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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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S.B. 19  
(1\_136\_2935-4)  
136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 19's Bill Analysis](#)

**Version:** In House Education

**Primary Sponsor:** Sen. Brenner

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** Yes

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### Highlights

- The bill's requirement to provide free academic intervention services to certain students who are struggling academically will increase costs for school districts and other public schools. These costs could be significant but are highly uncertain. Ultimately, they will depend on the number of qualifying students already receiving services meeting the bill's requirements and district and school implementation decisions.
- Schools, districts, and information technology centers (ITCs) could incur substantial costs to implement a single student information system (SIS) to submit data to the Education Management Information System (EMIS).
- Costs for districts and schools not meeting the bill's 51% threshold for third grade mathematics proficiency may increase to develop and implement mathematics achievement improvement plans. Any costs will vary depending on the strategies districts and schools choose to employ.
- The bill requires districts and schools that must establish a mathematics achievement improvement plan to use curriculum from the list of high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials that the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) must develop. However, it also allows districts and schools to use disadvantaged pupil impact aid funds through the school funding formula for that curriculum and professional development on effective mathematics instruction.
- The bill may increase DEW operating costs in the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to review academic intervention services in up to 5% of public schools each year and to modify how K-3 diagnostic assessments are administered.

- GRF scholarship program expenditures may increase due to the bill's expansion of eligibility for an Autism scholarship.
- The bill may increase state aid expenditures paid from the GRF and school district revenues depending on the extent to which home-educated students participate in career-technical education (CTE) at their resident districts and the CTE programs the students participate in. School district expenditures may increase to educate additional students.
- Costs for DEW, the Department of Higher Education, the State Board of Education, and public schools may increase to carry out various administrative responsibilities.

## Detailed Analysis

### Overview

The bill makes a number of changes to education law, the primary focus of which is improving academic performance among public school students. The bill also makes changes to a number of other provisions regarding data reporting, testing, eligibility for Autism scholarships, and eligibility for home-educated students to participate in career-technical education at their resident school district, among others. The provisions of the bill with notable potential fiscal effects are discussed below.

### Academic intervention services

The bill requires each school district, community school, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) school to provide qualifying students with evidence-based academic intervention services, free of cost, either directly, through a vendor, or a combination of both. These services must align with a qualifying student's assessed level of skill and provide accelerated learning and mastery where possible to help the student demonstrate a level of skill appropriate to the student's grade. A student qualifies for such services if they demonstrate a limited or basic level of skill in mathematics, English language arts (ELA), or both, on both a state-approved diagnostic assessment and a state assessment.<sup>1</sup> Practically, eligibility for intervention services under the bill appears to be based solely on a student's performance on diagnostic assessments and state tests taken in third grade. This is because the state-approved diagnostic assessments are limited to students in grades K-3 and the state tests are provided to students in grades 3-8 and high school, with only third grade students taking both. Districts and schools may provide academic intervention services through a variety of evidence-based supports identified by the bill, though the bill requires these services to be in addition to, rather than a replacement for, existing academic instruction and other services provided to students, and that they generally not supplant core academic instructional time. Any student in grades 9-12 who is not required to take another state test after demonstrating a limited or basic level of skill on their most recent state test will still qualify for intervention services. The bill requires districts and

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<sup>1</sup> The bill generally exempts students who have an individualized education program (IEP) related to a traumatic brain injury or a significant cognitive disability, or a student who attends a dropout prevention and recovery community school.

schools to provide these qualifying high school students with academic intervention services that align with the student's selected graduation pathway.

The bill requires each district or school to notify the parent or guardian that their student qualifies for and will receive academic intervention services, provide the parent or guardian with periodic updates on the services provided, and annually report to the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) various data regarding the number of students qualifying for and receiving academic intervention services. The bill also requires a district or school to report, through the Education Management Information System (EMIS), the core curriculum and instructional materials being used for mathematics and the mathematics intervention programs used in grades K-12 (this reporting requirement is similar to one enacted in H.B. 33 of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly for ELA core curriculum and instructional materials and reading intervention programs).

### **Fiscal effects**

Continuing law requires public schools to provide students in grades 3-8 with intervention services in any skill in which the student scored below proficient on the state tests. In addition, it also requires public schools to provide intervention services to students in grades K-3 whose diagnostic assessments indicate that the student is failing to make satisfactory progress toward attaining the academic standards for their grade level. Indeed, based on conversations with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA), it is common practice for schools to offer intervention services to students. As a result, some portion of these students may already be receiving academic intervention services that meet the bill's requirements. Due to data limitations, that number is not known. As a point of reference, DEW reports that, of the 128,818 students in grade 3 who took the state test in ELA in the 2024-2025 school year, 49,854 (38.7%) scored at the limited or basic level of skill. Of the 124,853 students in grade 3 tested in mathematics, 44,451 (35.6%) scored at the limited or basic level of skill. Fewer students may qualify under the bill if some students scoring below proficient on the state tests score proficient or higher on a state-approved mathematics diagnostic assessment. Qualifying students under the bill continue to receive intervention services in mathematics or ELA until they demonstrate proficiency on either a diagnostic assessment (presumably one that is applicable to students in grades higher than three and, thus, not on the state-approved list) or a state test in the applicable subject.

Schools that already provide academic intervention services may still incur increased costs if there is a need to restructure or expand their existing programs, particularly to ensure compliance with the bill's requirement that services be in addition to core academic instruction and other services and to adhere to the requirements of mathematics improvement and monitoring plans, as applicable. Schools may also incur increased administrative costs to comply with the bill's notification and reporting requirements. Consequently, the costs of providing academic intervention services to qualifying students could be significant but are highly uncertain. Ultimately, costs will vary depending on a number of factors, including the number of third grade students who score at a limited or basic level of skill in each district or school who are not already served or exempt, how each district or school chooses to provide the services, staffing needs, staff salaries, contract agreements, and other considerations.

## **Data reporting to EMIS**

The bill requires DEW to designate a single student information system (SIS) for all schools to use to submit data to EMIS by March 1, 2027. Schools will be required to use this designated software system by August 1, 2027. Currently, schools and districts use at least six different software systems to report data to EMIS.

Costs to implement a new SIS could be substantial for each district and information technology centers (ITCs). Currently, all but two (Akron City and Columbus City) school districts use one of the state's 16 ITCs to operate, support, and train schools on SIS and EMIS reporting. None of these ITCs operate all of the different SIS software that schools use. Once DEW designates a single SIS, some ITCs would need to learn, configure, and operate the new system, transfer data from existing systems, train districts and schools on how to operate the new system, and submit data to EMIS. Additionally, the chosen software may have more substantial technical needs and could require districts, schools, and ITCs to modernize hardware to operate effectively. This may include improving processing power, storage, speed, and other necessary technical requirements. ITCs are mainly supported by a combination of state subsidies and fees charged to member districts and schools for services rendered. Thus, ITCs may find it necessary to pass along any additional costs they incur through higher service fees on member school districts and other public schools while districts may also incur additional direct costs.

In addition, DEW noted that districts and schools often customize their SIS with other features, such as communications to parents, grades, homework assignments, and so on. To the extent the SIS selected under the bill does not allow for the current functionalities districts and schools have, there may be additional costs for districts and schools to secure new providers of those services. Also, other software that relies on SIS data extracts to operate (such as bus routing, food service, and library automation systems) would need to be altered to pull data from the new SIS.

## **State tests and diagnostic assessments**

The bill contains several provisions related to the administration of various state assessments and diagnostic assessments. These include the requirement to develop a plan for next generation computer-adaptive state assessments, the requirement to pursue a federal waiver for the use of nationally norm-referenced state assessments, and changes to locally administered diagnostic assessments for grades K-3. These provisions are discussed in more detail below.

### **Next generation, computer-adaptive state assessments**

The bill requires DEW, by December 1, 2026, to develop a detailed plan for a next generation computer-adaptive state assessment that meets certain requirements. The bill does not lay out a timeline for the actual adoption of a computer-adaptive assessment, but DEW's existing testing contract contains an option to implement computer-adaptive testing. Computer-adaptive testing is based on an algorithm that draws test items (questions) from an existing item bank. Computer-adaptive tests require larger test item banks than traditional fixed-form tests. According to the current testing contract, the current item banks are sufficient to move to adaptive testing in the short term. Further, test form construction would be replaced by configuring the adaptive algorithm each year, meaning that there would be no cost to the state to transition from a fixed-form test to an adaptive test administration if test form construction

has not started for a school year. However, over time, DEW indicated it likely would need to pay for the development of more test items to accommodate test item public release requirements. Under the current testing contract, the development of each additional item beyond what already exists in DEW's item banks costs approximately \$1,800 per stand-alone item.

It is important to note that under continuing law, unchanged by the bill, districts and schools can choose to administer paper tests for the third grade ELA or mathematics assessment, or both.<sup>2</sup> The bill does not address how this current option would fit into the computer-adaptive testing plan.

### **Federal assessment waiver**

The bill requires DEW, by December 31, 2026, to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education for testing requirements under federal law to allow for the use and implementation of end-of-year nationally norm-referenced assessments in place of standards-based assessments, which are used under current law, as the primary assessment of student achievement in Ohio. If a waiver is granted, the bill requires that DEW administer the norm-referenced assessments in place of standards-based assessments beginning with the first full school year that begins after the waiver's approval date, which, for example, would be the 2027-2028 school year if approval is received prior to July 1, 2027. The bill requires that DEW issue a request for proposals for the selection of the norm-referenced assessments and adopt rules to establish a timeline and plan for their implementation.

### **Fiscal effects**

If a waiver is granted, DEW could incur substantial costs to administer nationally norm-referenced assessments when compared to the costs of existing testing contracts. For FY 2025, DEW spent over \$45 million on the main state tests, which averages around \$16.50 per test. According to DEW, the price per assessment for nationally norm-referenced assessments can vary by vendor depending on a number of factors, such as features, support mechanisms, and reporting options. Based on a sample of norm-referenced testing vendors provided by DEW, the cost per test for tests that link to Ohio's standards could be at or above the average cost per test under the current testing system. One test (which is computer-adaptive) is about the same cost per test while another (which is computer-based but not computer-adaptive) is up to \$25 per test.

### **Diagnostic assessments**

Current law requires DEW, by June 30, 2026, to adopt a diagnostic assessment for reading only and to approve a list of up to five diagnostic assessments aligned with the academic standards for each of grades K-3 for both reading and math, including the three reading diagnostic assessments that were approved by DEW for use as comparable tools for the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, and are most widely used by public schools in the state. The bill replaces current law with requirements for DEW to adopt up to six approved diagnostic assessments in each of reading and mathematics that are inclusive of all grades K-3. In addition, a provider that offers a reading diagnostic approved prior to the bill's effective date may apply to DEW for a waiver to permit school districts to use that reading diagnostic assessment. DEW

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<sup>2</sup> R.C. 3301.0711(G)(4) and (5).

must approve a waiver application if the previously approved assessment meets all of the bill's criteria. Starting in the 2027-2028 school year (FY 2028), the bill requires that schools administer a diagnostic assessment from the updated list. In most cases, the bill prohibits schools from administering assessments in a given subject area from different providers. Finally, the bill requires DEW, beginning in FY 2028, to develop a method to compare test results to determine equivalent scores across diagnostic assessments, with the option of contracting with an organization to conduct this analysis.

### **Fiscal effects**

Districts and schools will be responsible for paying any costs associated with the state-approved diagnostic assessments. Thus, these costs may change depending on the mix of assessments approved by DEW under the bill. These provisions also may increase DEW's administrative costs. In addition to administrative costs or workload associated with reviewing diagnostic assessments for inclusion on the list, DEW may also incur administrative costs to comply with the bill's waiver opportunity and comparison study. Under the waiver process, DEW will need to create and process waiver applications, communicate changes and the waiver opportunity to vendors and districts, and answer questions for and provide technical assistance to applicants and districts. Twelve assessments are on DEW's approved list for the 2025-2026 school year and are eligible for a waiver extending their use. The bill's required study does not have a deadline or certain frequency. As such, DEW may need to complete the study one time, or may need to plan for recurring costs depending on the frequency of changes to the diagnostic assessments.

### **District and community school mathematics achievement improvement plans**

Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, the bill requires each school district or community school in which 51% or less of the district or school's students score "proficient" or higher on the third grade mathematics state test to develop a mathematics achievement improvement plan and submit the plan to DEW. Once more than 51% of a district or school's students taking the third grade mathematics state test score proficient or higher, the district or school will no longer be required to develop and submit a plan. DEW will be responsible for adopting rules for the mathematics achievement improvement plans. The plans must, at a minimum, include (1) analysis of student performance data, (2) measurable performance goals, (3) strategies to meet student needs, (4) a staffing and professional development plan, and (5) instructional strategies for improving student performance. The bill also requires DEW to post all submitted plans and rules for the plans on its website, as well as to develop and publicly post a student academic intervention template specific to mathematics that must be used by districts subject to an achievement improvement plan.

The costs of carrying out the plans will vary depending on the strategies chosen by the districts and schools that are subject to them. The bill requires districts and schools subject to a mathematics achievement improvement plan to adopt high-quality curriculum and instructional materials from the list developed by DEW, which may result in additional costs for districts and schools that have not implemented such materials (see "**High-quality core mathematics curricula**" below). For the 2024-2025 school year, 65 (10.7%) traditional school districts and 125 (36.9%) community schools had a proficiency rate of 51% or less on the third grade mathematics state test.

## **Annual reviews**

Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, and each school year thereafter, the bill requires DEW to randomly select no more than 5% of all public schools (individual schools operated by a school district as well as community schools and STEM schools) for a review of their academic intervention services and outcomes. The bill prohibits DEW from reviewing any one school more than once every three years. DEW must provide a report to the district or school of the review's results within 75 days of completion. That district or school is then required to post the results on its website or to make it available upon request. The bill also requires DEW to include a copy of the report within the Student Opportunity Profile found on the school's state report card.

DEW's operating costs likely will increase to complete the reviews. The bill's requirement translates to reviews for up to approximately 170 individual schools each year. The bill requires the reviews to include, at a minimum, a document review, interviews with applicable district and school staff, and observations of interventions. The reviews will evaluate whether qualifying students are receiving the services, the types and methods of services qualifying students receive, and the quality of the services provided.

DEW may need to hire new staff to carry out the reviews. It is conceivable that the costs, if the reviews are performed in-house, would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, though it will depend highly on the number of new staff needed. This number will depend on the scope, duration, and complexity of the reviews and the DEW unit responsible for overseeing them. Currently, the Office of School and District Improvement oversees school improvement initiatives, including identifying evidence-based strategies to improve outcomes. The base pay rate for an education program specialist starts at \$34.28 per hour. The total annual payroll costs for each such position will range from about \$93,000 to \$112,000, depending on the single or family health insurance coverage the employee may enroll in. If necessary, a program manager position may start at a base pay rate of around \$40 per hour, which would mean total annual payroll costs ranging from \$107,000 to \$126,000. An administrative professional's base pay rate starts at about \$22 per hour, equating to annual payroll costs ranging from \$64,000 to \$83,000. Hypothetically, if this new function is administered by a team of three education program specialists, a program manager, and an administrative professional, the total annual payroll cost could range from \$451,000 to \$546,000 plus any supplies, equipment, and travel reimbursement costs. Costs may be different if the Department chooses to contract with an organization involved in supporting school improvement and academic intervention services to assist in conducting the reviews, as permitted by the bill. Contract costs will depend on the particulars of the contractual arrangement.

## **High-quality core mathematics curricula**

The bill requires DEW, no later than April 15, 2027, to review core mathematics curricula and create a list of high-quality instructional materials in mathematics and evidence-based mathematics intervention programs aligned with state standards and best practices. As part of its review, DEW must create a rubric and scoring system to evaluate core mathematics curricula based on certain factors and post them on its website. Under the bill, school districts and other public schools may, but are not required to, use the DEW-approved mathematics materials or select their own high-quality options, unless the district or school is required to establish a mathematics achievement improvement plan, in which case they must use curriculum from the list established by DEW. Districts and schools that choose to modify mathematics curricula and

instructional materials may incur some costs to do so. These costs likely will vary depending on the materials chosen.

The bill expressly allows districts and schools to use the disadvantaged pupil impact aid (DPIA) they receive through the school funding formula for the implementation of high-quality core mathematics curriculum and professional development on evidence-based strategies for effective mathematics instruction. Continuing law enacted in H.B. 33 of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the main operating budget for FY 2024 and FY 2025, added similar provisions regarding the use of DPIA for reading improvement and intervention and professional development in the science of reading. DEW reports that in FY 2024, districts and schools spent \$140.8 million in DPIA and Student Wellness and Success Funds toward reading improvement and intervention initiatives.

H.B. 33 of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly also required DEW to establish a list of high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials in ELA, and a list of evidence-based reading intervention programs, that are aligned with the science of reading and strategies for effective literacy instruction. DEW's workload and administrative costs may increase on an ongoing basis to develop and update the list required by the bill. The process to identify high-quality mathematics curricula and materials may be like the one DEW used to establish the list of ELA materials. According to DEW, under that process, it established criteria and procedures for considering both the quality and alignment of core curriculum instructional materials and intervention programs with Ohio's academic content standards, best practices, and research in effective literacy instruction and alignment with state law. DEW used an independent nonprofit entity (EdReports) that reviews K-12 instructional materials to initially identify high-quality materials based on certain criteria. Some materials were automatically approved while applicants were able to submit materials that were not for further review. Those meeting review criteria were also included on the list. Since releasing the initial versions of the list in early 2024, DEW has been accepting applications on a quarterly basis for revised editions of previously approved materials. DEW conducts technical and quality reviews of the submitted materials and adds materials meeting DEW's criteria to the approved list when it is periodically updated. According to its website, DEW anticipates that its next full review cycle will commence in the fall of 2026.

In addition, the bill requires DEW to include on a district or school's report card, as an unrated measure, the reading and mathematics curricula used in each school building and whether the curriculum is designated as high-quality by DEW. The bill provides DEW with discretion in how it reports the information. The provision may minimally increase DEW's costs to collect data for and generate district and school report cards. These costs are funded by the GRF in appropriation line item (ALI) 200439, Accountability/Report Cards. In each of FY 2026 and FY 2027, H.B. 96 appropriates \$7.4 million to ALI 200439.

## **Mathematics professional development course**

The bill requires DEW to develop a professional development course that focuses on foundational knowledge in mathematics and integrates life skills and, by December 31, 2026, to develop a pilot series of professional development programs for school and regional educational leaders on evidence-based mathematics instruction. DEW may incur costs roughly in the tens of thousands of dollars to develop and produce the required course. DEW operates the Learning Management System for Ohio Education (LMS), which provides online access to courses and free

professional development opportunities to actively licensed educators. Most likely, DEW will include the course required by the bill as part of this system.

Generally, professional development programs related to academic requirements are supported by GRF ALI 200427, Academic Standards, which has appropriations of \$5.5 million in FY 2026 and \$5.4 million in FY 2027. However, DEW has used other sources of funding, including federal COVID-19 relief funds, in recent years to support certain professional development opportunities. For example, DEW used roughly \$49,000 in FY 2024 and \$13,000 in FY 2025 from federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds for the development of virtual professional development materials related to literacy and learning loss, produced through the Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio.

### **High-quality tutoring program list**

Under current law, DEW must compile a list of high-quality tutoring programs, covering literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science. DEW most recently issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) for the high-quality tutoring program directory at the beginning of 2024. Under current law, DEW is scheduled to update the list in early 2027. The bill temporarily requires DEW, not later than 30 days after the bill's effective date, to open an application period to update its list of high-quality tutoring programs and update the list accordingly. Administering the review process will require the creation and review of several documents, communication and application status updates with vendors and districts over several weeks, and onboarding approved vendors on DEW's expectations and statutory requirements for districts. According to DEW, the accelerated review process will require it to hire at least one additional staff member. As noted above, total annual payroll costs for a full-time education program specialist position start from about \$93,000 to \$112,000. Actual costs may be less if the new staff member is hired on a temporary basis.

### **Advanced learning opportunities in mathematics**

Under current law recently enacted in H.B. 96 of the 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, each school district, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, must provide each student that achieves an "advanced" level of skill on a mathematics achievement test or end-of-course exam with advanced mathematics learning opportunities in the following school year. These opportunities refer to learning opportunities or a course that provides academic content or rigor that exceeds the standard mathematics curriculum for the student's grade level, including a mathematics course that is two grade levels above the student's current grade level. If a district does not offer any advanced learning opportunities in mathematics for the grade level in which the student is enrolled for the next school year, that district is exempt from the requirement. In addition, a parent or guardian may opt out their child from advanced mathematics learning opportunities.

The bill replaces the law enacted in H.B. 96 with a provision that requires school districts and other public schools, beginning July 1, 2027 (effectively, the 2027-2028 school year), to:

- Enroll high-performing students in mathematics (i.e., those who achieve an "advanced" level of skill and, under certain conditions, those who achieve an "accomplished" level of skill on a mathematics state test) in grades 3-5 in advanced learning opportunities in mathematics. Under the bill, these opportunities refer to a course that exceeds the standard mathematics curriculum for the student's grade level or services or curricula modifications that provide additional rigor or challenge, including differentiated

instruction tailored to a student’s particular needs and readiness or interdisciplinary work.

- Enroll high-performing students in mathematics in sixth grade in (1) a mathematics course in seventh grade that combines in one school year seventh and eighth grade mathematics standards, and (2) Algebra I in eighth grade. According to DEW, the former type of class, known as “Compacted Math,” is commonly offered in public schools.
- Adopt a comprehensive mathematics placement policy for Algebra I and advanced learning opportunities in mathematics beginning in grade 3.

Districts may also enroll additional students who meet locally determined criteria in advanced learning opportunities for mathematics. Similar to current law, the bill requires districts to notify parents or guardians of sixth grade students eligible for more challenging mathematics class enrollment under the bill, and parents may opt their child out in writing. DEW must adopt rules on student placement in more challenging mathematics classes in seventh and eighth grade based on prior-year test performance.

Districts and schools may already provide advanced mathematics instruction to certain students under existing gifted education programs and acceleration policies. Under continuing law, school districts must have a student acceleration policy, which may be either the model policy adopted by DEW or a locally developed policy approved by DEW. Therefore, the fiscal effect of these provisions is likely minimal. For example, some students may take higher level mathematics courses earlier than otherwise. Districts and schools may experience some additional workload or costs to accommodate shifts in course enrollment. Any costs for additional services or curricula modifications for younger students will depend on district and school implementation decisions. In the 2024-2025 school year, nearly 228,000 (38%) students taking the third through seventh grade state mathematics tests scored at an accomplished or advanced level of skill.

The bill also requires DEW to include the provision of advanced learning opportunities in mathematics, as described above, in its model student acceleration policy. DEW may incur some additional administrative workload to update the policy accordingly.

## **Mathematics proficiency testing for preK-8 educator licenses**

The bill requires the State Board of Education to assess mathematics proficiency for applicants seeking a new preK-8 educator license and requires the Chancellor of Higher Education, in consultation with DEW, to define the level of proficiency at which individuals are prepared to provide high-quality mathematics instruction. The Chancellor and DEW must collaborate with the State Board to set appropriate benchmarks. The State Board must certify to each district or school that employs the individual whether the individual is proficient in mathematics. The bill does not disqualify an individual for a license if they do not demonstrate mathematics proficiency but it prohibits districts and schools from assigning such an individual to teach mathematics. An individual that does not demonstrate proficiency may retake the mathematics assessment and, if demonstrating proficiency, be assigned to teach mathematics. These provisions will likely increase administrative workload or costs for the state agencies to carry out these activities and may reduce district and school flexibility in responding to certain staffing needs.

Most likely, any determinations of proficiency and benchmarking will be applied to the mathematics assessment offered through the state's existing educator assessment system. In addition to completing an educator preparation program, a prospective educator generally must pass licensure tests prescribed by the State Board that assess a candidate's knowledge of pedagogy and content knowledge. Vendors provide and score the tests, which are supported by testing fees paid by the candidates taking them. The current cost for an educator to take the mathematics content test is \$109.

## **Autism scholarships**

The bill expands the set of qualifications for the Autism scholarship to include students who (1) have been diagnosed as autistic by a physician or psychologist, (2) are enrolled in a chartered or nonchartered nonpublic school, are home educated, or are older than compulsory school age but less than 22 and received a home education and have not received a diploma, and (3) has an education plan developed by the school district in which the child is entitled to attend school that includes transitional services. It is unclear exactly how many additional students will qualify for an Autism scholarship under the bill, but a marginal increase in participation and an associated increase in GRF scholarship costs is likely.

## **Career-technical education for home-educated students**

The bill permits home-educated students to take career-technical education (CTE) courses at the student's resident school district as a part-time student without financial assessment, charge, or tuition. The bill includes these students in the school district's student enrollment count for state funding purposes. Under continuing law, these provisions also apply to nonpublic students. The bill may increase state aid expenditures paid from the GRF and school district revenues depending on the extent to which home-educated students participate in CTE at their resident districts and the CTE programs the students participate in.<sup>3</sup> School district expenditures may increase to educate additional students.

## **Innovative education programs**

Under continuing law, school districts, educational service centers (ESCs), and chartered nonpublic schools can apply to DEW proposing an innovative education pilot program that exempts the district, ESC, or school from specific statutory provisions or rules. The bill permits community and STEM schools to apply to establish an innovative education pilot program in the same manner as districts, ESCs, and chartered nonpublic schools. This broadened applicant pool may result in an increase in DEW's administrative workload if the number of applications needed to be processed and reviewed significantly increases. The bill also adds the implementation of the Science of Reading to the list of requirements from which a district, ESC, or school may not be exempted. Districts and schools have been required to use curriculum, instructional materials, and intervention programs aligned to the Science of Reading since the 2024-2025 school year. According to DEW, there have been no requests to waive Science of Reading requirements. The bill also requires DEW to promote innovative educational programs designed to increase student

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<sup>3</sup> For additional details concerning CTE categorical funding, see the LSC [Categorical Add-on Aid to Ohio Schools Members Brief \(PDF\)](#).

achievement and engagement, improve student wellness, and prepare students for the workforce and postsecondary education. This may increase DEW's administrative workload.

### **Elimination of DEW physical education coordinator position**

The bill eliminates the requirement that DEW employ a full-time physical education coordinator to provide guidance and technical assistance to districts and schools in implementing physical education standards. DEW reported that the position's elimination will not have a fiscal effect, as the position is currently vacant and its responsibilities have been delegated to other staff.

## **Synopsis of Fiscal Effect Changes**

- The substitute bill (I\_136\_2935-4), compared to the previous (Senate-passed) bill, adds the bill's provisions regarding data reporting to the Education Management Information System, state tests and diagnostic assessments, the high-quality tutoring program list, Autism scholarships, career-technical education for home-educated students, and innovative education programs and their associated fiscal effects.
- The substitute bill may, overall, lessen the bill's increase in district and school costs to provide required intervention services to academically struggling students compared to the previous bill by generally limiting eligibility for those services to students who performed at the limited or basic level of skill on both a state-approved diagnostic assessment and the state tests taken in third grade. Under the previous bill, a student qualified for such services if, in general, the student demonstrated a limited level of skill on any state test or a level of skill that is below grade level or below proficient on a mathematics diagnostic assessment.
- The substitute bill provides additional time for the Department of Education and Workforce and districts and schools to comply with various provisions of the bill by extending various deadlines by one year.