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March 2018 News Flash

Welcome Spring!

Welcome to the Alliance News Flash!

Included in this issue are summaries related to HB512 – Department of Learning and Achievement, SB216 – Deregulation and an update on the work being done by the House Education Funding Task Force.

Upcoming issues will deal with HB360 – Bullying, HB343/371 – Property Reevaluation, pending legislation related to the state report card, high school graduation changes, ESSA and the State Board of Education's Strategic Planning process.

As you can see from the above, while the Governor chose not to introduce a mid-biennium budget this year, our plate is certainly full of educational issues and initiatives to address.

If you have any questions please call us!

Mike Dovilla—We wish you the best!

It is with regret, that Mike Dovilla, tendered his resignation in early February. Mike has been selected to become Chief of Staff in the Office of Policy Development in Washington, DC.

We wish Mike the best as he takes on this new challenge. The Executive Committee is in discussion on how to fill this opening and hope to have the position of Legislative consultant filled before the next school year.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

March 15 Legislative Committee, Conference Call 1:00 pm

March 21 Accountability Committee, Conference Call 11:00 am

March 28 Executive Committee Meeting, BASA Conference Room 9:30 am

HB512-Department of Learning and Achievement(DLA)

With little advanced notice, Rep. Reineke recently introduced a proposal that would create a new cabinet level agency entitled the Department of Learning and Achievement (DLA) which would consist of merging the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Ohio Department of Higher Education and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation under the control of the Governor.

At our February Executive Committee meeting, members expressed several concerns including the following:

- Who makes Educational Policy in this new model? Governor? General Assembly?
- Does the elimination of the State School Board undermine the current system of checks and balances?
- Where and who do we voice concerns regarding education policy?
- How would the DLA prioritize K- 12 public education needs against a focus primarily on preparing children for specific workforce needs?
- Who takes on the leadership role when issues need to be discussed?

The committee also agreed the manner in which decisions regarding how educational policy is made are not an effective process. Between the Governor's office, the State Board of Education, ODE and maneuvering between both the House and Senate Education committees, knowing who to talk to first about instituting or addressing a need, is a challenge. While we agree that the system needs work, consolidating decision making in the Governor's office and diminishing the State Board of Education role does not necessarily solve this problem.

The committee agreed they would like to provide input and feedback to help with the development of solutions that would make the education policy decision making process more effective, inclusive and responsive to current needs. The committee suggested that an appropriate next step would be to meet with the sponsors and stakeholders connected to the DLA proposal to get a better understanding of what the changes are and how those changes will affect school districts.

A meeting with Representative Reineke has been scheduled for March 13. Following that meeting, the Alliance Legislative Committee will meet to discuss the impact of HB512 and formulate a set of recommendations for the Executive Committee to consider when they meet this month on March 28.

House Education Task Force

At the urging of the educational community and with the assistance of Jim Betts, Rep. Cupp and Patterson are chairing a House task force with the goal of conducting an extensive review of the current school funding methods in order to have a set of recommendations that can then be shared with the incoming administration prior to the development of the next biennium budget. The committee began their work in January and has been working as both a full committee and in sub-committees since then.

There are several sub-committees centered on studying specific funding areas including Special and Gifted Education ELL, ESC's, Career Tech and STEM/STEAM, Technology, Transportation, and Poverty and Pre-K Education, Base costs and Distribution Methods.

We have been fortunate to have several Alliance Superintendents chosen to participate on the committee including Tom Hosler, Perrysburg who is co-chairing the Base Cost Review subcommittee, Mike Hanlon, Chardon who is co-chairing the Distribution Review subcommittee and Scot Prebles, Forest Hills who is co-chairing the Open Enrollment, Community Schools and Vouchers.

Work will continue in the sub-committees over the next several months. A final report is slated to be completed this summer. As recommendations are developed out of the subcommittees we will share that information with you.

SB 216

At the present, an amended version of the bill, that included the removal of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) provision and the insertion of several changes to the gifted education professional development proposal, has passed out of the Senate Education Committee and is headed to the Senate floor for a vote. The vote in committee was unanimous which would indicate it has bipartisan support and should be received favorably when the Senate considers it in the next week or two. If confirmed by the Senate, the bill will then head over to the House for their deliberations.

One of the amendments we were particularly interested in dealt with the gifted professional development provisions of the bill. Working with Ann Sheldon (Ohio Association of Gifted Children) and Tom Ash (Buckeye Association of School Administrators), we were able to make several changes to the gifted rules that alter the timeline and requirements associated with the professional development requirements. Those changes included the following:

- Lengthen the number of years required to meet the standards from two to four,
- Give credit to AP and IB programs for up to 30 hours for those teachers who have earned that endorsement and
- allowing districts to receive credit for servicing students once they enter the training process.

These changes are also under consideration by the State Board of Education and if approved, will supersede the need for the provisions in SB216 which are identical. Based on the time line the board of education is on, these changes could be approved in April which would allow districts the time to adjust for next year.

In addition to the above, SB216 contains a variety of provisions that including adjustments to the rules governing on-line verses paper pencil assessments for grades 3, 4 and 5, having parents share in 50% of the costs of textbooks related to College Credit Plus courses, removing unexcused absences when determining if students are excessively absent from school, adopting the Education Standards Board recommendations for changes related to OTES, makes changes to the educator licensure system that will allow districts to be more flexible in terms of assigning staff and securing substitutes when necessary, consolidates school mandate reports into a single reporting period and makes changes to the current rules surrounding reading improvement plans.

A detailed review of the bill developed by the Ohio Legislative Commission is available on our website.

