

info@oesca.org • **April 17, 2017**

*This April 17, 2017, Legislative e-Update is provided by OESCA to Ohio's ESCs, their client school districts, and other key education stakeholders.*

*The e-Update provides information on the education bills of interest to Ohio's public education community introduced during the 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly. Bills are organized in order of bill number.*

*For each bill listed, the long title of the bill is included as well as the current status. There are also links to the state bill page for users to download any bills, analyses or fiscal notes. The document concludes with the latest news from Capitol Square.*

## Legislative Tracking Report

### BILL MONITORING

*The following education bill of interest are monitored by OESCA on behalf of the membership and client districts:*

#### HB8

**PUBLIC RECORDS-MINORS** (HAMBLEY S, REZABEK J) To exempt from the Public Records Law certain information concerning a minor that is included in a record related to a traffic accident involving a school vehicle in which the minor was an occupant at the time of the accident.

**Current Status:** 3/29/2017 - House Government Accountability and Oversight, (Third Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 3/22/2017 - House Government Accountability and Oversight, (Second Hearing)  
3/15/2017 - House Government Accountability and Oversight, (First Hearing)

**Categories:** Education

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-8>

#### HB21

**COMMUNITY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION** (HAMBLEY S) Regarding verification of community school enrollments.

**Current Status:** 2/14/2017 - House Education and Career Readiness, (First Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 2/8/2017 - Referred to Committee House Education and Career Readiness  
2/1/2017 - Introduced

**Categories:** Education

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-21>

- HB37 SCHOOL SAFETY-STRUCTURES (ARNDT S)** To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security.  
*Current Status:* 2/14/2017 - House Education and Career Readiness, (First Hearing)  
*Recent Status:* 2/8/2017 - Referred to Committee House Education and Career Readiness  
2/7/2017 - Introduced  
*Categories:* Education  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-37>
- HB47 STUDENTS IN MILITARY (BOCCIERI J)** To enact the "Students to Soldiers Support Act (S3A)" regarding the participation of students who are serving in the uniformed services in extracurricular activities at public and nonpublic schools and public and private colleges.  
*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - House Education and Career Readiness, (First Hearing)  
*Recent Status:* 2/14/2017 - Referred to Committee House Education and Career Readiness  
2/8/2017 - Introduced  
*Categories:* Education, Military Affairs  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-47>
- HB49 OPERATING BUDGET (SMITH R)** Creates FY 2018-2019 main operating budget.  
*Current Status:* 4/6/2017 - Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee, (First Hearing)  
*Recent Status:* 4/5/2017 - Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee, (First Hearing)  
4/5/2017 - Senate Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, (First Hearing)  
*Categories:* Budget and Appropriations  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-49>
- HB51 DEPARTMENT REVIEW SCHEDULE (FABER K)** To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.  
*Current Status:* 2/28/2017 - House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing)  
*Recent Status:* 2/23/2017 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing)  
2/21/2017 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)  
*Categories:* State Government  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-51>
- HB58 CURSIVE HANDWRITING INSTRUCTION (BRENNER A, SLABY M)** To require instruction in cursive handwriting.  
*Current Status:* 3/29/2017 - House Higher Education and Workforce Development, (Second Hearing)  
*Recent Status:* 3/1/2017 - House Higher Education and Workforce Development, (First Hearing)  
2/21/2017 - Referred to Committee House Higher Education and Workforce Development  
*Categories:* Education

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-58>

**HB80**

**SCHOOL FOOD-SUMMER INTERVENTION** (LATOURETTE S, SMITH K) To require school districts to allow approved summer food service program sponsors to use school facilities to provide food service for summer intervention services under certain conditions.

*Current Status:* 4/5/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Government Oversight and Reform

*Recent Status:* 3/15/2017 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 90-4  
3/15/2017 - Bills for Third Consideration

*Categories:* Education, Health Care

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-80>

**HB87**

**COMMUNITY SCHOOL PUBLIC MONEYS** (ROEGNER K) Regarding public moneys returned to the state as a result of a finding for recovery issued pursuant to an audit of a community school.

*Current Status:* 3/29/2017 - House Government Accountability and Oversight, (First Hearing)

*Recent Status:* 2/28/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight  
2/22/2017 - Introduced

*Categories:* Education, State Government

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-87>

**HB102**

**SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM** (BRENNER A) To replace locally levied school district property taxes with a statewide property tax and require recipients of certain tax exemptions to reimburse the state for such levy revenue lost due to those exemptions; to increase the state sales and use tax rates and allocate additional revenue to state education purposes; to repeal school district income taxes; to require the Treasurer of State to issue general obligation bonds to refund certain school district debt obligations; to create a new system of funding schools where the state pays a specified amount per student that each student may use to attend the public or chartered nonpublic school of the student's choice, without the requirement of a local contribution; to eliminate the School Facilities Commission; to eliminate the Educational Choice Scholarship Pilot Program, Pilot Project Scholarship Program, Autism Scholarship Program, and Jon Peterson Special Needs Scholarship Program; to eliminate interdistrict open enrollment; to require educational service centers to transport students on a countywide basis; and to permit school districts to enter into a memoranda of understanding for one district to manage another.

*Current Status:* 3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee House Finance

*Recent Status:* 3/1/2017 - Introduced

*Categories:* Education, Taxation, Transportation & Infrastructure

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-102>

**HB129**

**SCHOOL EXTERNSHIPS-GOVERNOR** (SMITH K, KELLY B) To require the Governor to complete a forty-hour externship consisting of on-site work experience in city, local, and exempted village school districts in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing)

*Recent Status:* 3/21/2017 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government  
3/14/2017 - Introduced

*Categories:* Administration - Governor, Education

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-129>

- HB134**      **SCHOOL COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS** (HAMBLEY S, KICK D) To allow community improvements board grants to a school district to be spent for permanent improvements outside the county so long as the improvements are within the school district.  
*Current Status:* 3/29/2017 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government  
*Recent Status:* 3/21/2017 - Introduced  
*Categories:* Education, Local Government  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-134>
- HB166**      **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM REVISIONS** (REINEKE W, CUPP B) To revise the laws governing the state's workforce development system, programs that may be offered by primary and secondary schools, certificates of qualification for employment, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, and to designate the first week of May as In-Demand Jobs Week.  
*Current Status:* 3/28/2017 - Introduced  
*Recent Status:*  
*Categories:* Economic Development, Education, Jobs, Mental Health & Disabilities  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-166>
- HB170**      **COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION** (CARFAGNA R, DUFFEY M) With regard to academic content standards and curriculum requirements for computer science; to revise educator qualifications regarding computer science; to create a competitive technology grant program for the 2018-2019 school year; and to make an appropriation.  
*Current Status:* 3/29/2017 - Introduced  
*Recent Status:*  
*Categories:* Education, Science & Technology  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-170>
- HB176**      **SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS** (THOMPSON A) With regard to state achievement assessments, statewide academic content standards and model curricula, and teacher and administrator evaluations.  
*Current Status:* 4/5/2017 - Introduced  
*Recent Status:*  
*Categories:* Education  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-176>
- HB181**      **ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT STANDARDS** (HOOD R, BRINKMAN T) With regard to the state academic content standards and primary and secondary education assessments.  
*Current Status:* 4/10/2017 - Introduced  
*Recent Status:*  
*Categories:* Education  
*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-181>
- HJR3**      **SCHOOL DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS REFUND** (BRENNER A) To conditionally authorize the issuance of state obligations to refund pending school district obligations, to conditionally waive, beginning in 2020, the requirement that schools levy property taxes to pay debt charges on their

obligations, and to conditionally authorize a treasury fund that is restricted exclusively to educational purposes.

**Current Status:** 3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee House Finance

**Recent Status:** 3/1/2017 - Introduced

**Categories:** Education, Taxation

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HJR-3>

**SB3**

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (BEAGLE B, BALDERSON T) To revise the laws governing the state's workforce development system, programs that may be offered by primary and secondary schools, certificates of qualification for employment, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, and to designate the first week of May as In-Demand Jobs Week.

**Current Status:** 4/5/2017 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED & REPORTED OUT**, Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Third Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 3/14/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Second Hearing)

2/8/2017 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing)

**Categories:** Economic Development

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-3>

**SB8**

**SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY** (GARDNER R, TERHAR L) To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security.

**Current Status:** 3/1/2017 - Senate Education, (Second Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 2/15/2017 - Senate Education, (First Hearing)

1/31/2017 - Introduced

**Categories:** Education

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-8>

**SB17**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND ALLOCATION** (TAVARES C) To increase monthly allocations to the Local Government Fund from 1.66% to 3.68% of the total tax revenue credited to the General Revenue Fund each month.

**Current Status:** 2/1/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance

**Recent Status:** 1/31/2017 - Introduced

**Categories:** Local Government, State Government, Taxation

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-17>

**SB34**

**SCHOOL YEARS** (MANNING G) To generally require public and chartered nonpublic schools to open for instruction after Labor Day.

**Current Status:** 3/8/2017 - Senate Education, (Second Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 2/15/2017 - Senate Education, (First Hearing)

2/6/2017 - Introduced

**Categories:** Education

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-34>

**SB36**

**AGRICULTURAL COMPUTATION** (HITE C) To require that the computation of the capitalization rate for the purposes of determining CAUV of agricultural land be computed using

a method that excludes appreciation and equity buildup and to stipulate that CAUV land used for a conservation practice or enrolled in a federal land retirement or conservation program for at least three years must be valued at the lowest of the values assigned on the basis of soil type.

**Current Status:** 3/8/2017 - Senate Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 3/1/2017 - Senate Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)  
2/22/2017 - Senate Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)

**Categories:** Agriculture

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-36>

**SB39**

**COMMUNITY SCHOOL OPERATION (SCHIAVONI J)** Regarding community school operator contracts, the operation of Internet- and computer-based community schools, and performance metrics for blended learning schools.

**Current Status:** 3/1/2017 - Senate Education, (First Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 2/15/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Education  
2/8/2017 - Introduced

**Categories:** Education

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-39>

**SB79**

**STATE DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE (JORDAN K)** To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.

**Current Status:** 3/29/2017 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (Second Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 3/15/2017 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (First Hearing)  
3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Government Oversight and Reform

**Categories:** General Assembly, State Government

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-79>

**SB82**

**SCHOOL ABSENCES-PARENTAL NOTIFICATION (WILLIAMS S, LEHNER P)** To require a public school to place a telephone call within one hour of the start of the school day to a parent whose child is absent without legitimate excuse.

**Current Status:** 3/29/2017 - Senate Education, (Second Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 3/22/2017 - Senate Education, (First Hearing)  
3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Education

**Categories:** Children and Family Issues, Education, Municipal Services

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-82>

**SB85**

**OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CREATION (HUFFMAN M)** To eliminate the Educational Choice Scholarship Pilot Program and Pilot Project Scholarship Program and to create the Opportunity Scholarship Program.

**Current Status:** 4/5/2017 - Senate Education, (Second Hearing)

**Recent Status:** 3/22/2017 - Senate Education, (First Hearing)  
3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Education

**Categories:** Education, Higher Education, State Government

**State Bill Page:** <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-85>

**SB104**      **PROHIBIT SECLUSION USE-SCHOOLS (TAVARES C)** To prohibit the use of seclusion on students in public schools.

*Current Status:* 4/5/2017 - Referred to Committee Senate Education

*Recent Status:* 3/21/2017 - Introduced

*Categories:* Education

*State Bill Page:* <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-104>

\*\*\*\*\*

## Capitol Square in Review

*Week ending Friday, April 14, 2017*

### Breaking News

#### **Lawmakers, Kasich Plan for \$800M Less in Coming Budget amid Lagging Revenues**

The Kasich administration will preemptively shave \$400 million more per fiscal year off its revenue outlook for the coming biennium, giving lawmakers a head start on addressing cutbacks likely to be formally announced in June.

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville), Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) and Gov. John Kasich sat shoulder to shoulder at a press conference Thursday to acknowledge further tightening of the budget and vow to cooperate on a structurally balanced two-year spending plan in the coming months.

"We're going to hunker down on this budget. We're going to scour every single part of the budget and make sure that over the next couple years we'll remain fiscally strong. That means we have to take some action," Kasich said.

"It is certain that the June conference committee re-estimation of revenues for FY18-19 will be significantly lower than that in the budget. It will be at least \$400 million below," said Budget Director Tim Keen.

The \$400 million annual reduction follows substantial shortfalls in state revenues throughout FY17 that go beyond those already embedded in the funding assumptions used to develop the introduced version of the executive budget proposal. Keen reiterated Thursday what he told the Senate Finance Committee last week (see *The Hannah Report*, 4/5/17) -- the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) predicted a \$592 million FY17 shortfall when writing the FY18-19 budget, but actual shortfalls have already surpassed \$600 million with three months still to go in the fiscal year.

Kasich and the legislative leaders declined to offer much detail on how they'll fill the gap, including any areas that might be held harmless, though they acknowledged the pressing needs of the drug and addiction epidemic. The governor said he sees health care reforms originating in Washington D.C. as the real threat to anti-addiction efforts, not this revenue problem.

"Everything has to be under the microscope. You just can't say willy-nilly we're just going to exempt all of this. But we'll be sensitive about areas we have to be sensitive about," Kasich said.

"This is not 'pull the fire alarm and slash and burn,'" Rosenberger said. "This is about restraint." The speaker and governor both said they're mindful of the need to achieve

structural balance for the benefit of their successors, given that both face term limits at the end of 2018.

"We've got teamwork and cooperation up here," Obhof said. "The speaker and I both consistently have asked for updates as we've seen revenue numbers miss projections. We've been talking about this all along."

Kasich said achieving a net tax cut is unlikely given the revenue problems, though he said income tax cuts could still come with offsetting increases elsewhere.

Even with the revenue cuts, the budget is still on pace for a small growth in All Funds spending, Kasich said. Keen later said, however, that with the lower revenue projections, state General Revenue Fund spending will be essentially flat.

The governor emphasized that the state continues to add jobs and foresees slower economic growth but not an economic contraction or recession.

Kasich scoffed at the suggestion from Democrats -- repeated most recently in a press conference Wednesday and in statements after Thursday's event -- that the problem was of Republicans' own making, following six years of tax cuts and tax "shifting." He hearkened back to the last budget passed under a Democratic administration -- Gov. Ted Strickland's second budget, developed in the depth of the 2008-2009 recession -- and the multi-billion dollar structural deficit it created.

"They left me with a disaster, which we had to claw our way out of," Kasich said. "We did not cut taxes on the basis of some dynamic scoring. ... This was nothing more than giving back to the people of this state an excess of revenue that came in, and it has helped us to grow."

House Minority Leader Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton) and Rep. Jack Cera (D-Bellaire), lead Democrat on the House Finance Committee, criticized Republican priorities and urged them not to seek further tax cuts in a press conference Wednesday. (See *The Hannah Report*, 4/12/17.)

Cera and fellow House Finance Committee member Rep. Emilia Sykes (D-Akron) followed up Thursday with a harsh assessment of the budget shortfall announcement.

"After six years of Ohio GOP policies that continue to shift taxes to working people and local communities to fund giveaways for the wealthiest 1 percent, Ohio is now faced with a serious budget crisis, one that will force us all to pay the price for the failed economic policies of the past. We were promised that deep cuts to communities, deep cuts to schools, privatizing job creation and shifting taxes to give millionaires breaks would grow our economy and create jobs, but today's announcement is proof Gov. Kasich and other leaders have broken that promise," Cera said in a statement.

"Now -- after having it their way without compromise for six years has brought us to the 'verge of recession' -- schools, communities, the opioid fight, health care for developmentally disabled people and children, and other essential services will be defunded because politicians in Columbus don't have the courage to do what's needed to recession-proof our state. Instead of shoring up self-made shortfalls with Rainy Day money that was essentially stolen from schools and communities, Ohio will likely continue on its terrible economic trajectory with fewer resources to fend off this deteriorating economy," Sykes said in a statement.

Senate Minority Leader Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) was similarly critical.

"Today we learned once again that more income tax cuts don't lead to more revenue. Gov. Kasich has been in office for over six years, yet he blames everyone but himself for the struggles that Ohioans face every day. Even some Republicans in the General Assembly are beginning to question the governor's fixation with cutting income taxes for the wealthy. And

they should. Job growth and household income in Ohio are worse than the national average. It's time for Gov. Kasich to take responsibility for the consequences of his disastrous economic policies," Schiavoni said in a statement.

Speaking after the press conference Thursday, Keen said potential reasons revenues are lagging even as the state adds jobs include the relatively strong reliance on manufacturing, and the fact that Ohio's population is aging, so when older workers retire, their younger replacements likely come onto the job at lower pay.

Keen dismissed the suggestion businesses have figured out ways to manipulate the new tax system to avoid tax liabilities. Some have worried previously that the new tax deduction for small business would encourage more businesses to reorganize as pass-through entities to avoid paying taxes.

"We have extensively reviewed the data that we have available to us, and there is no evidence that businesses are reorganizing their structure in order to game, as you say, the system," Keen said.

"We look at the number of firms by type and the withholding they're paying -- the trends are absolutely consistent with what we've seen previously."

Asked his level of confidence that the \$400 million reduction is an accurate projection, Keen said he is trying to be cautious and conservative as the governor wants. He said OBM has not made a "full, formal" re-estimation of revenues, but has looked at the factors that go into making such estimates and concluded revenues will be down "at least" by \$400 million.

Like Kasich, Keen demurred when asked about policy responses to the shortfall, specifically the likelihood of K-12 funding cuts.

"We are going to get to work with the House and the Senate and identify a range of options. It's too early to say what is going to happen, but it would also be a mistake for us to put things off the table. We need the widest range of options to try to address this circumstance that we face now," Keen said.

**Story originally published in *The Hannah Report* on April 13, 2017. Copyright 2017 Hannah News Service, Inc.**

## **FY18-19 BUDGET**

The forthcoming substitute version of HB49 (R. Smith) will not contain the Kasich administration's proposed changes to the Children with Medical Handicaps Program (BCMh), House GOP leaders said Tuesday.

House Minority Leader Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton) and Rep. Jack Cera (D-Bellaire) said Tuesday that they believe Gov. John Kasich and legislative Republicans have the wrong priorities and called for a budget free of tax cuts, among other changes.

The Ohio Society of Association Executives (OSAE) issued a statement Tuesday expressing its board's opposition to sales tax proposals in the executive budget proposal reflected in the introduced version of HB49.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION (OCMC)**

The Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission (OCMC) Education, Public Institutions and Local Government Committee sent recommendations to the full commission regarding state penitentiaries and persons with disabilities, and made plans to further address sections on county and township organization and casinos in upcoming meetings.

The OCMC Constitutional Revision and Updating Committee may vote as early as next month to recommend changes to the initiated statute and constitutional amendment processes, cutting out

the supplemental signature gathering process for the former and only allowing the latter to go on the ballot in even numbered years.

The full Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission adopted five recommendations from its committees that would keep a number of sections of the Ohio Constitution intact with no changes during its meeting Thursday.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Leading economic indicators for Ohio's private development agency dropped below 2012 numbers last year after two straight years of growth, as capital investments fell by nearly a third in 2016. Total new projects and new jobs commitments negotiated by JobsOhio trailed the previous year's performance by double digits. Retained jobs were way up in 2016, however, suggesting the nonprofit agency is having an easier time getting companies to agree to remain in Ohio than to relocate here or to actually expand their operations.

## **EDUCATION**

Ohio must move expeditiously to develop a plan to comply with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Superintendent Paolo DeMaria said Monday at the State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting. He proceeded to outline a distribution of topics among the various board committees and a timeline that has the board voting on the plan at its July meeting.

The SBOE's Executive Committee voted 5-0 Monday to endorse proposed updates to the teacher evaluation system that would change how student growth is counted in ratings of educators.

Also Monday, the SBOE's Accountability and Continuous Improvement Committee continued discussions on new policies for addressing student absenteeism and truancy.

The State Board of Education officially asked lawmakers Tuesday for the authority to temporarily add new options for students to earn a diploma next year in response to warnings of a potential graduation crisis.

The legal battle over student log-in duration data continued in the 10th District Court of Appeals on Thursday, as a three-judge panel heard oral arguments from attorneys for the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

The Ohio Supreme Court in a split decision Friday declined to revisit a ruling that upheld the Delaware Joint Vocational School District's 2015 levy victory.

## **EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT**

The national unemployment rate dropped from 4.7 percent in February to 4.5 percent in March as total nonfarm payroll employment edged up by 98,000 jobs, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) said Friday. The number of unemployed persons decreased by 326,000 over the month to 7.2 million, BLS said. The unemployment rates for adult women, whites and Hispanics declined in March, while other groups showed little or no change.

## **GAMING**

Ohio casino revenues saw a slight uptick in March, according to figures released Friday by the Ohio Casino Control Commission, while racino revenue saw a much larger increase from the previous year. According to the commission, the four casinos earned a combined \$75.4 million over the month, up from \$73.7 million in March 2016 and up from \$67.2 million in February.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

Two members of the Barberton City Council are among the nine applicants for Rep. Greta Johnson's (D-Akron) vacant seat. Johnson resigned last month to take a job as deputy law director in the office of Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro.

Former Speaker of the House Larry Householder (R-Glenford), and now a "freshman" in the 132nd General Assembly, told *Hannah News* that the only thing that has changed in the 12 years since he was a member of the chamber are the faces.

## **GOVERNOR**

The expanded autism insurance coverage requirements provided in 131-HB463 (Dever) are part of a "kinder, gentler Ohio," Gov. John Kasich said Wednesday at a ceremonial signing of the bill. The law imposes specified insurance coverage minimums for those 14 and younger.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Ohio State University's Board of Trustees approved a plan Friday to lease the school's energy facilities and assets to Ohio State Energy Partners, a group made up of investment company Axiom Infrastructure and French energy company ENGIE. In return, the group will make a payment of \$1 billion to OSU.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) Tuesday announced that its I-Corps@Ohio program has launched its third cohort, focusing on the two categories of medical technology and science and engineering. The program, sponsored by ODHE, establishes a mechanism for evaluating the market need and commercial potential of technologies proposed by the participating research group.

The University of Cincinnati (UC) announced that campus renovations will move its spring commencement from Fifth Avenue Arena to Nippert Stadium, where the ceremonies were last held in 1984.

Kent State University said its Office of Sexual and Relationship Violence and Support Services received three grants Wednesday to launch campus-wide awareness and prevention initiatives surrounding sexual harassment and assault, relationship violence and stalking.

## **MARIJUANA**

The Medical Marijuana Control Program is expected to cost approximately \$5 million over the course of the next biennium, according to the official coordinating the program for the governor's office. Missy Craddock told the Medical Marijuana Advisory Committee (MMAC) Friday that the proposed budget, HB49 (R. Smith), would appropriate \$2.58 million in FY18 and \$2.47 million in FY19. These appropriations are essentially split between the Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) and Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP), with OBP receiving slightly more funding in each fiscal year. The State Medical Board of Ohio (SMBO) does not require additional funding to carry out its role in the program, Craddock said.

## **MILITARY AFFAIRS**

The Ohio National Guard (ONG) marked the centennial of America's entry into World War I and "the contributions and sacrifices our predecessors made to help make the world safe for democracy." According to ONG, most of its members had just returned from nine months' service along the Mexican border when Congress declared war against Germany on April 6, 1917. In August of that year, the entire guard was drafted into the U.S. Army, sending more than 25,000 into federal service.

## **PENSION FUNDS**

The Ohio Retirement Study Council voted Thursday to accept a staff recommendation supporting School Employees Retirement System's (SERS) plans to scale back cost-of-living adjustments (COLA).

The State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) board is scheduled to discuss, and could act on, changes to its cost-of-living adjustments at its Thursday, April 20 meeting.

## **TAXATION**

Ohio Tax Commissioner Joe Testa recently issued a reminder that the income tax filing deadline is midnight Tuesday, April 18. He explained that the traditional April 15 deadline was pushed back by the weekend and the Emancipation Day holiday observed in Washington, D.C.

## **UTILITIES**

The Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) says a new bail-out of nuclear power plants following the failure of FirstEnergy's power purchase agreement (PPA) would only add to the billions of dollars in state-ordered subsidies customers have paid to regulated utilities in an otherwise deregulated energy market. Introduced late Thursday, SB128 (Eklund) would require participating electric utilities to buy nuclear energy "credits" to prop up FirstEnergy's Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station and Perry Nuclear Generating Station in northern Ohio. Proceeds would go to a "zero-emissions nuclear resources fund" administered by the Ohio Treasurer of State for distribution to FirstEnergy and any other nuclear power plant that might emerge. Utilities' costs would then be charged to all participating ratepayers through a non-bypassable bill rider.

actionTRACK - Hannah News Service, Inc.

*This report is intended to provide updated information on the legislative issues of interest to Ohio's Educational Service Centers, their client OESCA members & interested parties.*