

March 17, 2017

ODE to Submit ESSA Plan in September

On Monday, March 13, 2017, State Superintendent Paulo DeMaria announced that the Ohio Department of Education would delay submitting the state's plan in response to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) until September. This was a reversal from all indications by the Department that the plan would be submitted in April, the earlier window for submitting the plan.

In announcing the decision, DeMaria stated, "in recent weeks, we've heard from stakeholders who feel their input was not reflected in the ESSA template. In reality, however, stakeholder sentiments were heard loud and clear, and we have stated our commitment to identifying solutions to the challenges raised. To allow this work to advance and drive needed change, the Department will delay the ESSA submission to the U.S. Department of Education to September. This also will allow more time to ensure that feedback received on the draft template can be considered carefully."

OEA had provided input to Superintendent DeMaria and other policy makers that the state's draft plan was not responsive to the concerns raised by educators, parents and others in key areas such as reducing testing, improving teacher evaluations and school report cards. OEA welcomes the decision to allow for more time to develop a plan with greater collaboration and is committed to continue work with policymakers to advance these issues.

OEA Members Share Views on High School Graduation Requirements

Over 2,500 OEA members participated in a recent survey for input on high school graduation requirements. The results of the survey were shared with the High School Graduation Workgroup that has been charged by the State Board of Education with providing policy recommendations to provide alternatives to the graduation requirements for the class of 2018.

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The current high school class of 2018 (this year's juniors) is subject to new graduation requirements. Left unchanged, these new requirements could very well lead to a dramatic decrease in the high school graduation rate, especially in high poverty areas of the state. That's because, in addition to successfully completing required coursework, students are now required to meet one of the following three graduation "pathways": 1) accumulate at least 18 points on seven end-of-course exams; 2) achieve a "remediation free" score on the ACT or SAT; or 3) earn an industry-recognized credential and pass the WorkKeys workforce readiness exam.

Here's a brief summary of the OEA member survey results:

- 79% do not think that high-stakes testing should remain a requirement for graduation
- Over 93% of respondents believe there should be a reduction in the number of required tests
- 64% believe that the end-of-course exam requirement should include alternative ways to accumulate points
- If factors other than test scores were considered, the most popular options were:
 - Class grades (80%)
 - Work experience/internships (66%)
 - Service learning project (63%)
 - Attendance in senior year (55%)
- 67% would like to see an expanded list of career tech programs count towards graduation
- The vast majority of respondents (93%) believe the workgroup should recommend changes beyond just the class of 2018

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