#### As Introduced

### 136th General Assembly

# Regular Session 2025-2026

H. B. No. 531

#### Representatives Newman, Ritter

Cosponsors: Representatives Claggett, Dean, Salvo, King, Miller, M., Click, Pizzulli, Creech, Plummer, Gross, Richardson

То	amend sections 3314.03 and 3326.11 and to enact	1
	section 3313.475 of the Revised Code to enact	2
	the School Chaplain Act to permit public schools	3
	to engage volunteer chaplains to provide support	4
	services.	5

#### BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

<b>Section 1.</b> That sections 3314.03 and 3326.11 be amended	6
and section 3313.475 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as	7
follows:	8
Sec. 3313.475. (A) As used in this section, "chaplain"	9
means a religious professional who has received endorsement or	10
certification by a recognized ecclesiastical endorsing agency	11
and who provides spiritual programming, support, and counseling	12
outside of a traditional church setting in such places as	13
hospitals, the armed services, prisons, law enforcement	14
agencies, and schools.	15
(B) A school district, community school established	16
pursuant to Chapter 3314. of the Revised Code, or STEM school	17
established pursuant to Chapter 3326. of the Revised Code may	18
accept as a volunteer a chaplain to provide support, services,	19

H. B. No. 531
As Introduced

and programs for students. A chaplain volunteering in accordance	20
with this section shall not be required to apply for a license	21
or certification with the state board of education.	22
(C) (1) As a condition of volunteering under this section,	23
each volunteer described in division (A) of this section shall	24
be subject to a criminal records check for a person hired by a	25
school district as prescribed by section 3319.391 of the Revised	26
Code. In the manner prescribed by the department of education	27
and workforce, the individual shall submit the criminal records	28
check to the department and shall register with the department	29
during the period in which the individual volunteers at the	30
school district or school.	31
(2) The department shall not accept the application of any	32
individual under this division if the department learns that the	33
individual has pleaded guilty to, has been found guilty by a	34
jury or court of, or has been convicted of any of the offenses	35
listed in division (C) of section 3319.31 of the Revised Code.	36
(3) Not later than December 1, 2026, each board of	37
trustees of a school district or governing authority of a school	38
shall vote at a public meeting of the board or authority on	39
whether to adopt a policy authorizing the district or school to	40
accept as a volunteer a chaplain under this section, beginning	41
in the 2026-2027 school year.	42
(D) Chaplain services may be offered in addition to, but	43
not in lieu of, school counselor services.	44
(E) A student may participate in supports, programs, or	45
services provided by a chaplain during school hours only if the	46
student's parent or legal guardian has provided written	47
permission for the student to do so.	48

(F) Each school district or school may establish	49
requirements and procedures as necessary to implement this	50
section.	51
Sec. 3314.03. A copy of every contract entered into under	52
this section shall be filed with the director of education and	53
workforce. The department of education and workforce shall make	54
available on its web site a copy of every approved, executed	55
contract filed with the director under this section.	56
(A) Each contract entered into between a sponsor and the	57
governing authority of a community school shall specify the	58
following:	59
(1) That the school shall be established as either of the	60
following:	61
(a) A nonprofit corporation established under Chapter	62
1702. of the Revised Code, if established prior to April 8,	63
2003;	64
(b) A public benefit corporation established under Chapter	65
1702. of the Revised Code, if established after April 8, 2003.	66
(2) The education program of the school, including the	67
school's mission and educational philosophy, the characteristics	68
of the students the school is expected to attract, the ages and	69
grades of students, and the focus of the curriculum;	70
(3) The academic goals to be achieved and the method of	71
measurement that will be used to determine progress toward those	72
goals, which shall include the statewide achievement	73
assessments;	74
(4) Performance standards, including but not limited to	75
all applicable report card measures set forth in section 3302.03	76

H. B. No. 531
As Introduced

or 3314.017 of the Revised Code, by which the success of the	77
school will be evaluated by the sponsor;	78
(5) The admission standards of section 3314.06 of the	79
Revised Code and, if applicable, section 3314.061 of the Revised	80
Code;	81
(6)(a) Dismissal procedures;	82
(b) A requirement that the governing authority adopt an	83
attendance policy that includes a procedure for automatically	84
withdrawing a student from the school if the student without a	85
legitimate excuse fails to participate in seventy-two	86
consecutive hours of the learning opportunities offered to the	87
student.	88
(7) The ways by which the school will achieve racial and	89
ethnic balance reflective of the community it serves;	90
(0) 5	0.1
(8) Requirements for financial audits by the auditor of	91
state. The contract shall require financial records of the	92
school to be maintained in the same manner as are financial	93
records of school districts, pursuant to rules of the auditor of	94
state. Audits shall be conducted in accordance with section	95
117.10 of the Revised Code.	96
(9) An addendum to the contract outlining the facilities	97
to be used that contains at least the following information:	98
(a) A detailed description of each facility used for	99
instructional purposes;	100
(b) The annual costs associated with leasing each facility	101
that are paid by or on behalf of the school;	102
(c) The annual mortgage principal and interest payments	103
that are paid by the school;	104

	105
(d) The name of the lender or landlord, identified as	105
such, and the lender's or landlord's relationship to the	106
operator, if any.	107
(10) Qualifications of employees, including both of the	108
following:	109
(a) A requirement that the school's classroom teachers be	110
licensed in accordance with sections 3319.22 to 3319.31 of the	111
Revised Code, except that a community school may engage	112
noncertificated persons to teach up to twelve hours or forty	113
hours per week pursuant to section 3319.301 of the Revised Code;	114
(b) A prohibition against the school employing an	115
individual described in section 3314.104 of the Revised Code in	116
any position.	117
(11) That the school will comply with the following	118
requirements:	119
(a) The school will provide learning opportunities to a	120
minimum of twenty-five students for a minimum of nine hundred	121
twenty hours per school year.	122
(b) The governing authority will purchase liability	123
insurance, or otherwise provide for the potential liability of	124
the school.	125
(c) The school will be nonsectarian in its programs,	126
admission policies, employment practices, and all other	127
operations, and will not be operated by a sectarian school or	128
religious institution.	129
(d) The school will comply with sections 9.90, 9.91,	130
109.65, 121.22, 149.43, 2151.357, 2151.421, 2313.19, 3301.0710,	131
3301.0711, 3301.0712, 3301.0715, 3301.0729, 3301.24, 3301.948,	132
, , , , , , ,	

3302.037, 3313.472, 3313.473, 3313.474, <u>3313.475,</u> 3313.50,	133
3313.539, 3313.5310, 3313.5318, 3313.5319, 3313.608, 3313.609,	134
3313.6012, 3313.6013, 3313.6014, 3313.6020, 3313.6024,	135
3313.6026, 3313.6028, 3313.6029, 3313.6031, 3313.643, 3313.648,	136
3313.6411, 3313.6413, 3313.66, 3313.661, 3313.662, 3313.666,	137
3313.667, 3313.668, 3313.669, 3313.6610, 3313.67, 3313.671,	138
3313.672, 3313.673, 3313.69, 3313.71, 3313.716, 3313.718,	139
3313.719, 3313.7112, 3313.7117, 3313.721, 3313.753, 3313.80,	140
3313.814, 3313.816, 3313.817, 3313.818, 3313.819, 3313.86,	141
3313.89, 3313.96, 3319.073, 3319.077, 3319.078, 3319.0812,	142
3319.238, 3319.318, 3319.321, 3319.324, 3319.39, 3319.391,	143
3319.393, 3319.41, 3319.46, 3319.90, 3319.614, 3320.01, 3320.02,	144
3320.03, 3320.04, 3321.01, 3321.041, 3321.13, 3321.14, 3321.141,	145
3321.17, 3321.18, 3321.19, 3322.20, 3322.24, 3323.251, 3327.10,	146
4111.17, 4113.52, 5502.262, 5502.703, and 5705.391 and Chapters	147
117., 1347., 2744., 3365., 3742., 4112., 4123., 4141., and 4167.	148
of the Revised Code as if it were a school district and will	149
comply with section 3301.0714 of the Revised Code in the manner	150
specified in section 3314.17 of the Revised Code.	151

- (e) The school shall comply with Chapter 102. and section 152 2921.42 of the Revised Code. 153
- (f) The school will comply with sections 3313.61, 154 3313.611, 3313.614, 3313.617, 3313.618, and 3313.6114 of the 155 Revised Code, except that for students who enter ninth grade for 156 the first time before July 1, 2010, the requirement in sections 157 3313.61 and 3313.611 of the Revised Code that a person must 158 successfully complete the curriculum in any high school prior to 159 receiving a high school diploma may be met by completing the 160 curriculum adopted by the governing authority of the community 161 school rather than the curriculum specified in Title XXXIII of 162 the Revised Code or any rules of the department. Beginning with 163

## H. B. No. 531 Page 7 As Introduced

students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after	164
July 1, 2010, the requirement in sections 3313.61 and 3313.611	165
of the Revised Code that a person must successfully complete the	166
curriculum of a high school prior to receiving a high school	167
diploma shall be met by completing the requirements prescribed	168
in section 3313.6027 and division (C) of section 3313.603 of the	169
Revised Code, unless the person qualifies under division (D) or	170
(F) of that section. Each school shall comply with the plan for	171
awarding high school credit based on demonstration of subject	172
area competency, and beginning with the 2017-2018 school year,	173
with the updated plan that permits students enrolled in seventh	174
and eighth grade to meet curriculum requirements based on	175
subject area competency adopted by the department under	176
divisions (J)(1) and (2) of section 3313.603 of the Revised	177
Code. Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, the school shall	178
comply with the framework for granting units of high school	179
credit to students who demonstrate subject area competency	180
through work-based learning experiences, internships, or	181
cooperative education developed by the department under division	182
(J)(3) of section 3313.603 of the Revised Code.	183

(g) The school governing authority will submit within four months after the end of each school year a report of its activities and progress in meeting the goals and standards of divisions (A)(3) and (4) of this section and its financial status to the sponsor and the parents of all students enrolled in the school.

- (h) The school, unless it is an internet- or computerbased community school, will comply with section 3313.801 of the Revised Code as if it were a school district.
  - (i) If the school is the recipient of moneys from a grant

H. B. No. 531 Page 8
As Introduced

awarded under the federal race to the top program, Division (A),	194
Title XIV, Sections 14005 and 14006 of the "American Recovery	195
and Reinvestment Act of 2009," Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115,	196
the school will pay teachers based upon performance in	197
accordance with section 3317.141 and will comply with section	198
3319.111 of the Revised Code as if it were a school district.	199
(j) If the school operates a preschool program that is	200
licensed by the department under sections 3301.52 to 3301.59 of	201
the Revised Code, the school shall comply with sections 3301.50	202
to 3301.59 of the Revised Code and the minimum standards for	203
preschool programs prescribed in rules adopted by the department	204
of children and youth under section 3301.53 of the Revised Code.	205
(k) The school will comply with sections 3313.6021 and	206
3313.6023 of the Revised Code as if it were a school district	207
unless it is either of the following:	208
(i) An internet- or computer-based community school;	209
(ii) A community school in which a majority of the	210
enrolled students are children with disabilities as described in	211
division (B)(2) of section 3314.35 of the Revised Code.	212
(1) The school will comply with section 3321.191 of the	213
Revised Code, unless it is an internet- or computer-based	214
community school that is subject to section 3314.261 of the	215
Revised Code.	216
(m) The school will comply with section 3313.7118 of the	217
Revised Code if it serves elementary school students.	218
(12) Arrangements for providing health and other benefits	219
to employees;	220
(13) The length of the contract, which shall begin at the	221

H. B. No. 531 Page 9
As Introduced

beginning of an academic year. No contract shall exceed five	222
years unless such contract has been renewed pursuant to division	223
(D) of this section.	224
(14) The governing authority of the school, which shall be	225
responsible for carrying out the provisions of the contract;	226
responsible for earlying out the provisions of the contract,	220
(15) A financial plan detailing an estimated school budget	227
for each year of the period of the contract and specifying the	228
total estimated per pupil expenditure amount for each such year.	229
(16) Requirements and procedures regarding the disposition	230
of employees of the school in the event the contract is	231
terminated or not renewed pursuant to section 3314.07 of the	232
Revised Code;	233
(17) Whether the school is to be created by converting all	234
or part of an existing public school or educational service	235
center building or is to be a new start-up school, and if it is	236
a converted public school or service center building, both of	237
the following:	238
(a) Specification of any duties or responsibilities of an	239
employer that the board of education or service center governing	240
board that operated the school or building before conversion is	241
delegating to the governing authority of the community school	242
with respect to all or any specified group of employees provided	243
the delegation is not prohibited by a collective bargaining	244
agreement applicable to such employees;	245
(b) Alternative arrangements for current public school	246
students who choose not to attend the converted school and for	247
teachers who choose not to teach in the school or building after	248
conversion.	249
(18) Provisions establishing procedures for resolving	250

H. B. No. 531
As Introduced

disputes or differences of opinion between the sponsor and the	251
governing authority of the community school;	252
(19) A provision requiring the governing authority to	253
adopt a policy regarding the admission of students who reside	254
outside the district in which the school is located. That policy	255
shall comply with the admissions procedures specified in	256
sections 3314.06 and 3314.061 of the Revised Code and, at the	257
sole discretion of the authority, shall do one of the following:	258
sole discretion of the authority, shall do one of the following.	250
(a) Prohibit the enrollment of students who reside outside	259
the district in which the school is located;	260
(b) Permit the enrollment of students who reside in	261
districts adjacent to the district in which the school is	262
located;	263
	0.64
(c) Permit the enrollment of students who reside in any	264
other district in the state.	265
(20) A provision recognizing the authority of the	266
department to take over the sponsorship of the school in	267
accordance with the provisions of division (C) of section	268
3314.015 of the Revised Code;	269
(21) A provision recognizing the sponsor's authority to	270
assume the operation of a school under the conditions specified	271
in division (B) of section 3314.073 of the Revised Code;	272
(22) A provision recognizing both of the following:	273
(a) The authority of public health and safety officials to	274
inspect the facilities of the school and to order the facilities	275
closed if those officials find that the facilities are not in	276
compliance with health and safety laws and regulations;	277
(b) The authority of the department as the community	278

H. B. No. 531 Page 11 As Introduced

school oversight body to suspend the operation of the school	279
under section 3314.072 of the Revised Code if the department has	280
evidence of conditions or violations of law at the school that	281
pose an imminent danger to the health and safety of the school's	282
students and employees and the sponsor refuses to take such	283
action.	284
(23) A description of the learning opportunities that will	285
be offered to students including both classroom-based and non-	286
classroom-based learning opportunities that is in compliance	287
with criteria for student participation established by the	288
department under division (H)(2) of section 3314.08 of the	289
Revised Code;	290
(24) The school will comply with sections 3302.04 and	291
3302.041 of the Revised Code, except that any action required to	292
be taken by a school district pursuant to those sections shall	293
be taken by the sponsor of the school.	294
(25) Beginning in the 2006-2007 school year, the school	295
will open for operation not later than the thirtieth day of	296
September each school year, unless the mission of the school as	297
specified under division (A)(2) of this section is solely to	298
serve dropouts. In its initial year of operation, if the school	299
fails to open by the thirtieth day of September, or within one	300
year after the adoption of the contract pursuant to division (D)	301
of section 3314.02 of the Revised Code if the mission of the	302
school is solely to serve dropouts, the contract shall be void.	303
(26) Whether the school's governing authority is planning	304
to seek designation for the school as a STEM school equivalent	305
under section 3326.032 of the Revised Code;	306

(27) That the school's attendance and participation

policies will be available for public inspection;	308
(28) That the school's attendance and participation	309
records shall be made available to the department, auditor of	310
state, and school's sponsor to the extent permitted under and in	311
accordance with the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	312
of 1974," 88 Stat. 571, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, as amended, and any	313
regulations promulgated under that act, and section 3319.321 of	314
the Revised Code;	315
(29) If a school operates using the blended learning	316
model, as defined in section 3301.079 of the Revised Code, all	317
of the following information:	318
(a) An indication of what blended learning model or models	319
will be used;	320
(b) A description of how student instructional needs will	321
be determined and documented;	322
(c) The method to be used for determining competency,	323
granting credit, and promoting students to a higher grade level;	324
(d) The school's attendance requirements, including how	325
the school will document participation in learning	326
opportunities;	327
(e) A statement describing how student progress will be	328
monitored;	329
(f) A statement describing how private student data will	330
be protected;	331
(g) A description of the professional development	332
activities that will be offered to teachers.	333
(30) A provision requiring that all moneys the school's	334

operator loans to the school, including facilities loans or cash	335
flow assistance, must be accounted for, documented, and bear	336
<pre>interest at a fair market rate;</pre>	337
(31) A provision requiring that, if the governing	338
authority contracts with an attorney, accountant, or entity	339
specializing in audits, the attorney, accountant, or entity	340
shall be independent from the operator with which the school has	341
contracted.	342
(32) A provision requiring the governing authority to	343
adopt an enrollment and attendance policy that requires a	344
student's parent to notify the community school in which the	345
student is enrolled when there is a change in the location of	346
the parent's or student's primary residence.	347
(33) A provision requiring the governing authority to	348
adopt a student residence and address verification policy for	349
students enrolling in or attending the school.	350
(34) A provision establishing the process by which the	351
governing authority of the school will be selected in the	352
future.	353
(35) A description of the management and administration of	354
the school.	355
(36) A provision requiring the governing authority to	356
adopt policies and procedures to establish internal financial	357
controls for the school.	358
(B) A contract entered into under section 3314.02 of the	359
Revised Code between a sponsor and the governing authority of a	360
community school may provide for the community school governing	361
authority to make payments to the sponsor, which is hereby	362
authorized to receive such payments as set forth in the contract	363

H. B. No. 531 Page 14 As Introduced

between the governing authority and the sponsor. The total	364
amount of such payments for monitoring, oversight, and technical	365
assistance of the school shall not exceed three per cent of the	366
total amount of payments for operating expenses that the school	367
receives from the state.	368
(C) The contract shall specify the duties of the sponsor	369
which shall be in accordance with the written agreement entered	370
into with the department under division (B) of section 3314.015	371
of the Revised Code and shall include the following:	372
(1) Monitor the community school's compliance with all	373
laws applicable to the school and with the terms of the	374
contract;	375
(2) Monitor and evaluate the academic and fiscal	376
performance and the organization and operation of the community	377
school on at least an annual basis;	378
(3) Provide technical assistance to the community school	379
in complying with laws applicable to the school and terms of the	380
contract;	381
(4) Take steps to intervene in the school's operation to	382
correct problems in the school's overall performance, declare	383
the school to be on probationary status pursuant to section	384
3314.073 of the Revised Code, suspend the operation of the	385
school pursuant to section 3314.072 of the Revised Code, or	386
terminate the contract of the school pursuant to section 3314.07	387
of the Revised Code as determined necessary by the sponsor;	388
(5) Have in place a plan of action to be undertaken in the	389
event the community school experiences financial difficulties or	390
closes prior to the end of a school year.	391

(D) Upon the expiration of a contract entered into under

H. B. No. 531 Page 15 As Introduced

this section, the sponsor of a community school may, with the	393
approval of the governing authority of the school, renew that	394
contract for a period of time determined by the sponsor, but not	395
ending earlier than the end of any school year, if the sponsor	396
finds that the school's compliance with applicable laws and	397
terms of the contract and the school's progress in meeting the	398
academic goals prescribed in the contract have been	399
satisfactory. Any contract that is renewed under this division	400
remains subject to the provisions of sections 3314.07, 3314.072,	401
and 3314.073 of the Revised Code.	402
(E) If a community school fails to open for operation	403
within one year after the contract entered into under this	404
section is adopted pursuant to division (D) of section 3314.02	405
of the Revised Code or permanently closes prior to the	406
expiration of the contract, the contract shall be void and the	407
school shall not enter into a contract with any other sponsor. A	408
school shall not be considered permanently closed because the	409
operations of the school have been suspended pursuant to section	410
3314.072 of the Revised Code.	411
Sec. 3326.11. Each science, technology, engineering, and	412
mathematics school established under this chapter and its	413
governing body shall comply with sections 9.90, 9.91, 109.65,	414
121.22, 149.43, 2151.357, 2151.421, 2313.19, 2921.42, 2921.43,	415
3301.0714, 3301.0715, 3301.0729, 3301.24, 3301.948, 3302.037,	416
3313.14, 3313.15, 3313.16, 3313.18, 3313.201, 3313.26, 3313.472,	417
3313.473, 3313.474, <u>3313.475,</u> 3313.48, 3313.481, 3313.482,	418
3313.50, 3313.539, 3313.5310, 3313.5318, 3313.5319, 3313.608,	419
3313.6012, 3313.6013, 3313.6014, 3313.6020, 3313.6021,	420
3313.6023, 3313.6024, 3313.6026, 3313.6028, 3313.6029,	421

3313.6031, 3313.61, 3313.611, 3313.614, 3313.615, 3313.617,

3313.618, 3313.6114, 3313.643, 3313.648, 3313.6411, 3313.6413,

422

H. B. No. 531	Page 16
As Introduced	-

3313.66, 3313.661, 3313.662, 3313.666, 3313.667, 3313.668,	424
3313.669, 3313.6610, 3313.67, 3313.671, 3313.672, 3313.673,	425
3313.69, 3313.71, 3313.716, 3313.717, 3313.718, 3313.719,	426
3313.7112, 3313.7117, 3313.7118, 3313.721, 3313.753, 3313.80,	427
3313.801, 3313.814, 3313.816, 3313.817, 3313.818, 3313.819,	428
3313.86, 3313.89, 3313.96, 3319.073, 3319.077, 3319.078,	429
3319.0812, 3319.21, 3319.238, 3319.318, 3319.32, 3319.321,	430
3319.324, 3319.35, 3319.39, 3319.391, 3319.393, 3319.41,	431
3319.45, 3319.46, 3319.90, 3319.614, 3320.01, 3320.02, 3320.03,	432
3320.04, 3321.01, 3321.041, 3321.05, 3321.13, 3321.14, 3321.141,	433
3321.17, 3321.18, 3321.19, 3321.191, 3322.20, 3322.24, 3323.251,	434
3327.10, 4111.17, 4113.52, 5502.262, 5502.703, and 5705.391 and	435
Chapters 102., 117., 1347., 2744., 3307., 3309., 3365., 3742.,	436
4112., 4123., 4141., and 4167. of the Revised Code as if it were	437
a school district.	438
Section 2. That existing sections 3314.03 and 3326.11 of	439
the Revised Code are hereby repealed.	440
the nevisea dode are hereby repeared.	110
Section 3. This act shall be known as the School Chaplain	441
Act.	442