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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
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Legislative Budget
Office

H.B. 123
133rd General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 123's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. G. Holmes and G. Manning

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

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Highlights

- Public district and school costs will likely increase to pay \$1,000 to \$1,500 to each faculty advisor to the student-led violence prevention clubs the bill requires to be created in buildings serving grades 6-12.
- Public districts and schools may also incur some additional administrative costs to carry out various requirements of the bill with respect to threat assessment teams and plans, the statewide anonymous reporting program, and school curriculum.
- Mandatory school district participation in a statewide anonymous reporting program will likely increase the workload of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Department of Education (ODE), and local law enforcement agencies in administering the anonymous reporting system and responding to tips.
- ODE's administrative costs may increase to develop various model curricula, materials, and approved lists of training programs.

Detailed Analysis

The bill makes various changes to the law regarding school security and youth suicide awareness and training. Provisions with potential fiscal effects are discussed below. Please refer to [LSC bill analysis](#) for a complete description of all the bill's provisions.

Violence prevention clubs

The bill requires public districts and schools to create a student-led violence prevention club for each building that serves grades 6-12. These student-led clubs must implement training activities related to social inclusion and suicide and violence prevention and have at least one adult advisor. Typically, faculty members are paid to serve in such roles. Subject to collective

bargaining agreements, this provision could cost anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per building to pay the additional amounts to the advisor.

Threat assessment teams and plans

The bill requires public districts and schools, within two years of the effective date of the bill, to create certified threat assessment teams for each school building that serves grades 6-12. The team may consist of school administrators, mental health professionals, school resource officers, and other necessary personnel. Each member of the team must undergo an evidence-based training program every three years and the district must report on completion of the certification annually.

Public districts and schools may incur some minimal costs to provide administrative support to the teams. Further, the workload of the personnel serving on the teams will increase, which could become a collective bargaining issue. However, there is likely little, if any, cost to obtain the required training, as no-cost, evidence-based training options are currently available. For example, the nonprofit Sandy Hook Promise organization provides the evidence-based Safety Assessment and Intervention program to school districts at no cost.¹ The organization provides a day-long workshop to identify existing gaps in current safety policy and code of conduct and help schools learn how to respond to reported threats, get to the root cause of threatening behavior, and keep the school community safe. Following the training program, the organization provides ongoing support and resources to the teams. The organization is partnering with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to scale the program statewide through a recently awarded federal Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

There also may be some additional administrative workload for school administrators and ODE related to the development and administration of the required threat assessment plans. Local administrators must develop these plans for each building under their authority and file copies with ODE and each law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the school. The bill requires ODE to adopt rules regarding these procedures and submit the plans to the Attorney General and Director of Public Safety. While there may be some costs to comply with these provisions, public schools and ODE already follow similar procedures under current law in regard to emergency management plans.

Statewide anonymous reporting program

The bill requires ODE, in collaboration with other state agencies, to develop an anonymous reporting program for tips about dangerous, violent, or unlawful activities that occur or may occur on school property or that relate to a school community. The program must provide twenty-four hour per day, seven day per week (“24/7”) support, forward relevant tips to school threat assessment teams and law enforcement agencies, and coordinate with appropriate entities listed in a school’s emergency management plan and with existing school training programs. The bill requires school districts to participate in the program.

¹ https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/prevention_programs.

Currently, the Department of Public Safety operates a statewide, anonymous, “24/7” school safety tip line.² SaferOH, launched by ODE and DPS, is free of charge to every school in the state. Schools need only to register online to allow individuals to anonymously share information with school officials and law enforcement about threats to student safety. DPS’ Ohio Homeland Security Threat Assessment and Prevention Unit processes any tips and, when necessary, forwards them to local school and law enforcement officials. Presumably, registration in SaferOH would satisfy the participation requirements in the bill. However, mandatory participation will likely increase the workload of all involved entities to administer the system and respond to tips. In addition, the bill requires districts to annually report to ODE the number of anonymous reports, the method the report was received, the number and type of disciplinary actions taken as a result of these referrals, the number and type of mental health referrals, and the number of intentionally false tips received. ODE must also compile a database of individuals responsible for administering the program in schools. This information would likely be collected when the school registers for the program.

Criminal penalty for false reports

The bill prohibits an adult from recklessly making a false report about a student through the reporting program. Violation of this prohibition is a third degree misdemeanor, which carries a fine of up to \$500, a jail stay of up to 60 days, or both. The anonymous nature of the reporting program suggests there will be few, if any, new criminal cases and thus little, if any, discernible ongoing annual effect on the revenues and expenditures of county and municipal criminal justice systems.

Curriculum-related provisions

ODE’s administrative costs may increase to (1) develop and adopt model curricula and develop a list of approved peer-reviewed, evidence-based staff training programs for instruction in suicide awareness and prevention and violence prevention and in social inclusion and (2) develop a model policy and list of approved training programs for school threat assessment teams. The training programs must include free or no-cost options for schools. As a point of reference, \$3.8 million in FY 2019 GRF funds are appropriated to ODE specifically to develop and communicate to school districts academic content standards and curriculum models.

The bill may minimally increase costs for school districts to update their curriculum to add at least one hour each of evidence-based suicide awareness and prevention, safety training and violence prevention, and social inclusion instruction. Some districts may already offer such instruction. Those who do not may use ODE’s model policies and list of no-cost options to provide the instruction.

² https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/tip_line_information.