

**Ohio Education Association  
State Budget (Substitute HB 59)  
June 11, 2013**

**School Funding**

The House funding proposal uses the current base per pupil amount of \$5,732 in FY 14 and establishes a \$5,789 base amount for FY 15. The Senate plan establishes a base per pupil amount of \$5,745 in FY 14 and \$5,800 in FY 15. Both plans reduce the number of districts that would receive hold harmless guarantee funds from 398 under the Governor's plan to 161 (House) and 176 (Senate) in FY 15. One important difference in the plans in terms of equity is that the Senate version places more poor and rural districts on the guarantee as compared to the House.

*Senate increase*

*Current*

*School funding is still unequal.*

Neither plan fully restores the \$1.8 billion reductions districts experienced from the last budget cycle which resulted in lost opportunities for students. Another shortcoming of both proposals is that it fails to identify the components needed for a high quality education and what it costs to provide that education. Both proposals return transportation and career technical money to the base formula calculation.

While the Senate plan increases overall education funding as compared to the House version, it shifts funding away from the Economically Disadvantaged component. This makes equity among districts harder to achieve because the reduction impacts poor, rural districts with the least capacity to generate local revenue.

Neither plan fully funds school districts because the plans place gain caps on funding increases in each year of the biennium. The House proposal places a 6% gain cap each year of the biennium, and the Senate proposal has a 6.25% gain cap in FY 14 and a 10.5% gain cap in FY15. Under the House plan, 312 districts are subject to the gain cap in FY 15 as compared to 242 districts under the Senate plan.

***OEA Talking Points: Ohio must adequately support our most valuable resource – our children. OEA is appreciative of the additional funds included in the Senate plan, and the use of a per-pupil base amount; however, we recommend that the conference committee modify the Senate version of the plan to target additional funds to poor, rural districts. Additionally, OEA recommends an ongoing process to determine the components of a high quality education, costing these provisions out and making recommendations to the legislature for changes to the funding formula.***

- The plan fails to fully address the reductions districts experienced from the last budget cycle (\$1.8 billion) that resulted in lost opportunities for students.

- The formula fails to define what components are needed for a high quality education and what it costs to provide that education.
- While the Senate plan increases overall education funding as compared to the House version, it does not fully fund school districts because it places a 6.25% gain cap in FY 14 and a 10.5% gain cap in FY 15 on funding increases. Approximately 242 districts are subject to the gain cap in FY 15.

### Vouchers

*Bottom lines: Private schools not held accountable get receive public funding.*

HB 59 calls for the creation of a new, statewide voucher program available to students based solely on household income. In the 2013-14 school year, children entering Kindergarten with a household income below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$46,100 for a family of four) would be eligible. The program expands to first grade the following year. Unlike current voucher programs and charter school funding, this new voucher does not have "pass-through" funding from local school districts. The program would be funded directly from lottery profits (more than \$25 million over the two year budget).

Additionally, beginning in the 2016-17 school year, the bill would expand eligibility for the Ed Choice voucher program to students assigned to schools that earn a "D" or "F" on the K-3 literacy component of the report card.

***OEA Talking Points: Urge legislators to remove the new expansion of vouchers from the bill. Scarce resources should be used to ensure adequate funding for our public schools where the vast majority of Ohio's students are educated.***

- This proposal would expand vouchers statewide even in the highest-performing school districts.
- There is no evidence of improved academic performance under Ohio's existing voucher programs.
- Over 90% of Ohio's students are educated in public schools that are still reeling from the massive cuts of \$1.8 billion in the last budget. Instead of creating new voucher programs, scarce resources should be used to adequately fund our public schools.
- This program and its costs would increase dramatically over time. Once a student receives a voucher, they get priority for a renewal each year until they graduate from high school.

### Single Salary Schedule

OEA opposes the elimination of statutory language requiring that public school employees be paid based on a single salary schedule. The single salary schedule requires equal pay for employees with the same levels of experience and training.

**OEA Talking Points: Urge legislators to support the Senate's reinstatement of the single salary schedule requirement for public school employees, which prevents favoritism and discrimination by requiring equal pay for employees with the same levels of experience and training.**

- Single salary schedules based on experience and training prevent unfair and arbitrary pay differentials based on biases regarding grade level taught, subject of instruction, job duties, race and gender.
- The elimination of the single salary schedule based on experience and training creates an open invitation to favoritism and arbitrary treatment in the compensation of public school employees, which is what single salary schedules were designed to prevent.

### **Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule**

*Local boards & associations can negotiate within single salary schedules.*

OEA opposes the elimination of the state minimum salary schedule for teachers based on years of service and training. State minimum teacher salaries were last updated in 2001. For example, the minimum base salary for a teacher with zero years of service and a Bachelor's degree is \$20,000. State minimum salaries are still relevant. Six Ohio school districts had 2012 starting base salaries below \$25,928, which is the inflation adjusted value of the \$20,000 state minimum salary established in 2001. The lowest starting teacher salary in Ohio is \$23,660.

**OEA Talking Points: Urge legislators to support the Senate's reinstatement of the state minimum salary schedule for teachers. In addition, encourage legislators to increase minimum teacher salaries for the first time in over a decade, which will help to ensure the competitive salaries that recruit and retain high quality educators.**

- The state minimum salary schedule for teachers is still relevant and serves an important function in setting a fair and competitive salary floor for teachers. Six Ohio school districts had 2012 starting base salaries below \$25,928, which is the inflation adjusted value of the ~~\$20,000 state minimum~~ salary established in 2001. The lowest starting teacher salary in Ohio is \$23,660. *Need to be indexed to inflation*
- Competitive salaries are a critical part of recruiting the high quality teachers needed to raise student achievement in Ohio. Instead of eliminating the state minimum salary schedule for teachers, the OEA recommends that the Governor and legislature focus on updating minimum teacher salaries, which were last increased in 2001.

### **Days to Hours**

HB 59 proposes to make changes to Ohio's standards for a minimum school year to be based on hours rather than days and hours beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. The hour requirements would be 910 hours for all-day Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade and 1,001 hours for grades 7-12 (same as current law). The bill also permits a chartered non-public school to have school on the weekends and eliminates the five statutory calamity days and the need for a school district to approve a contingency plan.

The changes to the minimum school year would not apply to any collective bargaining agreement executed prior to July 1, 2014 but would require that any collective bargaining agreement or renewal executed after that date comply with those provisions.

HB 59 was amended in the Ohio House to require school district boards to hold a public hearing on the school calendar 30 days prior to adopting the school calendar and prohibits a school district from reducing the total number of hours of instruction from the previous years, unless the reduction is approved by the district board. The Senate amended the provision further to restore current law defining a school week as five days for public schools.

***OEA Talking Points: Urge legislators to support the Senate's reinstatement of current law that defines a school week as five days. Thank the Senate for this work, and urge legislators to retain this language.***

- By not defining a school week as five days, it would be permissible to shorten the school week and lengthen the school day. A longer school day is problematic for children, especially those in lower grade levels, as their capacity to focus, be active participants in the classroom and retain information will be diminished. It is also problematic for older students who participate in extracurricular activities or have a job.
- Allowing school districts to reduce time on task is the wrong approach when the Ohio Legislature continues to increase expectations for our students.

### **School District Takeover**

*over-reaction*

The School District Takeover Amendment included by the Ohio House in the budget bill allows the unelected State Superintendent of Public Instruction to hand complete control of a local school district over to an unelected commission of five political appointees. Specifically, the provision authorizes the State Superintendent to establish an "academic distress commission for any school district that is found by the Auditor of State to have knowingly manipulated student data with evidence of intent to deceive." Once in power, the commission of political appointees would be authorized to fire administrators without cause, unilaterally void/restrict provisions of collective bargaining agreements and outsource education services.

***OEA Talking Points: Urge legislators to support the Senate's removal of the school district takeover language. This language is focused on punishing school districts, not improving student learning. This is a heavy-handed effort by legislators to take away local control of school districts and restrict collective bargaining agreements.***