

Dayton school board holds off on physical education request

State wants to make sure classes are required — even for athletes.

By [Anthony Gottschlich](#), Staff Writer

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DAYTON — The Dayton Board of Education likely won't act anytime soon on a request by a group of parents to waive the high school physical education requirement for certain student athletes and others.

That's because pending legislation at the Statehouse in Columbus threatens to eliminate a provision in recent state law that allows school districts to waive the requirement, and the board doesn't want to act too soon, board member Sheila Taylor said Wednesday, Dec. 16.

"We really didn't want to start a process, put it in a place and use the time of staff because there's so much going on in the district," Taylor said. "Not that it's not an important issue, (but) we're just going to kind of wait and see what happens with the legislation."

House Bill 373, sponsored by state Rep. John Carney, a Columbus-area Democrat, would eliminate a school district's authority to waive the physical education requirement for high school students who participate in interscholastic athletics, marching band or cheerleading for at least two full seasons.

The bill, which contains several measures designed to fight childhood obesity and improve the health of children, would require high school students to participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate to rigorous physical activity per day. It also would require students in the class of 2014 and later to complete an additional half credit of physical education. Senate Bill 210 calls for similar measures.

Parent Donna LaChance, who has four children in Dayton schools, three at Stivers School for the Arts, urged the school board last month to allow the waiver option, arguing it would allow students to take another course that could bolster their academic record and better prepare them for college.

LaChance said Wednesday she's disappointed the board won't act on her request soon, "but given the legislation that's pending I can understand why they're taking a wait-and-see approach at this point."

Jennifer Economus, a legislative specialist with the Ohio School Board Association, said the OSBA wants the law to stay the way it is, giving school boards the latitude to determine what works best for their districts.

But, she said, the House and Senate bills enjoy broad support from both parties, the Ohio

Business Roundtable and several health care advocacy groups.

“It’s very early in the process,” Economus said. “We anticipate sometime next year some movement on the bill. What that will look like no one can predict.”

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