

Education Update

To: LWVO

From: Joan Platz

Education Update for February 1, 2010

1) 128th General Assembly: The Ohio House and Senate will hold sessions and committee hearings this week.

*Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner announced on January 28, 2010 that an effort, led by LetOhioVote, to put a referendum on the ballot authorizing video lottery terminals (slot machines) at Ohio racetracks has failed to obtain the necessary 214,366 valid signatures of Ohio voters. LetOhioVote will have additional time (ten days) to submit additional signatures to the Secretary of State's office.

*The Ohio House approved on January 27, 2010 SJR8 (Goodman), which would give voters an opportunity to amend Section 6 of Article XV of the Ohio Constitution to change the authorized location of the casino in central Ohio from Columbus to a designated site in Franklin County. The question will be submitted to the voters on the May 4, 2010 primary ballot.

*The Education Commission of the States (ECS), Roger Sampson president, announced on January 26, 2010 that it had selected Ohio as recipient of the 2010 Frank Newman Award for State Innovation.

According to the press release, "Ohio's enactment of 2009 H.B. 1 demonstrates the state's commitment to informed, bold and courageous reform. H.B. 1 overhauls nearly every major component of the education system, from early learning through postsecondary." The award will be presented at the 2010 ECS National Forum on Education Policy in Portland, Oregon.

2) State of the Union Address: President Barack Obama focused on the economy, stabilizing the financial markets, and maintaining and creating jobs in the "State of the Union" address to a joint session of Congress on January 27, 2010. The President also outlined his administration's priorities for education, including investing in college access, adult education, K-12 reform, and early learning. He stated his intention to renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and to revamp our primary and secondary education system, and create a more competitive education system which will lead to economic prosperity. Included in his address were the following recommendations:

-ESEA Renewal/Race to the Top: According to the President, the Race to the Top grant competition is an example of how to support school reform and student success. In his remarks the President recommended expanding Race to the Top to all states through the ESEA renewal:

"Instead of funding the status quo, we only invest in reform - reform that raises student achievement; inspires students to excel in math and science; and turns around failing schools that steal the future of too many young Americans, from

rural communities to the inner city. In the 21st century, the best anti-poverty program around is a world-class education. And in this country, the success of our children cannot depend more on where they live than on their potential."

The U.S. Department of Education is expected to unveil its ESEA plan in late February or early March.

-FY 2011 Budget: The federal budget for FY2011 will be released this week, and the President is recommending a freeze in government spending for three years in most discretionary programs. In spite of the freeze the U.S. Department of Education's budget is expected to include an increase of 6.2 percent or up to \$4 billion more for K-12 education, according to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Included in the increase will be \$1.35 billion to extend the Race to the Top (RttT) grants to school districts in all 50 states.

-Higher Education: The President urged leaders in higher education to review operations and reduce costs so that a college degree could be more affordable. He also urged lawmakers to pass legislation to revitalize community colleges, increase Pell grants, give tax credits for families who are supporting students in college, authorize the U.S. Department of Education to take over the student loan program, and implement policies that help students pay-back or reduce their college loan obligations.

To read President Obama's State of the Union address please visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address>.

To read Secretary Duncan's remarks about the FY11 education budget please visit <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/01/president-calls-for-greater-investment-in-education/>

3) This Week at the Statehouse

*The Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, chaired by Senator Widener, will meet on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 9:00 AM in the Senate Finance Hearing Room. The committee will hear testimony on HB113 (Foley) School Energy Measures, which authorizes school boards to enter into installment contracts subject to specified terms of payment for on-site renewable energy generation measures in the same manner as for energy conservation measures.

*The Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 10:00 AM in the South Hearing Room. The committee will hear testimony on HB260 (Stewart) Election Law and SB191 (Schuring) Campaign Finance, which would require each campaign committee that receives a contribution from an individual that exceeds \$100 to identify the individual's employer on the campaign committee's campaign finance statements.

*The House Elections and Ethics Committee, chaired by Representative Stewart, will meet on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at 11:00 AM in Hearing Room 122. The committee will hear testimony on HB358 (Ujvagi) Absentee Voting, which would change the time by which absent voter's ballots must be ready; authorize the Secretary of State to make emergency

revisions in the armed service absent voting provisions; and establish write-in absent voter's ballots for certain overseas voters.

The committee will also hear testimony on HJR13 (Domenick) Initiative/Referendum Approval, which would require sixty-seven per cent of the electors voting in an initiative or referendum to vote in favor of the issue in order for the issue to be approved.

*The Senate Education Committee, chaired by Senator Cates, will meet on February 2, 2010 at 4:00 PM in the North Hearing Room. The Committee will hear testimony on SB192 (Cates) School Transportation, which would permit non-Civil Service school district boards to terminate positions of district transportation employees for reasons of economy and efficiency, and to contract with independent agents to provide transportation services.

4) Ohio School Funding Advisory Council: The Ohio School Funding Advisory Council, chaired by Superintendent of Public Instruction Deborah Delisle, will meet on February 4, 2010 at 12:00 PM at Battelle for Kids, 1160 Dublin Road, Suite 500, Columbus. The Council will receive a presentation on public records and continue a presentation by Kelly Weir, ODE Director of Budget and Planning, on "Education Finance Overview".

The following subcommittees will meet at 2:15 PM: Special Needs; Education Linkages; Regional Variation; and Learning Environments. The Traditional Public/Community School Collaboration and the Education Reform Tracking Subcommittees will not convene. The subcommittees will discuss the appointment of additional members and information and resources needed to address subcommittee tasks. The next SFAC will be held on February 16, 2010.

5) State of the State Address: Governor Ted Strickland presented his fourth "State of the State Address" to a joint session of the Ohio House and Senate on January 26, 2010. The Governor expressed optimism about the future of Ohio using the phrase "I believe in Ohio" to remind the audience about Ohio's contributions to our nation's growth and prosperity and Ohio's potential to be a leader in new technologies in the future.

He proposed initiatives to create more jobs, support small businesses, retrain workers, and transform Ohio into "America's Energy Gateway". According to Governor Strickland, "There will come a day when Ohio will be the undisputed home of advanced energy. A day when we will have cast off those two tired little words that have been used to put us down. Rust Belt. Because that's not who we are. A day when the iconic image of the Texas oil rig will be eclipsed by the Ohio-made wind turbine and solar panel."

Unlike previous years in which the State of the State address was used to announced major initiatives for Ohio's preK-16 education system, this year's address summarized the following accomplishments in K-12 education, and proposed initiatives in higher education and a reduction in the tangible personal property tax:

*Accomplishments for K-12 Education:

- Increased school funding by 5.5 percent in the last budget using state and federal resources.
- Approved a major education reform plan "...that gives our students and our taxpayers a system that is constitutional, accountable, and incomparable."
- Defined the resources our students need inside and outside the classroom through the new evidence-based model.
- Redefined our expectations and our practices "...with one core purpose in mind - to prepare our students to become critical and creative thinkers who will thrive in the workplace and in life."
- Acknowledged that Ohio ranked fifth in the nation on Education Week's annual report card on the nation's schools based on more than 150 indicators of school quality.
- Raised expectations and achievement of African-American students through the "Closing the Achievement Gap" initiative. "Over the first two years of this effort, participating school districts achieved a more than 18 percent increase in the overall ninth and tenth grade promotion rate."
- Announced that Ohio was selected in January 2010 to receive Education Commission of the States' Frank Newman Award for State Innovation.

*Proposed Initiatives for Higher Education:

- Facilitate research projects between state colleges and universities and Procter & Gamble by developing a uniform legal agreement regarding the ownership of intellectual property, royalty payments, etc.

-Develop "Hubs of Innovation" in all major cities in Ohio with the involvement of universities and colleges.

-Develop the Build Your Own Business Program, which would expand a program at Lorain County Community College to help individuals start their own businesses.

-Implement the co-op internship program, funding for the Workforce Guarantee Program, and develop an urban workforce initiative.

-Create "Insource Ohio", a collaboration between the Ohio Department of Development, Job and Family Services, and the Board of Regents to work with any Ohio company currently outsourcing or considering outsourcing to demonstrate how Ohio's workforce can meet their needs within a business model that remains competitive.

*Proposed Changes for the Tangible Personal Property:

- Request that the General Assembly "...erase Ohio's tangible personal property tax on generation for wind and solar facilities that break ground this year, create Ohio jobs, and begin producing energy by 2012."

6) The Flat World and Education: A new book by Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford University, entitled "The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future" was released on January 10, 2010.

According to a press release, "The Flat World and Education offers an eye-opening wake-up call concerning America's future and vividly illustrates what the United

States needs to do to build a system of high-achieving and equitable schools that ensures every child the right to learn."

Darling-Hammond identifies the problems in our education system related to equity and quality, and presents "...a vision of the changes that are necessary to build a better education system and a brighter future for all our children and our nation." Diane Ravitch, New York University.

7) News from the ODE: The ODE has available an updated Ohio Educational Directory in Adobe PDF format on its website at <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=15&ContentID=3669&Content=80028>

This document includes information about Ohio's traditional, community, and nonpublic schools, Educational Service Centers, Joint Vocational School Districts, and more.

8) Bills Introduced:

HB424 (Williams, S.) Ohio College Opportunity Grants: Qualifies students in non-credit community college programs for Ohio College Opportunity Grants and requires the awarding of academic credit for community colleges' career certification programs.

HB419 (Derickson) Federal Pell Grant: Authorizes an income tax deduction for the otherwise taxable portion of a federal Pell grant used to pay room and board for a post-secondary student.

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