

**Ohio School Counselor Association  
Legislative Report**

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**Ohio General Assembly Begins 130<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly**

The Ohio General Assembly has begun the 130<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly when 99 members of the Ohio House of Representatives and 33 members of the Ohio Senate were sworn in on January 7, 2013. Leadership in the Ohio House and Ohio Senate will be as follows:

**Ohio House Republican Caucus Leadership**

Representative William Batchelder (R-Medina), Speaker  
Representative Matt Huffman (R-Lima), Speaker Pro Tempore  
Representative Barbara Sears (R-Sylvania), Majority Floor Leader  
Representative John Adams (R-Sidney), Assist Majority Floor Leader  
Representative Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City), Majority Whip  
Representative Jim Buchy (R-Greenville), Assistant Majority Whip

**Ohio House Democratic Caucus Leadership**

Representative Armond Budish (D – Beachwood), Minority Leader  
Representative Matt Szollosi (D – Oregon), Assist Minority Leader  
Representative Tracy Heard (D-Columbus), Minority Whip  
Representative Debbie Phillips (D-Athens), Assistant Minority Whip

**Ohio Senate Republican Caucus Leadership**

Senator Keith Faber (R – Celina), President  
Senator Chris Widener (R – Springfield), President Pro Tempore  
Senator Tom Patton (R – Strongsville), Majority Floor Leader  
Senator Larry Obhof (R – Medina), Majority Whip

**Ohio Senate Democratic Caucus Leadership**

Senator Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati), Minority Leader  
Senator Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman), Assistant Minority Leader  
Senator Nina Turner (D-Cleveland), Minority Whip  
Senator Edna Brown (D-Toledo), Assistant Minority Whip

This is a budget year and Governor Kasich has released a summary of his proposal. However, the actual bill language has not been released yet. The Ohio Senate has named Senator Scott Oelslager (R – Canton) as the Chair of the Finance Committee in the Ohio Senate. In the House, State Representative Ron Amstutz (R – Wooster) has again been named Chair of the House Finance Committee. The Senate Education Committee will be led by Senator Peggy Lehner (R – Kettering) and the House Education will be chaired by Representative Gerald Stebelton (R – Lancaster)

**OSCA Representative Sarah Williams Participates on School Safety Panel**

In reaction to the school shooting in Chardon and Sandy Hook, the Ohio Senate is putting together a school safety work group. Senator Peggy Lehner, Chair of the Senate Education Committee reached out to OSCA for a school counselor representative. Legislative Advocacy Chair, Sarah Williams, has made herself available to participate in discussions. Sarah participated in an initial meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup> at the Statehouse. Sarah has also been invited to testify before a panel on February 12, 2013.

Additionally, Senate President Keith Faber (R-Celina) announced that he has established a joint committee to address school safety and the prevention of violent acts in public spaces.

The bipartisan Committee on Safe and Secure Schools will include members of the Senate Public Safety and Education committees and will be co-chaired by Senator Frank LaRose (R-Copley) and Senator Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering).

“Our only agenda is to make sure our children are as safe as they can be and that we deter those who have violent intentions,” Faber said in a statement. “This committee will engage safety experts and the public in a thoughtful discussion to find reasonable solutions to the problem of violence in public spaces.

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“This committee will have two priorities – protection and prevention,” LaRose told reporters. “We want to make schools a safe place to learn and ensure professionals have the tools they need to identify those likely to commit offenses.” Lehner said mental health will be a major focus of the committee. “We hope to better identify the potential for this type of violent act and get help for those at risk,” she added. “This is a very challenging and complicated issue, but there is a very strong will within the Senate to tackle the problem.”

One issue she wants to explore is what is being done to address bullying because that is a common thread among these incidents.

She and LaRose said that together with Senators Tom Sawyer (D-Akron) and Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood) they talked Tuesday with mental health professionals to get their perspectives on the issue.

She said among the things they learned is that it is difficult to commit anyone over the age of 18 without their cooperation and that federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) rules make it impossible for school counselors and community counselors to share information.

They said they will now reach out to public safety, law enforcement and education officials for ideas about what they as legislators might do to protect Ohio's school children.

**Governor Kasich Begins Unveiling His Budget: Including His School Funding Plan**

Governor John Kasich has begun rolling out his biennial budget proposals, including his plan for school funding. He has released some summary documents about the proposal and held an on-line Town Hall meeting on January 31, 2013 to discuss his proposal. However, the actual budget language has not been released, and is not expected until the week of February 11, 2013.

The bill will be first debated in the House Finance and Appropriations Committee, Chaired by Representative Ron Amstutz (R – Wooster). However, a large portion of the education funding debate will be had before the Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee. That sub-committee has the following members: Chair Bill Hayes (R – Granville), Representative Ron Maag (R – Lebanon), Representative Gerald Stebelton (R – Lancaster), Ranking Minority Member Matt Lundy (D – Elyria) and Representative Debbie Phillips (D – Athens).

The Governor has said that in his new school funding proposal, no district will receive less money that it has this current year. Below are some of the reforms outlined in the summary document released by Governor Kasich:

**Guarantees:** These components represent the state resources necessary to help students succeed. However, over the course of the last 15 years, there have been significant and repeated changes to school funding in Ohio. Each of these changes included components that held districts harmless from changes related to the formula. These “guarantees” maintained funding levels or limited funding losses, regardless of a district’s declining enrollment or increased taxing capacity. However, these guarantees are neither fair nor sustainable in the long term. As implementation of our funding formula without continued temporary assistance could destabilized a district’s finances, each district is ensured the same level of funding for these core resources as was received in the prior year. It is important to note that the guarantee represents \$880 million over the biennium and will represents 7.4 percent of FY 2014 foundation funding to traditional public school districts.

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**Career Technical Education:** The goal of Ohio's primary and secondary education system is to prepare students for life after graduation. Many of the opportunities that attract our students are careers in specialized trades and industries. Career technical programs allow students to tailor coursework in a way that allows students to learn specialized trades while mastering the core subject areas all students are required to learn. However, specialized instruction in the industry and trade fields require investments in specialized equipment and frequently require much smaller classes to maintain a safe learning environment. Additional funding is provided for each student in a career technical program depending on the type of program.

All students deserve an opportunity to explore career opportunities and experience career technical coursework. To ensure this opportunity exists, all public schools in Ohio serving middle and high school students, including community schools and STEM schools, will be required to join a career technical planning district. Supplemental funding for career technical courses will be distributed to the planning district to ensure equal opportunity is provided to all students attending member schools. The following table provides the per pupil amount for each category of career technical programs.

- 1 Environmental & Agricultural Systems, Construction Technologies, Engineering & Science Technologies, Finance, Health Science, Information Technology, Manufacturing Technologies - **\$2,900**
- 2 Business & Administrative, Hospitality & Tourism, Human Services, Law & Public Safety, Transportation Systems - **\$2,600**
- 3 Career Based Intervention - **\$1,650**
- 4 Arts & Communications, Education & Training, Marketing, Workforce Development Academics, Career Development - **\$1,200**
- 5 GRADS, Family and Consumer Sciences - **\$900**

**College Credit Plus:** For students planning to enter college after completing high school, the completion of college-level work while still in high school provides an opportunity to transition to post-secondary course work while still having access to the support of the high school community. Students earn both high school and college credit for these courses which can reduce the overall cost of higher education. However, under today's current structure, some students attend courses free of charge while other students must pay a reduced tuition rate for the same course. The barriers of the current system must be eliminated so that all students have the opportunity to participate in postsecondary opportunities while they are in high school if they are ready. To accomplish this, the Governor proposes a standard funding mechanism for all courses so that there are uniform opportunities for all students. All public high schools and colleges will be required to participate in these programs, with high schools required to provide all students with information on the post-secondary or dual-credit opportunities available, including programs offered through the career technical planning districts.

**Safety and Security:** To increase the safety and security of our schools, the Governor is proposing to make available funds to reimburse schools for the cost of retrofitting a school entrance with buzzers and security cameras and to purchase MARCS radio that will allow for instant 911 notification to local law officials if assistance is required.

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The Governor's proposal calls for the State Board of Education to review and revise the operating standards set for schools to make sure that the standards do not set requirements that exceed what is needed to ensure students attend safe and healthy places of learning and receive the same core curriculum. In addition, state statutes were reviewed to remove legislative requirements that exceed these expectations, including the following:

- **Alternative School Years:** Traditional schools and district must currently set a schedule with a minimum number of days. This often hinders the implementation of creative learning environments. Allowing schools and districts to define the length of school days, weeks and years will allow them to meet the needs of their students. It is proposed that schools be required to offer at least 920 hours for elementary students and 1,050 hours for high school students.
- **Remove the Requirement to Pay a Fixed Amount per Pupil to an Educational Service Center (ESC):** Currently, many of our local districts are required to pay an ESC a per pupil amount and additional funds for the ESC to provide certain supervisory services. By removing these requirements, districts and ESCs can develop agreements that meet the needs of their students.
- **Remove Minimum Staffing for Speech Pathologists and School Psychologists:** Under law, districts are required to serve students who require speech therapy or psychological services and further requires one speech pathologist per 2,000 students and one school psychologist per 2,500 students. Requiring staffing levels without regard to the needs of the students creates a disconnect between the opportunity to provide each student with the resources they need to succeed and hiring or maintaining staff levels. Frequently, schools then employ to the standard, so that a school with 3,000 students will not hire an additional speech pathologist until there are 4,000 students in the school even when students need the surfaces. To ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for our students, we must allow schools to employ staff based on student needs.
- **Require Salary Schedules without Defining Structures:** Under current law, each school district must adopt salary schedules for teachers which are either based on training and experience, on level of licensure, on whether the teacher is highly qualified, and on performance evaluation ratings. None of these methods allows a school district to develop salary schedules (as opposed to supplemental contracts) that provide for differentiated teaching roles such as mentors for new teachers, instructional coaching, high school teachers who are approved by colleges to teach dual credit courses, or student organization advisors. This change will allow school districts and their bargaining units to design salary schedules that support the priorities of the community.

**School Counselors Encouraged to Promote Career Tech Education**

Towner Policy Group regularly meets with freshman legislators to introduce ourselves and tell the new members about our clients. When Amanda Sines met with freshman State Representative Mark Romanchuk (R – Ontario), he brought up the perception that school counselors do not do enough to encourage students to pursue career tech education. Below is an article that was published in Hannah News Service, a Statehouse publication. That perception was reiterated in the article.

**New Funding Structure, Perception Could Propel Career Colleges, Workforce Development**

The first two House bills for the 130th General Assembly, HB1 (Derickson-Romanchuk) and HB2 (Derickson-Brown), focus on workforce development, a clear sign that the issue is at the top of many legislators' priority lists along with Gov. John Kasich's. Especially with the reemergence of the manufacturing industry, many leaders have noticed an influx of available jobs but a lack of trained workers.

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Officials with the Ohio Board of Career Colleges and Schools and the Ohio Association of Career Colleges and Schools (OACCS) told Hannah News Wednesday that their educational institutions are ready to step up to the challenge but could use some help. "These schools are pretty flexible and if there's a need in a particular area they're able to develop programs pretty quickly to meet that need," said John Ware, executive director of the Ohio Board of Career Colleges and Schools, which approved a variety of new programs and degrees Wednesday.

Part of that help includes changing the mindset of high school teachers and counselors. Ware said that there is a certain stigma attached to their establishments. "There is a perception at the high school level -- and certainly amongst high school counselors -- that everybody needs to do [four-year degree programs], and if not they're a failure. But that's really not the case. There are a lot of opportunities out there that don't require a four-year degree," Ware explained.

Those opportunities were spotted by the 21st Century Manufacturing Task Force as legislators traveled around the state last year. Through several meetings, representatives heard about the positions that were going unfilled because none of the applicants had the proper training.

Rep. Mark Romanchuk (R-Mansfield), co-sponsor of HB 1, has told Hannah News that he understands the value of career colleges and schools. "I think what we need to do across the board in education is -- stop telling people -- stop telling kids that to be successful you have to get a four-year degree. It's just not true. If we could tell them that some training or education is necessary post-high school -- that's the message. It doesn't have to be a four-year degree. It could be a two-year degree; it could be a certificate of training," said Romanchuk who owns a manufacturing company.

Changing the perception of career training institutions in high schools is just part of the battle. OACCS Executive Director David Rankin said the state must also look at its student financial assistance funding structure. Currently, a student attending a four-year university is more likely to receive financial assistance than a student who chooses to attend a one-year training program.

"The thing is making sure that all schools and all students -- no matter where they go to school -- are treated the same," said Rankin who wants state policymakers to look at creating a more equal funding formula. "We've got to look for a way to help those individuals that are only going for certificates and diploma, because they are not eligible for a lot of that financial assistance. And a lot of those people are people that could use that type of financial assistance," Rankin added.

A new mindset in the high schools and a reformed funding structure for financial assistance are two ways to advance and encourage the use of career colleges for post-high school education. There is also a perception that the manufacturing industry is still a dirty and grimy business. Romanchuk said it is time to tell students about the high-tech nature of the industry. Rankin agrees that taking these steps would be an important element to getting Ohioans back to work. "There are jobs out there -- there are a lot of jobs out there."

### **Hayes Introduces School Minimum Hours of Instruction Legislation**

House Bill 32, sponsored by Representatives Bill Hayes (R – Granville) and Bill Patmon (D – Cleveland) would establish a minimum school year for school districts, STEM schools, and chartered nonpublic schools based on hours, rather than days, of instruction. A similar proposal could be included in the budget bill.

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Under the legislation, schools would be required to be open for instruction a minimum of:

- 455 Hours for kindergarten, unless the school has available all day kindergarten, in which case they shall be open a minimum of 910 hours;
- 910 hours for students in grades 1-6;
- 1,001 hours for students in grades 7-12.

The legislation also requires that not later than 30 days prior to adopting a school calendar, the board of education of each city, exempted village, and local school district shall hold a public hearing on the school calendar, addressing topics that include, but are not limited to, the total number of hours in a school year, length of school day, and beginning and end dates of instruction. Each board would be required to publish notice of the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the district not later than 30 days prior to the hearing.

**How to Contact Your Lobbyists**

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