



OELMA Position Statement on House Bill 512

OELMA Board Position:

The Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA) Board believes that our members should be aware of House Bill 512 and its possible ramifications. Furthermore, the OELMA Board feels it is our responsibility to advocate for the children of Ohio and their learning. House Bill 512 does not serve the educational needs and interests of Ohio's children. With this responsibility in mind, the OELMA Board does not support House Bill 512.

About House Bill 512:

House Bill 512's short title is "Restructure Education Agencies and Their Duties" <<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-512>>. Under House Bill 512, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) would be merged with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, creating the Ohio Department of Learning and Achievement (ODLA). House Bill 512 relegates Ohio's education system to a cabinet level organization, placing education under the control of the governor. Although Ohio's Constitution requires Ohio to have a State Board of Education, House Bill 512 reduces the responsibilities and authority of both Ohio's elected State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education.

The Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation was created by Governor John R. Kasich with Executive Order 2012-02K and is "committed to identifying the needs of business, connecting businesses and workers, and aligning training to meet business needs" <<http://workforce.ohio.gov/About>>. Education is not represented in the Office of Workforce Transformation.

Concerns about House Bill 512:

- Under this bill, when a new governor assumes office, the governor will appoint an unelected executive director of ODLA.

- This politically appointed position will dictate how laws are implemented and the administrative rules for Ohio's K-12 and postsecondary educational systems.
- With each change in administration, there will likely be extreme shifts in the focus of Ohio's educational system, placing Ohio's schools in a constant state of flux and in a position of being reactive instead of proactive.
- The transfer of significant authority and responsibilities from Ohio's State Board of Education (11 elected positions and an additional 8 positions appointed by the governor) to an appointed position leads to questions and concerns about transparency and accountability.
- Ohio's elected State Board of Education would no longer have any authority in an extensive list of areas including content standards, graduation requirements, report cards, teacher assessment, and operating standards. Instead, these would be under the control of the governor and the appointed executive director of the ODLA.