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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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Mid-Biennium Review Bills Head to the Senate

This week, the Ohio House passed multiple Mid-Biennium Review (MBR) bills. These bills will now head to the Ohio Senate for consideration. Below is a review of the major changes to the bills since their introduction. OEA GR will continue to analyze these provisions and will make recommendations to the Senate for further changes or deletions.

HB 487 – K-12 Education MBR

During the HB 487 committee debate, OEA supported amendments to remove the expansion of vouchers, require charter school teachers to be held to the same evaluation standards as traditional public school teachers, require educator and counselor involvement in the development of "locally-based" methods for identifying students at-risk of not graduating and requiring dedicated time for the development of those plans. The amendments were tabled by the majority party.

Career Education and Advising

- Delays until the 2016-2017 school year – instead of the 2014-2015 school year – the requirement that school districts identify students who are at-risk of dropping out of school "using a research-based, locally-based method."

- Delays until the 2016-2017 school year the requirement that each school district adopt a policy on career advising.
- Delays the deadline for ODE to create model career advising policies from September 2014 to December 2014.
- Reinstates a requirement that school districts adopt a resolution pertaining to financial literacy in curriculum.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (under this bill renamed College Credit Plus)

- Permits school districts to negotiate an agreement that falls below the $40/credit hour established in the formula contained in the bill.
- Permits 7th and 8th graders to participate in College Credit Plus.
- Permits students who have been denied approval by their superintendent to participate in the program to appeal the denial to the State Board of Education.
- Permits out-of-state colleges whose programs are approved by the Board of Regents to participate in College Credit Plus.
- Adds a high school counselor to the College Credit Plus Advisory Committee.

Vouchers

- Expands the eligibility for the Ed Choice voucher program, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, to students who would attend a building that serves any of grades nine through 12 and that received a grade of "D" or "F" for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in two of the three most recent report cards published prior to the first of July of the school year for when the voucher is sought.
- Allows students who qualify for the Cleveland Voucher Program to participate in the Ed Choice Voucher program if the Cleveland program is full due to financial limitations.
- Requires that Ed Choice and Cleveland Voucher students be subject to retention under the reading guarantee statute. The measure also requires these students to be assessed on their reading skills, requires parent notification and intervention for students who are not "on-track."

Charter Schools

- Permits ODE to contract with an organization to conduct peer evaluations of charter school sponsors.

- Requires a charter school sponsor to verify certain requirements including, but not limited to, employment of a licensed school treasurer and school enrollment prior to authorizing ODE to send money to a new charter school.
- Places limitations on charter schools opening in the same location where a traditional school was just closed for poor performance. A school may open in the same location so long as it has a new principal or director, 50% or more of the staff has been replaced, the school has a different sponsor, and the school has a different performance and accountability plan than previously established.
- Revises the charter school evaluation process by permitting data review, in addition to onsite visits to be used to determine compliance with rules and laws.
- Clarifies that ODE shall approve performance measures in contracts between charter school sponsors and the school governing authority.
- Requires educational service centers sponsoring a charter school outside of their client service area or contiguous counties to obtain approval from ODE to become a statewide sponsor.
- Permits students enrolled in a charter school to have access to extracurricular activities in their district of residence.

Other

- Revises the calculation for the value-added progress measure on the school and district report card to use only the most recent school year instead of up to three years of data; uses only data from students who have been enrolled and assessed by that school for not less than two years.
- Establishes that one of the criteria for creating an academic distress commission in a local school district is when a district earns both an “F” for value-added for three consecutive years AND an “F” for report card indicators.
- Incorporates the provisions of HB 216 regarding school debt consolidation into the bill.
- Incorporates provisions of HB 215 allowing school districts to enter into an agreement with a volunteer who is a current or retired law enforcement officer to offer school safety services.

<u>HB 484 – Higher Education MBR</u>

- Removes the requirement that the institution submit recommendations to modify its faculty workload policy by July 1, 2017, to increase the aggregate workload by 10% in the combined areas of instruction, advising and research.

- Requires the involvement of university faculty or any organization that represents faculty in the development of the report regarding the institution's faculty workload and practices to be submitted to the Ohio Board of Regents.
- Creates a Higher Education Student Financial Aid Workgroup to review financial assistance programs provided to Ohio residents who attend Ohio colleges and universities. Further, the workgroup is charged with developing recommendations regarding the types of financial assistance available, including that for at-risk populations, and ideal funding levels. Requires the report to be submitted the Ohio General Assembly and Governor by December 31, 2014.

HB 483 – General MBR with Provisions Regarding Education, Developmental Disabilities and Appropriations

Developmental Disabilities

- Expands the proposal that permits County Boards to share management workers to allow County Boards to "share employees."
- Allows County Board employees to serve on the boards of local non-profit entities.

Education

- Replaces the proposed Adult Career Opportunity Pilot Program with the provisions of HB 343 that would allow high school dropouts between the ages of 22-29 to earn a diploma from a dropout recovery community school, an adult career center or a community college.

Other

- Caps the "mitigating rate" for the STRS defined contribution plan and alternative retirement plan at 4.5% for fiscal year 2015, and requires the Ohio Retirement Study Council to study the mitigating rate and make recommendations to the legislature.

- Allows institutions of higher education to limit the number of providers of 403 (b) plans to four or more through a selection process determined by the institution.