

**Gov. Strickland's Efforts to Protect Education Funding
and Improve Ohio Schools – OEA Talking Points**
February 9, 2009

Governor Strickland's current proposals in context

- Amid economic crisis, Governor Ted Strickland introduced sweeping education reforms and a new funding plan for Ohio schools, including a budget that preserves education programs and expands learning opportunities for Ohio students.
- The Governor has already protected public education against the impact of \$1.8 billion in 2009 budget cuts – which could have eliminated an estimated \$900 million of education programs. In his proposed budget, the Governor is actually adding \$925 million in education funding over the next two years.
- Simultaneously, the Governor is working for passage of the federal economic recovery and stimulus package. He and other governors have asked Congress and President Obama to help make sure the recovery legislation includes ample funds for public schools and other essential state services for children and families.
- Only by combining federal recovery and infrastructure funds, Ohio's rainy day fund and painful cuts in other areas of state government, can the Governor close a projected \$7.3 billion deficit for Ohio over the next two years.
- The Governor conducted sixteen forums on education and education funding, and his proposals are the product of input from more than 90 stakeholder groups, including OEA.

OEA's comments

- Governor Ted Strickland's leadership on the state budget, school funding and education reform mean public education is at the center of his value system and his top priority for state government.
- The Governor understands the needs of the whole child, going beyond the basics, beyond the tests and unfunded federal mandates to a vision of creativity and innovation in our schools.
- He has taken a comprehensive and systemic approach, and his ideas represent an opportunity to improve Ohio public schools that we cannot afford to waste.
- OEA's priorities are to preserve public education funding and the economic security of members, so OEA supports the Governor's proposals to reform and increase funding for public education and improve teaching and learning.
- OEA is working to secure federal economic recovery funds, seeking support from Sen. George Voinovich, Sen. Sherrod Brown and the entire Ohio Congressional delegation.
- OEA will continue to be at the table in discussions on the education budget, school funding and education reform and will work to secure funding, uphold collective bargaining rights and shape a promising future for our members and the learners we serve.
- OEA will be strong in our advocacy for our principles and for our members – both in these discussions and in collective bargaining, where many of these proposals must be implemented.

OEA will share more information through interviews, our web site (www.ohea.org), and our participation in the public meetings and legislative hearings to come throughout this year.

Where OEA Stands on the Governor's Proposals – Collected Talking Points

Part 1. The Ohio Budget Crisis

The Governor's Budget Proposal

- The Governor has already protected an estimated \$900 million of public school funding against the impact of nearly \$2 billion in state budget cuts during the current budget year.
- In a worst-case scenario analysis, the Strickland administration said Ohio faces a \$7.3 billion budget deficit during the next two years due to the economic crisis and declining tax revenues.
 - That translates into state aid cuts of \$840 per student next year and \$870 per student the next, as well as 10,000-25,000 staff layoffs over the next few years, leading to larger class sizes and program cuts of an historic scope.
 - Without a dramatic turnaround in the economy or widespread voter approval of new local taxes, as many as 80 percent of Ohio school districts could face a deficit by the end of the 2011-2012 school year.
- But instead of cutting education, the Governor has proposed an **increase in education funding** by \$321.5 million in fiscal 2010 and \$603.5 million in fiscal 2011, a total of \$925 million over the next two years to ensure programs for our students.
 - To accomplish all this during an economic crisis, the Governor is seeking billions in federal economic recovery funds and plans to use Ohio rainy day funds to balance the budget.

OEA Talking Points

- The Governor's efforts to protect and expand funding for Ohio public schools represents investing in what matters and is a vital long-term investment in Ohio's future.
- Under the Governor's plan, state funding for Primary and Secondary education will increase by \$925 million, protecting education programs in many districts.
- OEA deeply appreciates the Governor's efforts to protect public education programs for our students, and to provide funds for a 21st century public education system.
- OEA members and leaders are working urgently to support the Governor's efforts to secure federal economic recovery aid for Ohio by shoring up resources for Ohio public schools and other essential state services.

Part 2. The Governor's Proposals for Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Strickland's Proposal – Changing the school year and school day

- Phase in 20 additional learning days to the learning year over a 10-year period, bringing Ohio's learning year up to the international average of 200 days.
- Expand the learning day with additional activities, such as community service, tutoring, and health and wellness programs

Source: Reforming Ohio's Education System for the 21st Century
Governor Ted Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan

Background

- The Governor has told OEA and other education stakeholders there will be no changes in the collective bargaining law, and that adding days to the school calendar should be resolved through future collective bargaining agreements, not re-opening current contracts.

OEA Talking Points

- OEA supports expanded learning time for students, but school employees must receive additional compensation for the additional days and hours. Phasing in more days and hours must be negotiated as part of collective bargaining.
- OEA supports the proposal for an expanded learning day where students would be engaged in planned learning, enrichment and wellness activities under the supervision of licensed teachers and health and social service providers. OEA members in each district must be involved in shaping these days.

Part 2 (cont'd). The Governor's Proposals for Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Strickland's Proposal – Universal All Day Kindergarten

- Increased learning time for students through state funding for universal all day kindergarten

Source: Reforming Ohio's Education System for the 21st Century
Governor Ted Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan

Background

- On a case-by-case basis the Ohio Department of Education could grant waivers of up to two years for districts encountering implementation and feasibility problems.
 - Source: Governor Strickland's Proposed Budget, the "Blue Book"

OEA Talking Points

- The Ohio Education Association supports the concept of a fully funded all day, every day kindergarten program. More than 60,000 Ohio kindergarteners will benefit from a richer learning experience and gain a better chance for academic success.
- Research confirms the lifelong benefits of all day kindergarten. All day, every day kindergarten will help close achievement gaps, reduce behavioral problems and drop-out rates, and prepare children for success as adults.
- OEA recognizes some local school districts will have to struggle to find more space to accommodate all day kindergarten. OEA will join education stakeholders in advocating for funding kindergarten facilities that not only meet fire, health and safety guidelines, but also provide high-quality teaching and learning conditions for kindergarten children and all education employees.
- In keeping with OEA's policy to oppose unfunded mandates, state and federal assistance must be made available to all districts to ensure all students have appropriate classrooms.

Part 2 (cont'd). The Governor's Proposals for Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Strickland's Proposal – Effective Funding for a 21st Century System of Education

- An increase in the state's share of education funding to 55 percent in the proposed 2009-2011 state budget, with a state share of 59 percent by fiscal year 2017, meeting the state's constitutional requirement to fund an adequate and effective system of public schools.
- Ending phantom revenue that reduces the state's contribution to local school funding. Instead of assuming local districts get phantom revenue, the state will provide the difference between 23 mills of local tax levies and a minimum of 20 mills local schools must raise.
- Letting voters decide if they want to use new "conversion levies," which would allow local districts' revenues to grow as local property values grow, helping schools to keep up with inflation.
- A state Council on Quality Education will be created to review both the components of a high quality public education and the associated costs every two years.
- The funding model will be phased in over time. For the current biennium, all districts will be guaranteed 100 percent of fiscal 2009 funding the first year and 98 percent the second year.
- Funding for charter and community schools will no longer be reflected directly in the regular school district aid calculations. A separate funding stream will be used for charter schools. Also, the governor's proposed budget would prohibit for-profit management companies from providing services to charter schools. Charter schools will have to meet the same standards of quality traditional public schools meet.

Source: Reforming Ohio's Education System for the 21st Century
Governor Ted Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan

OEA Talking Points

- The Governor has proposed a systematic way of identifying the resources we need for high quality education in the 21st century. He believes state government has primary responsibility for ensuring public school funding is adequate, fair and effective, and his plan has many elements designed to make that a reality.
- The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled four times that Ohio's current school funding system is unconstitutional, cumbersome and inadequate.
- Just as Ohio must transform public education, we must transform school funding to eliminate inequities based on wealth and help all Ohio children meet the challenges of the 21st century.
- OEA supports ideas like the conversion levy mechanism as ways to help schools obtain increased revenues over time, while preserving the right of communities to vote on taxation. Conversion levies may help relax the need for school levies every year. But conversion levies require a vote and are not un-voted taxation, as some opponents of the proposal instantly concluded.
- Funding proposal details are still emerging. The impact of new funding formulas, eliminating phantom revenue and eliminating guarantees and other complexities of the current system will clearly vary for different school districts.

Part 2 (cont'd). The Governor's Proposals for Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Strickland's Proposal –Tenure & Termination of Employment Standards

- Teachers will be eligible for tenure after nine years, following the completion of the residency program and after serving as a professional educator for an additional five years. Currently, teachers are eligible for tenure after at least three years of teaching
- Increase the authority of a school board to dismiss teachers for good cause, the same standard that is applied to other public employees

Source: Reforming Ohio's Education System for the 21st Century
Governor Ted Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan

OEA Talking Points

- OEA shares the Governor's goal of making sure that there is a highly qualified and well-trained teacher in every Ohio classroom.
- It's important to remember why tenure and due process protections were developed. They were designed to combat systems of patronage, nepotism and favoritism.
- We don't think the nine-year tenure standard is reasonable – it doesn't make sense. The real problem may be with our evaluation system. It should not take eight or nine years for an informed employer to evaluate whether a teacher is successful and effective.
- We can work with school districts to provide a combination of effective mentoring programs for new teachers, interventions to help struggling professionals get back on track, and – if intervention fails – ways to counsel people out of the profession.
- To attract and retain high-quality professionals in public education, we need evaluation systems and employment rules – including tenure and due process rules – that are fair and even-handed, not based on favoritism or arbitrary decisions.

Part 2 (cont'd). The Governor's Proposals for Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Strickland's Proposal –Teacher Licensure

- Recognize a teacher's skills and accomplishments with a career ladder with four licensure levels:
 - Resident Educator License – a four-year program of mentored clinical experience for new teachers modeled after medical residencies
 - Professional Educator License
 - Senior Professional Educator License
 - Lead Professional Educator License
- Advancement to the next licensure level will be based on the teacher's credentials, experience and the progress of the teacher's students

Source: Reforming Ohio's Education System for the 21st Century
Governor Ted Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan

OEA Talking Points

- The OEA supports Governor Strickland's efforts to support new teachers, provide additional time for teacher collaboration and mentoring, and to encourage teacher leadership.
- The Governor's proposal to change licensure tiers and qualifications is intended to elevate the teaching profession, but OEA must further examine the details to ensure that the proposal will attract, prepare, support and retain high-quality teachers.
- OEA will fight to preserve the rights of those who hold teaching licenses and ensure that any changes in licensure be phased in without abridging members' due process rights.
- The Governor has not clarified how he specifically intends to use the "progress of students" as a factor in teacher licensure levels.
- By policy, OEA opposes using standardized test results in making high-stakes decisions about teachers and their license to work in the profession.

Part 2 (cont'd). The Governor's Proposals for Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Strickland's Proposals – On Use of Value-Added Data Systems

- Teacher advancement to the next licensure level will be based on the teacher's credentials, experience and the progress of the teacher's students.

Source: Reforming Ohio's Education System for the 21st Century
Governor Ted Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan

Background

- Value-added data systems measure a student's academic achievement – through standardized tests – against his or her expected level of achievement, as predicted by the student's previous record of learning.
- This element in the Governor's proposals suggests he believes value-added data provide reliable evidence of teaching quality.

OEA Talking Points

- The OEA opposes using standardized test results for making high-stakes decisions about students and teachers.
- Although value-added data systems can provide information that educators can use to make curricular and instructional decisions, there is insufficient evidence of the validity and reliability of the test results for high-stakes decisions. This relatively new technology should not be used for teacher evaluation, licensure or employment decisions.
- There are no value-added testing systems in place for the vast majority of subjects and grade levels. Adopting value-added systems would require a massive effort of test development and validation, adapting information systems to handle an increased data load, and retraining educators to use the systems effectively.

Part 2 (cont'd). The Governor's Proposals for Education Reform and School Funding

Governor Strickland's Proposals – Testing/Graduation Requirements

- The Governor seeks to make high school graduation requirements “more rigorous and relevant” by including “better methods to measure creativity, problem solving and other key skills.”
- He would replace the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) with “ACT Plus,” a four-part assessment needed for high school graduation:
 - The ACT college entrance exam, provided free to encourage college applications
 - End of course exams,
 - Completion of a service learning project,
 - Submission of a senior project

Source: Reforming Ohio's Education System for the 21st Century
Governor Ted Strickland's Education Reform and Funding Plan

OEA Talking Points

- The OEA supports multiple measures for student achievement, including the Governor's proposal to substitute the ACT for the Ohio Graduation Test and to add end-of-course exams, service learning and a senior project to the requirements for graduation. This kind of change can help Ohio move to standards aligned with 21st Century knowledge and skills.
- The OEA believes in high expectations for student learning and the alignment of curriculum, resources and assessments so that teachers can prepare students to think and compete globally in the 21st Century.
- OEA will work with the Governor and the Ohio Department of Education to ensure that the new graduation requirements will be aligned to updated state academic content standards.
- OEA will advocate for a well-developed implementation strategy, including professional development and collaboration time for teachers to design the curriculum and research-based strategies for evaluating student work.
- OEA sees potential in the use of the ACT and end-of-course exams, such as increased access to and readiness for college.