

Education Bureaucracy Groups Email Re: Gifted Operating Standards.

To: School board members, superintendents, treasurers and other school business officials

From: Damon Asbury, OSBA — (614) 540-4000
Tom Ash, BASA — (614) 846-4080
Barbara Shaner, OASBO — (614) 325-9562

Date: Sept. 10, 2013

Re: New Operating Standards for Gifted Education – School District Comments Needed!
Talking Points & Background Below

The State Board of Education is considering new rules for the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) that would spell out operating standards for gifted education in public school districts. The proposed (draft) standards are posted on the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) website and are open for public comment — **between now and Sept. 20**. As school district representatives charged with serving all students in your district, including those identified as gifted, your input is needed. Please provide feedback to ODE and members of the State Board of Education.

Following are talking points on the proposed new gifted education operating standards:

- The proposed rule would require **two new whole grade-screening requirements** under the District identification plan section in OAC 3301-51-15 (C)(2)(b)(iii). This represents an additional administrative burden and financial cost to districts over previous identification requirements. While the new funding formula includes some per-pupil funding for gifted student identification, it is unclear whether they will be sufficient to cover the cost of the new requirements for gifted identification and assessment.

The State Board must continue to evaluate the cost to districts for the identification and ongoing assessment requirements for gifted students, and recommend state funding accordingly.

- The draft operating standards for serving students identified as gifted will allow districts the flexibility necessary to best meet the needs of students locally. The proposal recognizes that multiple appropriate options for such services should be available. Districts need the flexibility to best use the resources available for all their students.

- The State Board's authority to adopt rules and operating standards is limited to that which appears in the Ohio Revised Code. Any additional restrictions on spending funds for gifted education should be opposed.

The State Board should adopt the rules for gifted services as proposed by ODE staff.

Note: ODE staff presented the proposed (draft) rules for consideration to the State Board at its meeting yesterday. Several board members indicated they have already heard from many gifted education advocates expressing opposition to the draft and **requesting that the standards be more prescriptive**. State Board members need to hear from school district leaders.

Important Links:

Click here to view the proposed rules: <http://1.usa.gov/18MH22i>

Click here to send comments to ODE: gifted@education.ohio.gov

Click here for a list of State Board members and their contact information: [State Board Members](#)

Click here for a report of the State Board's discussion: [Gongwer Article](#)

Background:

House Bill 59, the biennial budget bill as passed by the General Assembly, included specific spending requirements for state funding for gifted education. However, Gov. John Kasich vetoed the spending

requirements for gifted funds from the bill. As a result, the State Board's authority in establishing the new gifted education operating standards is limited to the provisions as written in the final "vetoed" version of the bill. Since no spending requirements for serving gifted students are authorized by law, the operating standards should not require specific uses for these funds. School districts should be permitted to choose the best method for serving their gifted students locally.

We must urge the State Board of Education NOT to recommend the adoption of operating standards for serving gifted students that go beyond this authority!

Our three organizations understand the need for gifted students to be served. We support the notion that all students, no matter what their ability, be given the opportunity to make appropriate academic progress each year. However, school districts must have the flexibility to serve all their students in a way that best meets their own community's needs, particularly when many districts are still struggling financially. Generally, funding for education in the new budget was increased, but the new funding formula is not fully funded and districts must make choices about the best use of resources.