



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

www.ohea.org/legislative-watch-archive



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?

Contact your Government Relations Team

David Williams
Interim Director
williamsd@ohea.org

Melissa Clark
Lobbyist
clarkm@ohea.org

Robert Davis
Lobbyist
davisr@ohea.org

Matthew Dotson
Lobbyist
dotsonm@ohea.org

Dan Ramos
UniServ Political Advocacy Consultant
ramosd@ohea.org

Russ Harris
Education Research Development Consultant
harrisr@ohea.org

December 6, 2013

Victory for Educators in Ohio Senate! Legislation (SB 229) that Would Lower the Academic Growth Factor on Teacher Evaluations Passes Full Senate Unanimously (33-0)

The Ohio Senate unanimously passed SB 229 (R-Gardner) by a vote of 33-0 on December 4, 2013. The bill would help make Ohio's new system for evaluating teachers more effective, fair and efficient by reducing the academic growth factor on evaluations to 35% from the current 50%. Further, the bill would provide school districts with more flexibility regarding the frequency of evaluations for highly rated teachers ("Accomplished" and "Skilled"). In addition to chief sponsor Sen. Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green), the bill has 27 bi-partisan co-sponsors, including the entire Senate Education Committee.

The OEA strongly supports SB 229 as part of ongoing efforts to make progress on addressing various concerns with Ohio's Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). OEA Vice President Scott DiMauro provided proponent testimony before the Senate Education Committee on November 19, 2013, which was well received by the Committee. OEA Advocates for Children and Education (ACEs) have also been contacting their state senators, requesting support for this legislation. The OEA will now be advocating for passage of SB 229 in the Ohio House, where similar proposals have faced opposition in the past. If you are not already signed up as an OEA ACE, [click here](#) to do so.

Below are two of the major provisions in SB 229:

Academic growth factor: Lowers the academic growth factor percentage required on teacher evaluations to 35% from the current 50%. A school district may attribute up to an additional fifteen percent to the academic growth factor, or may instead attribute that additional percentage to formal observations and reviews, student surveys or any other factors. This local option to add an additional percentage and the factors included are permissive and subject to collective bargaining. If an additional percentage is included, there is no requirement that it contain student growth measures.

Frequency of evaluations: Authorizes local school boards to reduce the frequency of evaluations required for teachers who receive an evaluation rating of “Accomplished” or “Skilled” (the top two ratings). Unless a school board reduces the frequency of evaluations as outlined below, these teachers will continue to receive annual evaluations.

- A school board may evaluate each teacher rated “Accomplished” on the teacher’s most recent evaluation once every three school years, instead of annually.
- A school board may evaluate each teacher rated “Skilled” on the teacher’s most recent evaluation once every two years, instead of annually.
- In any year that a teacher is not formally evaluated as a result of receiving a rating of “Accomplished” or “Skilled” on the teacher’s most recent evaluation, a qualified evaluator shall conduct at least one observation of the teacher and hold at least one conference with the teacher. The board may also require other methods of review.

OEA Talking Points on SB 229:

- SB 229 would help make Ohio's new system for evaluating teachers more effective, fair and efficient. The OEA supports SB 229 as part of ongoing efforts to make progress on addressing various concerns with Ohio's Teacher Evaluation System (OTES).
- Lowering the academic growth factor on teacher evaluations to 35% from 50% will make evaluations more fair and better reflect the fact that student growth measures based on tests, including value-added, were never designed to be valid and reliable for high stakes decisions like teacher evaluation.
- More flexibility for school districts in determining the frequency of evaluations for highly rated teachers will help schools focus the limited time and resources of evaluators on teachers that are new to the profession and teachers that need to raise their evaluation ratings.



Legislation Proposing New Graduation Requirements (HB 193) Awaits Amendments in House Education Committee

The OEA has been reviewing the proposed revisions to Ohio's high school graduation requirements contained in HB 193 (R-Brenner), as well as a set of graduation requirement changes proposed by the State Board of Education. These proposals for revising graduation requirements are in expectation of the full implementation of the Common Core Curriculum Standards and related assessments. Under the bill, the new graduation requirements would be applicable to students entering ninth grade after July 1, 2014. The OEA has specific concerns with this proposal to revise graduation requirements and the broader issue of whether school districts are prepared to meet the new requirements. A list of proposed amendments to HB 193 has been submitted to the House Education Committee by the OEA.

Proposal to Repeal Ohio's Adoption of Common Core Curriculum Standards (HB 237) Receives Two Hearings in House Education Committee

The OEA opposes HB 237, introduced by Rep. Andy Thompson (R-Marietta), which would repeal Ohio's adoption of the Common Core Curriculum standards. The OEA supports Ohio's participation in the Common Core, along with the participation of more than 40 other states in the nation, because higher education standards will better prepare students for success in college and careers in an increasingly competitive global economy. The Common Core is a state-lead, bi-partisan effort to raise and improve education standards across the nation, while still retaining local control.

The House Education Committee has held two hearings on HB 237, but the bill is not expected to be passed out of committee. The chair of the House Education Committee (R-Stebelton) opposes the repeal of Common Core, as does the chair of the Senate Education Committee (R-Lehner).

The OEA recognizes that there are many practical challenges that need to be addressed in order to maximize the success and effectiveness of the implementation of Common Core at the local level. The OEA will continue to advocate in various forums for policy makers to address ongoing concerns, which include the need to ensure that schools and teachers have sufficient planning time, resources, professional development and technological capacity to support student learning under the Common Core.

