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H.B. 98
(1_136_0496-1)
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 98's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: In House Workforce and Higher Education

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Santucci and Williams

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill appropriates \$8.0 million from the GRF in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 for the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) to support the newly created Community Connectors Workforce Program to connect students to jobs and internships in their communities. The program will be overseen by DEW and administered by educational service centers.

Detailed Analysis

The bill requires the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) to establish and oversee the Community Connectors Workforce Program that is designed to connect students to jobs, internships, and career professionals in their communities. The bill supports the program with appropriations of \$8.0 million from the GRF in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027. Educational service centers (ESCs) will administer the program for their client school districts. Of the \$8.0 million appropriated in each fiscal year, \$4.0 million will be allocated equally among ESCs and \$4.0 million will be allocated to ESCs in proportion to the number of students in each ESC's student count used for determining ESC state operating payments (this count is the total student enrollment of all the school districts with which the ESC has service agreements, as reported on the most recent report card issued for the districts). DEW will distribute these funds to ESCs to employ or contract for at least one, but not more than three, directors to administer the program in the high schools of the ESC's client school districts (the bill makes the requirement for ESCs to employ the program directors contingent on state appropriations). ESCs are responsible for determining the appropriate number of program directors and any eligibility or application requirements for them, except that the bill requires the program directors to have experience in job placement, school counseling, or primary and secondary education.

The program directors must identify jobs, apprenticeships, and internships in the community; determine the number of students that may participate; select students through an application and interview process; consider a student's graduation plan when placing that student in a job, apprenticeship, or internship; and provide classroom instruction in soft skills and professional skills training, including problem solving, time management, creative and critical thinking, communication and civility, and ethics. If a district or school already offers similar instruction, the director must collaborate with the instructors, other appropriate school officials that have commensurate experience, and professionals who support career development in the school. The bill also requires the program directors to report certain program information to the employing ESC and DEW.

Synopsis of Fiscal Effect Changes

- The substitute bill (I_136_0496-1) changes the funding source for the bill's appropriation from lottery profits, as in the As Introduced (previous) version, to the GRF.
- The substitute bill clarifies how the bill's appropriation will be distributed among educational service centers (ESCs), by requiring half of the appropriation (\$4.0 million per fiscal year) to be allocated equally among the ESCs, and the other half of the appropriation to be allocated proportionally based on each ESC's client district student count. The previous bill gave the Department of Education and Workforce discretion in the distribution method.