

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2014 MID-BIENNIUM REVIEW

END-OF-COURSE EXAMS TO REPLACE OUTDATED OHIO GRADUATION TESTS.

The Class of 2018 (freshmen in the fall of 2014) will not take the Ohio Graduation Tests. Beginning with this class, students will take seven end-of-course exams over four years of high school – English 1 and 2, geometry, algebra 1, physical science, American history and American government. The State Board of Education will create a system of points that students will earn toward graduation, based upon how they perform on these tests. The tests can take the place of final exams.

- The State Board of Education will have the option to increase the algebra 1 requirement to algebra II in 2016.
- Students can substitute passing scores on Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate exams or dual credit course exams for the physical science, American history and American government tests.
- **Additional paths to graduation.**
 - Students can become eligible to earn a high school diploma by earning scores on national college admissions tests that indicate they can do college-level work without needing to take remedial classes.
 - Students also can become graduation-eligible by earning industry-recognized credentials and passing scores on nationally recognized job-skills assessments.
- **Giving all students the opportunity to take a college readiness test.** Ohio will provide the ACT free to all juniors. This will help teachers and families make sure students are taking the right courses to be ready for college and beyond. Statewide, only 17 percent of students currently take the ACT as juniors.
- **Extending the high school curriculum opt-out.** For students with different career plans, current law allows families to select an alternative set of math and science courses. This provision will be extended for two years to cover the classes of 2018 and 2019.

PROTECTING LOCAL CONTROL, TRANSPARENCY AND GUARDING AGAINST FEDERAL INTERFERENCE

Ohio's New Learning Standards will continue to ensure local control of education, protect student data, and make certain new testing requirements are phased in carefully, with students' best interests in mind. Implementation of the new learning standards will be modified by:

- Ensuring that local schools call the shots in developing the curriculum that works best in their communities, selecting materials and writing lesson plans.
- Making sure that Ohio will not follow any learning standards dictated by the federal government;

- Reaffirming existing state laws and rules that protect student privacy and personal education information.
- Ensuring that the Ohio Department of Education conducts a study of data security and privacy by Dec. 31, 2014.
- **Giving schools more time:** Ohio can't rush new learning standards or the consequences of failing to meet them. The state will delay for one year certain consequences from teacher evaluations and school report cards, based on the new assessments being administered in 2014-2015. The assignment of overall letter grades for schools will also be delayed for one year.
- **Getting more input on Ohio's Learning Standards:** New review committees will examine Ohio's standards for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.
- **Local review committees.** Requires school districts to provide an opportunity for parents to review the selection of textbooks, instructional materials and academic curriculum used in their schools. School boards remain the sole authority in determining and selecting textbooks, reading lists, instructional materials and academic curriculum for its schools.

DOING MORE TO ENSURE THAT OHIO STUDENTS ARE SAFE AT SCHOOL

Through a combination of legislation and state agency initiatives, Gov. Kasich's administration is taking additional steps to ensure the safety of our students.

- **Providing additional funding for security upgrades at schools:** Through the Ohio School Facilities Commission, the state is providing more than \$17 million in additional funding for school security upgrades. Of that amount, \$10 million is for public schools to improve building security and purchase emergency radio equipment. Another \$7 million will allow private schools to make similar upgrades.
- **Building stronger safety plans:** Almost all schools currently submit safety plans, but many of those plans could be strengthened. As you know, schools have been asked to compare their existing plans to a model plan developed by the Ohio Attorney General's School Safety Task Force that outlines the best approaches to keep kids safe. State experts, including those in the Department of Public Safety-Office of Homeland Security, are reviewing the information and will provide guidance to help schools implement best practices to improve their plans.
- **Ensuring annual reviews of safety strategies:** The MBR requires schools to review their plans each year and conduct emergency training drills so students and teachers can practice what to do in the case of a real emergency.
- **Protecting students in every school:** The MBR includes new penalties — up to licensure revocation — for administrators who fail to submit a safety plan. Joint vocational schools, STEM schools, college-preparatory boarding schools, educational service centers and preschool programs licensed by the Ohio Department of Education are also now required to file safety plans.
- **Providing technical assistance at no cost to schools:** Through a federal grant, the state Emergency Management Agency and the University of Findlay will train school staff and local first responders at no cost. This will help local educators partner with local law enforcement

agencies to develop more comprehensive safety plans. Additionally, state Homeland Security will provide technical assistance at no cost to local stakeholders as they develop and implement their school safety plans.

- **Offering a student and community tip line:** Public safety officials will rebrand an existing statewide hotline and offer it free to schools as a way for students to report potential suicide, school shootings, bullying or other problems anonymously.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR CAREERS SOONER, INCREASING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT WITH KIDS AND PREVENTING DROPOUTS

By better connecting our students—especially those at risk of dropping out—with mentors, career information and job-focused training, more of them will be able find fulfilling careers.

- **Dropout prevention—helping keep Ohio students in schools:** Nearly 24,000 young men and women drop out of Ohio high schools each year. Students who are at risk of dropping out need our help to stay in school and get their diplomas. The newly passed Mid-Biennium Review legislation includes new ways to identify these at-risk students earlier in their school careers and build alternative strategies to better engage them. The Ohio Department of Education and local school districts will work together on new strategies to identify at-risk students and connect them with tailored career counseling.
- **Encouraging mentorship through *Community Connectors*:** The legislation includes \$10 million from lottery proceeds to provide 3-to-1 matching grants that support efforts by community groups and businesses to mentor students. Quality mentoring programs have proven to motivate and inspire students, as well as help them develop skills that lead to success in school and the workplace.
- **Expanding access to vocational education:** Career-technical programs now may begin in the seventh grade to give more Ohio students a jumpstart on career education.
- **Helping Ohio adults without diplomas get back on track:** As many as 1 million Ohio adults lack high school diplomas. It's difficult for students older than 22 to earn a traditional high school diploma. Approved colleges and career centers will be able to create new programs that enable adults to earn a high school diploma while simultaneously earning an industry credential or certificate.

OTHER CHANGES

- **Closing the Cleveland Scholarship gap:** The state will transfer existing funds to provide scholarships to Cleveland students who want to attend a charter or community school but have been denied because the program is over-subscribed.
- **Tougher rules to prevent failed charter schools from reopening:** Charter schools that have closed for not meeting the needs of students should not be allowed to reopen under a new name. A failed community school will be prohibited from attempting to reopen with the same chief administrator and governing board. The school also must ensure that the majority of teachers and administrative staff are new. It also must have a new accountability plan and set of performance standards.

- **Apply the Third Grade Reading Guarantee to students who receive EdChoice and Cleveland Scholarships:** This closes an unintended exemption in the new Third Grade Reading Guarantee. Students with an ISP are not subject to retention the same as public school students with IEPs.