

**The ESC BRIDGE**

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**Government and Education**

**For the Week of February 23, 2015**

**Featured News**

[**Former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland expected to launch U.S. Senate bid Wednesday, sources say**](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2015/02/former_ohio_gov_ted_strickland_9.html#incart_2box_open_index.ssf) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Democrat Ted Strickland is likely to launch a U.S. Senate bid Wednesday, according to sources close to the former Ohio governor. A spokesman said Strickland will issue a morning statement, and all indications are that he will confirm his intentions to challenge Republican incumbent Rob Portman. The decision could pit two Washington veterans against each other in a nationally watched race with ramifications on which party controls Congress.

[**House Panel Plumbs ODE Budget; Cupp Stresses Need for Explicable Formula**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198963) **Hannah**

A House budget subcommittee took a five-hour tour through Gov. John Kasich's education policy and funding proposals Thursday, raising questions about assessments, charter school accountability and confusing projections from the new foundation formula. Rep. Bob Cupp (R-Lima), chairman of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education, asked the administration to work with lawmakers on puzzling through seeming "quirks" in the new formula, which Kasich officials say is meant to better gauge local funding capacity in terms of income and property valuation. Aaron Rausch, the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) budget chief, pledged cooperation and said numerous factors play in to how funding spreadsheets calculate the estimated effect of formula changes. Districts that have been on a funding guarantee for a decade or more also haven't seen their state aid shift to reflect the reality of their current situation, he said.

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

[**White House threatens veto of GOP bill to overhaul maligned No Child Left Behind education law**](http://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2015/02/25/house-to-debate-gop-bill-to-fix-no-child-left-behind) **U.S. News & World Report**

The White House threatened Wednesday to veto a Republican bill to overhaul the widely criticized No Child Left Behind law, calling the effort "a significant step backwards." The veto threat came as lawmakers began debate on the measure in the House. A vote is expected on Friday. Republicans say the bill would restore local control in schools and stop top-down education mandates. Democrats say it would allow billions in federal dollars to flow out without ensuring they will improve student learning.

[**U.S. Education Secretary Says ESEA Should Expand Focus to Early Learning**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/early_years/2015/02/education_secretary_says_esea_should_expand_focus_to_early_learning.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=earlyyears) **Education Week**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act should expand beyond its current focus on K-12 schooling and encompass earlier learning, said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan during a Wednesday visit to an elementary school here that also includes nine preschool classrooms. The details for how to achieve that goal, he said, are up to the leaders of the U.S. Senate education committee, who are currently working on a bill to reauthorize the ESEA.

[**Title I Portability for Private Schools to Get No Floor Vote in House NCLB Debate**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/02/title_i_portability_for_privat.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaignk-12) **Education Week**

When the U.S. House of Representatives considers amendments to the Republican-backed No Child Left Behind Act rewrite on Thursday, members will not get a chance to vote on a measure that would have allowed Title I money for low-income students to be used at private schools. The ruling is a big win for those House Republicans, including education committee Chairman John Kline, R-Minn., who want to pass the NCLB overhaul bill without any snafus, and for House Democrats who don't want to see the rewrite become any more conservative.

[**House Leaders Officially Postpone Vote on NCLB Rewrite**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/02/house_leaders_officially_postp.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=campaignk-12) **Education Week**

It's possible that leaders will find the votes to pass the bill next week—but if they don't the bid to update the NCLB law this year could be in serious trouble.

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

**131st General Assembly**

***House***

[**HB1**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-1)WORKFORCE GRANT PROGRAM (Rep. Kirk Schuring, Rep. Nathan Manning) To establish the Workforce Grant Program, to authorize an income tax credit equal to 25% of the student loan payments a grant recipient makes per year, and to make an appropriation

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Economic & Workforce Development Committee**

[**HB2**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-2)CHARTER SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP (Rep. Mike Dovilla, Rep. Kristina Roegner) With regard to sponsorship and management of community schools

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Education Committee**

[**HB5**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-5)PUBLIC OFFICE-STATE AGENCY EFFICIENCY STUDIES (Rep. Stephanie Kunze, Rep. Kyle Koehler) To allow the Auditor of State to conduct business case studies regarding the efficiency of local public offices and state agencies

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Local Government Committee**

[**HB7**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-7)ASSESSMENT SCORE DETERMINATIONS (Rep. Jim Buchy) To prohibit individual student scores from certain elementary and secondary achievement assessments administered for the 2014-2015 school year from being used to determine promotion or retention or to grant course credit

**STATUS: (Passed by House) Senate Education Committee – Reported out as amended**

[**HB12**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-12)TIF-INCENTIVE DISTRICTS (Rep. James Butler, Jr., Rep. Tony Burkley) To establish a procedure by which political subdivisions proposing a tax increment financing (TIF) incentive district are required to provide notice to the record owner of each parcel within the proposed incentive district before creating the district

**STATUS: Referred to House Ways & Means Committee**

[**HB15**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-15)STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERSHIP (Rep. Ron Gerberry) To change the voting membership of the State Board of Education to consist of a member from each of several electoral districts with boundaries coinciding with the state's Congressional districts and a president to be appointed by the Governor if there is an even number of such electoral districts

**STATUS: Referred to House Education Committee**

[**HB20**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-20)CONCEALED CARRY-SCHOOL SAFETY ZONE (Rep. Anne Gonzales, Rep. Kyle Koehler) To expand and clarify the authority of a concealed handgun licensee to possess a handgun in a school safety zone

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House State Government Committee**

[**HB25**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-25)FOOD-DRINK SCHOOL SALES (Rep. Stephanie Kunze) To require the State Board of Education to adopt rules regarding the sale of beverages and food during the regular school day in connection with a school-sponsored fundraiser

**STATUS: Referred to House Education Committee**

[**HB27**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-27)FINANCIAL AID-FINISH FUND (Rep. Dan Ramos) To create the Finish Fund and the Finish Reserve Fund to provide grants to students who are nearing completion of their associate or bachelor's degrees and display financial need or hardship

**STATUS: Referred to House Finance Committee**

[**HB28**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-28)SUICIDE PREVENTION-HIGHER EDUCATION (Rep. Marlene Anielski) With regard to suicide prevention programs at state institutions of higher education

**STATUS: Referred to House Community & Family Advancement Committee**

[**HB39**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-39)SCHOOL-CAMP INHALER PERMIT (Rep. Mike Duffey, Rep. Anthony DeVitis) To permit schools and camps to procure and use a metered dose inhaler or dry powdered inhaler used to alleviate asthmatic symptoms in accordance with prescribed policies and to exempt them from licensing requirements related to the possession of these inhalers

**STATUS: Referred to House Health & Aging Committee**

[**HB42**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-42)LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND (Rep. Ron Gerberry, Rep. Jack Cera) To require that, for fiscal year 2016 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Local Government Fund must receive the same proportion of state tax revenue that the Fund received in fiscal year 2005

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Finance Committee**

[**HB43**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-43)CLASSROOM FACILITIES-PROPERTY TAX ROLLBACKS (Rep. Ron Gerberry) To revise the law governing classroom facilities assistance programs and to restore the application of the 10% and 2.5% property tax rollbacks to school district tax levies approved on or after the effective date of Am. Sub. H.B. 59 of the 130th General Assembly

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Ways & Means Committee**

[**HB44**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-44)LOTTERY PROFITS-SCHOOLS (Rep. Ron Gerberry) To require that a portion of lottery profits be distributed annually on a per pupil basis to public and chartered nonpublic schools

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Ways & Means Committee**

[**HB46**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-46)GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE DATABASE (Rep. Mike Dovilla, Rep. Jonathan Dever) To require the Treasurer of State to establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House State Government Committee**

[**HB52**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-52)WORKERS' COMPENSATION LAW (Rep. Robert Hackett) To make changes to the Workers' Compensation Law, to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Insurance Committee**

[**HB54**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-54)VOCATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS-OFFICE TERMS (Rep. Marlene Anielski) To revise the law regarding terms of office of members of certain joint vocational school district boards of education

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Education Committee**

[**HB55**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-55)THIRD-GRADE READING GUARANTEE (Rep. Robert Sprague) To specify deadlines for the administration of reading skills assessments for purposes of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Education Committee**

[**HB56**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-56)PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT-CRIMINAL RECORDS (Rep. Kirk Schuring, Rep. Stephen Slesnick) To limit the use of criminal records in the hiring and employment practices of public employers

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Commerce & Labor Committee**

[**HB64**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-64)OPERATING BUDGET (Rep. Ryan Smith) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to House Finance Committee**

[**HB70**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-70)SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING (Rep. Denise Driehaus, Rep. Andrew Brenner) To authorize school districts and community schools to initiate a community learning center process to assist and guide school restructuring

**STATUS: Referred to House Education Committee**

[**HB74**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-74)PRIMARY-SECONDARY ASSESSMENTS (Rep. Andrew Brenner) With regard to the administration of state primary and secondary education assessments

**STATUS: Referred to House Education Committee**

[**HB81**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-81)SPECIAL ELECTIONS (Rep. Steve Hambley) To eliminate the ability to conduct special elections in February and to require a political subdivision to prepay sixty-five per cent of the estimated cost of a special election

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**HB85**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-85)CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION (Rep. Dan Ramos, Rep. Christina Hagan) With respect to age-appropriate student instruction in child sexual abuse and sexual violence prevention and in-service staff training in child sexual abuse prevention

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**HB89**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-89)MEDICAID SCHOOL PROGRAM (Rep. Anthony DeVitis) Regarding the Medicaid School Program

**STATUS: Introduced**

***Senate***

[**SB3**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-3)HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL DISTRICT EXEMPTION (Sen. Cliff Hite, Sen. Keith Faber) To exempt high-performing school districts from certain laws

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Education Committee**

[**SB4**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-4)IN-STATE TUITION REDUCTION (Sen. Keith Faber) To require each state institution of higher education to develop a plan to reduce in-state student cost of attendance by five per cent for the 2016-2017 academic year

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB6**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-6)JOINT COMMITTEE ON OHIO COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY (Sen. Shannon Jones, Sen. John Eklund) To increase the maximum income tax deduction for college savings contributions to $10,000 annually for each beneficiary

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee**

[**SB12**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-12)INCOME TAX CREDIT-SCIENCE RELATED DEGREE (Sen. Jay Hottinger) To grant an income tax credit to individuals who earn degrees in science, technology, engineering, or math-based fields of study

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee**

[**SB19**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-19)OHIO COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY GRANT (Sen. Tom Sawyer) To make changes to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, to limit state university over load fees, and to make an appropriation

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB20**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-20)CHARTER SCHOOLS-RECORD KEEPING (Sen. Joe Schiavoni) Regarding audit and record-keeping requirements for community school sponsors and operators

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Education Committee**

[**SB22**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-22)LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND-ALLOCATION INCREASE (Sen. Charleta Tavares) To increase monthly allocations to the Local Government Fund from 1.66% to 3.68% of the total tax revenue credited to the GRF each month

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB24**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-24)OHIO COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY GRANT QUALIFICATION (Sen. Sandra Williams) To qualify students in noncredit community college programs for Ohio College Opportunity Grants and to require the awarding of academic credit for community colleges’ career certification programs

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB34**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-34)SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY-DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR (Sen. Charleta Tavares) With respect to school district policies for violent, disruptive, or inappropriate behavior

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Education Committee**

[**SB39**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-39)PEDESTRIAN RIGHT OF WAY-SCHOOL ZONE (Sen. Bill Beagle) To increase the penalties for failing to yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian who is crossing a roadway within a crosswalk when the crosswalk is located within a school zone

**STATUS: Introduced; Referred to Senate Criminal Justice Committee**

[**SB43**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-43)COLUMBUS STATE LOGISTICS PROGRAM (Sen. Jim Hughes) To establish the Columbus State Logistics Program and to make an appropriation

**STATUS: Referred to Senate Finance Committee**

[**SB59**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-59)COMMUNITY SCHOOLS-STATE APPROPRIATED FUNDS (Sen. Michael Skindell) With respect to the use of state-appropriated funds by operators of community schools

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB71**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-71)TRIO-PROGRAM APPROPRIATION (Sen. Charleta Tavares) To make an appropriation for the provision of state matching funds for federal TRIO programs at Ohio institutions of higher education for FY 2016 and FY 2017

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB73**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-73)MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (Sen. Charleta Tavares) To require community colleges, state community colleges, technical colleges, and university branches to comply with minority business enterprise set-aside requirements, and to require the Director of Administrative Services to establish guidelines for these entities, and the Northeast Ohio Medical University, to establish procurement goals for contracting with EDGE business enterprises

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB78**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-78)GED GRANT PROGRAM (Sen. Sandra Williams) To create the GED Grant Program for undergraduate students who have earned high school equivalence diplomas and are enrolled in two-year state institutions of higher education and to make an appropriation

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB82**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-82)GED-TEST COST (Sen. Sandra Williams) With regard to the administration and cost of the tests of general educational development required to earn a high school equivalence diploma

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB85**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-85)PROPERTY-TAX COMPLAINTS (Sen. William Coley) To limit the right to initiate most types of property tax complaints to the property owner and the county recorder of the county in which the property is located

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB92**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-92)SCHOOL SAFETY FUNDS (Sen. Joe Schiavoni) To require the State Board of Education to establish criteria and procedures for the awarding of school safety funds to school districts and to make an appropriation

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB93**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-93)BULLYING PREVENTION FUNDS (Sen. Joe Schiavoni) To require the State Board of Education to establish criteria and procedures for the awarding of bullying prevention and education funds to school districts and to make an appropriation

**STATUS: Introduced**

[**SB94**](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-94)MEDICAID SCHOOL PROGRAM (Sen. Kevin Bacon, Sen. Peggy Lehner) Regarding the Medicaid School Program

**STATUS: Introduced**

**Ohio Budget/Politics**

[**Former House Speaker William Batchelder joins lobbying firm for Ohio’s largest charter school, ECOT**](http://www.ohio.com/news/break-news/former-house-speaker-william-batchelder-joins-lobbying-firm-for-ohio-s-largest-charter-school-ecot-1.568549)  **Akron Beacon Journal**

Recently retired Ohio House Speaker William Batchelder, R-Medina, long an advocate for school choice, has gone into business with former House staffers who are lobbying for the state’s largest charter school organization. The online school, Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow and known as ECOT, is among the state’s lowest performing charter schools. The for-profit companies related to ECOT are Altair Learning Management and IQ Innovations, an online education software firm.

[**More charter school controls wanted by the left and by Auditor Yost on the right**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/02/more_charter_school_controls_w.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Charter school reform proposals are gaining broad support in Columbus, but there are voices on both the left and the right who say the $1 billion charter school movement in Ohio needs even stronger controls than what has been proposed. Both Gov. John Kasich and Republicans in the Ohio House have made separate proposals to change the oversight and management of charter schools - public schools open to anyone, but which are privately-run.

[**Kasich Praises, Pushes, Prods in Fifth 'State of State' Address**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198932) **Hannah**

Gov. John Kasich's fifth "State of the State" address -- this one in Wilmington which has been characterized as the "poster child" for the effects of the Great Recession here in Ohio -- was a blend Tuesday night of celebrating how far Ohio has come since he first came into office mixed with a whole lot of pushing and prodding as the governor made the case for his vision for Ohio in the next budget and beyond. Repeatedly exhorting his audience and the legislators in attendance in particular, Kasich said, "There is more work to do ... more battles against the status quo. We can't drift if we want to take Ohio where we want it to be and where we need to be."

[**JCARR to Hear ‘5 of 8’ Rule for School Districts, Medicaid Eligibility after Asset Transfer**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198926) **Hannah**

A rule that would eliminate the language requiring school districts to employ a certain number of educators in specific areas such as counseling, music and physical education will be on Thursday’s agenda for the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) in its second meeting of the year. JCARR members will consider a rule from the Ohio Department of Education that removes the requirement of school districts to have five educational service personnel from eight categories per every 1,000 students. The “5 of 8” areas or positions include: counselor, library media specialist, school nurse, visiting teacher, social worker, elementary art, music or physical education.

[**John Kasich's State of State speech suggests fiscal conservatism has replaced compassionate conservatism as his 2016 calling card: 5 observations**](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2015/02/john_kasichs_state_of_state_sp_1.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

Let's dispense with this up front. Gov. John Kasich is considering a run for president in 2016 -- and as much of a long shot as he is at this early stage, it's never hard to hear the national aspirations in his speeches. Be that as it may, while delivering [his State of the State address here Tuesday](http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2015/02/ohio_gov_john_kasichs_state_of_the_state_address_live_coverage.html#incart_m-rpt-1) evening, Kasich sounded very much like a guy who wants to do more as governor.

[**Kasich uses State of the State address to push tax cuts, education plan**](http://www.crainscleveland.com/article/20150225/FREE/150229902/kasich-uses-state-of-the-state-address-to-push-tax-cuts-education) **Crain’s Cleveland Business**

The success of Ohio, Gov. John Kasich said in his State of the State address Tuesday night, Feb. 24, starts with a strong economy. And that strong economy, he argued, depends on the Ohio General Assembly embracing the reductions in the state income tax he proposed in the two-year, $72.3 billion budget he sent to the Legislature in January.

[**House Speaker, Finance Chair Expect Tax Cuts, Tweaking to School Funding Formula**](http://www.hannah.com/DesktopDefaultPublic.aspx?type=hns&id=198951) **Hannah**

Both House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) and House Finance Chairman Ryan Smith (R-Gallipolis) said Thursday they expect the House to include a tax cut when they pass the budget in April, but did not commit to the size of the cut or whether it would include some of the tax changes Gov. John Kasich had included in his budget. Kasich made a plea during the "State of the State" Tuesday for lawmakers to overhaul Ohio’s tax system, saying high income taxes punish innovation. As part of a $500 million tax cut package, he has proposed raising and/or expanding the severance, sales, commercial activity and tobacco taxes.

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

[**Common Core tests get mixed reviews**](http://www.newarkadvocate.com/story/news/local/2015/02/19/common-core-tests-get-mixed-reviews/23707075/) **Newark Advocate**

It was an "epic failure," in the words of one principal. Ask another, though, and it was fine — a whole lot of fuss about nothing. This week, students across Ohio started taking the PARCC tests, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. The computer-based tests are centered on Common Core and, at least so far, feedback is varied.

[**Opting out of state tests has costs for Ohio students, schools**](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/02/23/opting-out-of-state-tests-has-costs.html)  **Columbus Dispatch**

Parent groups have sprouted throughout the state — and central Ohio — to protest the new state exams aligned with Common Core standards. But parents say there has been a lot of confusion about whether they can keep their kids from taking the tests. Here’s the rub: Students and their parents can opt out of state testing, but there are consequences for their teachers and for some students if they do.

[**Ohio schools’ window for testing extended because of weather**](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/02/24/ohio-schools-window-for-testing-extended-because-of-weather.html)  **Columbus Dispatch**

Ohio’s students will have more time to complete standardized testing disrupted by bad weather. The Ohio Department of Education notified school districts on Thursday evening that the testing window for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers test could be extended up to five days if necessary. Depending on the format of the test, districts have a 10- or 20-day window to complete the testing.

[**Districts risk state funding if parents opt out of tests**](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/02/24/state-testing-funding-losses.html) **Columbus Dispatch**

School districts risk losing state funding for students who don’t take state standardized tests, but so far no money has been withheld. As more parents keep their children from taking new state tests currently being administered in schools, the state plans to provide further guidance on the issue this week, said John Charlton, spokesman for the Ohio Department of Education.

[**Ohio charter schools identified as among worst in nation**](http://www.ohio.com/news/break-news/ohio-charter-schools-identified-as-among-worst-in-nation-1.570727)  **Akron Beacon Journal**

The event was hosted by the Education Writers Association with funding from the Walton Family Foundation, a staunch proponent of private and charter schools. While panelists disagreed on how much regulation should be applied to charter schools, which are exempt from some states’ requirements, there was little debate about where some of the lowest performing charter school companies operate.

**Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

[**States Ceding Power Over Classroom Materials**](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/02/18/states-ceding-power-over-classroom-materials.html?cmp=ENL-CM-NEWS1) **Education Week**

States are increasingly giving up a long-standing source of their power over education by allowing school districts to choose the instructional materials they use in the classroom. The shift in authority has taken shape little by little, mostly in the past four years, as one state after another has modified or thrown out its procedures for adopting textbooks and other kinds of print and online learning resources.

[**As Common-Core Test Season Begins, Teachers Feel Pressure**](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/02/23/as-common-core-test-season-begins-teachers-feel.html?cmp=ENL-CCO-NEWS1) **Education Week**

According to the calendar, it's only two-thirds of the way through winter. But the spring testing season has begun. Tests in many states are being given earlier than they were last year, and that's putting pressure on teachers to cover as much content as they can before testing begins. The pinch is most acute in the District of Columbia and the 10 states that are administering the common exams developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC.

**College and Career Readiness**

[**College students are transferring before graduating, according to new report**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/02/college_students_are_succeedin.html#incart_river) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

Colleges should not be judged by how many of their freshmen graduate in six years because many students transfer and graduate from another institution, a new report says. The [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](http://nscresearchcenter.org/) studied where students enrolled in two- and four-year colleges and where they graduated.

[**The College Dropout Problem May Not Be as Bad as the Government Says**](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-02-24/the-college-dropout-problem-may-not-be-as-bad-as-the-government-says) **Bloomberg Business**

Almost 41 percent of students who start college won’t finish, according to the [U.S. Department of Education](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_326.10.asp). The data is grim—but it could also be unnecessarily pessimistic. A new report suggests the government may be over-counting dropout rates because it doesn’t account for a big, but hard-to-track, group of students: the ones who transfer midway through college.

[**Early High School Dropouts: What Are Their Characteristics?**](http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015066)  **National Center for Education Statistics**

This Data Point uses data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09) to examine the extent to which high school students drop out of school between the ninth and eleventh grade and how dropout rates vary by sex, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. HSLS:09 is a nationally representative, longitudinal study of more than 23,000 ninth-graders in 2009. HSLS:09 surveyed students, their parents, math and science teachers, school administrators, and school counselors.

**Early Learning**

[**Word Gap Exists Among Early Educators Too, Says Workforce Expert**](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/early_years/2015/02/word_gap_exists_among_early_educators_too.html?utm_source=feedblitz&utm_medium=FeedBlitzRss&utm_campaign=earlyyears) **Education Week**

If President Barack Obama's call for universal preschool is going to be answered effectively, it is time to turn attention to educating the early-educator workforce, according to a [Washington Post column by Elizabeth A. Gilbert](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/02/16/the-famous-word-gap-doesnt-hurt-only-the-young-it-affects-many-educators-too/) of the University of Massachusetts Amhurst. Writing as a guest columnist on Valerie Strauss' The Answer Sheet, Gilbert explains the results of a survey she and her colleagues delivered to a sample of Massachusetts early educators.

**Northeast Ohio Schools**

***Cuyahoga County***

[**Berea schools could lose $2.2 million over next two years under governor's proposed budget**](http://www.cleveland.com/berea/index.ssf/2015/02/berea_schools_treasurer_challe.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[**Berea has used at least seven snow days so far, but has several extra days built in**](http://www.cleveland.com/berea/index.ssf/2015/02/berea_has_used_seven_to_eight.html) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[**Chagrin Falls Middle School Career Speaker Program enlightens students**](http://www.cleveland.com/chagrin-valley/index.ssf/2015/02/chagrin_falls_middle_school_ca.html)

[**New West Side high school and new JFK High School campus are early priorities in Cleveland school construction schedule**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/02/new_west_side_high_school_and.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[**Cleveland's Waverly and Watterson-Lake elementary schools to be closed this summer, students moved during construction**](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/02/clevelands_waverly_and_watters.html#incart_river) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[**Cleveland principals applaud student based budgeting**](http://www.newsnet5.com/news/local-news/cleveland-metro/cleveland-principals-applaud-student-based-budgeting) **NewsNet 5**

[**Cleveland Heights-University Heights schools use last calamity day; Beachwood, Shaker have several days remaining**](http://www.cleveland.com/cleveland-heights/index.ssf/2015/02/cleveland_heights-university_h_69.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Fairview Park school board considers $435,000 bid on former Coffinberry Elementary School land**](http://www.cleveland.com/fairview-park/index.ssf/2015/02/fairview_park_school_board_con.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Mayfield, South Euclid-Lyndhurst Schools don't expect to exceed calamity days allotment, despite record-breaking winter**](http://www.cleveland.com/hillcrest/index.ssf/2015/02/mayfield_south_euclid-lyndhurs.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Mayfield schools promote middle school assistant principal to Center Elementary principal**](http://www.cleveland.com/hillcrest/index.ssf/2015/02/mayfield_middle_school_assista.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**North Royalton schools have hit limit on calamity days; Brecksville-Broadview Heights, Strongsville schools have time to spare**](http://www.cleveland.com/north-royalton/index.ssf/2015/02/north_royalton_schools_have_hi.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Polaris Career Center in Middleburg Heights seeks first levy in 31 years**](http://www.cleveland.com/middleburg-heights/index.ssf/2015/02/polaris_career_center_in_middl_1.html) **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[**Richmond Heights schools struggle with busted pipes, broken heaters, could seek tax renewal for building repairs**](http://www.cleveland.com/hillcrest/index.ssf/2015/02/richmond_heights_schools_strug.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Strongsville schools Superintendent John Krupinski to retire at end of school year**](http://www.cleveland.com/strongsville/index.ssf/2015/02/strongsville_schools_superinte.html#incart_river) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

[**Westlake elementary schools to address concerns for International Baccalaureate certification**](http://www.cleveland.com/westlake/index.ssf/2015/02/westlake_elementary_schools_mu.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

***Geauga County***

[**Chardon bus drivers, fleet proponents issue petition for 100 percent in-house bus service**](http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20150224/chardon-bus-drivers-fleet-proponents-issue-petition-for-100-percent-in-house-bus-service) **Willoughby News-Herald**

***Lorain County***

[**Lorain City Schools diagnostic tests reveal room for improvement**](http://www.morningjournal.com/general-news/20150223/lorain-city-schools-diagnostic-tests-reveal-room-for-improvement) **Lorain Morning Journal**

[**D.A.R.E. anti-drug program still used to teach students about drugs**](http://www.morningjournal.com/general-news/20150226/dare-anti-drug-program-still-used-to-teach-students-about-drugs) **Lorain Morning Journal**

***Medina County***

[**Cheering Sparkles have uplifting effect on Medina County schools (photos)**](http://www.cleveland.com/medina/index.ssf/2015/02/sparkles_bring_an_uplifting_ef.html#incart_river)  **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

[**Brunswick Schools pulls levy because Ohio to award more funding**](http://medinagazette.northcoastnow.com/2015/02/24/brunswick-schools-pulls-levy-ohio-award-funding/) **Medina Gazette**

***Summit County***

[**Akron schools save on energy efficiency; board considers moving calendar from days to hours**](http://www.ohio.com/news/break-news/akron-schools-save-on-energy-efficiency-board-considers-moving-calendar-from-days-to-hours-1.569347)  **Akron Beacon Journal**

[**Green school board formally opposes Nexus pipeline**](http://www.ohio.com/news/local/green-school-board-formally-opposes-nexus-pipeline-1.569569) **Akron Beacon Journal**

[**Year-round school in Akron? What do you think about that**](http://www.cleveland.com/akron/index.ssf/2015/02/year-round_school_in_akron_wha.html) **Northeast Ohio Media Group**

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