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H.B. 25
([l_136_2337-7](#))
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 25's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: In House Workforce and Higher Education

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Jarrells and Ray

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill's requirement for school districts and other public schools to designate a foster family navigator, with certain assigned responsibilities, for each school building under the district or school's control may create some additional work for districts and schools that are not already performing those tasks. The Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) reports that many schools likely already perform the activities required of the foster family navigator role.
- DEW, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the Department of Children and Youth, and the Department of Job and Family Services may incur minimal, if any, administrative costs to comply with certain responsibilities required by the bill.

Detailed Analysis

Foster family navigators and local foster care education liaisons

The bill requires school districts, community schools, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) schools to designate a foster family navigator for each school building under their operation. The foster family navigator will serve as the primary point of contact for students placed in foster care that attend school in that building. In general, a navigator will provide personalized support, resources, and guidance to foster youth and their families, helping the students engage in school activities, access various services, and make plans for work or further education after they graduate high school. According to the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), many schools likely already perform the activities that would be required of the foster family navigator role. Those activities may be carried out by a variety of personnel, including guidance counselors, school social workers, teacher leaders, deans, student support specialists, or family engagement coordinators, depending on each school's staffing and

level of need. Districts and schools not already meeting the bill's requirements may need to do some additional work, the magnitude of which will depend on the number of students in foster care in each of the district's or school's buildings. As a point of reference, DEW reported that public schools served 14,200 students in foster care in the 2024-2025 school year. Large, urban districts tend to have the highest numbers of students in foster care. In the 2024-2025 school year, districts with the most students in foster care included Columbus City (539), Cincinnati City (523), Dayton City (398), Cleveland Municipal (290), Toledo City (289), and Akron City (244). As DEW also reported, districts with the highest rates of students in foster care (between 4% and 6% of enrollment) are more varied in demographic and geographic characteristics, with many being classified as rural or suburban.¹

The bill also requires each school district, community school, and STEM school to designate a local foster care education liaison for the district or school to support the identification, enrollment, and access to academic and nonacademic services for students in foster care. Federal law currently requires the designation of local foster care education liaisons at school districts and other public schools. Therefore, the bill is not expected to increase public school costs for this purpose.

The bill requires each local foster care education liaison and foster family navigator to complete a state-developed training (see below) at least once annually.

State agency duties

Within six months of the bill's effective date, the bill requires DEW to collaborate with the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE), the Department of Children and Youth (DCY), and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to develop training for both foster care education liaisons and foster family navigators, and encourage the sharing of best practices to support students placed in foster care, including posting resources to their websites to assist local foster care education liaisons, foster family navigators, and public children services agencies (PCSAs). The bill specifically requires DEW to support local foster care education liaisons and foster family navigators and makes the Department primarily responsible for the posting and administration of their training. Additionally, ODHE must post on their website any scholarship opportunities for students placed in foster care that are available at each state institution of higher education.

There appears to be minimal, if any, cost associated with these provisions. While development of the training courses may increase workload and administrative costs, DEW may be able to leverage a virtual training it has already developed. This training outlines federal law requirements associated with serving students in foster care and students experiencing homelessness. The training has been open to local foster care education liaisons and any staff involved in the enrollment, well-being, and academic success of students experiencing homelessness or students in foster care. In addition, DEW already employs a state coordinator of educational supports for foster youth, whose duties presumably coincide with the bill's

¹ See DEW's October 21, 2025 [Testimony Before the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee on Foster Youth in K-12 Schools \(PDF\)](#), which is available on the House Workforce and Higher Education Committee website: ohiohouse.gov/committees/workforce-and-higher-education.

requirements, and each agency currently posts resources that support foster youth on their websites.

Independent living services

The bill requires a PCSA or a private child placing agency (PCPA) to provide independent living services to each youth in the custody of the agency as developmentally appropriate to prepare the youth for the transition from agency custody to self-sufficiency. The PCSA or PCPA must determine which services are applicable or not needed based on a life skills assessment. These requirements largely codify existing rules. However, the rules specify that these services must be provided to youth “no later than 14 years of age.” The bill does not specify this. Assuming that this would not result in youth receiving services earlier than under current practice, this provision should have no fiscal impact.² The bill also requires, at the request of a foster family navigator, a PCSA, or PCPA to provide the navigator with a copy of the youth’s life skills assessment. This provision should not result in any additional costs.

Synopsis of Fiscal Effect Changes

- The substitute bill (I_136_2337-7) eliminates the previous (As Introduced) bill’s provisions that (1) create the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program to be administered by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE), (2) appropriate \$7.5 million in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 for that program under ODHE’s budget, and (3) transfer \$15 million cash from the GRF to a new Foster-to-College Scholarship Fund (Fund 5AM1) to support the appropriations. However, the substitute bill adds provisions requiring ODHE to perform additional administrative responsibilities, which may minimally increase its administrative costs.
- The substitute bill adds the provisions regarding foster family navigators, local foster care education liaisons, and independent living services and any associated fiscal effects described above.
- The substitute bill may minimally increase the administrative costs of the Department of Education and Workforce, the Department of Children and Youth, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services by adding provisions requiring the departments to perform additional administrative tasks regarding local foster care education liaison and foster family navigator training and resource sharing.

² Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-42-19.