



OEA Legislative Watch

An OEA Newsletter

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

Take action — Become an OEA Member Lobbyist!

Questions?

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Senate Bill 21 Heading to the Governor

On Wednesday, May 22, 2013, the Ohio Senate agreed to the version of Senate Bill 21 that passed the House a week earlier. The bill, sponsored by Senator Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering), makes a number of changes to the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. Specifically, the bill alters the teacher qualifications required for those assigned struggling readers who have been retained or are under a reading improvement plan. Under current law, the teacher qualification requirements are far too rigid. Senate Bill 21 adds additional flexibility to the qualifications. Further, the bill offers districts the option of up to three additional years of using a “staffing plan” (waiver) in lieu of the staffing requirements. The bill contains an emergency clause and will go into effect upon being signed into law.

In the area of teacher qualifications, the House version of SB 21 has the following requirements:

After July 1, 2013, third grade students who have been retained or are on a reading improvement plan shall be assigned to a teacher who has at least one year of teaching experience and satisfies one of the following criteria:

- K-12 reading endorsement on their teaching license.
- Master’s degree in reading or literacy.
- Rated “most effective” for reading instruction for the most recent two years based on student growth measures.
- Rated “above expected value added” in reading

instruction as determined by criteria established by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) for the most recent consecutive school years.

- Passed a rigorous test of principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction approved by the State Board of Education.
- Holds a teaching license for P-3 or 4-9 issued on or after July 1, 2017.

The House version limited or did away with qualifications in the Senate version that allowed for evidence of completion of a program of scientifically research-based reading instruction programs approved by the department (limited to until July 1, 2016) or the teacher is an effective reading instructor as determined by criteria established by the department (eliminated). Representative Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo) offered an OEA-supported amendment on the House Floor to restore those options as permanent qualifications. The amendment was tabled by a vote of 59-39.

The House version of the bill also expands who may offer services in the following ways:

- A teacher with less than one year of experience provided they meet one of the qualifications and is assigned a teacher mentor who meets one of the qualifications.
- Through July 1, 2016, a teacher who has successfully completed training on reading instruction approved by the department.
- A teacher other than the classroom teacher to whom the student is assigned provided the teacher meets the qualifications, the teacher and the principal agree and the assignment is documented in the student's reading improvement plan.
- A speech language pathologist may provide reading intervention and remediation services.

Additionally, the House version of the bill allows school districts who cannot furnish the number of teachers to satisfy the qualifications to submit a staffing plan to the Ohio Department of Education. ODE may grant extensions of district staffing plans through the 2015-2016 school year.

Other provisions of the House-passed version of SB 21 include:

- Specifies that retention under the Third Grade Reading Guarantee is triggered by failure to attain at least the "equivalent level of achievement" as determined by ODE.
- Exempts English language learners enrolled in U.S. schools for less than three years.
- Exempts students with significant cognitive disabilities from diagnostic tests on a case-by-case basis as determined by ODE.
- Requires the State Board of Education to adopt competencies for reading credentials and training by January 31, 2014. Requires all new applicants seeking an educator license for grades P-3 or 4-9 to pass an examination aligned with these competencies. Requires reading endorsement programs to align to these new competencies not later than July 1, 2016.
- Requires school districts and community schools that receive a "D" or "F" on the K-3 literacy progress measure on the new school district report cards and less than 60% of students score at least proficient on the third grade English language arts assessment submit a reading achievement improvement plan.



House Bill 167 - “Columbus Plan” Legislation

The introduction of House Bill 167 by State Representatives Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City) and Tracy Heard (D-Columbus) comes after months of deliberation by the Columbus Education Commission on how to best address the issue of improving education in the Columbus City Schools. The bill contains several recommendations from the Commission’s final report that require legislative approval, including the following provisions:

- Requires a ballot issue where voters would approve or disapprove the creation of the position of an independent auditor for the Columbus City Schools.
- Requires a ballot issue where voters would approve or disapprove a levy of additional millage for Columbus City Schools that would grant the school board the authority to determine which charter schools would share the revenues, if any.
- Authorizes the mayor and city council of Columbus to sponsor charter schools that are located in the school district of Columbus City Schools.

House Bill 167 received two hearings in the House Education Committee the week of May 20, 2013. The OEA is closely monitoring this bill as it receives hearings in the Ohio General Assembly.

