



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Bill Analysis

Mitchell Smith

H.B. 686

132nd General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Rep. Barnes

BILL SUMMARY

- Dissolves all current academic distress commissions and repeals the law on the establishment of new commissions.
- Requires the implementation of a community learning center model for schools within school districts for which an academic distress commission had previously been organized or those that meet certain criteria.
- Requires the Department of Education to establish the Office of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures.
- Establishes the State Business Intervention Fund to engage business intervention teams and individuals to assist school districts.
- Transfers FY 2019 funds initially appropriated for academic distress commissions to the State Business Intervention Fund.
- Establishes the Teacher Education Advancement Program to assist veteran elementary and secondary teachers with completing an advanced degree program.
- Requires the board of education of each school district and educational service center to create a process for employees to make suggestions that may advance educational excellence.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Academic distress commissions

The bill dissolves all current academic distress commissions for persistently low-performing school districts and repeals the law on the establishment of new commissions.¹

Current law, enacted in 2015 in H.B. 70 of the 131st General Assembly, requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish an academic distress commission for certain school districts with persistently low academic performance to guide actions to improve their performance. The law requires each commission to appoint a chief executive officer who has substantial powers to manage the operation of a qualifying district and prescribes progressive consequences for the district, including possible changes to collective bargaining agreements and eventual mayoral appointment of the district board. Currently, only Youngstown and Lorain have academic distress commissions.

For a detailed description of current law, see the pp. 10-23 of the LSC Final Analysis of H.B. 70 at: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=2653&format=pdf>.

Community learning center model implementation

The bill requires schools operated by school districts for which an academic distress commission had been established and other specified districts to begin transitioning to a community learning center model. A community learning center, as authorized by current law for all districts on a voluntary basis, is a school that "participates in a coordinated, community-based effort with community partners to provide comprehensive educational, developmental, family, and health services to students, families, and community members during school hours and hours in which school is not in session."²

Besides a school in a former academic distress commission district, the bill requires any school building to begin such a transition if, it receives an overall grade of

¹ New R.C. 3302.10(A) and Section 7 of the bill; Repealed R.C. 3302.10; Repealed Sections 4, 5, and 6 of H.B. 70 of the 131st General Assembly; Conforming changes in R.C. 133.06(G)(1) and (2), 3302.036(B)(3), 3302.042(F), 3302.11, 3302.12, 3310.03(E) and (G)(4), 3311.29(D), and 3314.102.

² R.C. 3302.16, not in the bill.



"F" on its state report card for three consecutive years, or it is operated by either the Cleveland or Columbus school districts.³

The bill requires these schools generally to follow the same process for voluntary community learning center creation as in current law.⁴ For a detailed analysis of the community learning center creation process, see pages 4-9 of the LSC Final Analysis of H.B. 70 of the 131st General Assembly.

The bill, however, diverges from the voluntary community learning center creation process in several ways. First the bill removes the provision that requires a district board or governing authority to conduct an election when a school is voluntarily deciding to transition to a community learning center model.⁵ Furthermore, the bill requires a school action team to conduct and complete a performance audit of the school and review the needs of the school with regard to restructuring within 30 days of the beginning of the mandatory community learning center process instead of four months, as prescribed by the voluntary transition process.⁶

Finally, the school action team must submit its improvement plan directly to the district board or governing authority for evaluation and adoption, rather than to the parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school for their approval. If the board or governing authority does not adopt the plan in full, it must provide an explanation as to why portions of the plan were rejected, and the action team must redevelop and resubmit those portions within 30 days.⁷

Office of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures

The bill requires the Department of Education to establish an Office of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures. The Office must do the following:

(1) Serve as a clearinghouse to assemble information and make it available to the public regarding each grant that may be available from the state and federal governments and from all sources of private philanthropic assistance available to Ohioans;

³ New R.C. 3302.10(B).

⁴ New R.C. 3302.10(C) to (E).

⁵ R.C. 3302.17(C) and (D), not in the bill.

⁶ New R.C. 3302.10(D).

⁷ New R.C. 3302.10(F).



(2) Solicit private donations to provide grants and assistance for economic development, health, safety, and morals;

(3) Identify barriers to entry into domestic and foreign business and suggest ways of removing them;

(4) Establish a liaison in each big-eight school district who disseminates information and resources developed by the Department at the local level;

(5) Create public-private partnerships to eradicate at-risk factors for all Ohio students. The partnerships should focus on career-technical and vocational education strategies for the business needs of the community.⁸

The bill permits the Office to accept gifts, grants, and other donations to be used in its official capacity and requires it to ensure cooperation and compliance with any such donations. The Office may also contract with independent contractors to carry out its duties and services, as necessary. The Office must maintain a registry of such contracts and publish it on its website.⁹

State Business Intervention Fund

The bill establishes the State Business Intervention Fund. The Department of Education must use moneys in the fund to engage business intervention teams and individuals to help school districts resolve administrative problems and issues affecting at-risk students. The bill also transfers \$600,000 of those moneys initially appropriated for academic distress commissions to the fund for FY 2019.¹⁰

Teacher Education Advancement Program

The bill requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to establish the Teacher Education Advancement Program. Under the program, any elementary or secondary school teacher who has taught in Ohio for ten or more years may be eligible for admission to any university to pursue an advanced degree without being required to pay tuition or a matriculation fee. The bill requires the school district of the program

⁸ R.C. 3301.132(A).

⁹ R.C. 3301.132(C) and (D).

¹⁰ R.C. 3301.41; Sections 265.10, 265.210, and 265.323 of H.B. 49 of the 132nd General Assembly amended in Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the bill.



participant to cover the cost of textbooks, fees, and other related expenses not included in tuition.¹¹

The bill requires each program participant to continue teaching in Ohio for at least five years after the completion of the advanced degree program. Participants must sign a promissory note payable to the state should they not satisfy those service requirements. The amount payable under the note must be the amount of total tuition waived under the program, over a period as determined by the Chancellor. The note must also stipulate that the obligation to make payments is canceled following the completion of the five-year service requirement, or if the program participant dies or becomes totally and permanently disabled.¹²

The bill requires each state university to report to the Chancellor the total number of program participants that enroll at the institution and the average amount of tuition waived. The Chancellor then must determine the average of all tuition waived in the preceding year, which then becomes the amount of grants payable to universities for program participants enrolled at their institutions. No grant under the program may exceed the tuition due and payable at any university.¹³

This program is similar to tuition waivers for children or spouses or qualifying former spouses of public service officers and members of Armed Forces killed in line of duty under current law; however, those waivers do not include an employment requirement.¹⁴

Advancing educational excellence

The bill requires each school district or educational service center board of education to create a process by which employees may make suggestions that might advance educational excellence. Suggestions must be published, along with a proper response from district officials as to whether an idea will be implemented, on the district's website. The bill requires the board to provide a reward to the progenitor of any suggestion which is implemented within the district.¹⁵

¹¹ R.C. 3333.27(A) and (B).

¹² R.C. 3333.27(A)(1) and (C).

¹³ R.C. 3333.27(D).

¹⁴ R.C. 3333.26, not in the bill.

¹⁵ R.C. 3313.361.



HISTORY

ACTION

DATE

Introduced

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