget priorities Thursday in a House subcommittee, with some objecting to proposed caps on state cost reimbursement and urging a full transition to income eligibility for Ohio's largest scholarship program. Witnesses in the House Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee included Kaleigh Lemaster, executive director of School Choice Ohio; Rabbi Eric "Yitz" Frank, Ohio director of Agudath Israel of America; Larry Keough, associate director for education with the Catholic Conference of Ohio; and Dan Dodd, executive director of the Ohio Association of Independent Schools (OAIS).

[**Yost Orders Statewide Review of Data Systems at Online Schools**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205794) **Hannah**

Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) can't capture all the data the state wants it to for purposes of verifying enrollment, Auditor Dave Yost found in his routine review of the online charter school's finances, prompting him to announce a broader look Thursday into the data capabilities of all online schools. According to Yost's office, though, his auditors did find records documenting student engagement that the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) did not consider in its review of ECOT's enrollment. ECOT and ODE are in a dispute over the school's enrollment totals and what criteria the state can use in verifying student counts. ECOT asserts the law and a contract it has with ODE bar use of log-in duration data to conduct the review, an argument it lost in Franklin County Common Pleas Court and is now pressing in the 10th District Court of Appeals.

[**Delay ESSA Filing, JEOC Told**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205806) **Hannah**

The theme from last week’s public testimony on the state’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan to the Joint Education Oversight Committee continued through this week’s testimony, with nearly 30 witnesses asking for a delay in the submission date for the ESSA plan, less testing and a less complicated report card system. However, one witness, Chad Aldis from the Fordham Institute, said the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) should go forward with its planned April filing of the plan so that districts can get certainty on what the federal requirements will be going into the next school year.

[**Fordham Report Sketches Fixes to School Funding Formula**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205795) **Hannah**

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute released a report it commissioned Thursday on how Ohio could improve its school funding formula to better meet the goal of equitable access by addressing factors that interfere with that end. Some recommendations in the report from Bellwether Education Partners are obvious targets, like elimination of caps and guarantees, the subject of repeated scorn in recent budget hearings. The report recommends gradual increases for districts on the cap and gradual decreases on the guarantee, but with a "failsafe measures" for the latter in cases of "extreme declines" in student count.

**Ohio Department of Education/State Board of Education**

[**Ohio schools must now give ACT or SAT to all juniors**](http://www.dispatch.com/news/20170228/ohio-schools-must-now-give-act-or-sat-to-all-juniors) **Columbus Dispatch**

It's testing season in Ohio, and this spring is the first in which school districts statewide are required to give the ACT or SAT to all 11th-graders, college-bound or not. Unlike before, the SAT or ACT is given during the school day. No need for teenagers to haul themselves out of bed early on a Saturday morning. And students don't have to pay the $45 for the SAT or the $42.50 for the ACT; the state is picking up the $5.25 million tab for each student to take one of the tests once.

[**Straight A Board Discusses Replication Grants**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205739) **Hannah**

The Straight A Fund Governing Board started brainstorming Friday on how to design proposed new grants specifically targeted to replicate successful projects, and also wrestled with whether to OK substantial modifications to a past grant to enable Greene County schools to make use of a donated jet. Gov. John Kasich's FY18-19 budget proposed another $15 million annually for the innovation grant program, the same amount as appropriated in FY16-17 but again diminished from the $250 million set aside to launch the program in FY14-15. Susan Zelman, executive director of the grant program, said she was pleased to see the funding source reverting to lottery profits as in FY14-15, given that such funding is restricted to K-12 education purposes.

[**School Board to Delve into New Truancy Law**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=205814) **Hannah**

The State Board of Education next week will discuss chronic absenteeism and the state's new policies to address truant students enacted in 131-HB410 (Rezabek-Hayes).The board's Accountability and Continuous Improvement Committee will discuss the subjects at its Monday morning meeting, led by Chris Woolard, senior executive director of accountability for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

**Early Childhood**

[**Study: Kindergartners Start School With More Academic Skills Than in Past**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/early_years/2017/02/study_kindergartners_start_school_with_more_academic_skills_than_in_past.html?_ga=1.119375105.900327749.1475523463) **Education Week**

Kindergarten students in 2010 started school with noticeably stronger literacy, math, and behavior skills across the board compared to their peers that started school just 12 years earlier, says a study published this month in the journal Educational Researcher. The new research was developed by the same researchers who found in a 2014 study that the kindergarten classrooms of today are more like the 1st-grade classrooms of years past. And if more 5-year-olds are starting school easily naming upper and lower-case letters or understanding relative quantities, it might seem like a more academic approach is warranted.

**College and Career Readiness**

[**Software maker helping colleges prevent dropouts lands funding without sacrificing equity**](http://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2017/03/01/startup-helping-colleges-prevent-dropouts-lands.html) **Columbus Business First**

Aviso Retention, a Columbus company whose software makes college academic advisers’ jobs more efficient so they have more time for actual counseling, is using a jump in revenue helped by a 10-school federal grant toward product improvements and a sales push.

**Northeast Ohio Schools**

***Cuyahoga County***

[**Missed The Berea State Of The Schools Address? Watch It Here**](http://patch.com/ohio/middleburgheights/missed-berea-state-schools-address-watch-it-here)  **Middleburg Heights Patch**

[**Brecksville-Broadview Heights schools reach impasse with teachers' union; teachers declare no-confidence in school board**](http://www.cleveland.com/brecksville/index.ssf/2017/02/brecksville-broadview_heights_376.html#incart_river_index) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

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