OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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H.B. 644
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Click here for H.B. 644's Bill Analysis

Version: As Passed by the House

Primary Sponsor: Rep. Manning

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill creates the Higher Education Evidence-based Innovation (HEEI) Fund, consisting of money designated for the fund by the General Assembly and any private contributions, to support competitive grants to state institutions of higher education for the development, piloting, scaling, and assessment of student success programs that use evidence-based reforms or practices. The bill does not provide funding for the grants.
- The Ohio Department of Higher Education's (ODHE) administrative workload may increase to establish and administer the grant program. Beginning in 2027, ODHE must open a competitive grant period at least once every two years.
- A state institution of higher education that chooses to operate a student success program may incur costs in doing so. Any grants received by ODHE under the bill will offset, at least partially, any costs incurred, mostly depending on the grant amount established and awarded by ODHE.

Detailed Analysis

The bill creates the framework for a grant program to support the adoption of evidence-based reforms and practices at state institutions of higher education. Under the program, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) will award competitive grants to state institutions to support the development, piloting, scaling, and assessment of student success programs,[1]

[1] The bill defines a "student success program" as a program established and operated by a state institution to improve postsecondary retention rates, completion rates, or the time students take to earn a degree, excluding post-baccalaureate programs, with an emphasis on supporting low-income students.

giving preference to applications that propose reforms or practices that produce sizable, important impacts on student achievement or attainment.[2] The bill requires ODHE, in consultation with the Department of Education and Workforce and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, to develop criteria for awarding the grants using certain specified metrics. ODHE must, beginning in 2027, open a competitive grant period at least once every two years. The bill creates the Higher Education Evidence-based Innovation (HEEI) Fund to distribute grants to institutions. The new fund will consist of any money the General Assembly allocates to it and any private contributions (the bill does not capitalize the fund or provide appropriations).

ODHE's administrative workload may increase to establish and administer the grant program. Ultimately, the scope of these administrative duties will depend on the amount of money in the HEEI Fund, future appropriations, and the number of state institutions that apply for the grants.

A state institution of higher education that chooses to operate a student success program may incur costs in doing so. Any grants awarded by ODHE under the bill will offset, at least partially, any costs incurred, mostly depending on the grant amount established and awarded by ODHE and the extent of the costs associated in establishing a program. The bill requires that each state institution that receives a grant must use it to carry out the programs and proposals described in the institution's grant application.

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[2] The bill establishes a set of criteria for "evidence-based reform or practice" and parameters for three tiers that scale up in terms of the impacts on student achievement or attainment. For further details see the LSC bill analysis for H.B. 644 (PDF), which is available on the General Assembly's website: legislature.ohio.gov.