



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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Senate Bill 229 (Teacher Evaluations) Gets First Hearing in Ohio House Education Committee

After being passed by the Ohio Senate in a unanimous vote (33-0), Senate Bill 229 (R-Gardner) had its first hearing in the Ohio House Education Committee on Wednesday, February 12, 2014. Chief sponsor Sen. Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green) provided sponsor testimony on the bill. He advocated for the speedy passage of SB 229, stressing the importance of the local flexibility that SB 229 would provide in key areas of teacher evaluations.

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). Senate Bill 229 would help make Ohio's new system for evaluating teachers more effective, fair and efficient by adjusting the academic growth factor on evaluations to 35% from the current 50%. In addition, the bill would provide school districts with more flexibility regarding the frequency of evaluations for highly rated teachers ("Accomplished" and "Skilled").

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED TO HELP PASS SB 229 IN THE OHIO HOUSE! Please [click here](#) to email a letter to your state Representative, urging them to support SB 229. Remember to ask your colleagues to do the same!



Hearings on New Graduation Requirements Legislation (HB 193) Expected to Begin Soon in Ohio Senate Education Committee

House Bill 193 (R-Brenner) contains a proposal to revise Ohio's high school graduation requirements in expectation of new end-of-course exams linked to the Common Core standards. Separately, the State Board of Education has adopted its own proposal to revise high school graduation requirements. The Ohio Senate is currently reviewing and contrasting the two proposals as it determines next steps. The Senate Education Committee is expected to begin hearings on HB 193 in the coming weeks.

It is critical that the implementation of new graduation standards and end-of-course exams linked with the Common Core standards provide sufficient time, resources and support for teachers and students to adequately prepare and succeed. In particular, it is vital that school districts are supported with the technological capacity and training required for effective and efficient on-line assessments.

The OEA is closely monitoring this process and working on various concerns specific to each proposal, including the effective date of new graduation requirements, school district capacity and readiness issues, teacher and student training, the number of end-of-course exams, alternative pathways to graduation, diploma endorsements (e.g. "remediation free" and "workforce ready"), course credit for performance on examinations, availability of substitute equivalent end-of-course exams and the need to avoid double-testing during the transition.

House Passes Modified Calamity Day Plan While Senate Considers Different Proposal

On Wednesday, February 19, 2014, the Ohio House passed legislation by a vote of 80-16 to provide school districts with more calamity days due to this year's brutal weather. House Bill 416 (Burkley-Hill) was amended on the floor to provide an additional two calamity days to school districts with the option of two more days if teachers report to school for two professional development days currently not on the calendar. These additional calamity days would occur after a school district has exhausted its five statutory calamity days. The bill would also allow for school districts to add half-hour increments to the school day to make up any additional time.

While House Bill 416 is waiting to be referred to the Ohio Senate, the Senate Education Committee received testimony on its plan to address calamity days detailed in Senate Bill 284 (Coley). This bill would grant school districts an additional four days after the school district has exhausted its statutory calamity days and has made up the five days outlined in





the district's contingency plan. Like the House bill, it would allow districts to add half-hour increments to existing school days to make up any additional missed time. Chairwoman Lehner indicated that her intent is to hold a hearing on calamity day legislation next Tuesday with a Senate Floor vote next Wednesday.

OEA believes that both chambers will continue to push for their respective version of calamity day legislation. At this time, it is not clear what the final plan will be. OEA will continue to monitor the legislation keeping in mind the best educational interests of students.

Legislature Passes Two Election Bills on Party-Line Votes

The General Assembly has passed two more election bills on party-line votes. On Wednesday, February 19, 2014, the House passed Senate Bills 205 and 238. Senate Bill 205, Sponsored by Senator Bill Coley (R- Liberty Township) would prohibit unsolicited mailing of absentee applications by anyone other than the Secretary of State and only in even numbered years when the General Assembly makes an appropriation. Senate Bill 238, Sponsored by Senator Frank LaRose (R- Copley Township) reduces the number of days for absentee voting, eliminating "Golden Week" the period of time when citizens can register to vote and cast a ballot. Democrats in the legislature decried both bills as attempts by the Republican majority to suppress the vote and tilt elections in their favor.

Also on Wednesday, the House Policy and Legislative Oversight Committee held its first hearing on House Bill 240. The bill would eliminate February and August special elections. OEA opposes this bill. Similar legislation has been proposed in prior years. HB 240 has 26 Republican co-sponsors including the Chair of the Committee.

