



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!

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April 19, 2013

Ohio House Passes Budget Bill (HB 59)

On Tuesday, April 16, 2013, the Ohio House Finance and Appropriations Committee passed House Bill 59, the budget bill, along party lines (20-9) with two Democrats (Sykes and Ashford) abstaining due to conflicts of interest. Prior to passage, the committee accepted an omnibus amendment that contained approximately 100 issues. Details of some of the major changes are outlined below.

After lengthy debate on Thursday, April 18, 2013, the Ohio House passed House Bill 59 by a vote of 61-35. Three Democrats, Representatives John Barnes (Cleveland), Zach Milkovich (Akron) and Bill Patmon (Cleveland) joined Republicans in voting for the measure. Representatives Barbara Boyd (Cleveland) and Lou Terhar (Cincinnati) were absent, Vernon Sykes (Akron) abstained due to conflicts of interest and Republican Ron Hood (Ashville) voted no.

Democrats offered OEA-supported amendments in House Finance Committee and on the floor that proposed to eliminate the new voucher program, reinstate the single salary schedule and state minimum salaries for teachers, eliminate new language that would allow the creation of an Academic Distress Commission for school districts the State Auditor determines to have knowingly manipulated student data with the intent to deceive, and provide for income tax changes that would allow additional revenue to go into the K-12 budget. All of these amendments were tabled by the majority party.



On the floor, House Republicans removed a controversial provision included in the omnibus amendment in Finance Committee that would have prohibited the teaching of sexual education coursework that endorses non-abstinence as an acceptable behavior or promotes “gateway sexual activity.” Additionally, the provision would have given parents a cause of action if their child receives sex education that appears to condone “gateway sexual activity.”

Additionally, while the budget bill does not include Medicaid expansion as proposed in the Executive Budget proposal, the House Republicans included language on the floor that would create a Medicaid Study Committee.

The last amendment to be offered by Republicans came from Representative Ron Hood (Ashville). The amendment would have made changes to prevailing wage for construction projects. This amendment was tabled from further consideration.

The bill now goes to the Ohio Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee for consideration. OEA opposes the bill as currently constructed and will continue to advocate for changes to the measure. For additional information on the House version of the budget bill, [click here](#).

Below are the major changes made to Substitute House Bill 59:

K-12 Education

- Allows the superintendent of public instruction to create an Academic Distress Commission for any district the state auditor determines to have knowingly manipulated student data with the intent to deceive.
 - Provides that a school district may charge tuition for a student enrolled in all-day Kindergarten as long as the student is counted as less than one full-time equivalent student.
 - Allows a school district that has a combined levy for current expenses and permanent improvements to replace or renew the levy solely for permanent improvements and to change the terms of the levy.
 - Increases the Foundation Funding line item by \$250,000 each year and earmarks that amount for home-schooled students to participate in Post-Secondary Enrollment Options.
 - Appropriates \$5 million in each year for a new line item, Ready to Learn. Directs the Department of Education to contract with public and private early childhood education providers to fund early childhood education for 2,200 preschool-aged children below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
 - Includes gifted unit funding in the list of core funding components. Requires a school district to use the funding it receives for gifted coordinator services or gifted intervention specialist services for that purpose only. Permits a school district to assign its gifted funding units to another education entity as part of an arrangement to provide gifted services.
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- Requires the Department of Education to conduct a study on gifted education funding by March 31, 2014.
 - Maintains phonics as a part of reading instruction.
 - Requires the State Board of Education to review performance levels and benchmarks for report cards issued to dropout recovery community schools by December 31, 2014.
 - Permits the Department of Education to decline sponsoring a community school whose contract has been terminated.
 - Permits an e-school that serves at least grades one through eight to divide into two schools as long as the sponsor agrees and the division is accomplished in either the 2013-2014 or 2014-2015 school year. Provides that a school created by this division does not count toward the annual cap of up to five new e-schools each year.
 - Provides that an e-school is eligible to receive career technical education funding in addition to the core opportunity grant and special education funding.
 - Permits a community school to charge tuition for a student who is not an Ohio resident.

Higher Education

- Specifies that any student who receives a utility bill issued by a state university to be used as proof of residency for voting purposes must be given residency status by the chancellor for purposes of receiving in-state tuition rates.
- Transfers administrative authority for the four-year tuition guarantee program from the Board of Regents to the Chancellor.
- Increases the Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) line item by \$125,000 per year and earmarks the increase to allow public libraries to apply for remedial coursework instruction grants.

Developmental Disabilities

- Increases the appropriation for the Employment First Pilot Program by \$2 million per year, taking the total to \$3 million per year.
- Appropriates an additional \$5.45 million per year for increasing the Individual Options waiver reimbursement.

Taxation

- Creates a tax exemption for real property held or occupied by fraternal organizations that have been operating in Ohio for at least 100 years.
 - Creates the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) Commission that will be jointly chaired by the chairs of the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees and will include a total of four legislators from each house. The Commission is charged with reviewing and making recommendations to reform the Commercial Activity Tax by October 31, 2013.
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