



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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HB 2 – Charter School Reform Bill Receives 20 Amendments, but Many Key Changes Rejected

Several proposals have been made on charter school reform – proposals that are a good starting point for reform and that are welcomed by OEA. They include HB 2 (R-Roegner/Dovilla) and recommendations made by the Governor in HB 64, the biennial state budget.

These bills take important steps on many, but not all, of the legislative fixes needed to achieve meaningful and comprehensive change that restores the original purpose of charter schools. For example, important progress would be made in strengthening charter school sponsor accountability and transparency, reinforcing ODE's oversight authority, reducing conflicts of interest in charter school governance and increasing public access to more information needed to hold charters accountable to taxpayers and students. Despite this progress, the reform efforts on these issues are still incomplete and OEA will continue to push for more action.

A primary shortcoming of these bills is the lack of strong accountability and transparency provisions for charter school operators, who often receive 97% of a charter schools funding with little oversight or disclosure requirements for how these tax dollars are spent. Further, steps have yet to be taken to create a funding system for charter schools that doesn't penalize local public schools.

In the most recent action on HB 2, the House Education Committee adopted 20 amendments to the bill at its Tuesday, March 17 hearing. Most of the amendments consist of the Governor's charter school recommendations proposed in the state budget bill (HB 64), which are heavily focused on charter school sponsor accountability.

Notably absent from the additions made to the bill were most of the reform recommendations submitted to the committee by State Auditor Dave Yost (R). The Auditor's proposals were based on his recent on-site audits of numerous charter schools, which raised a variety of concerns about the lack of accountability and transparency.

Fellow Republicans on the House Education Committee rejected the State Auditor's recommendations for more transparency on how tax dollars are spent by charter schools, tighter student truancy laws for charters, more accountable charter school governance and measures to



prevent charter operators from using these schools as a “back-door means to acquire real estate.” The committee also rejected numerous amendments proposed by Democrats, some of which were attempts to include the Auditor’s proposals in the bill.

OEA Holds First Lobby Day of the Year

On Wednesday, March 18, 2015, OEA held its first Member Lobby Day of the year. 46 individuals attended and met with legislators focusing on the issue of charter school reform. In addition to OEA members, retired teachers, administrators and a school board member also participated. Attendees were briefed on the issue by OEA Lobbyist Matt Dotson before their legislative appointments.

OEA’s next Member Lobby Day is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2015, and will focus on the issue of testing. For more information or to register to attend please contact Julie Parsley at parsleyj@ohea.org.

Senate Advisory Committee on Testing Begins Work

Recently, the Ohio Senate announced the formation of an Advisory Committee on the issue of testing. The committee is comprised of teachers, administrators and other experts in education. Its initial purpose is to provide recommendations to the Ohio Senate on whether newly adopted tests (PARCC and AIR) should be retained, adjusted or replaced entirely. A recommendation on the initial charge is expected by early May. The Senate developed a brief survey to provide input to the committee. OEA members are encouraged to participate in the survey by [clicking here](#).

Additionally, the Advisory Committee is expected to take a more comprehensive approach and recommend other changes in the overall testing program in Ohio. Three OEA members serve on the Advisory Committee: Amy Holbrook (Mad River), Kimberly Jones (Columbus) and Billie Sarich (Grandview Heights).
