

Ohioans rally to cheer Kasich's voucher plan

Budget lifts cap on new charter schools

By Jim Provance

COLUMBUS -- Some 1,100 Ohioans swarmed the grounds of the Statehouse Tuesday to demonstrate support for Gov. John Kasich's plan to quadruple the number of school vouchers, even as overall aid for public schools is cut.

The governor's \$55.5 billion, two-year budget proposed last week also would lift the cap on the creation of charter schools, which operate with more regulatory freedom than their traditional public K-12 counterparts.

"School choice is not about doing away with public schools," Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor told the crowd. "It's about making them better. ... Ohio's future depends on our children being the best and the brightest in the world."

Mr. Kasich's spending plan would more than quadruple the number of vouchers to 60,000 by 2013 from roughly 14,000 now.

Suzanne Donahue of Toledo sends her 13 and 11-year-old daughters to St. Catherine of Siena School. She's never received an Ohio EdChoice scholarship, and she's not sure that her children would qualify under the proposed expansion. But she attended Tuesday's rally to support that option for other children.

"We pay out of our pockets for it, and I vote for every tax situation that's on the ballot for the kids because I hate to see the children suffer," she said. "However, it would be nice to have some of those funds come to my own family. ... I believe healthy competition will equal better schools and that better schools will survive."

READ MORE: <http://www.toledoblade.com/Education/2011/03/23/Ohioans-rally-to-cheer-Kasich-s-voucher-plan.html>



March 23, 2011

Kasich, Gee will push aligning colleges, needed job skills

Ohio companies, colleges already cooperate some

By Joe Vardon

For about a month, Gov. John Kasich has bemoaned the 63,000 job vacancies in the state. That number, according to the state's Department of Development, actually has climbed to about 80,000.

In a joint news conference yesterday featuring Kasich and Ohio State University President E. Gordon Gee, the governor said he will call on Gee and others to help fill those jobs.

Kasich said many of those vacancies exist because the state's universities and community colleges are not producing enough workers with skills specific to the needs of Ohio companies.

To combat this problem, Kasich promised to convene a meeting with Gee, University of Cincinnati President Greg Williams, Stark State College President John O'Donnell and representatives of companies such as Honda, Nationwide, Swagelok and Diebold.

Kasich is proposing partnerships between higher education and businesses that could include developing satellite campuses near companies in need of skilled labor.

"We're going to sit down and talk about how we align curriculum with jobs," Kasich said.

Gee agreed with the governor that "flow" is an issue and that Ohio's educational institutions can be of service.

"Ohio is a mosaic," Gee said. "If you think about it, as a massive, public, world-class university, our job is to train people and create jobs. Then we have great places like Stark State, and what they have the responsibility to do is make sure people get a job by being trained. That's the mosaic."

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