

May 21, 2018

Ohio Senate Passes Bill that Seeks Changes to Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions for Ohio's Youngest Learners

Senate Bill (SB) 246, sponsored by Senator Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering), Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and Senate Majority Whip Gayle Manning (R-North Ridgeville), passed the Ohio Senate on May 16, 2018. The bill seeks to limit certain out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for children in pre-kindergarten through the 3rd grade. Under the legislation, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions would continue to be permitted for violent behavior and to protect the health and safety of others. The bill would also still permit emergency removal of disruptive students when necessary.

Additionally, the bill requires school districts to implement an intervention to encourage positive behavior and to support a framework that seeks to “improve the school climate for the purpose of improving academic and social outcomes and increasing the learning for all students.” SB 246 appropriates \$2 million for competitive grants to assist schools in the implementation and allows for a three-year phase-in of the bill’s requirements.

OEA supports this legislation. The bill aligns with OEA Legislative Policy passed at the December 2016 OEA Representative Assembly regarding out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of children who are nine years old and younger. A wide variety of research has concluded that more exclusionary approaches to school discipline often fail to improve individual student behavior. Such approaches can also lead to a series of adverse consequences later in life, including academic failure and incarceration.

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Voucher Bill Scheduled for a Possible Committee Vote

House Bill 200, sponsored by Representative Kyle Koehler (R- Springfield), would greatly expand private school vouchers in the state. The bill would replace the EdChoice and Cleveland voucher programs with a new statewide voucher called the “Opportunity Scholarship.” OEA opposes the creation or expansion of voucher programs that drain resources from students in public schools to provide private school tuition to selected students. Therefore, OEA strongly opposes HB 200.

HB 200 calls for a greatly expanded voucher program based on family income. The bill would increase the threshold for eligibility of the current program to 300% of poverty (\$73,800 for a family of four) and expand the program to all grades.

HB 200 is scheduled for a hearing and possible vote in House Education Committee on Tuesday, May 22, 2018. Urge your legislators to oppose HB 200 and prioritize providing resources to the students in our traditional public schools; the choice of 90% of Ohio families. You can take action today by clicking [here](#).

HB 540 – OEA Supported OTES Reform Bill Scheduled for a Possible Committee Vote

HB 540 (R-Gavarone/R-Manning) is scheduled for a possible vote in the Ohio House Education Committee on Tuesday, May 22, 2018. HB 540 would implement the OTES reforms recommended by the teacher-majority Educator Standards Board. These reforms would restructure teacher evaluations so they are teacher-driven and student-focused. The bill eliminates the stand-alone 50% student growth measure evaluation factor.

The OEA strongly supports HB 540, which is sponsored by Rep. Theresa Gavarone (R-Bowling Green) and Rep. Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville). In a prior House Education Committee hearing, OEA members Jeanne Cerniglia and Jonathan Juravich testified in support of HB 540. Jonathan is an art educator with Olentangy Local Schools at Liberty Tree Elementary. He is also the 2018 Ohio Teacher of the Year. Jeanne is a middle school math teacher in Southeast Local Schools (Wayne County), as well as a member of the Educator Standards Board (ESB) that recommended the OTES reforms that appear in HB 540.

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HB 87 – Local School Districts Stand to Recover Funds Lost to Troubled Charter Schools

OEA Government Relations delivered proponent testimony in support of HB 87 (R-Roegner) in the Ohio Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, May 16, 2018. This was the bill's second hearing in the Senate. HB 87 is scheduled for a third committee hearing on Wednesday, May 22, 2018.

The Ohio House passed HB 87 by a vote of 94-2 on March 7, 2018. OEA worked with Rep. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) and the bill's bi-partisan co-sponsors to secure overwhelming support for this important charter school financial accountability bill. HB 87 requires any public funds that are reclaimed by the state based on a finding of recovery against a charter school for fraudulently over-reporting enrollment to be returned to the school districts from which the funds were initially deducted. Ohio law is currently silent on where the state should send these recovered funds.

HB 21 – Stronger Residency Verification for Charter Students will Protect Districts from Erroneous Per-Pupil Deductions

OEA supported HB 21 (R-Hambley) is scheduled for a possible vote in the Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, May 23, 2018. OEA Government Relations delivered proponent testimony on HB 21 in a prior committee hearing. HB 21 will establish stronger charter student residency verification requirements, which will better ensure that per-pupil deductions are sourced from the district in which a student actually lives (as opposed to a district a charter school erroneously claims a student lives in). The Ohio House passed HB 21 by a vote of 94-0.

HB 591 – OEA Supports School Report Card Reforms

HB 591 (R-Duffey) will receive its second hearing in the Ohio House Education Committee on Tuesday, May 22, 2018. OEA strongly supports HB 591, which creates a new state report card system to assess student performance and other measures for school districts, individual district buildings, charter schools, STEM schools, and

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college-preparatory boarding schools beginning in the 2018-2019 school year. Importantly, HB 591 would end the use of arbitrary letter grades on report cards. Instead, seven benchmark performance measures would be used to show how districts and schools compare to others. Districts and schools would also have an opportunity to showcase their strengths by voluntarily including other information on report cards, such as unique enrichment and program offerings.

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