

**The ESC BRIDGE**

**Bridging Resources, Information, and Data from**

**Government and Education**

**For the Weeks of January 12, 2015**

**Featured News**

[**Kasich’s student-mentoring program drops religious requirement**](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/01/15/student-mentor-program.html) **Columbus Dispatch**

The Ohio Department of Education will no longer require schools to partner with religious organizations in seeking funding from Gov. John Kasich’s new $10 million student-mentorship program. Department officials said yesterday that the definition of a “faith-based organization has been expanded” to include nonreligious groups.

[**Ohio Announces New Plan to Get High School Dropouts into the Workforce**](http://education.ohio.gov/Media/Media-Releases/Ohio-Announces-New-Plan-to-Get-High-School-Dropout#.VLwFZWd0w_1)  **Ohio Department of Education**

Ohio took its first steps today to offer a brighter future to the state’s 1.1 million citizens 22 years of age and older who have dropped out of high school. Five educational institutions have been selected to share $2.5 million to develop a new approach to adult education — one that will link earing a diploma with free job training for in-demand careers.

**Federal, National and U.S. Department of Education**

[**Sneak Peek at President Obama's Fiscal 2016 Budget Request**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/01/sneak_peek_at_president_obamas.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaignk-12) **Education Week**

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan made big news Monday morning when he called on Congress to repeal the No Child Left Behind Act, the current iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and replace it with legislation that both keeps the annual testing regimen in place and targets federal dollars to the country's poorest-performing schools.

[**Sen. Alexander's ESEA Draft Offers Two Options on Testing**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/01/alexander_draft_NCLB_offers_lawmake.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaignk-12) **Education Week**

Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., the chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, kicked off the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, the latest iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, by saying he wants to start a dialogue about testing. And Tuesday, he did just that, releasing a 400-page draft bill, obtained by Education Week, to renew the law that outlines two different potential paths for the committee to take on the sticky issue of whether to continue with the law's annual, statewide assessments.

**Ohio Legislation Update (recent bill action in red)**

**131st General Assembly**

***House***

*No legislation has been introduced.*

***Senate***

*No legislation has been introduced.*

**Ohio Budget/Politics**

[**Ohio attorney general inaugurated for 2nd 4-year term**](http://www.cantonrep.com/article/20150111/NEWS/150119922/10287/NEWS) **Canton Repository**

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine has been inaugurated for a second four-year term during which he pledged to continue his crime fighting efforts, which have been aimed at protecting children, assisting victims of rape and targeting drug dealers, scam artists and corrupt public officials.  
  
[**John Kasich sworn in for second term as Ohio's governor (Video)**](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2015/01/john_kasich_sworn_in_for_secon.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Gov. John Kasich was formally sworn in for his second term just after 12 a.m. Monday during a ceremony in the Senate chamber at the Ohio Statehouse. Ohio Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor administered the oath to Kasich. He was joined by his wife, Karen, who held the Bible used during the oath, and his twin daughters, Emma and Reese.

[**Ohio General Assembly faces big questions**](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/01/11/general-assembly-faces-big-questions.html)  **Columbus Dispatch**

The 131st General Assembly kicked off last week with a new House speaker and record Republican majorities. Here are nine things to watch as lawmakers move into another two-year session.

[**Ohioans in Congress might flex muscles on committees**](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/01/11/ohioans-in-congress-might-flex-muscles-on-committees.html) **Columbus Dispatch**

Rep. Pat Tiberi is taking the helm of a subcommittee focusing on trade. Sen. Sherrod Brown is now the lead Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee. Rep. Steve Stivers now sits on the House Rules Committee. The 114th Congress has just been sworn in, but you can hardly hear it for the noise of so many shifting chairs.

[**Rosenberger, Strahorn Announce Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, Ranking Minority Members**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198482) **Hannah**

Speaker of the House Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville), in conjunction with House Minority Leader Rep. Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton), Monday announced the chairs, vice chairs and ranking minority members for a slightly reconfigured and expanded committee organization for the 131st General Assembly. Under Rosenberger's structure, there are 19 standing committees and six subcommittees -- five of those are the subcommittees for the House Finance and Appropriations Committee. This is up from 17 standing committees in the 130th General Assembly, when there were also six subcommittees.

[**Ohio ed chair open to Common Core debate**](http://www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com/story/news/local/2015/01/13/ohio-ed-chair-open-common-core-debate/21707685/) **Mansfield News Journal**

The Ohio House's new education chairman believes his chamber will again debate Common Core repeal, and unlike his predecessor will not try to use his influence to curtail it. Rep. Bill Hayes, R-Pataskala, on Monday was announced as the new education committee chair, a position the former school board member said was his ultimate goal when he first ran for the Legislature.

**Ohio Department of Education/State Board of Education**

[**State school board Democrats vow that their "voice will be heard" on testing, school funding and charter schools**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/01/state_school_board_democrats_v.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Democrats on the [state school board](http://education.ohio.gov/State-Board) have banded together to push for better state funding of schools, better controls over charter schools and a reduction in the amount of standardized tests kids have to take. The coalition of seven members will be a minority on the mostly-Republican board of 19. But leaders of the coalition said in a press conference this morning that they hope that by speaking together, they can have a voice in support of education.

[**Local School districts respond to state changes**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150110/local-school-districts-respond-to-state-changes) **Willoughby News-Herald**

One thing is unanimous among local superintendents — elementary art, music, physical education teachers aren’t going anywhere and neither are librarians, social workers, counselors and nurses at schools. The Ohio Board of Education recently gave the go-ahead to remove a minimum staffing requirement from the Ohio Administrative Code known as the “5 of 8” rule.

[**Gunlock, Elshoff Take Helm of State School Board**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198483) **Hannah**

Tom Gunlock ascended Monday from vice president to president of the State Board of Education on a 12-7 vote over career teacher Pat Bruns. Tess Elshoff was elected 11-8 to succeed Gunlock in the vice presidency, defeating board member Michael Collins.  Gunlock and Elshoff are both appointees of Gov. John Kasich, who recently re-upped their terms by another four years. Bruns is the newly elected Fourth District member, succeeding former President Debe Terhar, who declined to seek re-election. Collins is halfway through a second term as the Sixth District board member.

[**School Board Committees Discuss Graduation Requirements, ESEA Waiver**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198487) **Hannah**

Committee work at Monday's opening State Board of Education meeting for the 2015-2016 term included some catching up with lame-duck legislative enactments and related work to continue to fill in details of the graduation requirements created in the 2014 mid-biennium review. Also Monday, Chris Woolard, accountability chief for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), advised board members that the state is in the process of applying to renew its federal waiver for the Elementary and Second Education Act, also known as No Child Left Behind. Woolard said the application is to be submitted in March, and the U.S. Department of Education will be looking for "extensive" stakeholder engagement in development of the renewal application.

[**Two governor's appointees elected to lead state school board**](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/01/12/state_school_board_leadership.html) **Columbus Dispatch**

A divided state Board of Education elected two appointees of Gov. John Kasich yesterday to lead the board. Thomas Gunlock of Centerville was voted in as president, and Tess Elshoff of New Knoxville was elected vice president. Gunlock had served as vice president under Debe Terhar, who did not seek a second term.

[**Food Purchasing Co-Op Seeks School Board Help; Ross Teases Testing Report**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198498) **Hannah**

Leaders of a purchasing cooperative that buys federal food commodities for hundreds of school districts asked the State Board of Education to intercede Tuesday to prevent reversion to state-run purchasing. Board President Tom Gunlock told the representatives of the cooperative, run by the Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council (EPC), that he supports local districts' abilities to offer alternatives to the state program. Gunlock asked state Superintendent Richard Ross to investigate the dispute and report back at the February meeting.

[**State may drop the religious requirement from Gov. Kasich's student mentoring grants**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/01/state_may_drop_the_religious_r.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

The state may stop requiring schools to partner with religious groups to receive any money from Gov. John Kasich's new $10 million fund to [promote student mentoring programs](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2014/02/state_needs_to_focus_on_keepin.html). State Superintendent Richard Ross told the state school board Tuesday that he could drop [the requirement that a church or other faith-based organization partner with schools](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2014/12/schools_need_a_religious_partn.html) if lawyers determine it could open the state up to a strong legal challenge.

[**State school tip line already helped prevent tragedies**](http://www.lancastereaglegazette.com/story/news/local/2015/01/14/new-safety-tip-line-prevents-tragedies/21771825/) **Lancaster Eagle-Gazette**

A new statewide anonymous tip line for schools has been credited with identifying 25 real threats and has expanded to 821 school districts in the state as of this week. Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction Richard Ross and Ohio Department of Public Safety Director John Born traveled Wednesday to Liberty Union High School to praise the district’s participation as one of the first school districts in Ohio to sign up for the program.

[**State superintendent wants to cut school testing**](http://www.mansfieldnewsjournal.com/story/news/local/2015/01/15/state-superintendent-wants-cut-school-testing/21828125/) **Mansfield News Journal**

Amid a groundswell of concern abut the amount of time Ohio students spend on mandated tests, the state superintendent Thursday recommended reducing testing by nearly 20 percent. A part of a report to the legislature, Superintendent Richard Ross made numerous recommendations, including eliminating the fall third-grade reading exam, although schools could provide a summer test for students who need it.

[**Ohio Department of Education recommends reducing state tests**](http://www.morningjournal.com/general-news/20150115/ohio-department-of-education-recommends-reducing-state-tests) **The Morning Journal**

Education leaders responded with guarded optimism after the Ohio Department of Education recommended reducing state tests for children by about 20 percent. In a news release from the Ohio Department of Education, Dr. Richard A. Ross, superintendent of public instruction in the State of Ohio, commented on an extensive report released Jan. 15.The state legislature required ODE to survey testing practices in hundreds of school districts.

[**State Names Schools Where Students Can Seek Private School Vouchers**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198544) **Hannah**

The Ohio Department of Education released the list Friday of schools whose persistent underperformance makes their students eligible for state-funded vouchers to attend private schools. Students at 255 schools will be eligible to seek an EdChoice Scholarship, for which the application period opens Feb. 1. Schools make the list if for two of the past three years they were in the bottom 10 percent by Performance Index score or received poor state rankings on certain measures. For this year, that means either an "academic emergency" or "academic watch" rating on the 2011-2012 report card, or a grade of "D" or "F" on the Performance Index and value-added progress dimension for the 2012-2013 or 2013-2014 academic years.

**Early Learning**

[**Cleveland preschools should step up to quality: editorial**](http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/01/cleveland_preschools_should_st.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Ohio's Step Up To Quality rating program for preschools and day care centers is an important first step: Ohio needs to help parents understand which of the state's 8,000 preschools and day care centers are successfully educating youngsters. The state's preschool rating program, which is optional now but becomes mandatory in five years for most centers, seeks to close parents' knowledge gap with a five-star grading system, [according to a series](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/01/state_ratings_point_to_preschools_that_are_really_schools_not_just_child_care.html) by Plain Dealer reporter Patrick O'Donnell.

**Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

[**Leveraging Grades and Attendance to Improve High School Success**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/college_bound/2015/01/grades_and_attendance_are_best_predicators_of_high_school_success.html) **Education Week**

The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research recently reported the best predictors of academic success in high school are a combination of grades and attendance in middle school. Now researchers have released practitioner briefs based on the report, "Looking Forward to High School and College: Middle Grade Indicators of Readiness in Chicago Public Schools," to help schools implement strategies culled from the findings.

**College and Career Readiness**

[**Online, summer college courses among Kasich budget options**](http://www.ohio.com/news/break-news/online-summer-college-courses-among-kasich-budget-options-1.557190) **Akron Beacon Journal**

Gov. John Kasich is being urged to support new technologies and innovative teaching styles in college classrooms across Ohio, to boost student advising and internship opportunities and to extend more college courses into the summers as he writes his next higher education budget.

[**Kasich administration interested in details of Obama plan to expand community college access**](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2015/01/kasich_administration_interest.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Gov. John Kasich's administration, while reserving judgment until more details are known, said President Barack Obama's plan to boost access to higher education through community colleges is consistent with some of its own priorities. Kasich has talked about a prominent role for community colleges, particularly in training and educating workers for the needs of businesses in the economy.

[**Ohio House speaker criticizes Obama's plan for free community college**](http://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/news/2015/01/09/ohio-house-speaker-criticizes-obamas-plan-for.html) **Cincinnati Business Courier**

Don't expect Ohio to have free community college any time soon. The new speaker of the Ohio House brushed aside President Barack Obama's plan to make community college tuition free for millions in a speech in Cincinnati on Friday.

[**Cleveland State University receives grants to create 40 paid internships**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/01/cleveland_state_university_rec_5.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[Cleveland State University](http://www.csuohio.edu/) has received two grants to create 40 paid internships for liberal arts majors. The university received $113,908 from the Career Ready Internship grant program administered by the Madison, Wisconsin-based Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation, and a $92,000 grant from the Fenn Educational Fund of the Cleveland Foundation.

[**Experimenting with Competency**](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/01/13/feds-move-ahead-experimental-sites-competency-based-education) **Inside Higher Ed**

The U.S. Department of Education will allow at least 40 colleges to experiment with competency-based education and prior learning assessment, granting them a waiver from certain rules that govern federal financial aid. The department last week notified colleges that had successfully applied to participate in the latest round of “experimental sites,” which observers said is more expansive than previous ones.

**Northeast Ohio Schools**

***Cuyahoga County***

[**Superintendent Clint Keener will deliver Bay Village State of the Schools address**](http://blog.cleveland.com/westshoresun/2015/01/superintendent_clint_keener_wi.html) **Sun News**

[**Chagrin Falls school board will consider options and costs of new construction on Tuesday**](http://www.cleveland.com/chagrin-falls/index.ssf/2015/01/chagrin_falls_school_board_wil.html) **Sun News**

[**Chagrin Falls School District uses digital platform to be on forefront of school nutrition**](http://www.cleveland.com/chagrin-valley/index.ssf/2015/01/chagrin_falls_school_district.html)  **Chagrin Falls Schools**

[**The Plain Dealer's Rachel Dissell reporting at the City Club of Cleveland**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/01/cleveland_students_racism_viol.html#incart_river)  **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[**Fairview Park school board considers four candidates for superintendent**](http://www.cleveland.com/fairview-park/index.ssf/2015/01/fairview_park_schools_consider.html#incart_river) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Fairview Park Superintendent Bill Wagner addresses business leaders**](http://www.cleveland.com/fairview-park/index.ssf/2015/01/fairview_park_superintendent_b_1.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Mayfield schools seeks volunteers to teach student art program**](http://www.cleveland.com/hillcrest/index.ssf/2015/01/mayfield_schools_seeks_volunte.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Parma schools support staff employees approve contract after 18-month negotiation**](http://www.cleveland.com/parma/index.ssf/2015/01/parma_schools_support_staff_em.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

***Geauga County***

[**Forecast favorable for Ledgemont territory transfer**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150115/forecast-favorable-for-ledgemont-territory-transfer) **Willoughby News-Herald**

[**Cardinal Schools receives Auditor of State award**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150115/cardinal-schools-receives-auditor-of-state-award) **Willoughby News-Herald**

***Lake County***

[**W-E Schools approves school improvements**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150113/w-e-schools-approves-school-improvements) **Willoughby News-Herald**

[**Chardon School Board elects president, authorizes purchase of GPS system**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150114/chardon-school-board-elects-president-authorizes-purchase-of-gps-system) **Willoughby News-Herald**

[**Riverside, teachers union have new contract**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150115/riverside-teachers-union-have-new-contract) **Willoughby News-Herald**

[**Mentor School District plans changes**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150114/mentor-school-district-plans-changes) **Willoughby News-Herald**

***Lorain County***

[**Lorain City School Board president spurs on momentum**](http://www.morningjournal.com/general-news/20150113/lorain-city-school-board-president-spurs-on-momentum) **The Morning Journal**

[**Lorain County schools focus on science, math, tech**](http://www.morningjournal.com/general-news/20150115/lorain-county-schools-focus-on-science-math-tech) **The Morning Journal**

***Medina County***

[**Highland schools news: testing informational meeting, cyber defense competition**](http://www.cleveland.com/medina/index.ssf/2015/01/highland_schools_news_testing.html) **Sun News**

[**Cloverleaf gym gets a makeover**](http://medinagazette.northcoastnow.com/2015/01/10/cloverleaf-gym-gets-makeover/) **Medina Gazette**

***Summit County***

[**Akron schools look to engage families**](http://www.ohio.com/news/break-news/akron-schools-look-to-engage-families-1.557890) **Akron Beacon Journal**

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