



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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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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Governor Outlines Education Proposals in State of the State, Ignores Damage His Policies Have Caused

On Monday, February 24, 2014, Governor John Kasich delivered his State of the State speech in Medina, Ohio. It should come as no surprise that the speech painted a rosy picture of the state, going as far to trumpet increased funding for education while ignoring the cuts of the previous budget. Kasich is also proposing another round of income tax cuts (which predominantly favor wealthy Ohioans) instead of making needed investments in public education.

In addition, the Governor outlined a number of education-related policies that he would be proposing in forthcoming legislation. The proposals include the following:

- Dropout prevention- “New strategies” to prevent students from dropping out of high school by identifying at-risk students and developing individualized plans with an alternative path to their diploma.
- Mentoring- \$10 million from casino-licensing fees to fund matching grants that support community efforts that bring parents, community organizations, faith-based groups and business to support schools and mentor students.
- Vocational Education- Expanding technical and vocational education to students in the seventh grade.
- Higher Education- Basing higher education funding solely



on course and degree completion and “fixing” the system to allow high school students to earn college credit.

These and other proposals are expected to be a part of the “Mid-Biennium Review” (MBR), legislation that has yet to be introduced. Once the language is available, OEA staff will review the bill and provide members with further. OEA President Becky Higgins has penned a response to the Governor’s speech that can be viewed [here](#).

Legislature Yet to Decide on Calamity Days

It will likely be another two weeks before the legislature passes legislation addressing calamity days. House Bill 416 is heading to a conference committee after the House failed to accept changes made to the bill by the Senate. The six-member conference committee will work out the differences between the two versions of the bill. The next scheduled voting sessions are set for Wednesday, March 12.

Both the House and the Senate version of the bill add an additional four days that can be excused (either as calamity days or professional development days), but they accomplish this in different ways. The House version extends to each school district two additional calamity days and two days that can be excused if they are professional development days for staff. The Senate version includes three additional calamity days and one professional development day but requires each district to make up four days as part of their contingency plan before utilizing the additional days. Both bills allow missed days to be made up by adding time to the school day in half hour increments and language that facilitates moving the testing window back a week. The Senate bill also includes language that excuses graduating seniors from make-up days scheduled after graduation and allowing districts to revise their contingency plans.

