



CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

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Community Schools*

MISSION

Richland Academy of the Arts' authorizing mission is to provide the oversight, monitoring, technical assistance, resources and leadership needed and wanted by its sponsored schools for them to provide their students with superior academic opportunities while maintaining sound financial viability without violating their autonomy.

VISION

Our authorizing vision is to be the sponsor of choice for community schools in Ohio. By not limiting imagination, we will honor developmental abilities and the growth of the whole child. We will cultivate communities who believe children need to grow up experiencing the arts and contributing back to their families and communities.

Senate deliberates state biennial budget bill

As previously reported, the Ohio House of Representatives passed the state biennial budget bill (H.B. 96) and sent it to the Senate where it is currently under further consideration.

There is significant overlap among the priorities of the two legislative chambers and those of the governor, but there are differences, too. If history is an accurate indicator, a conference committee of House and Senate members (three from each chamber – two from the majority caucuses and one from the minority) will be appointed to resolve the differences before passage of the final bill by the June 30 deadline.

The deadline for senators to submit their amendments to the bill was May 16. Finance Committee Chair Senator Jerry Cirino (R-Kirkland) said in an interview with Gongwer News Service that he expects the substitute bill to be released early June, with a vote of the full Senate to occur June 12 at the earliest. He said he expects Medicaid, K-12 education and higher education to be the most common amendment themes.

Hundreds of witnesses – proponents, opponents and interested parties – have offered in-person and written testimony before various legislative committees.

A number of key issues have been raised in Senate Education Committee hearings including:

- ◆ Updating cost inputs in the Cupp-Patterson K-12 education funding plan (aka Fair School Funding Plan) and boosting funding levels for students who are economically disadvantaged, English language learners and/or have disabilities;
- ◆ Removal of language proposed by Governor Mike DeWine requiring high schools to incorporate career planning into students' graduation plans;
- ◆ Restoring a \$16.5 million earmark for career awareness and exploration proposed by the governor but eliminated in the House;
- ◆ The effectiveness of Ohio's *Stay in the Game!* initiative aimed at tackling chronic absenteeism, which Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) Director Stephen Dackin described as not a solution, but rather "another tool in the toolbox;"
- ◆ Whether the requirement that public schools transport students to charter and private schools should be replaced with an allocation of transportation funds to them;
- ◆ A controversial provision that would cap how much cash school systems can hold in reserve (using those funds to reduce property taxes) and, as proposed by Chair Andy Brenner (R-Delaware), establishing "guardrails around what those cash reserves would be;
- ◆ Whether schools should continue to be required to develop five-year budget plans, or to reduce the requirement to three-year plans as proposed by the House (and whether the requirement is a meaningless exercise given that funding levels are only determined by the General Assembly every two years);
- ◆ Whether to increase funding for charter schools which do not benefit from local property taxes and receive less per-pupil funding than traditional public schools;
- ◆ Whether to retain budget language requiring districts to make more unused or underused facilities available for sale to charter schools;



Continued on pg. 2

DEW request for school meal funding boost approved

A request for \$67 million in funds – \$9 million for breakfast and \$58 million for lunch – by the Ohio Department of Education (DEW) was recently approved by the Ohio Controlling Board.

The programs are administered by DEW on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In its request, DEW explained that district payments “may exceed the available appropriation” due to growing demand.

“The increase in eligible students has led to an increase in reimbursement – as free meals are reimbursed at a higher rate than meals paid for by students and families,” the request reads. “Additionally, schools and districts are serving more meals this year compared to last, increasing 3% over the prior year.”

Budget bill – con't

- ◆ Ensuring that students learn responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI);
- ◆ Whether to change the make-up of the State Board of Education (from 11 elected members and six appointed, to only five appointed members); and,
- ◆ Whether provisions of S.B. 113 banning diversity, equity and inclusion programs in public schools should be amended into the budget bill.

Governor launches new initiative to improve schools' cyber defenses

Governor Mike DeWine recently announced that a partnership has been formed to provide schools and Ohio's 16 Information Technology Centers with resources for cybersecurity training and simulated cyber-attacks. His office is partnering with CyberOhio, the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), and the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network to implement TechGuard.

The initiative will provide online lessons to help identify phishing attempts, email scams and other cyberattacks for school administrators, teachers and students.

“Protecting our schools and equipping our teachers with training to help them identify and report cyberattacks helps make our schools safer and stronger,” the governor said in a statement. “I launched CyberOhio as a way to help more schools and businesses fight cyberattacks. These threats continue to evolve over time as technology changes, so we need to remain proactive in training people to spot the warning signs and protect our critical IT systems.”



Licensure conversion application available

The online application for licensure conversion is now available in CORE. Ohio educators whose five-year professional teaching licenses are eligible for renewal have the option to convert to the new elementary and middle school (PK-8) license or an adolescence to young adult (7-12) license. [Click here](#) to access the exam and coursework requirements.



Cellphone ban is coming

It is extremely likely that a cellphone ban in public schools is coming soon – in one form or another. As previously reported, the governor included provisions generally banning cellphones in schools in his budget proposal (introduced as H.B. 96). The House maintained the ban in the as-passed version sent to the Senate. The Senate recently passed legislation (S.B. 156) with the same cellphone ban provisions. It seems that all three players – the governor, and House and Senate leadership – are on the same page.



CLASS DISMISSED

Have an amazing summer!

