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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

H.B. 43  
136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

## Bill Analysis

[Click here for H.B. 43's Fiscal Note](#)

**Version:** As Reported by Senate Education

**Primary Sponsors:** Reps. Fowler Arthur and D. Thomas

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### SUMMARY

- Requires the Department of Education and Workforce to provide flexibility to the Ashtabula City School District in granting a high school diploma to a senior who attended Ashtabula Lakeside High School during the 2024-2025 school year based on the student's demonstration of subject area competency.
- Requires the Department to waive up to 24 hours of the required minimum number of hours that Ashtabula Lakeside High School must be open with students in attendance during the 2024-2025 school year for the purposes of the Ashtabula City School District's eligibility to receive state funds.
- Declares an emergency.

### DETAILED ANALYSIS

#### Winter weather emergency

The bill requires the Department of Education and Workforce to do both of the following for the Ashtabula City School District for the 2024-2025 school year:

1. Provide flexibility in granting a high school diploma to a senior who attended Ashtabula Lakeside High School during that school year based on the student's demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction; and
2. Waive up to 24 of the required minimum number of hours that high school must be open for instruction with students in attendance for the purposes of the district's eligibility to receive state funds.

The bill requires the Department to undertake these actions because of winter weather for which the Governor declared a state emergency and the Ashtabula County Sheriff declared multiple Level Three Snow Emergencies, and that caused:

- Ten days of unusable residential roads;
- Shutdown of all essential services such as grocery stores and the local hospital;
- Up to a month of inaccessible local internet service;
- Structural and roof damage to the Ashtabula County Emergency Response Facility and backup emergency response facility;
- The collapse of Ashtabula Lakeside High School's roof; and
- Damage to the Ashtabula City School district administrative offices and server, which delayed the transition to remote instruction.<sup>1</sup>

## **Background**

### **Instruction required to qualify for high school graduation**

Under continuing law, high school students are required to complete 20 units of instruction in specified subjects as a requirement for graduation. Generally, one unit means a minimum of 120 hours of course instruction, though for a laboratory course one unit means a minimum of 150 hours. The Department, in consultation with the Chancellor of Higher Education, is required to adopt a statewide plan implementing methods for students to earn units of high school credit based on a demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction. Each district must award units of credit to students who demonstrate subject area competency in accordance with the Department's plan.<sup>2</sup>

### **Number of hours a school must be open for instruction**

Continuing law requires each school district to have each of its schools open for instruction with students in attendance for a specified number of hours depending on the grade levels the school serves. A school serving students in grades 7-12 must be open for those students for a minimum of 1,001 hours each school year. Each school district board of education must adopt a resolution establishing its school calendar for a school year and no school may reduce the number of hours it is open for instruction without authorization from the board or so that the total number of hours it is open is fewer than 1,001 hours of instruction.<sup>3</sup>

Generally, under continuing law, the Department is not authorized to make school foundation payments to a school district in a fiscal year if the district failed to have its schools open for instruction with students in attendance for the required number of hours of instruction.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1.

<sup>2</sup> R.C. 3313.603(C) and (J), not in the bill.

<sup>3</sup> R.C. 3313.48, not in the bill.

<sup>4</sup> R.C. 3317.01, not in the bill.

## Emergency clause

The bill declares an emergency to ensure that, after the closure of Ashtabula Lakeside High School due to severe winter weather and the school's roof's collapse, affected high school seniors may graduate on time and Ashtabula City School District may maintain its state funding.<sup>5</sup>

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## HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-03-25
Reported, H. Education	02-11-25
Passed House (91-6)	02-26-25
Reported, S. Education	03-19-25

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<sup>5</sup> Section 2.