

**League of Women Voters of Ohio
Conference Call Regarding the FY14-15 Education Budget
January 8, 2013**

This chart describes *possible* policy changes for K-12 education in the FY14-15 budget; relevant League of Women Voters of Ohio positions; and *possible* LWVO responses. The purpose of this chart is to inform LWVO members about the education policy discussions that are happening throughout the state and nation, and consider the LWVO advocacy agenda regarding the FY14-15 education budget for Ohio. The LWVO Board of Directors will make the final decision about LWVO action.

Education Policy Change	Relevant LWVO Positions	Possible League Response
1) Authorize the governor to appoint the Superintendent of Public Instruction. According to the Ohio Constitution the State Board of Education is responsible for selecting a new superintendent.	1) No position.	1) Provide information. Take no action. This change would require a constitutional amendment.
2) Authorize the governor to appoint all members of the State Board of Education.	2) LWVO position #1 supports an elected State Board of Education.	2) Could oppose. This change could be accomplished by changing the law.
3) Merge the duties and responsibilities of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Board of Regents (BOR). The Ohio Department of Education and the Board of Regents will combine offices at 25 S. Front Street in Columbus. The building's name (Ohio Department of Education) is expected to change, and there is some discussion already about combining some functions of the ODE and the BOR, such as communications.	3) LWVO positions #1-4 address the duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the Ohio Department of Education. The LWVO believes that the ODE should be an administrative and regulatory agency and the State Board's policy making/planning functions should be better managed and communicated. The LWVO's positions on higher education support a Board of Regents with broad policy-making powers. But, since the Chancellor assumed more powers, the Board of Regents is basically an advisory board with no authority.	3) The LWVO's response will depend on the details of the merger. It is difficult to guess how the merger would affect the duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Education, which is now a decision-making board, compared to the Board of Regents, which is advisory. The Ohio Constitution requires that there be a State Board of Education, which will appoint a Superintendent of Public Instruction. Other duties and responsibilities of the State Board are prescribed in law.
4) Expand open enrollment for all students to attend any public school or a combination of public schools to receive instruction. This is referred to as "bundling" courses or classes.	4) No position on open enrollment or bundling. However, LWVO position #10 supports the state providing a realistic level of expenditures per pupil and #16 supports state aid for mandates and meeting the educational needs of students. LWVO positions #19 and #20 refer to more state support to minimize fluctuations in school budgets and to fund transportation.	4) The LWVO response will depend on the level of support the state provides to facilitate open enrollment. Currently 64 percent of school districts have some form of open enrollment policy. But, some school districts oppose open enrollment, because of the loss of funding when a student leaves a district, and some school districts are so overcrowded that it would be difficult for them to accept open enrollment students. The School Funding Advisory Council in 2010 recommended that a comprehensive study about open enrollment be conducted to determine the impact of open enrollment on student achievement, enrollment, school budgets, etc.

Education Policy Change	League Position	League Response
<p>5) Expand opportunities for students to access instruction online from any school district. This model is now in practice or under consideration in Louisiana, Michigan, Arizona, and Utah. Students build a custom curriculum by selecting from hundreds of classes offered by public institutions.</p>	<p>5) No position on online learning. However, LWVO positions #10 supports the state providing a realistic level of expenditures per pupil and #16 supports state aid for mandates and meeting the educational needs of students. LWVO position #19 refers to more state support to minimize fluctuations in school budgets. Position #6 requires all schools to comply with the same standards.</p>	<p>5) The LWVO response would depend on whether or not the level of support to facilitate online learning is realistic, and if all schools are required to comply with the same standards for awarding a diploma.</p>
<p>6) Allow students to open enroll or participate in online learning from private schools or vendors using public funds so that “funding follows the student.” This model is now in practice or under consideration in Louisiana, Michigan, Arizona and Utah. Students build a custom curriculum by selecting from hundreds of classes offered by public institutions, private schools, or vendors. Some of the questions that this proposal raises are: how will the quality of the content of the courses be determined? how will students be assessed and awarded credit? and how will diplomas be awarded?</p>	<p>6) LWVO position #9 states that public funds should only be used to support public schools that are accountable and responsive to tax payers. The LWVO has interpreted this to mean that an elected board of education, which is responsive and accountable to tax payers, should have oversight over the school district or school, rather than a private board or a governing authority appointed by the operator of a charter school. LWVO position #6 states that all schools should comply with the same standards. Private schools, community schools, and STEM schools are not required to follow the same standards as traditional public schools.</p>	<p>6) Could oppose based on positions #9 and #6. This concept is generally interpreted as another type of voucher program.</p>
<p>7) Authorize Educational Service Centers (ESCs) to provide more direct services to students. Educational Service Centers, formerly county boards of education, have expanded their services to school districts, and several ESCs have been consolidated with other ESCs to improve operations.</p>	<p>7) LWVO position # 21 states that the functions and operations of the county school system should be evaluated for possible action by the State Board of Education and/or the legislature. Since ESCs are overseen by an elected board of education, expansion of ESC responsibilities would not conflict with the LWVO position about tax dollars being used only for public schools. However, there are still questions about how responsive and accountable ESC boards of education are to the general public, since they represent local and exempted village school districts, even though they might serve other school districts.</p>	<p>7) The LWVO response would depend on whether or not the level of support the state provides to facilitate this effort is realistic, and if the ESCs will be required to comply with the same standards as traditional public schools. More information is also needed about how ESC boards are elected and who they represent.</p>

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<p>8) Improve operations and efficiencies. Governor Kasich has urged school districts and local governments to look for ways to become more efficient through mergers, partnering, shared services, etc. However, some of the recommendations for consolidating, privatizing, and merging schools to save money have been refuted. And, many school districts already partner with consortia to save costs for transportation, purchasing energy and health care, special education services, etc. Some schools are sharing principals and some districts are sharing a superintendent and treasurer to save costs.</p>	<p>8) LWV believes that an efficient and economical government requires adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government. (LWV Principles) LWV also supports a government that is accountable and responsive to the public. LWVO position #9 requires that tax dollars be used to support public schools.</p>	<p>8) The LWVO could support efforts to improve school operations within a system that is accountable and responsive to tax payers.</p> <p>On the other hand, the LWVO could oppose legislation that privatizes school operations in the name of efficiency, based on LWVO position #9, which states that tax dollars should be used only for public schools that are accountable and responsive to tax payers.</p>
<p>9) Authorize city school districts (or any school district) to adopt the Cleveland Plan in total or in part. Mayor Coleman of Columbus has established a council to make recommendations to improve the Columbus City Schools. There has been some discussion about adapting some parts of the Cleveland Plan for Columbus and other large city schools, or allowing the mayor to take control of the school district and appoint an advisory board. The Cleveland Plan includes a number of changes in law affecting the teachers and schools in Cleveland, and allows eligible charter schools to share local tax revenue.</p>	<p>9) LWVO positions do not address this issue specifically. LWVO position #1 supports an elected State Board of Education. It could be assumed that the LWVO would then prefer that local boards of education also be elected.</p> <p>LWVO position #9 states that public funds should be used only for public schools that are accountable and responsive to tax payers. The LWVO has interpreted this to mean that an elected board would be more responsive and accountable to the public than a board appointed by the operator of school, which is how charter school boards are selected.</p> <p>The LWVO has assumed that an elected mayor who controls a school district is accountable and responsive to the public, but is that really possible, considering all of the constituencies that a mayor must serve? And, the success of school districts currently controlled by mayors has been mixed. (Chicago, New York, Boston, Washington, D.C, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Harrisburg, Providence, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Jackson, Mississippi.)</p>	<p>9) Depending on the specific details, the LWVO could oppose legislation that would grant the mayor, rather than an elected board of education, authority to oversee a school district, and could oppose legislation that would provide charter schools access to local tax revenue.</p> <p>This is a complicated issue, because the LWVO did not take any action regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -when the mayor of Cleveland took over the school district and appointed a board of education; -when the citizens of Cleveland could have voted to reinstate an elected board of education; -when the Cleveland Plan to share local tax revenue with some charter schools was passed last summer. <p>There was great frustration with the Cleveland board of education at the time that the mayor took control of the school district, and some Cleveland residents believed that any change would be for the better.</p> <p>But, expanding mayoral control over K-12 education in other Ohio cities could weaken public oversight of public education, and providing charter schools, even those that are achieving, access to local tax revenue,</p>

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		<p>without the oversight of an elected board of education, is not supported by LWVO positions.</p> <p>In addition, there are some Cleveland citizens who are questioning the mayor's control of K-12 education. Mary Rose Oakar, Cleveland's representative on the State Board of Education, has stated that she is disappointed that Cleveland doesn't have an elected board of education like other cities, and has stated that many citizens in Cleveland have expressed that opinion to her.</p>
<p>The State Board of Education has proposed a number of policy recommendations for the FY14-15 state budget. The following are some of those recommendations and possible LWVO responses:</p> <p>1) Fund students where they are educated rather than where they reside. This recommendation changes the way state dollars are distributed to charter schools and voucher programs. It would directly fund choice programs, rather than deducting the funds for charter schools and voucher programs from the foundation aid that school districts receive.</p> <p>The per pupil deduction for charter school students for 572 out of 610 school districts in 2012 was more than the state foundation aid that the school districts received. (See data prepared by the Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding, Bill Phillis executive director.)</p>	<p>of policy recommendations for the FY14-15 state budget. The following are some of those recommendations and possible LWVO responses:</p> <p>1) LWVO position #9 requires that public funds should be used for public schools that are accountable and responsive to tax payers. LWVO position # 19 states that the General Assembly should establish a method to minimize fluctuations in state funding for elementary and secondary education programs. LWVO position #16 states that the state formula should be calculated to reflect the actual costs for state mandated programs.</p>	<p>The following are some of those recommendations and possible LWVO responses:</p> <p>1) LWVO could support this recommendation because it makes the funding system for charter schools more transparent and will end the transfer of school district funds to subsidize the state mandated charter school program. In 2012 over \$700 million was distributed to fund charter schools. The state should directly fund charter schools and be accountable for the total cost of charter schools.</p>
<p>2) Increase funding for early childhood education and development programs.</p>	<p>2) The LWVUS supports programs, services, and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it. The LWVUS supports programs that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of children including early childhood education; developmental services for children ages 0-3; family support services; etc.</p>	<p>2) LWVO could support this recommendation.</p>

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3) Target early childhood education resources to serve children with high needs including children from low income families, children with disabilities, and English language learners.	3) The LWVUS supports programs that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of children including; early childhood education; developmental services for children ages 0-3; family support services; etc.	3) LWVO could support this recommendation.
4) The minimum school year should be determined based on hours of instruction, as opposed to days of instruction.	4) No position	4) No Action
5) Funds provided to management companies of community schools should be transparently reported for all school finances to be reasonably compared.	5) LWVO position #9 supports a school funding system that is accountable and responsive to tax payers. Public dollars should be used only for public schools.	5) LWVO could support this recommendation, because it would increase transparency for using public funds.
6) Chartered nonpublic schools and private businesses participating in state scholarship programs should provide data on the performance of scholarship students so that these schools can be reasonably compared to their public school counterparts.	6) LWVO position #9 supports a school funding system that is accountable and responsive to tax payers. Public dollars should be used only for public schools.	6) LWVO could support this recommendation, because it would increase transparency for using public funds.
7) The role of ESCs as part of the state system should be clearly delineated.	7) LWVO position #21 states that the the functions and operations of the county school system should be evaluated for possible action by the State Board of Education and/or the legislature.	7) The LWVO could support this recommendation to clearly delineate the role of ESCs in the state's education system.
8) Provide Ohio's schools with a shared services model for core services such as fiscal processing, library automation, EMIS reporting, student services, and connectivity. ###	8) LWV believes that an efficient and economical government requires adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government. (LWV Principles) LWV also supports a government that is accountable and responsive to the public. LWVO position #9 requires that tax dollars be used to support public schools. ###	8) LWVO could support this recommendation to improve the efficiency of school district operations. ###