

The State Board of Education on Tuesday again delayed action on rules governing how services are provided to gifted students.

The gifted operating standards, which passed out of committee last month, could still undergo changes as gifted advocates have remaining issues with the board's version.

Approval of the operating standards, part of a five-year review, has been delayed multiple times. In July, ODE staff briefed a board committee on the work being done, saying the rules were intended for a full board vote in October. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, July 8, 2013](#))

Board President Debe Terhar, of Cincinnati, said she has reached out to the attorney general's office for clarity on legal questions members have on the standards. A representative is expected to address the board next month.

"There are several different elements in there that are a concern to the board, and we have to make sure that we follow the law," she said in an interview.

The version of standards advocated by board member C. Todd Jones, a [Gov. John Kasich](#) appointee, reflect an "output-based" accountability system whereby districts are judged by how their gifted students perform rather than being told how to provide services. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, November 8, 2013](#))

"I think the rules should facilitate whatever approach a district wants to take that leads to an effective outcome, and we should separately have an outcome system that accurately measures the performance of gifted students," he said. "Those two things in combination are superior to dictating the manner of services the district should provide."

Mr. Jones said he is happy with the new report card because gifted value-added data is included in overall school grades, which should make superintendents pay attention to the performance of that group.

The Ohio Association for Gifted Children, meanwhile, has said because the law only requires schools to identify exceptional students, many fail to provide services for them, making requirements for staff levels and funding use necessary.

"We have a draft right now that we're fundamentally opposed to on many levels," OAGC Executive Director Ann Sheldon said. "There's no funding accountability that we believe is required by law; there's a sunset on minimum standards for gifted kids, which we're incredibly opposed to; there's some major technical issues. So I think to a certain extent, the delay is good if it gives us more time to correct those things, but what does the legal opinion do. Will it move us to the point where they will be corrected?"

"What will they do if the attorney general says, yes, you can have accountability for funding? Will you move to do that because I haven't received a positive answer on that yet."

Ms. Sheldon said a number - possibly a majority - of board members have taken her side of the issue.

"We thought maybe we had a compromise solution for this month, but it fell through," she said.

President Terhar said she and member Tess Elshoff collaborated to create the compromise version of the standards. She said she doesn't know whether that version is still on the table.

"It's going to be getting that clarity from the AG's office on questions from both sides," she said.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Dick Ross told board members during the meeting the Department of Education had miscalculated the number of districts that have not identified any gifted students.

The agency had previously reported 50 districts without any identified students, but the correct number is two: Kelleys Island and College Corner local schools. Both are "very small" districts, he said.

"I don't want to say that I think there's sufficient identification at all because that's not what I'm saying," Mr. Ross said, adding he is reaching out to the 50 districts. "It still concerns me because I suspect there are some issues there."

- See more at: [http://www.gongwer-oh.com/programming/news.cfm?article\\_ID=822380208#sthash.tGbpAoAe.dpuf](http://www.gongwer-oh.com/programming/news.cfm?article_ID=822380208#sthash.tGbpAoAe.dpuf)