

March 2, 2018

Kasich Administration Voices Support for Education Consolidation

House Bill 512, sponsored by Representative Bill Reineke (R- Tiffin), seeks to consolidate the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation into a new, cabinet-level agency, the Ohio Department of Learning and Achievement. The bill also proposes to transfer most of the functions and policy-making powers of the State Board of Education (SBOE) to the new department. Under the bill, SBOE would oversee teacher licensure and educator misconduct. OEA is opposed to this bill.

On Tuesday, February 27, 2018, supporters of the bill offered proponent testimony in a hearing before the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. The proposal was praised by officials from Governor Kasich's administration. John Carey, Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education and Ryan Burgess, Director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation stated that the bill will lead to greater coordination and collaboration. Among others providing testimony in favor of HB 512 were Dennis Franks, Superintendent of the Pickaway-Ross Career and Technology Center; Ron Iarussi, Superintendent of the Mahoning County ESC; and Tom Gunlock, former President of the State Board of Education.

In opposing the bill in its current form, OEA believes the proposed consolidation of these state departments would dilute the unique roles and needs of each department. OEA is skeptical that the proposed "super" department will promote additional collaboration. OEA is also not convinced that the functions of the preK-12, higher education, and workforce development systems would be adequately carried out under this plan.

Further, OEA is very concerned with the diminished role of the State Board of Education. Members of the Board serve an important democratic function that allows for public, parent and educator input on K-12 education issues. While we share the

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stated goal of increased collaboration, OEA believes that the stated objectives for this bill can be achieved without the merger of these state departments.

Senate Bill 216 – Public School “Deregulation Act” Continues to Receive Hearings

The Ohio Senate Education Committee held a seventh hearing on Senate Bill 216 (R-Huffman) on February 28, 2018. The committee accepted several amendments to the bill, which are outlined below. More amendments are expected at future hearings.

Senate Bill 216 is a wide-ranging bill with numerous policy proposals that impact educators and students. OEA has a variety of positions on specific provisions in the bill and recognizes that the bill is still evolving. However, as an overall package, the OEA opposes the bill as it currently stands. To view OEA’s testimony delivered before Senate Education Committee, [click here](#).

Of primary concern are provisions OEA views as diluting or eliminating safeguards in teacher licensure that are designed to ensure the professionalism and preparedness of educators serving students in the classroom. On the other hand, OEA supports teacher evaluation reforms that are designed to advance continuous teacher improvement and student achievement. In some areas, the bill raises important issues that merit further consideration of more narrowly-tailored solutions.

SB 216 amendments accepted by Senate Education Committee on February 28, 2018:

School safety: Requires the Ohio Department of Education to create a separate, stand-alone school mandate compliance report for school districts to use when complying with requirements for the establishment and review of a school emergency plan.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA): Retains the KRA, but requires the Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment Advisory Group, as convened by the Department of Education, to submit recommendations to the State Superintendent regarding ways to improve the use and administration of the kindergarten readiness assessment. In developing its recommendations, the Advisory Group shall consider

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appropriate areas of content for the assessment and efficient procedures for administering the assessment. The State Superintendent shall review and make final recommendations regarding the assessment to the General Assembly.

Gifted education professional development: Not later than July 1, 2018, the State Board of Education shall revise any rule it has adopted regarding operating standards for identifying and serving gifted students to specify all of the following:

- If a general education teacher is designated as the provider of gifted services but is not an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate teacher, that teacher shall participate in at least 15 hours of ongoing gifted professional development during the first year in which the teacher has that designation and 45 hours of ongoing professional development by the end of the fourth year in which the teacher has the designation.
- If a general education teacher is designated as the provider of gifted services and is an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate teacher, that teacher who has earned at least 24 hours of certified Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate development within the five years prior to receiving that designation shall participate in at least 7.5 hours of ongoing professional development during the first year in which the teacher has that designation and 22.5 hours of ongoing professional development by the end of the fourth year in which the teacher has that designation.
- If a teacher satisfies the above requirements, that teacher may be reported as providing services to gifted students in the teacher's classroom for that year.
- Any documented hours earned in the twenty-four months prior to the revision of any rule adopted by the State Board regarding operating standards for identifying and serving students who are gifted in accordance with this section shall count toward the requirements.

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School District Report Card Reform Discussions Unfold

State Representative Mike Duffey (R-Worthington) held a second education stakeholder meeting on Thursday, March 1, 2018 to discuss ideas for report card reforms. A wide-range of education stakeholders and concerned citizens are providing feedback on ways to improve Ohio's state report card rating system for school districts and public schools.

OEA is a strong advocate for school district report card reform and is providing input and feedback. A variety of concepts are being considered, such as moving away from the use of letter grades on report cards, reconsidering the role of current report card indicators (e.g. value-added student growth measure), and creating more "opportunity" indicators (e.g. special programs and extracurriculars) that will be more useful to parents and students in assessing the learning environment of a school district.

An archived live-stream of the stakeholder meeting from Thursday, March 1, 2018 can be seen at this

link: <https://www.facebook.com/TheOhioChannel/videos/2021728991177072/>

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