

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF PUPIL SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
February 9, 2017

The following is a summary of the various activities of the OAPSA Executive Director since our December conference. Further detail is available upon request.

There has not been a meeting of the Executive Board and the Governing Board of the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) since our December OAPSA conference. After more than a year of inaction, the OCECD was awarded the Parent Mentor contract and they are now very busy with the initial implementation of the deliverables. The next OCECD meeting will be on March 28, 2018.

For those attending both days of the February conference and also the May conference, there is still an opportunity to sign up for Ashland University graduate credit. For one graduate credit hour, the member must attend three full conference days and also write a short “reflection paper”.

The Office of Federal Programs, with the support of the Committee of Practitioners, has issued a draft overview of Ohio’s state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The plan, titled “Driving Education Excellence: Securing the Future for All Ohio Students”, has been recently disseminated and input on the draft is being requested. OAPSA is cooperating with ODE on generating input.

Very recently, there was a situation in the US Senate that attracted a considerable amount of attention from those involved in K-12 education, including those involved in the field of special education. President Trump nominated Betsy DeVos for the position of Secretary of Education. There were many concerns expressed about her testimony during confirmation hearings. She ultimately was approved by the HELP committee in a surprise “sunrise” 6:00 am meeting so her nomination went to the full Senate. Two Republican senators said they would vote “no” meaning there would be a tie vote to be settled by the Vice President. Over the weekend, there was a huge effort on the part of many to convince at least one more Republican senator to vote “no”. OAPSA took the unusual action of distributing my email message encouraging our members to call or email Senator Rob Portman to ask him to vote “no”. Those efforts were unsuccessful. On Tuesday, the vote was taken and it was a tie so that Mike Pence cast the deciding vote to approve the nomination of Betsy DeVos.

As of the writing of this report, although the Governor’s budget has been introduced, it has not yet appeared in the Legislature but it will soon. My analysis of the special education and early childhood components of the proposed budget has generated several questions. For example, in the General Revenue Fund, the Special Ed Enhancements dropped from its current level of \$53.9 mil to \$42.4 mil; a drop of 21% which stays the same in both FY '18 & '19. We need to find out why this change occurred. In fund 3700, Education of Exceptional Children, the budgeted amount went from \$1.6 mil to \$2.5 mil (+59%) and increases another 4% in FY '19. This increase is only a fraction of the reduction in Enhancements. Two smaller funds, School Climate Transformation and Javits, were dropped completely for FY '18 & '19. A new fund (3HFO, Federal Education Grants) was created for

\$633K. We need to find out how this is different from IDEA funding. Overall, it appears that special education funding dropped from \$541 mil to \$530 mil (-2%). We need to determine why this is happening. Early Childhood Education (6570A) appears to have an increase of 2.8% in FY '18 and a small increase for FY '19.

Over the past two months I have remained in touch with ODE/OEC, OSPA, OCECD, CoP and other groups and representatives. There are several key current issues and areas of concern and OAPSA maintains a level of participation in each.

Submitted by Dr. John Opperman
OAPSA Executive Director