

# Advocacy Update!

Here is a short summary of some legislative and advocacy activities right now.

## **From National PTA "Take Action" e-mails and website:**

**PTA Leaders Advocate for Family Engagement to be an ESEA Priority:** In March, more than 240 PTA advocates helped reaffirm and revitalize PTA's leadership in grassroots advocacy by attending the 2010 National PTA Legislative Conference. Members spoke with First Lady Michelle Obama and made more than 300 visits with congressional leaders asking them to prioritize family engagement in children's education as part of the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Advocates asked members of Congress to safeguard Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) - the sole federal program dedicated to engaging families in their children's education. The efforts of conference attendees, along with more than 8,700 emails sent to Congress, resulted in an additional 39 representatives and 21 senators signing on to support family engagement within ESEA.

**U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry unanimously passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act:** This bill reauthorizes school meals and other child nutrition programs. This is the first step in the process to improve child nutrition programs that only occurs about every five years. This includes a \$4.5 billion increase in funding over the next 10 years. PTA has worked to improve school meals and other child nutrition programs through this legislation for the past two years. Many of our recommendations have been included in the legislation. One notable inclusion is the requirement to update nutrition standards for food sold outside of the school meal programs through vending machines, school stores, and a la carte menus- for the first time since 1979. This provision would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to ensure that healthier food options are available to students while limiting their access to salty, fatty junk foods and sugary drinks. PTA's recommendations for the Child Nutrition Act reauthorization can be found in our [2010 Public Policy Agenda](http://www.pta.org/PPA10.pdf) (<http://www.pta.org/PPA10.pdf>) pg 17.

**Common Core State Standards Due to be Released Late Spring:** In 2009, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)—the organizations in charge of developing Common Core—convened a group of leading experts to develop K-12 standards for math and English language arts. The standards they developed are due to be released in final form and available for adoption by the states in late spring. The standards are expected to reflect the knowledge and skills young people need to gain in order to finish college and work in a global economy. To: [View the draft standards](http://www.corestandards.org/) (<http://www.corestandards.org/>) and to [View National PTA's statement on the draft standards](http://www.pwrnewmedia.com/2010/pta_00329/index.html) ([http://www.pwrnewmedia.com/2010/pta\\_00329/index.html](http://www.pwrnewmedia.com/2010/pta_00329/index.html))

**Obama Administration Releases Blueprint to Overhaul Federal Education Law:** During a [March 13 video address](http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/03/president-discusses-proposal-for-esea/) (<http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/03/president-discusses-proposal-for-esea/>), President Obama released his plan for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The plan would overhaul much of the law's current framework including its accountability system for schools, districts, and states. The plan emphasizes the preparation of all students for college and career, and on aggressive interventions to turn around low-performing schools. It organizes programs into six categories: College and Career Ready Students; Great Teachers and Leaders in Every School; Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners; A Complete Education; Safe Healthy and Successful Students; Fostering Innovation and Excellence. For the full blueprint see: (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/publicationtoc.html>) Read National PTA President Charles J. "Chuck" Saylor's [statement in response](http://www.pwnnewmedia.com/2010/pta_00315/index.html) to the Blueprint at: ([http://www.pwnnewmedia.com/2010/pta\\_00315/index.html](http://www.pwnnewmedia.com/2010/pta_00315/index.html))

### **From Ohio School Board Association (OSBA) "Facts in a Flash" e-mail:**

**HB 462** signed into law, includes some new appropriations and spending adjustments, including \$525 million in bond funding for the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC).

**SB 192** heading to the House, School Transportation: Permits non-Civil Service school district boards to terminate positions of district transportation employees for reasons of economy and efficiency, and to contract with independent agents to provide transportation services.

**SB 232 & HB 464** both the House and Senate are holding hearings, provide local property tax exemptions for alternative energy development projects. Although both bills rely on similar concepts, each has a different approach to exempting property and providing funding reimbursements to schools.

**Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Committee** requests proposals for expanding and establishing STEM regional partnerships from collaborations representing cities, villages or local or joint vocational school districts, colleges, universities, and business/industry partners seeking grants to strengthen STEM programs in their regions.

Resources for tracking legislation:

[www.house.state.oh.us/](http://www.house.state.oh.us/)    [www.legislature.state.oh.us/](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/)    [www.lsc.state.oh.us/](http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/)

Please contact me (Elise Fessler @ [bfsing@cinci.rr.com](mailto:bfsing@cinci.rr.com), HCC & Finneytown PTAs' Advocacy Chair) to get on a distribution list for monthly Advocacy Reports (this report can be used as is for meetings and newsletters or edit it as desired but please keep the references mentioned).