



OEA Legislative Watch

April 20, 2012

OEA Testifies on Senate Bill 316

On Tuesday, April 17, 2012, OEA presented testimony on portions of Senate Bill 316 in Senate Education Committee. The bill contains many education related policy changes due to a mid-biennial review of last year's budget bill. The primary focus of the testimony highlighted concerns to proposed changes to the teacher evaluation system implemented in last year's budget bill, changes to the teacher re-testing provisions, implementation of a new report card system, and changes to the third grade reading guarantee. You may view a copy of the testimony by [clicking here](#).

Senate Bill 316 will receive additional hearings next week in Senate Education Committee. The bill is slated for a possible vote to occur on either May 1 or May 2, 2012. Additionally, Senate Bill 316 will be a primary focus of OEA Educator Lobby Day scheduled for Tuesday, April 24, 2012. If you would like to register for lobby day you may do so by [clicking here](#).

Relief Fund Introduced for Schools and Communities

Earlier this week, Ohio House Democrats announced a proposal to aid in offsetting the impact of the reduced funding for school districts and local governments passed in House Bill 153. The *Kids and Community First Fund* uses surplus revenue (currently at \$265 million), a portion of the Budget Stabilization Fund (\$120 million), and \$15 million in Governor Kasich's severance tax increase to restore up to \$400 million to school districts and local governments in the first year. This fund will keep teachers in the classroom and safety forces on the streets in communities all across Ohio. As early as July 2012, school districts and local governments could apply for an emergency relief grant.

After Fiscal Year 2013, the fund would be replenished and supported by the severance tax increase as proposed by Governor Kasich. Additionally, a portion of the tax revenue collected by the state would also be available to protect local communities impacted by hydraulic fracking.

The proposal will be offered as an amendment next week to House Bill 487, Governor Kasich's Mid-Biennium Review, currently pending in the House Finance and Appropriations Committee. The amendment would reinstate the as introduced language on the Kasich Severance Tax, which was removed by House Republicans after the introduction of House Bill 487.

Do you know that the political process affects virtually everything in your school day?

Take action —
Become an OEA Member Lobbyist

Questions?

Contact your Governmental Services Team

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OEA is supportive of this initiative and applauds the Ohio House Democratic Caucus for their willingness and compassion to restore some funding to Ohio's schools to ensure great public schools for every child.

To show your support you may sign the Kids and Community First petition at:

http://www.ohiohousedems.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=230%3Aemail-sign-the-kids-and-community-first-petition&catid=3%3Anews&Itemid=6 .

Mayor Jackson's Cleveland Plan: SB 325 and HB 506

After numerous negotiation meetings between Mayor Jackson and the Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU), an affiliate of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT), an agreement has been reached on a broad range of issues initially proposed by the Mayor and corporate groups in Cleveland.

A new draft of legislation that reflects the announced agreements is expected to be introduced as new, separate bills in the House and Senate. The bills are expected to have the same primary sponsors of the current Cleveland Plan bills. SB 325 is sponsored by Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) and Sen. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland). HB 506 is sponsored by Rep. Ron Amstutz (R-Wooster) and Rep. Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland). There are no co-sponsors of SB 325 and HB 506. The process of introducing the new bills will allow legislators another chance to sign on as co-sponsors.

According to the parties, the proposal to require a one-time "fresh start" on the CTU collective bargaining agreement has been dropped. OFT and CTU still oppose inclusion in the new bills of a provision that would allow local levy funding to be sent to charter schools. CTU did not assent to this provision. OEA also opposes the charter school levy provision and is assisting with efforts to remove it from the bills. In addition, there are ongoing concerns about the transparency and authority of the Transformational Alliance, a new oversight body, relative to the existing Cleveland school board.

According to Mayor Jackson, agreements have been reached in the following areas:

- **Low performing schools:** Allows the district to more quickly intervene in low-performing schools in consultation and collaboration with employee unions and clarifies teachers and employees cannot and will not be fired just because they work in a low-performing school;
- **Differentiated salary schedule:** Requires the development of a salary schedule that factors in performance, specialized training, and other relevant experience and ensures that teachers will not receive pay cuts simply because a new pay schedule is created;
- **Teacher evaluations:** Maintains the work between the district and CTU on a modernized Teacher Development and Evaluation system while expanding timelines and focusing on quality;

- **Teacher assignments:** Allows the district to fill teaching positions in all schools using hiring teams that include principals, teachers and parents, as opposed to assigning teachers based on seniority;
- **Tenure and dismissal:** Provides the district wider discretion about granting tenure and streamlines the dismissal process for poor performing teachers by focusing on performance evaluations as the primary factor, while protecting the due process rights for district employees;
- **Reduction in force or layoff:** Aligns layoff decisions to teacher evaluations and teacher quality and uses tenure and seniority as tiebreakers when needed;
- **School year calendar:** Allows the school district to set the school year and school day calendar for all district schools;
- **Transformation Alliance:** Clarifies that the Transformational Alliance must conduct public meetings, provide access to public records and adopt appropriate conflict-of-interest policies.

We acknowledge the importance of the negotiation process between CTU and Mayor Jackson on policies that *only* impact the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD). **However, we strongly oppose any attempts by the governor or legislature to spread these policies to any other school district in the state.**

In addition, OEA strongly opposes one provision of the current version of the bill—the dangerous precedent of sending local school levy money to charter schools. Mayor Jackson’s Cleveland Plan legislation will allow local levy money to go to charter schools, most of which are fraught with dismal academic performance and lack accountability for how they spend money. OEA is currently lobbying aggressively to remove this provision from the House and Senate versions of the bill. OFT and CTU oppose this provision as well.