



## Ohio Revised Code Section 3319.311 Investigations.

Effective: October 3, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 33

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(A)(1) The state board of education, or the superintendent of public instruction on behalf of the board, may investigate any information received about a person that reasonably appears to be a basis for action under section 3319.31 of the Revised Code, including information received pursuant to section 3314.40, 3319.291, 3319.313, 3326.24, 3328.19, 5126.253, or 5153.176 of the Revised Code. Except as provided in division (A)(2) of this section, the board shall contract with the office of the Ohio attorney general to conduct any investigation of that nature. The board shall pay for the costs of the contract only from moneys in the state board of education licensure fund established under section 3319.51 of the Revised Code. Except as provided in division (A)(2) of this section, all information received pursuant to section 3314.40, 3319.291, 3319.313, 3326.24, 3328.19, 5126.253, or 5153.176 of the Revised Code, and all information obtained during an investigation is confidential and is not a public record under section 149.43 of the Revised Code. If an investigation is conducted under this division regarding information received about a person and no action is taken against the person under this section or section 3319.31 of the Revised Code within two years of the completion of the investigation, all records of the investigation shall be expunged.

(2) In the case of a person about whom the board has learned of a plea of guilty to, finding of guilt by a jury or court of, or a conviction of an offense listed in division (C) of section 3319.31 of the Revised Code, or substantially comparable conduct occurring in a jurisdiction outside this state, the board or the superintendent of public instruction need not conduct any further investigation and shall take the action required by division (C) or (F) of that section. Except as provided in division (G) of this section, all information obtained by the board or the superintendent of public instruction pertaining to the action is a public record under section 149.43 of the Revised Code.

(B) The superintendent of public instruction shall review the results of each investigation of a person conducted under division (A)(1) of this section and shall determine, on behalf of the state board, whether the results warrant initiating action under division (B) of section 3319.31 of the Revised Code. The superintendent shall advise the board of such determination at a meeting of the board. Within fourteen days of the next meeting of the board, any member of the board may ask that the



question of initiating action under section 3319.31 of the Revised Code be placed on the board's agenda for that next meeting. Prior to initiating that action against any person, the person's name and any other personally identifiable information shall remain confidential.

(C) The board shall take no action against a person under division (B) of section 3319.31 of the Revised Code without providing the person with written notice of the charges and with an opportunity for a hearing in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

(D) For purposes of an investigation under division (A)(1) of this section or a hearing under division (C) of this section or under division (E)(2) of section 3319.31 of the Revised Code, the board, or the superintendent on behalf of the board, may administer oaths, order the taking of depositions, issue subpoenas, and compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, accounts, papers, records, documents, and testimony. The issuance of subpoenas under this division may be by certified mail, regular mail with a certificate of mailing, or other form of delivery with proof of delivery, including electronic delivery with electronic proof of delivery, or personal delivery to the person.

(E) The superintendent, on behalf of the board, may enter into a consent agreement with a person against whom action is being taken under division (B) of section 3319.31 of the Revised Code. The board may adopt rules governing the superintendent's action under this division.

(F) No surrender of a license shall be effective until the board takes action to accept the surrender unless the surrender is pursuant to a consent agreement entered into under division (E) of this section.

(G) The name of any person who is not required to report information under section 3314.40, 3319.313, 3326.24, 3328.19, 5126.253, or 5153.176 of the Revised Code, but who in good faith provides information to the state board or superintendent of public instruction about alleged misconduct committed by a person who holds a license or has applied for issuance or renewal of a license, shall be confidential and shall not be released. Any such person shall be immune from any civil liability that otherwise might be incurred or imposed for injury, death, or loss to person or property as a result of the provision of that information.



(H)(1) No person shall knowingly make a false report to the superintendent of public instruction or the state board of education alleging misconduct by an employee of a public or chartered nonpublic school or an employee of the operator of a community school established under Chapter 3314. or a college-preparatory boarding school established under Chapter 3328. of the Revised Code.

(2)(a) In any civil action brought against a person in which it is alleged and proved that the person violated division (H)(1) of this section, the court shall award the prevailing party reasonable attorney's fees and costs that the prevailing party incurred in the civil action or as a result of the false report that was the basis of the violation.

(b) If a person is convicted of or pleads guilty to a violation of division (H)(1) of this section, if the subject of the false report that was the basis of the violation was charged with any violation of a law or ordinance as a result of the false report, and if the subject of the false report is found not to be guilty of the charges brought against the subject as a result of the false report or those charges are dismissed, the court that sentences the person for the violation of division (H)(1) of this section, as part of the sentence, shall order the person to pay restitution to the subject of the false report, in an amount equal to reasonable attorney's fees and costs that the subject of the false report incurred as a result of or in relation to the charges.