

Legislative/Systems Improvement Committee

Zoom Conference for all members

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

10:00 A.M.

MEETING SUMMARY

In attendance on phone conference: Tony Podojil and member representatives from 49 school districts.

Tony Podojil convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The primary focus of the meeting was to receive feedback from Alliance members on bills pending in the General Assembly related to teaching race theory, transgender athletes, and vaccinations.

I. Current Political Landscape/ Legislative Initiatives.

A. Prohibitions Related to Teaching Race Theory

- a. HB322(Rep. Jones)/Sub. HB 327 (Reps. Grendell and Fowler Arthur)

B. Transgender Athletes

- a. HB 61 (Reps. Powell and Stoltzfus)— “Save Women’s Sports Act”

C. Vaccinations

- a. HB 248 (Rep. Gross)—“Vaccine Choice and Anti-Discrimination Act”
- b. Amendment on Senate Floor to HB 244 (Reps. White and Lampton)
- c. HB 350 (Rep. Cutrona)

Several districts have been receiving inquiries from parents and other community members during their board meetings regarding CRT and what role that has in relation to instruction in the classroom. Members on the call shared how districts are approaching these concerns.

Q: *What talking points are you using with your board? How are you addressing those issues? What is working or causing more confusion?*

A: Some talking points:

- Focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion and how that translates to the classroom in terms of instruction and meeting student needs.
- Focus on how developing an understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion assists in providing a positive classroom environment contributing to meeting the social emotional needs of students
- Give details about how the district implements diversity, equity, and inclusion in classrooms.
- CRT is not part of the American History/Government content standards.
- CRT is not being *taught* in the district but is *discussed* along with other relevant topics in American History.

B: Things that are working:

- Giving board members information on what Critical Race Theory is so that they can better communicate their understanding with the community.
- Sharing a statement with the community on what the district focuses on such as: educating students on inclusion, being accepting of others and tolerant of all people.
- Allowing time during the public participation portion of the board meeting.

C: Addressing the issues:

- Working with OSBA to facilitate board meetings for the community to understand CRT.
- Reviewing teacher’s professional development on wellness.
- Develop a wellness vision to share with the community.
- Continue to educate students on inclusion, being accepting of others and tolerant of all people
- Have board members reach out to the community to be proactive with community concerns

- Engage local business in the community to see if this topic has had any effect on them
 - Hiring new staff
 - Hiring staff to handle this specific topic
 - Asking how they communicate with their employees on this topic

D. Concern:

- Some districts are seeing a shift in discussion. Community is moving from conversations around CRT to sex education and social/emotional learning questions at board meetings.

Transgender Athletes

Transgender athletes, HB61/SB187, will be discussed more in the Fall. Districts will follow guidance from OHSAA regarding the wearing of mask during sports activities and events.

Vaccinations

- Each district is working with their local health department to develop guidelines for the beginning of the school year.
- Most districts are following the CDC recommendations requiring masks for bus transportation.
- There is still conflicting guidance amongst the health profession in regard to recommending masks for the K -12 group, especially, those under the age of 12.
- A decision related to athletics needs to be made within the next week since programs are set to start the week of August 2.

II. Next Steps:

A. Fall 2021

Below is a list of the legislation will we focus on for Fall of 2021:

- HB327/HB322 – Prohibitions Related to Teaching Critical Race Theory
- HB61/SB187 – Transgender Athletes
- HB248/HB244 – Vaccination Prohibitions
- SB 1 (Sens. Wilson and McColley)—Financial Literacy
- HB 205 (Reps. Ghanbari and Sheehy)—"Ohio Anti-Bullying and Hazing Act"
- HB 151 (Rep. Jones)—RE and RESA
- HB 333 (Reps. Miranda and White)—School Counselors
- HB 368 (Reps. Bird and Pavliga)—College Credit Plus
- SB 206 (Sens. Yuko and Brenner)/HB 359 (Reps. Russo and Callender-Art & Music Therapists)

III. Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be held August 18, 2021, at 10 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Shared Links from today’s meeting are listed below.

<http://protectohiochildren.net/>

<https://www.comprehensivesexualityeducation.org/stop-cse-tsunami-strategy-step-by-step-instructions/>