

# Education Update

To: LWVO  
From: Joan Platz  
Education Update for September 28, 2009

1) 128th General Assembly: The Ohio House and Senate will hold committee meetings and sessions this week. The House and Senate Education Committees will not meet this week.

\*The Ohio Senate approved SJR5, Redistricting (Husted), along party lines (21-12) on September 23, 2009. SJR5 would ask voters on May 2, 2010 to approve amendments to several sections of Article XI of the Ohio Constitution to revise the redistricting process for the Ohio General Assembly and Congress.

\*The Ohio Supreme Court issued on September 21, 2009 a 6 to 1 ruling in the case State ex rel. LetOhioVote.org v. Brunner. The Court agreed with the plaintiff, LetOhioVote.org, that a provision included in Am. Sub. HB 1, the FY10-11 budget bill, regarding the installation of video lottery terminals (VLTs) at Ohio horse racing tracks by the Ohio Lottery Commission, is subject to referendum. The intervening respondents had argued that the VLT provision was an appropriation and as such was not subject to the referendum process. LetOhioVote.org expects to collect the estimated 250,000 signatures needed to place the issue on the November 2010 ballot.

The ruling jeopardizes approximately \$933 million in the FY10-11 state budget. Governor Strickland and lawmakers included the provision for VLTs in the state budget bill, Am. Sub. HB 1, to raise revenue to fund Ohio's schools after reducing the budget by more than \$2 billion. The Ohio Lottery Commission has currently suspended plans to adopt the rules needed to install the VLTs by May 2010.

Governor Strickland released a statement saying that his administration is disappointed with the decision, and is reviewing it to fully understand its impact.

2) Hearings this Week:

\*The Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, chaired by Senator Hughes, will meet on September 29, 2009 at 10:00 AM in the South Hearing Room. Among the bills that the committee will consider is SB8 (Seitz), Elections Clarifications, which requires absent voter's ballot identification envelope statements to be completed for absent voter's ballots to be counted, and generally prohibits same day voter registration.

\*The House Elections and Ethics Committee, chaired by Representative Stewart, will meet on September 30, 2009 at 10:00 AM in hearing room 122. The committee will hear testimony on HB92 (Mecklenborg), which requires absent voter's ballot

identification envelope statements to be completed for absent voter's ballots to be counted, and generally prohibits same day voter registration and application for absent voter's ballots, and HB260 (Stewart) Election Laws.

\*The House Health Committee, chaired by Representative Boyd, will meet on September 30, 2009 at 4:00 PM in hearing room 113. The Committee will hear testimony on several bills, including the following:

- HB60 (Pillich) School Nutritional Standards, which establishes nutritional standards for food and beverages sold in vending machines in public schools.
- HB229 (Stewart), Comprehensive Cleaning System for Schools, which requires the Ohio Department of Health to establish a pilot program to test the effectiveness of the "OS1" comprehensive cleaning system in public schools.
- SB69 (Cates) On campus student vaccinations, which requires that students living on-campus housing at institutions of higher education be vaccinated for meningococcal meningitis and hepatitis B, or obtain a waiver.

### 3) Federal Update:

\*Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick appointed Paul Kirk to the late Ted Kennedy's vacant Senate seat. A special election to fill the position will be held on January 19, 2010. The appointment of Kirk allows Democrats to maintain their 60 vote majority in the Senate.

\*According to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the next version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) should drive reforms that prepare students for success in college and careers. Secretary Duncan focused on the reauthorization of ESEA in a monthly forum with education stakeholders on September 24, 2009, and said that reauthorizing ESEA is urgently needed to build a "transformative education law that offers every child the education they want and need."

ESEA was first approved by Congress in 1965 and was reauthorized in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind Act. The US DOE will be developing its ESEA reauthorization proposal over the next months based on President Obama's vision for K-12 education, and the comments and concerns expressed through the "Listening and Learning"

tour, which Secretary Duncan is hosting in several states. According to Secretary Duncan the reauthorized law should include the following:

-Recognize and reinforce the proper role of the federal government to support and drive reform at the state and local level.

-Respect the honored, noble status of educators-who should be valued as skilled professionals rather than mere practitioners and compensated accordingly.

-Demand real accountability tied to growth and gain both in the individual classroom and in the entire school. Rather than utopian goals, the law should encourage educators to work with children at every level, the gifted and the struggling-and not just the tiny percent near the middle who can be lifted over a mediocre bar of proficiency with minimal effort.

-Discourage a narrowing of curriculum and promote a well-rounded education that draws children into sciences and history, languages and the arts in order to build a society distinguished by both intellectual and economic prowess.

-Bring equity and opportunity to those who are economically disadvantaged, or challenged by disabilities or background.

-Inspire a new generation of young people to go into teaching-and inspire all America to shoulder responsibility for building a new foundation of growth and possibility.

The full speech is available at  
<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/09/09242009.html>.

The U.S. DOE has on its web site information about a series of ESEA stakeholder forums that will be held at the Barnard Auditorium at the department's headquarters in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Building, 400 Maryland Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. The forums are part of the department's "Listening and Learning" tour, which is seeking public input about changes to the ESEA. By the end of the year, the secretary or a senior staff member will have led a listening and learning event in all 50 states.

4) Policy Matters and CFED Release Report:  
Policy Matters Ohio and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) released on September 21, 2009 "The 2009-2010 Assets and Opportunity Scorecard".

The Scorecard is a comprehensive assessment of family financial security in the issue areas of (1) financial assets and income; (2) business and jobs; (3) housing and homeownership; (4) health care; (5) education; and (6) community investment and accountability policies.

The Scorecard ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia on 92 outcome and policy measures related to wealth, poverty, and financial security of families, and gives grades on a curve with the fifty states divided evenly so that ten earn each grade of A through F.

According to this latest report, the United States as a whole does a poor job of relieving poverty, reducing debt, and ensuring health insurance and retirement.

"The findings in the 2009-2010 Assets & Opportunity Scorecard give credence to the claim that in the years leading up to the financial crisis, the façade of financial prosperity was indeed built on a foundation of sand. Even as leading indicators such as net worth were still on the rise and seemingly telling a story of increasing prosperity, there was compelling evidence that Americans - especially low- and moderate-income individuals and families - were becoming more financially overextended and vulnerable."

Ohio earned an overall grade "C"

for its policies and outcomes to support financial security for families. The following are the ratings for Ohio in the issue areas:

Financial assets and income: C

Business and jobs: D

Housing and homeownership: D

Health care: A

Education: C

Community investment and accountability policies:

State Support for Community Development Financial Institutions - No  
Tax Expenditure Transparency - Biennial report online; Covers major taxes  
Impact Analysis of Tax Law Changes - Yes, multiple models  
Community Investment for State-Chartered Banks - No

The report includes the following recommendations for Ohio:

-PROTECT HOMEOWNERS AND STABILIZE COMMUNITIES: To address soaring foreclosure rates and protect consumers from financial services that deplete wealth, Ohio should enact stronger consumer protection laws regulating mortgage services, payday lenders, rent-to-own stores, and paid tax preparation stores.

-PROMOTE FINANCIAL SECURITY: To address high bankruptcy and asset poverty rates and to help residents build assets, Ohio should implement a state Earned Income Tax Credit and make the Dependent Care Credit refundable, to supplement the earnings of low-income workers.

-SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: To reduce the burden on family budgets from paying for decent child care, and to ensure all children have access to high-quality education from a young age, Ohio should devote sufficient funds toward developing a high-quality, and universally available, pre-K program.

According to a press release from Policy Matters Ohio, Ohio policy makers should target the following policy changes to improve the well-being of Ohio's families:

\*Adopt a refundable earned income tax credit, make it available to families who have children and earn less than \$45,000.

\*Make Ohio's dependent care tax credit refundable.

\*Provide universal, high-quality early childhood care and education. Until that is in place, immediately restore access to quality child-care for low-income families at 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

\*Force short-term lenders to comply with the payday lending law passed by the legislature and affirmed by the voters, but currently being circumvented.

\*Broaden eligibility for unemployment benefits to cover part-time workers, and extend unemployment benefits for 26 weeks to those who participate in approved training programs.

The Scorecard is available at

<http://scorecard.cfed.org/index.php>. The companion report from Policy Matters Ohio is available at [http://www.policymattersohio.org/pdf/CFEDCompanion2009\\_0921.pdf](http://www.policymattersohio.org/pdf/CFEDCompanion2009_0921.pdf)

5) Common Core Standards Released: The Common Core Standards Initiative released on September 22, 2009 draft college- and career-readiness standards in English-language arts and mathematics. The Initiative is led by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) (Dane Linn director of NGA's Education Division) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (Gene Wilhoit executive director) in partnership with Achieve and the College Board.

The draft standards define the knowledge and skills students should have to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses, and in workforce training programs.

The English Language Arts Standards consist of three strands: reading, writing, and speaking and listening, which are divided into two sections, Standards for Range and Content and Standards for Student Performance. The standards for mathematics consist of three interconnected parts: a Standard for Mathematical Practice, ten Standards for Mathematical Content, and a set of Example Tasks.

The draft standards were developed based on a set of "criteria" and the following "considerations":

-Fewer, clearer, higher: The standards must cover only those areas that are critical for student success and are usable by teachers.

-Evidence: This work has made unprecedented use of evidence in deciding what to include - or not include - in the standards.

-Internationally benchmarked: These standards are informed by the content, rigor, and organization of standards of high-performing countries and states.

-Special populations: In the development of these standards, the inclusion of all types of learners was a priority.

-Assessment: While an assessment of the common core state standards is not currently being developed, these standards will ultimately be the basis for an assessment system that would include multiple measures of student performance.

-Standards and curriculum: Standards are not curriculum. This initiative is about developing a set of standards that are common across states. The curriculum that follows will continue to be a local responsibility (or state-led, where appropriate).

The public is invited to comment on the draft standards, which are available at <http://www.corestandards.org/>. Feedback on the standards should be submitted by October 21, 2009 at <http://www.corestandards.org>.

Ohio is one of forty-eight states participating in the Common Core initiative. The goal of this initiative is to establish more uniform expectations for students nationwide, in contrast to the current system in which each state has adopted its own state academic content standards. Once the readiness standards are revised and in final form, participating states will be asked to approve them.

Next Step: The NGA Center and CCSSO are expected to begin developing the K-12 standards that will enable students to meet the validated college and career-readiness standards.

6) Update on Gifted Education: Am. Sub. HB 1, the FY10-11 budget bill, changed the method for funding gifted students in Ohio's school districts effective July 17, 2009. The previous school funding system for gifted education based on unit funding for gifted intervention specialists and gifted coordinators has been replaced by the new Evidence-Based Model (EBM), which determines state levels of funding in four areas for gifted education support:

- Gifted Identification Factor
- Gifted Coordinator Factor
- Gifted Intervention Specialist Factor
- Gifted Intervention Specialist Professional Development Factor

The Ohio Department of Education has prepared responses to "frequently asked questions"

regarding gifted education and the EBM funding for gifted education. This resource is available on the ODE's Education Reform website at

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=523>

7) Foundation for Education Excellence Launched:

The Foundation Center, an national initiative founded in 1956 and serving close to 550 philanthropic institutions, announced on September 16, 2009 that it was launching a new online resource center called Foundation for Education Excellence. The center will help education funders align their grantmaking with funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The new resource center was developed with a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, William S. White president, and was launched in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education. The center will connect education foundations with resources and tools to support innovative approaches to education reform at the local, state, and national levels.

The Foundations for Education Excellence portal includes the following:

- Interactive U.S. maps updated weekly with details for each state, including foundations that have made grants for elementary/secondary school reform; total ARRA education dollars announced, available, and paid out; and key ARRA education funding resources.

- Summaries of best and "promising" practices drawn from foundation-sponsored reports.

- Weekly spotlights of current foundation initiatives on education reform.

Lists of top foundation funders and nonprofit recipients in each of the education reform areas, by state.

-Links to daily education news from the Center's Philanthropy News Digest, including upcoming and archived events related to ARRA funding for education. The portal also features "What You Need to Know," a compilation of timely information from the DOE, such as daily news feeds, guidelines, major announcements, and grant deadlines.

The initiative is guided by advisory board members from Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Chicago Community Trust, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, The John D. & Catherine T.

MacArthur Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Rodel Foundation of Delaware, and WestEd.

The Foundation for Education Excellence is found at <http://foundationcenter.org/educationexcellence/>

#### 8) Bills Introduced

SB172 (Grendell) GED Test Fees: Requires the Department of Education to waive fees for certain Ohio residents taking the GED test.

SB173 (Cates) School Districts: Delays for one year the effective date of rules regarding school districts' expenditure of funds for core teachers and the requirement for districts to provide all-day kindergarten for all kindergartners.

SJR7(Grendell) Health Care System Participation: Prohibits a law or rule from compelling a person, employer, or health care provider to participate in a health care system.

HB284 (Hagen) Income Tax Rates: Increases the marginal income tax rate applicable to income in excess of \$200,000 to its pre-2005 rate.

9) The Arts Education Effect: An article published in Education Week on September 23, 2009, entitled "The Arts Education Effect: Why Schools With Arts Programs Do Better At Narrowing Achievement Gaps" by Sandra S. Ruppert, proposes that quality arts education programs for all students may be a strategy for closing the achievement gap among students, and helping more student graduate from high school.

The author opines that the estimated 1.3 million students who drop out of school each year may be turned off from school starting in middle school. What is troubling is recent information from the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the arts, released in June 2009, that shows a lack-luster performance of 8th grade students in music and visual arts, and significant disparities in achievement in the arts (visual and music) based on socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, gender, and type and location of schools.

The author asks, "Does it really matter if the performance of 8th grade students on the NAEP arts assessments is mediocre at best, or that significant achievement gaps based on socioeconomic and other characteristics continue to persist? It matters only if we as a nation are truly serious about reaching the president's goal of preparing all K-12 students by 2020 to succeed in school, work, and life."

The author goes on to describe the important learning experiences that students achieve through quality arts education. For example, arts education helps students to develop capacities for critical thinking, creativity, imagination, and innovation, all skills and competencies that student need to succeed in the 21st century.

Research also shows that arts education can make a difference in the educational experiences of 8th graders. The Arts Education Partnership published "Champions of Change" in 1999, a groundbreaking research study "...that compared 8th graders who were highly involved in the arts with those who had little or no involvement, and found consistently better outcomes for the highly involved students: better grades, less likelihood of dropping out by grade 10, and more positive attitudes about school. The study also showed that the benefits of high levels of arts participation can make more of a difference for economically disadvantaged students."

The author identifies the following five strategies, drawn from the NAEP results, that can help arts education leaders, policymakers, and educators improve performance in the arts and narrow achievement gaps:

- Ensure equal access to arts education. Eighth graders who attend schools where visual arts instruction is offered at least once a week perform better than 8th graders who attend schools where the visual arts are not taught. The same is true for music education.

- Raise levels of participation in arts coursetaking. Even in schools where the arts are offered, actual rates of student participation can be low. For example, one-third of schools estimate that no more than 20 percent of their students received any music instruction in 2008. Fewer than half of 8th graders reported taking a visual arts course in 2008.

- Build interest in and demand for the arts in the early grades. Multiple factors can account for mediocre performance and low levels of participation in the arts, but one plausible explanation is that arts programs have been eliminated or reduced at the elementary grade levels, which reduces interest in and demand for arts courses in middle school.

- Focus on what works in improving student achievement in the arts. Based on the NAEP results, 8th graders perform at consistently higher levels when they attend schools where any of these conditions exist: (1) a state or district curriculum is in place; (2) classes are taught by a full-time or part-time arts specialist; and (3) classes are located in a designated and adequately equipped space.

- Level the playing field to help close the arts education achievement gap. Minority students and those from low-income households have less access to

instruction and are less likely to attend schools that have a state or district curriculum in the arts. They are less likely to receive instruction from a full-time or part-time arts specialist, or to take field trips or have visiting artists in their schools.

The author concludes with this recommendation:

"Arts learning opportunities-both as stand-alone classes and integrated with other subjects-must play an integral role in providing all student with the complete education they need to succeed."

The article is available at

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/09/23/05ruppert.h29.html?tkn=PYSC91y1J3qpiFsnOGm%2BcVvpg4tH%2FDj11vCv>