

March 22, 2019

Bi-Partisan Bill Introduced to Repeal Failed State Takeover Law and Restore Local Control

OEA Strongly Supports House Bill 154

Two former teachers now serving in the Ohio House of Representatives - **Joe Miller (D-Amherst)** and **Don Jones (R-Freeport)** - have introduced bi-partisan legislation that would *repeal* the disastrous law that allows the state to takeover local school districts that are deemed to be in trouble. HB 154, which has 29 bi-partisan co-sponsors, would *restore* local control to school districts.

OEA strongly supports the bill.

The Miller/Jones bill would also dissolve all existing Academic Distress Commissions and appointed CEOs. Rep. Joe Miller represents Lorain City Schools, one of the three districts already taken over by the state (the other two are Youngstown and East Cleveland).

State takeovers of local school districts are hurting students and the communities in which they live. When state officials and appointed managers are running local school districts, it lowers student and educator morale, undermines local engagement, and impedes progress.

It is time to *restore* local control to elected school boards and superintendents that are accountable to the community.

It is time to return collective bargaining rights and professional respect to the classroom teachers who understand the unique needs and challenges of their students.

State takeovers are based on misleading state report cards and excessive testing that

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severely penalize students in poverty. Instead of harmful state takeovers, Ohio can help students overcome barriers to learning caused by poverty. By turning more school buildings into "community learning centers," children living in poverty can have access to the "wraparound" social and health services that help prepare students for learning in the classroom.

What does HB 154 do?

- **Repeals state takeover law:** Academic Distress Commissions are terminated and dissolved. No more big government state takeovers.
- **Restores local control to public schools:** Local control is returned to community residents, the elected school board and the local superintendent. Teachers regain their collective bargaining rights and professional voice.
- **Focuses on "wraparound" student support services:** Instead of harmful state takeovers, the bill helps students in poverty by turning more school buildings across the state into "community learning centers" with access to locally identified "wraparound" student support services. The objective is to help students overcome barriers to learning caused by poverty.

In addition to HB 154, legislation that has been introduced (HB 127) that would establish a moratorium on the establishment of new academic distress commissions. As currently drafted, that bill would not abolish existing academic distress commissions.

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