



**Ohio School Boards
Association**

The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) is pleased to share our comments on the 2015 *Local Impact Statement Report* on selected bills enacted in 2014 as prepared by the Legislative Service Commission (LSC). The report is prepared for members of the Ohio General Assembly and the general public. The document provides the reader with a concise summary and analysis of the fiscal impact of specific bills on public school districts and other local government agencies. The report provides a valuable understanding of the cost and programmatic implications of the selected bills.

The 2015 *Local Impact Statement Report* includes information related to the bills enacted during 2014 that require local impact statements. Three bills included in the report have potential fiscal impact on local school districts. These bills are Sub. House Bill (HB) 10, HB 264, and HB 487.

Sub. HB 10

OSBA was very active throughout the legislative process and did offer testimony on Sub. HB 10. The bill as enacted does address our concerns about the fiscal practices of some charter/community schools. In particular, we support the provisions that deal with those schools declared "unauditable" by the Auditor. The consequences include being charged for any administrative costs required to rectify the situation and future withholding of state funding if the condition is not resolved in a timely manner. We also support the provisions that permit the State Board of Education to suspend, revoke, or limit the license of any fiscal officer who has been suspended and to require the governing authority of a community school to post a surety bond or cash in the amount of \$50,000 with the Auditor of State.

We believe that these steps are essential to ensuring that the expenditures of tax dollars are being accounted for properly.

Sub. HB 264

OSBA was also involved and did register concerns with HB 264, a bill that would place emphasis on services for students with diabetes.

Most of those concerns were addressed by changes to the bill. Many of those changes allowed much more local flexibility, as district leaders seek to meet the individual needs of their students.

We understand the seriousness of the illness and the need for schools to provide appropriate care. Our one outstanding concern with Sub. HB 264 is the provision that requires school districts to allow students with diabetes to attend the building of their choice, regardless of the resources available for their care (and the care of all the diabetic students in the district). This could result in a mandate that districts provide additional staff for every building that individual students might choose to attend, resulting in increased costs, rather than allow the district the flexibility to work out with the students and families, the best option for students.

Am. Sub. HB 487

The Ohio School Boards Association did voice concerns with several measures contained in HB 487 as they relate to primary and secondary education.

One area of concern is the College Credit Plus Program (CCP). We generally support CCP as a way to promote more consistency in the quality of the post-secondary courses, to increase awareness for parents and students of the options available, to reduce barriers to student participation, and to ensure that good data are available with which to evaluate the success of the program going forward.

The funding mechanism for CCP establishes a link between the per-credit hour cost and the school funding formula basic per-pupil amount. No school district would lose more than the per-pupil basic aid amount when a student chooses CCP options. The tuition amount is prorated based on the number of credit hours taken and is referred to as a "ceiling." There is also recognition of the administrative costs incurred by the resident school district under the CCP proposal as the district retains 17% of the prorated basic per-pupil amount. This represents an improvement compared to the post-secondary options program.

However, OSBA opposed the provision in Am. Sub. HB 487 that would require a "floor" within the funding mechanism. This feature has the potential for increasing costs to school districts for students receiving college credit. Many districts, prior to the introduction of CCP, were engaged in agreements with institutions of higher education (IHEs) at the local level, and these agreements required payments from districts that were much lower than the required "floor" as contained in Am. Sub. HB 487. Even though the Chancellor at the Department of Higher Education has the ability to waive the "floor" requirement, we have not seen any IHEs willing to negotiate below the established floor.

OSBA encouraged flexibility for school districts, including the continued use of locally executed agreements to provide students with options to earn college credit. For example, there are agreements that allow for students to take courses on a college campus with a college professor, courses offered on the high school campus but taught by a college professor, or college courses taught by an approved high school teacher on the high school campus.

We were pleased that Am. Sub. HB 487 preserved the ability for school districts to form agreements locally with IHEs for determining the post-secondary options best suited to their own students. Yet we believe the requirement that local agreements be subject to the funding "floor" actually undermines the spirit of flexibility these agreements have traditionally provided.

These comments represent our observations about those bills with major cost implications for public schools. As always, we appreciate the opportunity to share our thinking.