

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse
August 31, 2018

Around the Square

Drug Policy Cabinet Position Proposed

State Representative Richard Brown (D-Canal Winchester) has proposed a plan to create a new cabinet-level position and state office devoted to drug policy. The recommendation aims to provide better coordination between state and local governments to address the opioid crisis and seek new solutions for prevention and treatment. The creation of this office is supported by local government entities across Ohio and was an initiative proposed by the Ohio Mayor's Alliance for the next governor to take on.

Political News and Notes

Education Department Unveils Five Year Plan

The Ohio Department of Education released a strategic plan for the years 2019-2024 on Tuesday. The document, formally named "Each Child, Our Future", outlines a goal of increasing the number of high school graduates who are enrolled in a higher-education facility, serving in the military or employed at a job that pays a living wage within one year of graduating. The plan also focuses on four learning domains- foundational knowledge, leadership and reasoning, well-rounded content and social-emotional learning- rather than focussing on testing. The State Board of Education approved the strategic plan almost unanimously in June, in collaboration with state legislators and over 1,300 Ohio residents.

PUCO Reveals Last PowerForward Initiative

On Wednesday, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) released the last phase of its utility policy plan, entitled "PowerForward: A Roadmap to Ohio's Electricity Future". PUCO Chairman Asim Haque described the policy recommendations as a more conservative approach to grid innovation, performance-based ratemaking and further efficient energy studies. The commissioners will create three evaluation groups to develop proposed recommendations including requiring utility distributors to file a cybersecurity plan and grid architecture status reports. PUCO hopes to see many of these policies put in place by the beginning of 2019.

Community Resilience Capital Funding Details

An effort included in the state capital budget to promote mental and behavioral health programs for at-risk youth has begun the \$20 million funding process. The funds are designated for improving infrastructure such as community centers and supporting programs that develop resiliency and social skills for middle and high school age youth. Projects are need-based and geared towards areas of high poverty, low tax base, limited philanthropic resources and high drug-related death rates. The Kasich administration announced the program funds in February and hopes to partner with local groups and establish programs in the coming months.

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