

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AT THE EAST CENTRAL OHIO LEGISLATIVE DINNER

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2019

The following questions were submitted by members in attendance at the ECOEA Legislative Dinner to the panel of legislators and state board of education members. The questions have been grouped by topic where possible.

Funding

- **Funding-Unconstitutional System**-Are there plans for this legislative session to figure out a way to fix the unconstitutional Ohio school funding system?
- **School Funding**-What do you know about the Patterson/Cup proposal for school funding?
- **The West Branch Rule being introduced by Rep. Don Manning**-Have you been asked to co-sponsor this legislation being drafted by Rep. Manning? If so, what was your response? What is your proposal to fix Ohio's unconstitutional school funding, which was ruled unconstitutional in 1997 and still hasn't been addressed-*Natalie Kee, Malvern EA*

Youngstown Plan/HB 70

- Three school districts with a median income of about \$21,500 have been taken over by an Academic Distress Commission as a result of House Bill 70. Ten more district with a median income of about \$25,500 are slated to be taken over by the state within the next couple of years. All of these districts would be considered low income, high poverty districts. The effects of low income and high poverty on academic achievement seem obvious. Please explain how state takeover of these districts is intended to overcome the effects of low income and high poverty on student achievement. What changes to the current law are being considered?
- Research supports that the effects of low income and high poverty are a hurdle to learning. What initiatives would you recommend treat the effects of these economic factors on student academic achievement?
- What data supports that the implementation of an Academic Distress Commission, as a result of House Bill 70, improves a school's academic achievement?
- **HB70-Poverty**-Coretta Scott King stated that "neglecting school children is violence" and "contempt for poverty is violence." This means that legislative violence is coming to school districts in the form of a hostile takeover with HB70. So, the question is: Does this Ohio legislature understand poverty? Are you looking at the real problem? Do you understand that poverty is systemic, and a state takeover is not the answer?
- What are you doing about HB 70? It is unfair for urban districts. What are you doing to reduce testing and unfair, biased graduation requirements? *CPEA*

Charter Schools

- **Funding Charter/Catholic/Christian Schools**-Why are the test scores not posted? Public schools get students back from charters when behavior is an issue/and/or parents aren't happy with a specific charter school. What justice is that?

- **Charter School**-With charter schools finally being held to standards, what assurances can you provide us, as taxpayers and teachers, that these students are going to graduate career and/or college ready?

Alternate Pathways

- **Educational options**-How can we insure that all students are given the opportunity to be successful (i.e. not all students want or need to be 4-year college ready). We have apprenticeships needing filled, but we are forced to prepare them all for college. My brother skipped college, join the Marines, go on-the-job-training, and now works and makes double my salary. *Joe Shimek, Canton Professional EA*
- **Alternate Pathways**-With the introduction of alternative pathways to reach graduation, will there be changes so each pathway is given equal weight so districts are not penalized if students graduate through an alternative pathway in lieu of the 18-point pathway? *Pat Downey, Canton Professional EA*

State Testing

- **Required State Testing**-Please explain why part of teacher evaluations and school accountability are reliant on test scores of students with little to no parent accountability? These students' most basic needs are often not being met, are often habitually absent from schools, and for several districts in the state, from areas of low socio-economic development. *Valentine Gheorghe, Wellsville EA*
- **Testing**-The ACT was never designed to be taken by all students., yet all juniors in Ohio are required to take it and the scores factor into our rating. Can you justify this please?
- **Testing**-Can we stop the high stakes testing? Why does Ohio require 11 more standardized tests than the federal government requires?

OTHER TOPICS

- **Nationwide Education Strikes**-Given the increasing number of education-related strikes around the country, what are legislators and state school board members/ODE learning that could ensure the voice of educators is being heard and used in your decision making?
- **Elementary Education Class Size**-Job and Family Services outline the ration of adult to school age as 1:18. That is for child care, not teaching or inspiring, just to keep them safe. Why can't we see those numbers 1:18 for class size in K-3? Teachers are doing much more than child care.
- **Safety and Security**-What are state leaders doing to help ensure the safety and security of students and teachers in our schools? *May Alayamini, Canton Professional EA*
- **State Report Card**-I've talked with local and city leaders who, when trying to attract businesses to come to Ohio, they are asked why they should come to Ohio when the state itself publishes report cards that show everyone how bad Ohio's schools are. Why does Ohio publish and rank schools so low generally to scare away businesses from coming to Ohio?
- **Accountability**-Will the definition of accountability ever be more expansive than your overall ranking on a standardized test? In other words, what other factors do you believe should be considered in the construction of state reports cards that are not related to testing that could carry equal weight?
- **School Libraries**-Thank you for funding INFOhio. It provides schools the tools needed to address information literacy. In the past 15 years, 15% of certified library positions have been lost. How can we make sure every school has a certified library to help students navigate the information landscape. *Mindy Engler, Canton Professional EA & Christina Conti, Jackson Memorial EA*

- **Gerrymandering**-Can you update the room on any legislation to draw fair voting districts at both the state level and national level in Ohio? How is gerrymandering coming to an end? *Brian Richeson, Plain Local TA*
- **A situation we've had:** We are required by law to report to parents anytime a student expresses the possibility or the intent to harm him or herself. This sounds good, but I have encountered, and our school counselor has encountered, a number of situations in which the reason the student is threatening to kill him or herself is mental/psychological abuse the child is receiving from the parent. When we contact the parent, this only worsens the situation and the child is increasingly abused and makes the student more inclined to harm him/herself. Our counselor estimates nearly 50% of our suicide threats are from students in this situation. Children's Services rarely will investigate unless there are visible bruises on the child. The only thing they will do for mental/physiological abuse is to call the student, but only talk to the child with the phone on speaker and with the offending parent present. When they ask if the parent (who is right there) is abusing the student, the child naturally will not say so under that circumstance. Children's Services then apologizes for bothering them and hangs up. Case Closed! Why do you believe this is a good system for "preventing" student suicides? If it is not, what are you doing to change it?
- What is the biggest impact you have been able to make during your term related to education?
- For students who receive full ride scholarship to university, why are we allowing these students to be taxed on their room and board? Many of these students are below the poverty level!
- Having taught older elementary students for a number of years, it is my experience that recently many of our older elementary students who display the most severe behavior issues often were held back in 3rd grade because they did not pass the Reading test. Please comment on the effectiveness of retention of students as a result of Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee.
- What hope can you give us as we go back to our job sites so we can convince our own students to become educators themselves?