Mentoring program for at-risk students proposed

In response to a direct request from Ohio House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville), state universities have worked to develop a plan to engage at-risk high school students.

A group of Waverly City Schools students impacted by Ohio's opiate crisis who served as the impetus for Speaker Rosenberger's efforts shared their personal experiences and support for the proposed OhioCorps pilot program at a recent Statehouse news conference announcing that legislation will soon be introduced in the House.

Rep. Scott Ryan (R-Newark) and Rep. Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin) are expected to co-sponsor the bill, which will dedicate $1.5 million in state funds to the pilot program projected to operate in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, most likely in southeast Ohio.

Under the initiative, college students – who would be eligible for service-learning credits and stipends -- would be paired with at-risk middle and high school students who could gain access to scholarship opportunities.

Bruce Johnson, president of the Inter-University Council of Ohio, spoke in support of the OhioCorps pilot program. He pointed to the link between drug use and feelings of hopelessness and stressed the importance of providing a pathway out of poverty and into fulfilling careers as part of Ohio's efforts to overcome Ohio's opiate crisis.