



Do you know that the political process affects virtually everything in your school day?

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Member Lobbyist!**

Questions?

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Committee on Testing Establishes Website for Public Input

The Senate Advisory Committee on Testing is continuing its work and has established a website to allow the public to provide input. In a letter announcing the website, Senator Peggy Lehner (R- Kettering) stated, "it will give a venue for educators, parents and interested citizens to provide constructive feedback on how the state should move forward with testing; feedback that will complement and inform the work of the committee." The website address is <http://sact.ohiosenate.gov/>

Testing will also be the focus of the next OEA Member Lobby Day, scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2015. [For more information or to RSVP, click here.](#)

Senate Passes Bill Aimed at De- Regulation, Testing

On Wednesday, March 25, 2015, the Ohio Senate passed Senate Bill 3 by a vote of 24-9. The bill, jointly sponsored by Senate President Keith Faber (R- Celina) and Senator Cliff Hite (R- Findlay), included a number of provisions aimed at reducing the amount of testing time as well as provisions to lift regulations on districts that meet certain performance metrics. OEA supports some provisions of the bill and is opposed to others and is therefore an interested party to this legislation.

The Senate Education Committee adopted an amendment to the bill which OEA strongly supports - a reduction to the student growth measure in the alternative framework to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). Under the bill, the student growth measure in the OTES alternative framework would be set at 35% (rather than 42.5%) and the teacher performance percentage would be set at 50% (rather than 42.5%). The bill would also allow the use of multiple measures to fill the remaining 15% in the alternative framework.

In the area of testing, the bill would set a cap on the time spent on tests required by the state and districts at 2% of the school year and a cap of 1% on test preparation. Districts could exceed the caps with the passage of a resolution by the local school board after at



least one public hearing. The bill would eliminate the fall administration of the third grade reading test as well as mandatory diagnostic tests on math and writing in grades 1-3.

The bill would exempt school districts which meet certain criteria from a number of regulations. School districts would qualify if they received at least 85% of the possible points on the performance index, received an "A" on district report card performance indicators, and have a graduation rate of at least 93% (four year cohort) and 95% (five year cohort). Approximately 125 districts currently meet these qualifications. Those districts would be exempt from the following regulations:

- Teacher qualification requirements of the third grade reading guarantee.
- Mentoring component of the resident educator program (provided there is a local approach to train and support new teachers).
- Any standard by the state board of education on class size.
- Requirement for teachers to be licensed in grade level they are teaching (unless required by federal law).

Qualifying districts would also be permitted to employ non-licensed teachers, provided they are "otherwise qualified based on experience" as determined by the district, the school board approves the employment and they pass criminal background check.

OEA is opposed to a number of these "de-regulation" provisions. While there is merit in identifying regulations that may be unnecessarily burdensome, it is important to draw clear distinctions between "regulations" and measures put in place to protect students and help ensure success. Every student deserves a well-prepared teacher. Licensure sets an entry-level threshold and there are multiple ways in which a teaching license may be obtained including alternative licensure programs. Allowing certain districts to circumvent these standards is unwarranted. Likewise, OEA opposes waiving regulations that limit class size. Smaller class sizes allow teachers to give students more individual attention and differentiate instruction to meet their needs.

An amendment was also added to the bill that provides all schools with the option of either using the third and fourth years of the resident educator program and performance-based assessment or use OTES in years three and four to assess each participant's progression.

The bill will now proceed to the Ohio House of Representatives. However, the state budget bill (HB 64), currently contains a number of provisions similar to those in SB 3. How the issues will evolve and what legislation will be the vehicle for such changes remains to be seen.

House Bill 2 – Ohio House Passes Charter School Reform Effort; Bill Now Goes to Ohio Senate

The Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 2 (R-Roegner/Dovilla) by a vote of 70-25 on Thursday, March 26, 2015. The bill now goes to the Ohio Senate, where Senator Lehner is expected to offer a bill that will contain additional reform measures. Six House Democrats voted for the charter reform package, which one of them characterized as "moving in the right direction" and urged the Senate to make further improvements to the bill.

Overall, House Bill 2 has a range of positive proposals that can serve as a foundation for more comprehensive charter school reform that protects and benefits both students and taxpayers.



Among the positive provisions in House Bill 2 are greater oversight, accountability and transparency of charter school sponsors. Poor performing sponsors will be shut down and efforts to avoid closing a failing school by hopping to another sponsor would become more difficult. This could help accelerate the closure of failing charter schools. However, potential loopholes still exist and more work still needs to be done in this area.

Advances were also made in making additional information publicly available on ODE's website, and requiring public records training for charter school sponsors, governing boards and school operators. These provisions can be strengthened, but they bring us closer to ensuring that charter schools are subject to the same public records laws and financial transparency standards as any other public entity.

Of particular concern, the bill does not include expanded financial reporting requirements for school operators, who often receive up to 97% of a charter school's funds with minimal disclosure of how the funds are spent. The proposal for additional operator disclosure was not included in the bill despite support from Auditor of State Dave Yost (R), bill co-sponsor Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) and House Democrats. The lack of sufficient operator disclosure requirements is a major shortcoming in the bill.

OEA remains an "Interested Party" on House Bill 2 and will continue to advocate for a variety of improvements to the bill as it moves to the Ohio Senate. As the bill receives further consideration, another of OEA's goals will be to establish a means of funding charter schools that does not penalize local public schools.

Ohio General Assembly Begins Legislative Recess

Next week, the Ohio General Assembly begins a two-week legislative recess. Legislators will return to Columbus on April 14. That week, we anticipate the Ohio House Finance and Appropriations Committee to accept a substitute version of House Bill 64, the biennial budget for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017.