

# Advocacy Update January 2009!

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

**The following is from Ohio PTA e-mails:**

- **HB 320 Child Booster Seat/Seat Belt Law**

This law would: require any child who is less than 8 years old and less than four feet, nine inches tall to be secured in a booster seat and require any child who is at least 8 years of age and under the age of 18 be restrained in a seat belt.

*Take Action: Contact Members of the Senate Highway and Transportation Committee ( [http://www.senate.state.oh.us/committees/com\\_highways.html](http://www.senate.state.oh.us/committees/com_highways.html)) to Support HB 320 that will help reduce injuries and death to children and provide an additional \$1.9 million in grant funding for child passenger safety education and the purchase of car seats for low income families.*

- **SB57 - Special Education Voucher Fails**

SB 57 Failed in the Ohio House by a 49-44 after a heated debate on a technical issue. Ohio PTA opposed this bill due to the diverting of public dollars through vouchers and concerns over parents losing their parental rights in the decision making process, which are currently guaranteed through IDEA.

- **Ohio Faces Ongoing Budget Crisis**

*Take Action: Visit the Ohio PTA Cap Wiz section of the Ohio PTA website ([www.ohiopta.org](http://www.ohiopta.org)) for an action alert requesting your assistance in contacting our legislators in Washington asking for their assistance in helping Ohio meet this upcoming budget crisis. Many programs which help children and families are in jeopardy with the upcoming federal and state budgets. your voice is needed.*

Note that any bill which did not pass both the Senate and House by December 31st will need to be reintroduced and follow the legislative process in January with our new General Assembly.

**The following is from National PTA E-Newsletter from the Capitol:**

- **National PTA's New E-Newsletter from the Capitol Replaces This Week in Washington**

*Monthly PTA Takes Action: Federal Policy Update replaces This Week in Washington newsletter*

Every month, PTA will keep you informed on what's happening in Washington DC – where *your* voice can help improve the health and well-being of all our children. PTA's success as an advocacy organization depends upon the active involvement of its members, and this publication will educate you about the children's issues being debated and elected officials' positions on them. As the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy group in the nation, PTA has accomplished a great deal, and there's much more it can still do, but only with your help. To sign up:

<http://capwiz.com/npta2/mlm/signup/>

- **Bush Signs Education Funding Bill**

President Bush signed into law the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), reauthorizing and strengthening the federal law that provides student aid programs for college education. The new law increases the maximum amount allowed under the Pell Grant Program, and makes it a year-round award to support students seeking to earn their degree early by attending summer school. The law continues most other federal grant and student loan programs, including the Perkins Student Loan Program and the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants. For more information: <http://www.pta.org/2451.htm#5>

- **Education and the Economic Bailout**

As part of the \$700 billion economic bailout package President Bush signed in October 2008, Congress addressed a need for school improvement and renovation by including a two-year, \$800 million extension of the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program. The QZAB program allows local school districts to pay for school renovations and improvements at no interest by providing tax credits in lieu of interest to bond buyers. These bonds are distributed to the states based on their low-income school population, making them equally valuable to both urban and rural areas in need. For more information: <http://www.pta.org/2451.htm#6>

## **The following is from the "Ohio Fair Schools Campaign" e-mails:**

- **What About the Lottery Money**

In an effort to clarify the common misconception that money from the lottery somehow gets spent on schools, the Wellsville school board has released an article in "The Link," a newsletter printed for legislative liaisons of school boards. Lottery profits do go toward education, but do not provide "extra" money for schools. The lottery revenue simply frees up money that would have been used on education, to be used elsewhere. While it's true that the lottery generates about \$600 million per year in net revenue for public schools, little of it is new money. In essence schools get nothing extra. For more information:

11/18 The Review: Board of education clarifies Ohio Lottery advertisements

<http://www.reviewonline.com/page/content.detail/id/507784.html>

- **The Cost of a High Quality Education**

An idea was proposed, perhaps in jest, to fund Ohio's public elementary and secondary schools at the average per pupil level as tuition for private and independent schools. This prompted a bit of research. The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) web site says, "Private schools do not receive tax revenues, but instead are funded through tuition, fundraising, donations and private grants". According to NAIS, the 2007-08 median tuition in the United States for the 1,228 private day schools responding to a survey was \$16,440. Average median tuition by grades at day schools was \$14,633 for grades 1 to 3, \$16,400 for grades 6 to 8 and \$18,287 for grades 9 to 12. In Ohio, the elite Cincinnati Country Day School's tuition was \$17,450 for students in grades 9-12 in 2006-07, according to the Wall Street Journal. (Summary courtesy of Dick Fisher and CORAS, <http://www.coras.org> using NAIS, Wall Street Journal and greatschools.net as sources)

School Funding Matters, an initiative of KnowledgeWorks Foundation, aims to give Ohioans the information and resources they need to understand and participate in the public dialogue about how Ohio schools are funded. Website: <http://www.schoolfundingmatters.org/>. (Summary courtesy of Julie Brinker Wijesooriya and KnowledgeWorks)

- **Update on Governor Strickland's Education Reform Process**

Governor Ted Strickland has recently released a list of 22 priorities to improve our system of public education in Ohio. The proposals cover many ideas from people who participated in the Conversation on Education and concurrent Watch Parties this summer. The proposal covers what should be expected of our schools as learning environments for students, our teachers as educators, and our administration as accountable and effective managers of resources. To read the "Roadmap for Academic Reforms". Visit: <http://www.osba-ohio.org/Files/08govroadmap.pdf>

### **The PTA Mission:**

- A powerful voice for all children
- A relevant resource for families and communities
- *A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child*

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). 1/09